



SYDNEY LEWIS

CLASS OF 2021

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Washington, NC

Undergraduate Major: Public Health: Pre-Health Professions

Career Aspiration: General Dentist

Professional School: East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine

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

Being able to meet a lot of different people on campus that have the same career aspirations as me or are already in the field.

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 and writing my personal statement. I would recommend starting to gather study materials for the DAT early and give yourself plenty of time to retake it if you need to. I would start your personal statement early and hire a writing coach if you need that additional help. It also helps to get multiple people to look at your statement and give you honest feedback.

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

Pirate Academic Success Center, Pre-Professional Advising, and the Career Center.

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

N/A

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

1. Keep your head up and work hard! The path to professional school seems long and hard but I promise you it's worth it!
2. Do not choose a major you are not interested in because you think it would look good to professional schools. I originally came in as a Biology major because I thought that is what dental schools wanted but I switched to Public Health because I was passionate about it. I really think my passion for Public Health came through in my application and interviews.
3. Be sure to start saving up money early. Taking the entrance exams and applying to professional schools is very expensive.

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 say to keep up with all of your classes and volunteer and shadowing hours starting at the beginning of freshman year no matter how tedious it seems. It will be worth it when you are entering all of those hours and classes into your application. It is also important to keep up with different honors you have received (Chancellor's List, Dean's List, ECU Excels,]etc).

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

Operation Smile, ECU HOSA, Phi Eta Sigma Honors Society, Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society, Pre-Dental Honors Society, Pirates Promoting Community Wellness, Pirate Academic Success Center, ECU Global Medical and Dental Brigades, The National Society of Leadership and Success, ECU Leads, ECU Excels

What type of shadowing did you do?

I started in high school shadowing my local general dentist and orthodontist. During college, I shadowed a general and family dentist in Greenville, NC. I also attended NC Missions of Mercy clinics or free dental clinics whenever they were offered.

What type of volunteering did you do?

Greenville Food Bank, Meals on Wheels, Elementary Classroom Volunteer, Missions of Mercy Clinics, ECU CLCE- Earth Day of Service and Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Operation Christmas Child, Global Medical Brigades, Give Kids the World Village, Pirate Academic Success Center Volunteer

Where are you going to school?

East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

Being able to make connections with the faculty and staff who gave me their support during undergraduate and then were so excited for me when I got accepted into dental school.

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

Freshman year I contacted the Pre-Professional Advising center and met Mrs. McAllister. I met with her every semester for advice and to make sure I was on track for applying to dental school. I also tried to make sure I was on top of my studies by going to the Pirate Academic Success Center and office hours for extra help. Through office hours I became closer to my professors which helped when it came time for me to ask for recommendation letters. I made sure to keep up with shadowing hours, volunteer hours, and work hours through spreadsheets to make it easier to enter into my application when it was time to apply. I continued to volunteer, shadow, and work all four years of college so I could stay consistent. I joined clubs that would benefit me and allowed me to learn more about dental school and how to be a strong applicant. After my freshman year, I started looking for leadership opportunities in the organizations I was involved in. I also tried to go on one study abroad trip so I could see how dental care was different in another country. I looked for any events the Pre-Professional Advising Center was hosting to help with the professional school application process. Lastly, I made time to enjoy my years at college and took time to relax because it is easy to get overwhelmed by everything.