



RAYE'ANNA HOFF

CLASS OF 2021

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Charlotte, NC

Undergraduate Major: Chemistry, Hispanic Studies minor

Career Aspiration: Pediatric Dentist or Prosthodontist

Professional School: Howard University College of Dentistry

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

My favorite part of the journey was overcoming barriers and truly getting to know myself. Applying to professional school is tough and overwhelming but I learned to enjoy the process and remain confident in my abilities. Knowing your “why” is important because there will be many obstacles. My mentors and professors were simply amazing! They provided me with countless resources, inspiration, encouragement, and knowledge. I am eternally grateful for their guidance throughout the entire process.

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

I took the DAT twice because I did not perform well the first time. I would say the biggest challenge was finding an effective way to study the second time while also balancing my upper-level chemistry courses. Once I learned effective study techniques, my scores increased almost 4 points in each section.

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

My advisors and I created a 4- year plan of the classes that I would have to take over the years. Before the applications opened, I reached out to my mentors and asked questions while gathering my volunteer work, experiences, and shadowing which made it easy to input the information.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

Undergraduate Student National Dental Association (USNDA), ECU Ambassadors, Pre-Dental Honors Society, Collegiate 100, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Chancellor's Student Leadership Academy, and the Pirate Academic Success Center.

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

I can't emphasize this enough, utilize the PPAC (they're there to help you get into professional school)! They have so many opportunities and information for their students to make the application process easier.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed at a general dentist office in my hometown and observed a variety of procedures. I also shadowed a pediatric dentist and orthodontist at Eastern Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry in Greenville, NC.

What type of volunteering did you do?

NC Missions of Mercy (MOM) Clinics, American Heart Association, Give Kids a Smile, Boys and Girls Club Field Day, Special Populations Prom, MLK Day of Service, Ronald McDonald House.

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

I did not participate in any research

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

The most rewarding experience at ECU was becoming a founding member of the Undergraduate Student National Dental Association (USNDA). Our member count increased almost to 40 members. We were able to provide minority students the opportunity to decrease oral health disparities locally, fostering mentorship within our organization, and advocating for a diverse health force.

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

Start early and network! Get involved in community service events, join clubs/organizations, find a mentor and start shadowing. These are important factors will make you a stronger applicant as the process is highly competitive. Also, utilize the ECU Career Services. I worked alongside with Ms. McAllister, Ms. Crystal Waters and Mr. John Stowe as they provided help with interview preparations.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Keep going with the end goal in mind. There are going to be many challenges and roadblocks on this journey but don't give up on your dreams. Stay true to yourself, set your goals high and don't stop until you achieve them. ECU provides countless resources for FREE so use them!