What's been your favorite part of the journey to apply to professional schools?
It has been rewarding to get to explore all of the different dental schools and see what they have to offer. During this process, I have acquired a greater understanding of my values and passions. Also, I learned how to advocate for myself. This really made my experience worthwhile.

What were some of the challenges you came across when preparing to apply to schools (or what was tougher than you thought)?
Applying to professional school is very challenging process. I struggled with making sure my personal statement was a true representation of me: my personality, passions, hobbies, and goals. It required me to get out of my comfort zone and rely more on my support system to help me accomplish this. This experience afforded me the opportunity to not just learn more about my strengths and weakness, but also allowed me to gain a deeper understanding of how to foster those relations to help strengthen my weaknesses.

How did you prepare yourself for the process of applying to schools?
Applying to dental school starts well before the application cycle starts. During advising, I made sure to track progress with both my academic advisor and the ECU Pre-Health Professions Committee to make sure I was on track to successfully apply to dental school.

Looking back, what advice would you give students who are interested in professional schools? Is there anything you wish you had known earlier?
My advice is to document EVERYTHING you do! The professional school applications are very extensive. If you already have a document that lists every award, involvement in organizations, research, and honors that you have either participated in or received throughout your undergraduate career, you will have no problem adding these details into your application.
What services or organizations would you recommend pre-professional students utilize?
I encourage pre-professional students to join their perspective pre-professional organizations. In these organizations, you will meet students who I applying to professional schools just like you. These students will be there to support you during the tough times and cheer you on during the good ones. Also, I recommend students to attend different conferences and summer programs. During this time, you will have the ability to meet stellar professionals who are prospering in the field you desire to be in!

What organizations were you involved in as an undergraduate student?
As an undergraduate student, I was involved in many organizations, such as ECU Ambassadors, Eta Sigma Gamma Honorary Society, Diversity in Dental Medicine, and Pre-Dental Honor Society. I also served as the president of the Theta Alpha Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

What type of shadowing did you do?
I shadowed a general dentist, pediatric dentist, and an orthodontist. Also, I participated in two MOM Clinics, a two-day voluntary dental clinic sponsored by the North Carolina Dental Society Foundation with dental professionals and volunteers in service of nearly 3,000 NC residents.

What type of volunteering did you do?
In Eta Sigma Gamma Honorary Society, I supported public health education advocacy programs such as gardening at the Southern Living Assisted Care and hosted fundraiser for the Association of Mexican in NC. In ECU Ambassadors, I hosted the Boys and Girls Club-Pitt County (Greenville, North Carolina) Annual Field Day for students ages 5-12 and served on the indoor committee for the Annual Special Populations Prom for individuals with disabilities. With Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., I participated in a food drive for a fourth grade class. During this time, my chapter bought enough food to provide each student with a book bag of food to ensure these students will have food during winter break.

Did you do research? If so, what was the topic?
I conducted research on the disparities associated with mass incarceration in the United States. Using the research gathered, I developed a logic model to suggest ways to bring balance into sentencing in order to end mass incarceration.

What was your most rewarding experience at ECU?
One of the most rewarding experiences for me at ECU was being an ECU Orientation Assistant. During this time, I served as the front lines to incoming ECU Pirates and their families. This time was definitely one to remember because I helped many Pirates feel confident in their decision to attend the greatest university in the world, East Carolina University.

Any other advice, recommendations, suggestions, or comments?
My advice is to believe in yourself, and never to give up. One or two bad grades are not going to shatter your opportunity to be the greatest professional you desire to be. In those times of uncertainty, hold onto your “why.” It will make all of the difference.