NSU’s Pre-Health Day
Saturday, February 13, 2016
Carl DeSantis Building

Brought to you by the Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography in collaboration with Career Development

NSU
NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
Pre-Health Day Program Schedule

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. ................................................................. Graduate School Programs Tabling and Information 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
8:00 – 9:00 a.m. ................................................................. Graduate School Programs Tabling and Information 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
9:05 – 9:25 a.m. ................................................................. Keynote Speaker 
............................................................................................. Richard E. Dodge, Dean of College of Halmos College of Natural Sciences and Oceanography 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
9:30 – 11:40 a.m. ................................................................. Breakout Sessions 

Bracket Number and Color    9:30-9:50 a.m.  9:55-10:15 a.m.  10:20-10:40 a.m.  10:50-11:10 a.m.  11:20-11:40 a.m.

1 — Yellow

Doctor
Marta Van Straten, D.O.
Huizenga Sales Institute

Dentist
Katherine Lorenzo, D.M.D.
Huizenga Sales Institute

Pharmacist
Alexis Jurick, PharmD, CPh
Huizenga Sales Institute

OT
Kaitlin Dudziec, MOT
Huizenga Sales Institute

Research Coordinator and Medical Intern
David Cevallos
Huizenga Sales Institute

2 — Blue

Doctor
Zaki Dorajat, D.O.
Room 2060

Assistant Dean of Research and Innovation, Program Director MS in Nutrition, Professor of Nutrition, College of Osteopathic Medicine
Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., M.Sc., RDN
Room 2060

Dentist
Claudia Harrisehasen, D.M.D.
Room 2060

Pharmacist
Nick Carris, Pharm D, BCPS
Room 2060

Scribe
Monica Perez,
Room 2060

3 — Green

Pharmacist
Daven Sawh, PharmD
Room 2056

Optometrist
Mari Holderby, O.D.
Room 2056

Cessation Coach/Public Health University of Miami Medical School
Carlos Almirola, M.P.H., C.T.T.S.
Room 2056

Doctor
Luke Williams, M.D.
Room 2056

Public Health
Crystal Romero,
M.P.H.
Room 2056

4 — Orange

Pharmacist
Daven Sawh, Pharm. D.
Room 2056

Audiologist
Ashley Lawrence, Au.D
Room 2057

Doctor: Regenerative Sports Medicine Specialist
Alberto Panero, D.O.
Room 2057

Anesthesiologist
Daveda Majara, D.O.
Room 2057

Dentist
Yani Cox, D.M.D.
Room 2057

5 — Red

Doctor
Marta Van Straten, D.O.
Huizenga Sales Institute

Post Doctoral Fellow and Molecular Researcher
Ivan Jozic, Ph.D.
Room 2067

Optometrist
Michael Baacigalupi, O.D., MS, FAAO
Room 2067

Nutritionist
Viktoriya Yudovina, MPH
Room 2067

Pharmacist and Medical Reviewer
Jennifer Gershman, Pharm. D.
Room 2067

11:45 a.m.–12:20 p.m. ................................................................. Lunch & Roundtable Discussions 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
12:20 – 1:20 p.m. ................................................................. Healthcare Related Panel 
............................................................................................. Panalist: Genetic Researcher, Genetic Counselor, Peace Corps, and Bio Medical Informatics Professionals 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
1:30 – 2:15 p.m. ................................................................. HPD Student Panel 
............................................................................................. Panelist: Current Dental, Medical, Pharmacy, PT and Optometry Students 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute
2:20 – 3:00 p.m. ................................................................. HPD Admissions Presentation 
............................................................................................. Presented by Marisela Jimenez, HPD Admissions Counselor 
............................................................................................. Huizenga Sales Institute

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Taking the Nontraditional Route to Medical School from Nurse to Physician. Are you sure you want to embark on this journey?

