

MORGAN AGNER

CLASS OF 2022

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Goldsboro, NC

Masters Certificate: Public Health Foundations and Practice

Career Aspirations: Physician

Professional School: Wake Forest School of Medicine

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

My favorite part has been the incredible people I have met along the way, from colleagues to friends and mentors, everyone has been an influential part of my journey. I also learned so much about myself. I was able to reflect on my past and develop a deeper understanding of how it led me to medicine, which was rewarding in itself, and also helped shape my professional application.

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

I prepared myself for the application process by doing ample research on all of the medical schools I was interested in, familiarizing myself with AMCAS (the medical school application service), and most importantly – establishing early connections with professors, the PPAC staff, and the career center. I also started formulating aspects of my application early on in my undergraduate career, so that I could build upon prior versions and make several revisions before I submitted a final application.

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 find out as much information about the application process for their professional school early on so that they can be best prepared and have ample time to develop their application. I would also advise them to research every aspect of the profession and ensure a true understanding of it through various hands-on experiences and learning from mentors in the field, as I think having that genuine passion is necessary for success in such a rigorous journey.

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

I strongly recommend the PPAC! They have so many resources and tools that will help streamline your professional school journey and provide great experiences. I also recommend utilizing the Pirate Academic Success Center, whether it be as a tutee or tutor, and the career center. It is also always a great idea to join different student organizations, some that are related to your field and some that are related to your other interests. I also spent two summers abroad and had the most incredible and influential experiences, so I would highly recommend studying abroad to all students!

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

A major challenge in applying to schools was the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on the entire application process. It affected the ability to continue certain activities and start new shadowing/volunteering experiences, as well as changed the way medical school interviews and other experiences were conducted. I learned how to adapt quickly to unforeseen circumstances and use creative solutions to make the most out of situations that were out of my control.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was a volunteer tutor through the PASC, and I was involved in several student organizations like the American Medical Student Association, the Minority Association of Pre-Health Students, and the Vietnamese Student Association. I was also an appointed member of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Council of Student Ambassadors and Sigma Delta Pi, the National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society. Additionally, I served as the Undergraduate Liaison for Pirates V. Cancer, a student organization at the Brody School of Medicine.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed abroad in European teaching hospitals with the Atlantis program. I also shadowed cally in different primary care specialties through the PPAC program, and I shadowed in various settings/specialties through some of the connections I made while working as a medical scribe.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I started as a volunteer at Vidant Medical Center, which gave me a better understanding of the various roles and duties throughout the hospital. I also volunteered at different non-profits dedicated to improving the health and well-being of underserved communities, such as AMEXCAN and Curamericas Global, where I could combine both my Hispanic Studies minor and health care interests to serve Spanish-speaking, marginalized populations. I was a volunteer Chemistry tutor at the Pirate Academic Success Center and was a Spanish/Math tutor at a local elementary school. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, I also volunteered with different health departments to assist in vaccine clinics.

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

To fulfill my Signature Thesis requirement for the Honors College, I helped develop an eight-week curriculum for elementary-aged youth, together with my colleagues, which was centered around nutrition and healthy eating habits. The intention of the program was to define healthy foods and communicate the importance of eating nutritiously in a manner that would successfully resonate with children. During the design stage, I was the Community Outreach Coordinator which included collaborating with community partners, and during implementation, I became a Sub-Investigator which involved administering instructional sessions and analyzing data.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience at ECU was the opportunity to go abroad. Although the program was not directly through ECU, I was influenced by compassionate and caring professors to pursue a deeper study of Spanish language and culture, which ultimately motivated me to combine my global studies interest with medicine. I was eventually able to shadow physicians abroad in Spain, where I had the opportunity to be a part of an immersive experience in the hospital while also learning about Spanish culture and how beliefs, values, traditions, and norms influence our views on health and wellness, medicine, and health care. After returning to ECU, I was given many opportunities to utilize and further developed what I learned, and it helped shape my professional application.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Above all – ENJOY the journey and don't overlook the beauty in the process of applying to professional schools. You have the opportunity to grow and learn so much about yourself along the way. Always stay true to yourself and make time to pursue your genuine interests even if they are not necessarily related to your profession as the best applicants are well-rounded and passionate individuals!