



IMANI GILBERT

CLASS OF 2020

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Fayetteville, NC

Undergraduate Major: Speech & Hearing Sciences

Career Aspiration: Speech-Language Pathologist

Professional School: ECU: MS in Communication Sciences and Disorders and PHD in Rehabilitation Sciences

What's been your favorite part of the journey to apply to professional schools?

My favorite part was receiving the acceptances!

What were some of the challenges you came across when preparing to apply to schools (what was tougher than you expected)?

When applying to schools, the hardest part was completing all the different essay questions and personal statements. It can be hard selling yourself on paper, and this was a skill I had to learn.

How did you prepare yourself for the process of applying to schools?

I talked to my mentors a lot. Their advice was critical to my preparation plan. I also set deadlines for myself. These were always set two weeks before the actual application deadline so that I had plenty of wiggle room.

What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?

I am a huge advocate for the writing center. Being able to communicate effectively through your writing is an important skill to have whether going to graduate school or entering the workforce. The writing center is able to give tips and strategies that can improve your writing ability, thus making you more marketable.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was involved with ECU NSSLHA.

Looking back, what advice would you give to students who are interested in professional schools? What do you wish you had known earlier?

I would advise students who are interested in professional schools to start the application process as soon as the applications open. Many applications open during the summer, and this is the perfect time to get a jump on things. I procrastinated a bit and was forced to do the application process while maintaining my schoolwork. The application process can be quite time consuming, so starting in the summer can prove to be beneficial.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I did multiple hours of shadowing as it is a requirement of all graduate schools in my field. However, I really enjoyed the process of shadowing speech-language pathologists and went well above the required number of hours. A few of the locations where I was able to observe are the following: schools, hospitals, private clinics, and university clinics. Completing a shadowing experience within your field is a great way to make yourself more competitive for graduate school.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I volunteered at AseraCare Hospice. It was a great experience, and it taught the value of empathy. I also volunteered as a teaching assistant and tutor within the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders.

Where are you going to school?

East Carolina University for a MS in Communication Sciences and Disorders and PHD in Rehabilitation Sciences.

Did you do research? If so what was the topic?

Yes. The research I completed in Dr. Jamie Perry's Cleft Palate Speech and Imaging and Visualization Laboratory was related to understanding the anatomical and physiological correlates of typical speech production and cleft speech production.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

I was able to spend one of my spring breaks facilitating a literacy camp in Belize with students and faculty in my department. This experience helped me step outside of my comfort zone socially and professionally. It was also amazing learning how to put into practice some of the techniques and content I had previously learned in class.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Remember you aren't alone. Utilize the services offered by the University, your academic advisor, your professors, and your peers. Everyone at ECU wants to see you succeed. You got this!