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

Truly getting to know myself. You do a lot of self-reflection and internalizing in this process. However, my favorite part about the application cycle were the interviews. I felt like the faculty/staff/students really got to know me as a person and WHY I was so passionate about dentistry.

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

STUDYING FOR THE DAT! I had a negative attitude about taking the test long before I even started studying for it. This made the studying process a lot harder than it needed to be. As a result, it reflected on my score and required me to re-take it.

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

STAYING ORGANIZED! I had an ongoing excel and word document for every shadowing/volunteer event I attended. Not only would I log the hours, but I would also write down a couple of sentences on what I did that day and what I learned. These documents came in very handy when I was filling out the “experiences” section in my application. I also had a folder for everything related to the different dental schools. This really helped me narrow down which dental schools I was going to apply to. Dental school applications are extremely expensive and it is super important to apply to the schools that align with YOU and vice-versa (mission, GPA, DAT scores, experience, demographic, location, etc.)

Where are you going to school?

East Carolina School of Dental Medicine
What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?
Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED- A Pre-Professional Honors Society), Pre-Dental Honors Society, Undergraduate Dental Student Association (USNDA)

What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?
Pre-Professional Advising Center, Career Center, Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED- A Pre-Professional Honors Society), Pre-Dental Honors Society, Undergraduate Dental Student Association (USNDA)

Looking back, what advice would you give to students who are interested in professional schools? What do you wish you had known earlier?
SHADOW, SHADOW, SHADOW! As much as you can. I shadowed every time I had the chance. I even spent my entire Junior year spring break shadowing from 7am-6pm (and sometimes later), Monday through Friday. Not only will shadowing help out your resume, but you will learn SO MUCH dentistry during the process.

What type of shadowing did you do?
I shadowed both general dentists and specialists in different dental settings (urban, rural, hospital dentistry, etc.)

What type of volunteering did you do?
MOM clinics, Bernstein "Mini MOM" clinics, Give Kids a Smile Day at Eastern Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry

Did you do research? If so, what was the topic?
I did research in the Biology and Chemistry departments. The research I helped with in biology was in the Summers Lab, where I got to work with frogs and help a Master student collect data. And for the Chemistry research, I helped out a Master student collect data in the Spuches Lab.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?
Getting into my #1 dental school choice after years of hard work.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?
KEEP GOING, KEEP WORKING HARD, AND STAY ORGANIZED. Your hard work, achievements, and even your struggles do not go unnoticed. - There is a light at the end of the tunnel! -