



KAILA MOORE

CLASS OF 2021

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Durham, NC

Undergraduate Major: Biology

Career Aspirations: Medical Doctor (M.D.)

Professional School: UNC School of Medicine

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

I prepared myself for the process of applying to schools in numerous ways. I was a part of the ECU Honors College Early Assurance Program, so I received a lot of guidance from the amazing faculty members over that program. Both of my older sisters are medical students at Brody School of Medicine, so I was able to learn about the process through them. I utilized the Center for Pre-professional advising to assist with my committee letter and interview preparation. I was a participant in the UNC Medical Education Development (MED) program, so I was able to receive two mentors that were first-year medical students at their institution and receive individual feedback about every section of my application until the final product was in its best shape possible. Additionally, I performed individual research and created an excel sheet of program deadlines, costs of applying and attendance, scholarships, loans, appealability of the living area, and anything else I thought would be useful when trying to make a decision about schools.

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

Find scholarships early and map out a plan about financing your education. I understood that I would need loans to get through school, but I was still shocked about exactly how many loans I needed and wish that I created a better savings plan for attending school.

If you're applying to medical school, be sure to use the Medical School Admission Requirements (MSAR) platform! It is an excellent resource to utilize when trying to decide which schools to apply to because it provides a better idea about each programs mission and student statistics. If you attend the AAMC virtual medical school fair, you will also receive a discount code for their subscription.

Apply for the AAMC Fee assistance program if you qualify! It saves you so much money during the application cycle.

Trust that what is for you cannot be taken from you. Trust in all your hard work and in God as you're waiting to hear back from schools. You will end up where you are meant to be and all the no's will be leading you towards the yes that is meant for your life.

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

Finding an organization to join is not a one shoe fits all task. You should not join any organizations due to thinking that it will impress the professional school you're applying to. Make sure to participate in your interests because it allows for schools to get to know who you are outside of academics and potentially leads to a more enticing interview conversation.

In regard to helping you be an amazing applicant, utilize the center for pre-professional advising for help with editing, interview preparation, advising, recommendation letters, and a support system. I would also suggest using the pirate academic success center to assist with your prerequisite courses. Don't wait until you're struggling with a class to ask for help! Seek mentorship and guidance with your courses even when you have great grades because it can teach you easier resources and methods that you didn't even know existed.

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

Being open to changing my study habits and finding new ways to prepare for the MCAT sections differently was very difficult for me. It was also difficult to be able to admit when I was ready to take the MCAT compared to when I wanted to take the MCAT. I tried to study for the MCAT the same way that I studied for college and use the same methods across all topics. This did not work for me, and it showed in my practice test scores. However, I was open to change and tried different ways to study for each section until I found what worked for me. Through trial and error I was able to finally score in a range that I was happy with. However, it did take some time and I had to postpone my test date and apply during a different cycle than I intended to be able to make sure that I was showcasing my best self.

It was also difficult to have patience during the application cycle. I submitted my primary application 07/06/2022 and submitted my last secondary on 8/28/2022. I did not receive my first interview invite until 11/08/2022 and did not get my first acceptance until 01/18/2023. There was a lot of silence in between those dates, and I was always super frantic. I was constantly checking reddit and student doctor network to try to compare my timeline to others and figure out if there were other things I needed to do. However, no one's journey is mine because what God has in store for me is solely meant for me. I had to trust in myself and my own timing!

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was involved in many organizations as an undergraduate student and served on the e-board of two. My favorite organizations were personally Queen in You, ECU Ambassadors, and A Moment of Magic. I also loved serving as a success coach with the Pirate Academic Success Center under the PRIMER Program to Promote Transfer Student Success.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

It is difficult to answer what my most rewarding experience at ECU was because I had so many spectacular moments as a student here. I met the most amazing professors who not only enhanced my education, but also pushed me to believe in myself. I formed close-knit relationships with individuals who helped mold me into who I am today. I participated in classes that stimulated my interests outside of my science degree and brought joy to study-filled days (special shout out to the scuba diving component of the honors college ocean explorations course). I learned how to be content on my own and build my own path when needed. I simply would not be where I am now without my experience at ECU, so every day was rewarding there.