Presenter: Zaki Darojat
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, 2003 Florida International University
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, 2010 West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine
Internal Medicine Residency, 2013 Pacific Hospital of Long Beach
Associate Chief Hospitalist, Sound Physicians Glendale Adventist Medical Center
zdarojat@gmail.com

Changing careers takes a lot of guts regardless of what career you had initially and the decision to embark on the journey of becoming a physician is a long one. I will discuss some factors that one should consider before making this leap. Medical school was not easy but it is definitely a rewarding career and I wouldn’t be happy doing anything else. However, I have colleagues who do not share the same sentiment. I hope to shed some light into the pros and cons of medicine and help you make an informed decision.
but those amazing moments that reminded me why I pursued their masters. Dental school came with many difficult challenges, some courses much tougher compared to those who obtained their masters in Biology with a minor in Chemistry in 3 years. I went tough, but I was able to achieve that and get my undergraduate degree in 3 years. Working at different dental offices, and studying for my DAT while maintaining my social life with family and friends was always exposed to the profession. When I started undergraduate school, I’m in the middle of my first fellowship in cytology, and anticipating the start of my second fellowship in breast pathology across the country at Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. I’m due with my second child any day, and supporting a husband whose career is just as demanding. I’m still learning, but know that the period of time spent in college is developmentally as important as early childhood. That time is truly a crossroads and the few years spent pursuing an undergraduate degree should be a time of exploration, not procrastination. Join me as I elaborate on truths like “30 is not the new 20”, “you can have it all, just not all at once”, and “nothing in the world takes the place of persistence”. I look forward to meeting you!

9:55– 10:15 a.m.

The Journey to Becoming a Dentist: Advice to My Undergraduate Self

Presenter: Katherine Lorenzo-Machado, DMD
Florida International University Honors College Graduate 2011
Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine Graduate 2015
Practicing General Dentist in Palm Beach County, FL
klorenzomachado@gmail.com

Growing up with a few family members who were dentists, I was always exposed to the profession. When I started undergraduate school at FIU, I knew that was what I wanted to be, and focused most of my time on getting there. Juggling undergraduate school, working at different dental offices, and studying for my DAT while maintaining my social life with family and friends was tough, but I was able to achieve that and get my undergraduate degree in Biology with a minor in Chemistry in 3 years. I went straight from undergraduate school to dental school, which made some courses much tougher compared to those who obtained their masters. Dental school came with many difficult challenges, but those amazing moments that reminded me why I pursued this career in the first place always prevailed. My experience on my mission trips to Jamaica are ones that I will always cherish. Having graduated from dental school about 8 months ago, I will speak about my transition from student dentist to practicing general dentist and what that entails in the real world. Dentistry is a field that is constantly advancing and challenging you, and requires not only mental but also technical expertise, but you can make a difference everyday by giving patients a healthy, stable mouth and restoring confidence in their smile.

My Career Journey

Presenter: Cecilia Rokusek, Ed.D., M.Sc., RDN
Assistant Dean of Research and Innovation Professor, Public Health, Family Medicine and Disaster & Emergency Preparedness
rokusek@nova.edu

Dr. Rokusek currently serves as Assistant Dean for Research and Innovation, Nova Southeastern University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Prior to joining Nova, Dr. Rokusek served as Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs at the University of South Dakota, School of Medicine. She served as Professor and Dean of Education at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota and Dean of Health Professions at Governors State University in Illinois and at Florida Gulf University in Ft. Myers, Fl serving as the first dean to bring all of the 5 health professions programs in the newly established university to full professional accreditation by the respective accrediting organizations.

Dr. Rokusek has secured over 80 million dollars in external funding during her career. She has authored over 65 publications, book chapters, and manuscripts in the area of nutrition, interprofessional education and practice, and disaster and emergency preparedness for vulnerable populations. Dr. Rokusek served as the national president of the American Association of Allied Health School Deans and President of the Nutrition Division for American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. In 1995 Dr. Rokusek was recognized by the Chicago Sun Times as one of the “Ten Most Influential Women in Illinois.” Dr. Rokusek is the founder and architect of the newly established M.S. in Nutrition degree at NSU. She is fluent in both the Czech and Slovak languages and currently serves as Honorary Consul for the Slovak Republic in Florida and is a member of the Miami Consular Corps.

The Path to Optometry

Mari Holderby, OD
Farquhar College Graduate of 2010
Doctor of Optometry, 2014, Nova Southeastern University
Certified Optometrist, Community Health Center
mariholderby@gmail.com

The path to optometry, although at times challenging, is extremely rewarding. I personally had my eyes set on becoming an optometrist since I was 16 years old, when I attended a Dual Enrollment program called College Academy at Broward College. I had graduated high school with an Associate of Arts degree, and therefore by the time I attended Farquhar, I knew what my long-term goals were.

