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

Applying to professional school is definitely a challenge, especially when the competition gets tougher every year. My favorite part of the journey was to rediscover why I want to be a doctor in the first place through the competitive process of applying to medical school. This was only possible through the connections I made through organizations, my advisors, and peers.

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

The biggest challenge I faced was taking the MCAT. I haven’t always been a fan of standardized testing and preparing for it was not only draining but also discouraging at times because of its large bearing. It was like training for a marathon because of the large amount of content to relearn and the need for stamina for a 7.5 hour test. However, I found great support from my family, advisors, and peers which allowed me to succeed and be where I am today.

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

It was definitely a nerve wrecking process because there are so many parts that play into the equation. However, the most important thing to do is to meet your advisor early and find out the necessary steps to get into a professional school. Medical schools look for a well rounded student that understands the role of being a physician, which requires hands-on and personalized experiences. For example, fulfilling the prerequisites for medical school is not only a requirement to apply but also necessary to understand the material on the MCAT. Also, it is important to get clinical and volunteering hours early on so the exposure to the medical world can really shape an opinion on the medical field and give you better talking points for interviews.
What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?
Health4PINE (Health For People In Need Everywhere), American Medical Student Association, Indian Student Association, AMEXCAN, Tri-Beta Honor Society

What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?
Definitely take advantage of the PPAC. Ms. McAllister not only gave me advice as a freshman in what courses to take, but also guided me in terms of internships and supported me in my extracurriculars as well. She also provided me with advice on the MCAT along with free resources to utilize to better my school and even looked over my application for medical school. Along with the PPAC, the PASC tutoring center is an important tool, at saved some of my grades my freshman and sophomore year.

Looking back, what advice would you give to students who are interested in professional schools? What do you wish you had known earlier?
Never do anything just to check a box off the pre-med list. There is so much more the medicine than just shadowing and GPA. There is no need to just volunteer at places you don’t want to. Instead, find one or two projects that truly give you satisfaction of shaping your personality and future career. When I was a sophomore, I officially started the non-profit organization Health4PINE, Health for People In Need Everywhere which focuses on providing a balanced lifestyle through mental, social, and physical wellness, which I later developed into a research project. This process allowed for me to become involved with several entrepreneurship challenges and gave me greater volunteering opportunities within my Greenville community.

What type of shadowing did you do?
Cardiology, Cardiothoracic Surgery, Neonatology, Pediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency Medicine.

What type of volunteering did you do?
I mostly volunteering with Health4PINE with the local Boys and Girls club and Innovation Early College at ECU. I also volunteered as a tutor in the Pirate Academic Success Center, in Hospital De Granada when I studied abroad in Spain, and did an Alternative Break Experience in Roanoke, Virginia.

Where are you going to school?
Brody School of Medicine

Did you do research? If so what was the topic?
As a lab assistant to Dr. Litwa at Brody School of Medicine my freshman and sophomore year, I studied autism development by using 3-D cerebral organoids from skin fibroblast samples taken from both control and autistic patients. I also worked as an assistant to Dr. Dodor to understand the gap between the Latino School System, the students, and their parents. Along with this, I worked as a research assistant at ECU Heart Institute/Obesity and Diabetes Clinic to find out the effect of Statin on overall muscle endurance with continuous exercise.
What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience from ECU is definitely the connections I have made. Having moved over 9 times, I had to start new friendships/relationships numerous times. However, I know the connections I made these past years gave me community support and lasting relationships. I am fortunate to continue networking with the Greenville community as a student at Brody School of Medicine.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

No matter how hard it gets, never give up. If you are truly passionate about the field you choose, then the end result is never impossible. Make sure you surround yourself with a positive community and remember you are never alone, especially because ECU has amazing advisors that can always help whenever you need. Take advantage of every free resource available to you.