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

My favorite part of applying to professional school has been learning how to accept failure and the unknown. It was easy to get discouraged when I was taking MCAT practice tests and scoring horrendously. I questioned the attainability of my goals with every rejection that I received, and I overthought every single word I said during my interviews. However, I am still about to begin my first year of medical school in just 2 more months. This process allowed me to truly understand that a failure means you're one step closer to succeeding. I learned it's natural to question yourself and get frantic at times, but I now know the importance of believing in yourself and only letting doubt live in your mind for no more than 1 day.

Full transparency, I had to take my MCAT 3 different times to attain a competitive score (my first 2 attempts were in the 490s). I thought about changing careers, thought that I wasn't smart enough to be a doctor, questioned if I wasted my time and if retaking the MCAT was even worth it. I did not get to cruise down the straight road like I expected, but I learned how to be okay with having to crawl down a bumpy road. This allowed me to handle hardships better and made me a stronger person. The process may have upset me at times, but I am still completely grateful for all the ups and downs I faced.

What type of shadowing did you do?

Most of my shadowing I did as an undergraduate student was virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I entered ECU in 2019 and graduated in 2021, so my entire duration of school was spent navigating the new rules that came with covid. One of those rules were hospitals not allowing outside visitors. I mainly utilized the Medical School Headquarters eShadowing but also joined other virtual sessions I found online.

I also knew that I wanted to be a doctor since I was a child, so I went to a medicine based high school called City of Medicine Academy in Durham, NC. Through this high school I was able to be a part of many organizations that allowed me to shadow numerous doctors at Duke Hospital.

Additionally, I had a paid position in a family medicine clinic during my last year of college and worked in a dermatology office after graduating. Through these positions, I was able to gain patient exposure and understand more about the specialties of the doctors I worked under.

What type of volunteering did you do?

Most of the volunteering I did was with the organizations that I joined. As the off-campus coordinator for A Moment of Magic, I was able to plan all off-campus events for the organization and engage with pediatric patients and ill children. I visited marathon events, households, and hospitals to incorporate playtime, social interaction, and photo opportunities for sick children.

As a member of Queen of You, I was connected with Dr. Garrie Moore in Bethel, NC and was able to assist with an after-school program at Bethel elementary/middle school and at the Bethel Youth Activity center. As a volunteer with these programs, I was able to help tutor students, provide mentorship, and create physical activities for children to be active.

Even when school became completely virtual, the organizations I joined still allowed us to write letters to geriatric populations in nursing homes/assisted living facilities and provide disinfectant products to communities in need.

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

I have done research with three different programs. My first experience with research was as a junior in high school with the Duke Summer Training in Academic Research (STAR) Program. In this program I performed a retrospective study on the effects of inhaled corticosteroids on bronchopulmonary dysplasia in premature infants.

The second time I did research was during my first year at ECU with the surgical oncology department. It was a work-study position and I conducted laboratory and mice research on cancer cells, analyzed the development of tumors in mice, created chemical agents for the lab, and sterilized equipment.

My third time doing research was directly after I graduated in 2021 as a participant in the Duke Bridging the Gap to Enhance Clinical Research (BIGGER) program. I conducted a systematic review on 1p36 deletion syndrome, specifically analyzing how genes PRDM16 and SKI contribute to structural heart defects and cardiomyopathy in individuals with this chromosomal disease.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Go conquer all of your goals and aspirations and allow yourself to grow during every phase of your journey.

Savor every moment, even that one class you dislike, because time goes by extremely fast. It feels like yesterday I was moving into my dorm. Where you are now is needed to go where you want to be. Be present and trust the rest will come later.