I was lucky enough to be accepted into the Dual Admission program for optometry, in which I had a guaranteed seat in NSU’s optometry school once I completed my three years at Farquhar. It is a disciplined program that helps guide you to fulfilling all of the requirements needed to enter into any optometry school. I had two years of college under my belt, and had learned that schools like students to be well-rounded,
either with other majors/minors, or extracurricular activities. Due to this, I received my Bachelors in Biology as well as minors in Psychology and Literature.

By 2010 I was accepted into NSU’s Optometry school. The first semester was very tough, although the material first year is pretty much repeating the general science classes I had taken during undergraduate year. However, Farquhar is a sprint and Optometry school is a marathon. This is when I realized that I needed to change the ways that I studied in order to do better, and by the time second semester rolled around I had changed a lot of things about myself. My main tips on transitioning from undergraduate programs to graduate programs are:

1) Change your studying skills if you need to
2) Make lots of friends
3) Balance your life
4) Say yes to as many opportunities as you can

Once I graduated in 2014 I felt like I could accomplish anything. I love what I do, and I have no regrets about choosing the path that I did. I am working at the Community Health Center now, treating an underserved population of patients who come in from all different walks of life. I feel like I am making a difference, and that is what I’ve always wanted to accomplish.

**BREAKOUT SESSION 2**

**From Undergrad to Audiologist, The Road Less Traveled**

Presenter: Ashley Lawrence
Farquhar College Graduate of 2006
Doctor of Audiology, 2010, Nova Southeastern University
Clinical Audiologist, West Palm Beach VA Medical Center

richie.ashley@gmail.com

College is a challenging yet rewarding time in life and if you stay motivated and keep your eyes on your long-term goals, you will be successful regardless of your career choice. I learned about who I was as a person throughout my college years, and I can offer some guidance on both the good choices and mistakes I made on my path to becoming a medical professional.

I began undergrad at NSU in 2002, long before the days of the University Center and when the NSU mascot was still a Knight. I majored in Biology and graduated in 2006 with my Bachelor’s in Science. I was very involved during my undergrad days, including sorority life, student government, and being a student employee for Residential Life and Housing. I believe that extracurricular activities and the life skills you develop during your time in undergrad are just as essential as your textbook education.

In my 3rd year at NSU, I came to a point where I was undecided on my future profession. I researched many professions and was offered frequent advice from friends, family and professors. In the end, I decided on a profession that I could enjoy every single day and that would make my life rewarding.

I truly love my job as an Audiologist. I diagnose and treat hearing loss and other hearing-related disabilities. I work for the West Palm Beach VA Medical Center and I get to positively impact the lives of our veterans and their families on a daily basis. Audiology is a relatively small field, but is one of the largest growing medical professions out there. I will be happy to share some highlights of my profession during my presentation, as well as the road that led me there.
From Undergrad to Pediatric Dentist

Presenter: Claudia X. Harriehausen
Farquhar College Graduate of 2006
Doctor of Dental Surgery, 2010, Howard University, Washington DC
Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency 2011, Washington DC
Pediatric Dentistry Residency 2016, Houston, TX
charriehausen@gmail.com

I have always known that my desire to become a dentist came during my childhood. Therefore, during my undergraduate years at NSU I reinforced that desire by participating in many activities related to dentistry, such as volunteering for non-profit organizations as dental assistant, and providing oral hygiene education for underserved communities. By working with patients at that time, I learned many interpersonal aspects of dentistry that are not covered in textbooks, which enhanced my commitment and dedication to this type of work. I could not envision a more rewarding and compassionate career to spend my life by promoting the wellness of others.

More than I have ever dreamed of, dentistry has provided a platform for personal growth and professional achievement. I will be happy to share some of the highlights of my profession during my presentation and the path that has led me to this point.

Road Less Taveled: My Journey to Becoming a Certified Tobacco Cessation Specialist

Presenter: Carlos Almirola, MPH, CTTS
FIU Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences, 2008
FIU Master of Public Health, 2011
University of Miami Miller School of Medicine
Department of Family Medicine and Community Health Affairs

I didn’t arrive in Public Health through conventional means. My father is a physician and I grew up thinking medicine was in my future. Towards the end of my undergrad I started to learn about other careers and eventually came across Public Health. I saw the importance of helping avoid problematic health issues in our community through early intervention. My Public Health training when combined with my background in Biology opened new doors I never knew existed.

