



SARAH GILLESPIE

CLASS OF 2025

STUDENT PROFILE

Hometown: Federalsburg, MD

Undergraduate Major: Biochemistry & Chemistry

Minor: Business Administration

Career Aspirations: Orthodontist

Professional School: University of Maryland School of Dentistry

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

Meeting and connecting with other pre-dental students. Finding others with the same goal was essential for me to navigate the application process because we were able to help and support each other along the way.

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

The DAT is extremely challenging and can be discouraging at times, but finding a studying method that worked for me paid off!

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

I reached out to many admitted dental students and current dentists for advice. I made a checklist to make sure that I was not forgetting anything and practiced interview questions with as many people as I could.

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

Try to find people with similar goals as you! Surrounding yourself with determined people is key. Applying to professional school is challenging so do not be afraid to ask for help and lean on your support system. I wish I had known earlier how much of a waiting game it is, once you submit your application it can be months before you hear back from any schools. Be patient!

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

Tutoring at the Pirate Academic Success Center! I went to tutoring for help with my prerequisites and worked as a tutor for my junior and senior year. I learned so much and met many other pre-dental students.

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?

Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity
Pre Dental Honor Society
Smile Squad Honor Society

What type of shadowing did you do?

I shadowed general dentistry, pediatric dentistry, orthodontics, and oral surgery. Seeing such a broad range helped me see the pros and cons of specialties and how offices operate differently.

What type of volunteering did you do?

I did a broad range of volunteering from NC MOM clinics, JOY Soup Kitchen, volunteer tutoring, street clean ups, and more.

How did you gain clinical experience?

The summer after my freshman year at ECU I started as a sterilization technician at an orthodontist office ant home. I began working on completing the requirements to become an orthodontist assistant and have been working as an orthodontic assistant for almost three years. I love being hands on and getting to connect with patients!

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

I did research under Dr. Geraldeli at ECU School of Dental Medicine. I worked on a variety of projects including the Effect of H-10 on Flexural Strength of Methacrylate-based Dental Adhesives and Bioengineering a Dentin-like Structure for Clinical and Educational Applications with Calcium Phosphate and gelMA.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?

My most rewarding experience was being a tutor at the PASC and getting to help fellow students excel in their chemistry classes!

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?

Have confidence and give yourself grace! Applying to professional school is challenging but remember to give yourself breaks and ask for help when needed!