



BAILEY GENTLE

CLASS OF 2024

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Shallotte, NC

Career Aspirations: Dentist

**Professional School: East Carolina University
School of Dental Medicine**

**Undergraduate major: Biochemistry with
Biology Concentration; Minors in Public
Health and Mathematics**

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

My favorite part of my journey to dental school has been getting to meet people I otherwise wouldn't have the pleasure of meeting. In the past couple of years, I have been able to connect with other pre-dental peers, current dental students, and practicing dentists.

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

I prepared myself for the applications by getting all the things my application would need done prior to the AADSAS portal opening. I made sure my personal statement was written and reviewed, my ECU committee letter was all wrapped up, my letters of recommendation were ready to be submitted, and having a list with all my hours and dates of my extracurriculars. This allowed me to streamline inputting all my information into the AADSAS and it allowed me to have more time to focus on answering all the supplemental questions that the different dental programs asked.

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

One of the biggest challenges I faced was figuring out how to fit all the prerequisites into a timeline that worked for me. Between taking all the necessary courses, studying/taking the DAT, writing a personal statement, etc. I felt overwhelmed with all the requirements that I had to fulfill before I could apply. To overcome this, I spent an afternoon my sophomore year laying out a plan with dates and deadlines for myself to stay on top of everything by spreading things out and giving myself ample time to complete everything to the best of my ability.

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

The biggest piece of advice I would give anyone interested in a professional school would be to go out and shadow that profession. Shadowing is the best way to see firsthand the day-in and day-out activities of someone in that profession. It also gives the possibility of finding someone to help you navigate through the process since those professionals have gone through the same process. One thing I wish I knew earlier was that there are many people within the university and beyond that are more than willing to help you get to where you want to be. I was fortunate to meet awesome dental students that helped me with my application and interview tips. The dentists I shadowed also gave me good insight on how to prepare for the application process which helped me immeasurably.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was the president of the Pre-Dental Honor Society, I was a member of the Undergraduate Student National Dental Association, and the Smile Squad Honor Society.

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

I would recommend for every student to find a club specific to their career path and become an active member of it. These clubs provide students with fun and informative meetings that give you insight on how to better prepare yourself for the profession you are interested in. I also highly recommend going to tutoring at the university to help stay on top of your courses and to get the highest grade possible. If you do well in those classes, look into being a tutor as well. This looks super well on applications and will help you in future courses as well.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I did primarily general dentistry shadowing with half of my hours in private practice and the other half in a public health setting. I wanted a good mix of seeing dentistry in those two settings because I see myself working in those areas of dentistry, so I focused on shadowing in those settings.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I spent roughly ninety percent of my volunteering between three places. I wanted to have quality volunteer hours rather than volunteering a little bit across a lot of places. I spent my three years at ECU coaching youth lacrosse with the Pitt County Youth Lacrosse organization. I volunteered at ECU health medical center where I was a patient/visitor escort. I also volunteered at a free health clinic, New Hope Clinic in Boiling Springs, NC, during my breaks back home where I helped the dental assistants set up and take down rooms along with helping convert all their physical records to digital.

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

I did research in dental biomaterials. We researched creating a dentin-like structure via a calcium-phosphate solution containing gelMA and collagen.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience at ECU has been being able to shadow at one of the ECU SoDM's Community Service-Learning Centers. I grew up in Brunswick County where the dental school has a clinic set up where dental students, residents, and faculty practice at. I was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to shadow at this clinic in my home county where I learned more about what it means to be a part of ECU's dental program, and get to see how one day in the future, I could be changing lives and smiles in the area that I grew up in.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

The biggest piece of advice that I carry with me that I like to pass on is to find your journey, respect your journey, and love it. In a world with endless possibilities of career options, find the one that you see yourself being successful and happy in. Spend time job researching, shadowing, interning, etc. to get as much experience as possible when figuring out which career will best suit you. Respect your journey by understanding that the road to success isn't straight nor easy no matter what your aspirations are. Give yourself grace in the fact that there will be roadblocks and adversity you will have to face and learning from these experiences will only help you down the road. Lastly, love the journey you set out on because being passionate is the driving force that encourages personal and professional growth every day.