Grad School gave me the opportunity to have involvement with different community health initiatives in Baptist Congregational Health, UM Docs Program, and as well as Miami-Dade Area Health Education Center. Through these experiences a disturbing trend was becoming apparent. A lack of meaningful intervention.

People were in many cases completely unaware of services available to them in order to take better care of themselves.

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Car Accidents, Gun Violence, infections, illicit drug use, and STDs combined do not reach the number of deaths caused by tobacco use. I saw a problem and wanted to do something about it. I began training with the Florida Certification Board and became a Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist.

The amount of people I have been able to help quit smoking easily has changed hundreds if not thousands of lives. Families who don’t have to see a love one suffer or a patient who thought they could never give up addiction now see a new outlook on life. I am proud to be a part of Tobacco Free Florida. When deciding what your career should be you should feel two things. If you are happy doing it and if you feel you are making a positive difference in the world.

The Knight Who Saved the Shark

Presenter: Alberto J. Panero, D.O.
Farquhar College Graduate of (2004)
D.O., 2009; Nova Southeastern University
Regenerative Sports Medicine Specialist, University of California, Davis
apinanero@gmail.com

Reaching one’s goals is never an individual effort. I enrolled at NSU in the year 2000, joining the Men’s soccer team and pursuing a career in sports medicine. High school was easy, managing being a student athlete did not pose many challenges. I could study for an exam the night before and do quite well on it. After getting a 68% on my first biology test in college, I quickly realized this method would no longer work. Developing a new study strategy and keeping up with the demands of being a full time athlete and social life was not easy. I struggled with it so much that I made up my mind that I would change my major from Biology to Business. As I sat in Dr. Robert Pomeroy’s office (chemistry professor) explaining my decision, he gave me a firm look and said: “I am not going to let you quit.” I was shocked. For the next 4-6 months I went to his office 2-3 times per week to go over chemistry problems. He challenged me to think of a test as a soccer game. With time, not only chemistry but all my grades went up. Now that I have accomplished my goal of becoming a sports medicine physician, I realize Dr. Pomeroy’s real chemistry lesson was how to develop the work ethic face challenges head on and not let them impede your career dreams.

Optometrist and Educator

Presenter: Michael Bacigalupi, OD, MS, FAAO
bacigalu@nova.edu

Dr. Michael Bacigalupi grew up in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. His father was a letter carrier for the US Postal Service and his mother was an office manager for a local optometrist. He decided at a young age that he wanted to become an optometrist and has never regretted this decision. He is proud of his career and hopes to inspire others to consider the profession of optometry.

Dr. Bacigalupi earned an Associate of Arts degree in Chemistry from Schreiner University and a Bachelor of Science degree in Optometry from the University of Houston. In 1993, he graduated magna cum laude from the University of Houston College of Optometry with a Doctor of Optometry degree. He earned a Masters in Business Management with emphasis on Leadership at the H. Wayne Huizenga School of Business and Entrepreneurship at Nova Southeastern University.

Prior to joining the faculty of Nova Southeastern University, Dr. Bacigalupi was in private optometric practice for 12 years. He is licensed as an Optometric Glaucoma Specialist in Texas. His private practice focused primarily on ocular disease and glaucoma care. He served on the Board of Directors of the Texas Optometric Association (TOA) and was honored as the Texas Young Optometrist of the Year in 2003. Dr. Bacigalupi is a Fellow of the American Academy of Optometry and is a clinical examiner for the National Board of Examiners in Optometry. He has been honored by Lions Club International with the International Service Award for his many eye care mission trips into Central America.
Dr. Bacigalupi was appointed Assistant Dean for Student Affairs of the College of Optometry in 2008. He is a lecturer for the 4th practice management course entitled “Current Topics in Practice Management” and lab instructor for “Optometric Theory and Methods.” Dr. Bacigalupi is a frequent author and lecturer in the areas of practice management, student affairs, and admissions

10:50–11:10 a.m.

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

From a B.A. in Speech Language Pathology to Becoming an Occupational Therapist; Change is Good!

Presenter: Kaitkin Dudziec
University of Iowa Graduate 2010
Master of Occupational Therapy, 2013, Nova Southeastern University
Pediatric Occupational Therapist, Baudhui Preschool
kaitlinebrooks@gmail.com

Everyone thinks college is a time for you to pick a career and decide what you are going to do with the rest of your life. This is true in a way, but it is also a time for you to find yourself and decide who you want to be as a person in the future. Day 1 of my undergrad career consisted of my switching majors from elementary education to speech-language pathology.

