What’s been your favorite part of the journey to apply to professional schools?
My favorite part about the professional school journey was meeting like-minded peers throughout the process. Whether it was through campus organizations, community volunteering, or shadowing, I really enjoyed meeting other students who had the same passion for medicine.

What were some of the challenges you came across when preparing to apply to schools (what was tougher than you expected)?
One aspect that was more challenging than expected was the application timeline. I was aware of the fact that I had to submit both my AMCAS and secondary applications as early as possible, but I did not expect how difficult it would be to complete that. I had a bunch of secondary applications come in at the same time, so managing writing those essays within a two week time span was challenging for me. At some point I hit a writing wall and had to take a couple of days off. However, this was not a setback. It ended up being extremely beneficial to my mental wellbeing and I was able to power through and complete the rest in a timely manner!

How did you prepare yourself for the process of applying to schools?
Plan ahead!!! My freshman year I attended an AMSA meeting about the pre-med timeline. The very next day I created a rough draft timeline for myself. This included what pre-requisite classes to take when, when I should take the MCAT, and what summer opportunities I could participate in. During my junior year, I started researching which medical schools I might be interested in applying to and created a spreadsheet with their statistics and requirements. I also started drafting my personal statement early so that it would be finalized by the time AMCAS opened. All of this planning made the application process much easier when the time came around!
What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?

The PPAC was extremely helpful with answering questions about the pre-med and application process!

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

I wish I had known how much waiting the entire process entails. From waiting for your MCAT scores to waiting for interviews and decisions, there is a lot of unexpected down time during your senior year! Make sure to never lose sight of your interests and hobbies because you will rely on them to keep you going.

What type of shadowing did you do?

Internal Medicine (Hospitalist)
Pediatrics
Geriatrics
OB/GYN (both at Vidant and a hospital in Budapest, Hungary)
Emergency Medicine
Neurology (in Budapest, Hungary)
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery (in Budapest, Hungary)
Cardiology
Cardiac Electrophysiology

What type of volunteering did you do?

Most of my clinical volunteer experience came from the two local clinics here: the Pitt County Care Clinic and Greenville Community Shelter Clinic. As an undergraduate volunteer, I assisted in taking vitals and patient triage. I was also a clinical intern for the Atrial Fibrillation Clinic at the East Carolina Heart Institute. My non-clinical volunteering was most through campus organizations, like PHACT. From high school I knew I loved working with the aging population and I wanted to continue doing that in college. Additionally, I volunteered as an event leader for the regional Science Olympiad tournament that is held at ECU every year.

Where are you going to school?

The Brody School of Medicine
Did you do research? If so, what was the topic?

I have been a part of the Spangenburg lab at the East Carolina Diabetes and Obesity Institute since my freshman year. My project looks at the mitochondrial energetics of a mouse skeletal muscle, the Flexor Digitorum Brevis (FDB). This muscle has been shown to be resistant to intermittent ischemia, meaning that it can still function under conditions of little to no oxygen. Since almost every other muscle in the body requires oxygen to function, this means that the FDB must have unique mitochondria that allow it to function with limited oxygen. My role has been to perform assays that map out the energetic pathways of both the FDB and another similar muscle so that any differences may be elucidated.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

Having grown up in Greenville, I always saw the city as having one singular dimension. However, attending ECU has made me see the community in a whole new light. I am grateful to have been connected to my home through service. I am even more grateful to continue serving it in a new capacity when I am in medical school.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Having a strong support system was crucial for me during this process. I would have never made it without help from my friends, family, and faculty advisors. Never be afraid to ask for help because everyone at ECU wants you to succeed!