



DIEGO GONZALEZ CAQUIAS

CLASS OF 2023

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Wilmington, NC

Undergraduate Major: Biology

Career Aspirations: Dentist

Professional School: University of Louisville School of Dentistry

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

My favorite part of the journey is all of the people I have met on my way. I have met countless driven and smart individuals who helped me push myself and vice versa. I also created friendships that I will have for the rest of my life as well. I also got to help a lot of students, as well as served my community in ways that I most likely would not have done.

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

Some of the challenges I faced while preparing to apply was stepping away from the big picture and being able to separate the smaller tasks that add up to the end goal. Another challenge I faced was during interviews and being confident enough in myself to articulate all of the word I had put in. Overall the process was was about as difficult as I had thought it would be due to doing research and having conversations with former students.

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

I prepared myself for the process applying a few different ways. The first being joining the Pre-Dental Honor Society to see what was needed for the application process. I also talked to individuals in the field that I respected to get their perspective on my future plan and listened to their advice. I also had them review my personal statement and provide feedback until I was confident in it. Finally I did multiple mock interviews so I was able to confidently articulate myself during the interviews.

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

My advice to students interested in professional school is to shadow first. Even if you have your mind set on a particular career path, seeing it first hand is the best way to see if it will be a good fit. If after shadowing that specific profession you aren't sure continue to shadow until you find a profession you are passionate about. Once you find a profession you are passionate about find a student who is already on the path you wish to go and ask for advice on what they would do if they were in your position. Everyone is super supportive and we all want to see each other succeed.

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

I recommend that students utilize the Pre-Professional Advising Center (PPAC) and the Pirate Academic Success Center (PASC). Both of these helped me immensely in helping complete a well rounded application. The PPAC helped specifically with the committee letter requirements and the building blocks of my application, making sure I completed all the correct steps. The PASC was great for finding like minded individuals to help you push yourself towards becoming your best version.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

I was involved with the PASC and Pre-Dental Honors Society. Both of these allowed me to meet individuals who kept me motivated and informed about the journey ahead.

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed four different dentists. Primarily in general dentistry to be able to see different rapport that was built between dentists and their patients. I also shadowed a prosthodontist to see the side of dentistry that's deals with more intensive work with one patient at a time.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I volunteered in different ways while I was in college, while I was home for summer, and after I graduated as well. During school I was tutor for the Pirate Academic Success Center. While I was home for summers I walked therapy dogs around local nursing homes. After I graduated I coached my former middle schools soccer team.

How did you gain clinical experience?

N/A

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

I did not conduct research.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience at ECU was tutoring at the Pirate Academic Success Center. I took great pride in helping students who were struggling in Biology and Chemistry to reach their academic goals. Nothing made me happier than helping students who were struggling reach their goals with dedicating some extra time and motivation.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Everything happens for a reason. It may not seem like that in the specific moment in time but hindsight is 20-20. I would also like to say if you truly believe that a specific profession is what you are meant to do put in the work and in due time you will get the results you are searching and working for.