Going through some of the pre-requisite psychology classes, I also decided I wanted to be a psychology major, so I added that in my second year of undergrad. In addition, I added on a certification in Deaf Studies. I didn’t know what I wanted to be, so I just was going to do everything. During my last year of undergrad, I applied to 7 different graduate schools in order to be a speech-language pathologist. When graduation day came in 2010, I was not accepted to any of the graduate schools, despite my good grades and great GRE score. This turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to me.

I never really felt 100% committed to speech pathology, so not being accepted to grad school was a blessing in disguise. I found Occupational Therapy while observing a speech pathologist and decided that is what I was meant to do. I loved all of my graduate classes and I truly enjoy going to work every day and helping those get back to their everyday activities (i.e. occupations). I am excited and happy to share my experiences and my journey to becoming an Occupational Therapist during this presentation.

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

Freshman at Farquhar to Pharmacy Professor: The Reality of the Journey and Tips for Success

Presenter: Nicholas Carris, PharmD, BCPS
Farquhar College Graduate of (2008)
PharmD, University of Florida, 2012
Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacotherapeutics and Clinical Research
Department of Family Medicine
 Colleges of Medicine and Pharmacy, University of South Florida
Tampa, Florida
carris@health.usf.edu

The path to becoming a healthcare provider is a commitment to lifelong learning, constant hard work, and a career that is not about you. Every class you take, everything you learn, every experience you engage in is preparing you to be a competent and compassionate healthcare provider, so that one day you can walk into the room of a desperate patient and help them. The pay is average at best, especially considering the years of training. People will be angry at you when you are doing your best to help them. People will be angry when you do not want to work for free, and you can expect to burn out if you are doing it for the money. However, if truly want this for whatever your one or many reasons are; it is worth it every day.

For those of you who want to pursue this I will be happy to call you a colleague one day. Tips for success:

- Know what experiences you cannot get back
  - You can work and make money later
  - You only get one chance to make a good grade in Gen Chem 1
- Be focused but flexible
  - If interested in pharmacy – pursue it!
  - Take all prerequisites to qualify for medical, dental, PA, etc. programs as well
- Exercise reduces stress
  - The less time you have for it, the more you need it
- Be social and stay in touch with your classmates
  - They’ll be doctors one day too

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

Journey to Internal Medicine

Presenter: Luke C. Williams, MD
Valdosta State University, 2002-2006
St. Matthews University School of Medicine, 2008-2011
Mercer University Internal Medicine, 2012-2015
Board Certified Internal Medicine, 2015
ekul_5@yahoo.com

My name is Dr. Williams, or as most people call me Dr. Luke. Currently, I work in South Georgia as an ED physician. The road to wear I’m currently sitting and to where I started has been long, trying but mostly fun!

I started my undergraduate at Valdosta State University; to say the least I was completely lost. My hometown has about 5000 people in the entire county so being at a bigger city seemed overwhelming. I had no friends really and my social life was subpar. I started out as a premed major but quickly realized that these college professors were in the businesses of “weeding” out students. My first bio class I made a C! Devastated but not out, I realized that if my dreams were to become reality it was going to take more dedication, time, and discipline. The first tool I can give you in regards to discipline is found in the book The Road Less Traveled. There is a chapter in the book that talks about “Delaying Gratification” or as in movie I watched a few years ago when the father told his son, “we do what we have to so we can do what we want to”. Just think about this for a while. Are you willing to say no to going out in order to study, miss family functions and events, and basically willing to accumulate more debt that most people make in their lifetime of working? I was.

After undergraduate, I applied to many “state” medical schools. My GPA was really good but MCAT was not so good. I did all of the Kaplan courses but just could not get my MCAT score up. I got wait listed but decided I did not want to take off an entire year. I applied to St. Matthews School of Medicine. This school is located in Grand Cayman! (small island located southwest of Cuba). My medical school changed my life. I had the opportunity to meet all types of people. We all came here with one goal and that was to become a medical doctor. While studying was strenuous and classes were grueling, I had the best time of my life.

After graduating medical school, I applied to internal medicine residency. Being from Georgia, I wanted to stay close to home.
I was accepted into Mercer IM, located in Macon, GA. I spent the next 3 years of my life in the hospital. Hours were strenuous in the hospital but as I grew in my residency, I realized there is no short cut to medicine. There is always something to learn; whether this pertains directly to the patient and their diagnosis and treatment plans to breaking difficult news to family members. Each step along the way was a building block to where I am now.

My goal for us, is for you to ask as many questions as possible and we can learn from each other. I look forward to speaking to you soon.

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**BREAKOUT SESSION 4**

**Advice to My Undegraduate Self About Pursuing a Carrer in Medicine**

Presenter: Daveda Maharaj, D.O.

Farquhar College Graduate of 2005

Doctorate of Osteopathic Medicine, 2010 NSU College of Osteopathic Medicine

General Anesthesiologist, Per Diem (as needed) in Broward with anesthesia groups Anesco and Sheridan
davedamaharaj@gmail.com

The journey I’ve traveled, literally and figuratively, to become an anesthesiologist has been both challenging and rewarding. When I was a student at Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, I hit the ground running with ambition and goals to achieve. A minor detour teaching high school in between undergrad and med school was a huge learning experience, and I still fulfilled my career goals of becoming a physician. I’m not sure I ever imagined that this is what the “real world” would be like for a practicing anesthesiologist, but I’ve come to learn some of the best and worst ways to manage my personal life and career. Medicine is a career filled with fantastic rewards and the ability to impact the lives of many people in a big way, but it is important not to lose sight of life’s little gifts in the process. These are some bits of advice, lessons I’ve learned, and things I wish my undergraduate self knew before beginning the journey to a career in medicine.

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**BREAKOUT SESSION 4**

**How a Biology Major Lead Me into Public Health and Working For a Non-Profit Organization**

Presenter: Viktoriya Yudovina

Farquhar College Graduate of (2008)

Master in Public Health (M.P.H.), 2013; Nova Southeastern University

Food and Nutrition Program Manager; Florida Introduces Physical Activity and Nutrition to Youth (FLIPANY), FL
vyudovina@flipany.org

In the beginning, I wanted to be a physician, a scholar of everything medicine. And while my greatest passion is still medical science and research, my path has taken me in a slightly different direction. Currently, I manage the Afterschool Meal Program and Summer Food Service Program for FLIPANY, a non-profit organization, whose “mission is to empower youth and their families through physical activity and nutrition education programs while raising awareness and creating policies for a healthier community”. Working in an arena of health and wellness, I am able to touch base on both my undergraduate days of biology in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences, and incorporate community outreach in underserved areas. I attended The College of Osteopathic Medicine to obtain a Master in Public Health degree, often sitting side by side with medical students taking a dual graduation track.

In this presentation, I will discuss some important steps of my journey. There will be unexpected turns, lessons learned, and a new sense of flexibility, discovery and positive outlook on what comes next.

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**BREAKOUT SESSION 5**

**The Path I Took from the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences to the Field of Medicine**

Presenter: David Cevallos

Farquhar College Graduate of (2008)

Doctor of Medicine, 2012; American University of the Caribbean Medical Intern, Manati Medical Center
dacr1086@gmail.com

The path to Medicine is a long journey with many twist and turns. It is a route that would test you physically, mentally, and socially, but knowing how to balance your life will help you reach your goals.

I was a former student of Nova Southeastern University already knowing what I needed to do to reach my goals. I was studying in the field of Biology to prepare myself to apply to Medical School. In addition, I attended various organizations like the Pre-Medical Society, while also volunteering an Emergency Department. I then took the MCAT and applied to various hospitals, both MD and DO, in the United States and outside the United States. I was then accepted to American University of the Caribbean where my journey continued.

In that time in American University of the Caribbean, I spent my first 2 years at St. Maarten of the Netherland Antilles. I continued being active in various organizations. I then took the United States Medical Licensing Exam (USMLE), which enabled me to continue to my 3rd Year rotations at England and to my 4th year rotations in the United States. During my 4th year rotation I completed my USMLE 2 CK & CS and graduated. I then did several externship rotations and passed the USMLE 3.

I continued my path as a research coordinator at the Miami VA Healthcare System for one year. I was then accepted and I’m currently working as a medical intern at Manati Medical Center. I will be applying to residency programs to be able to complete the last step to specialize and earn my state licensure to practice medicine.
Pursuing a biology degree can lead to a wide variety of jobs in the medical field. You can become a PA, a doctor, a nurse practitioner, a veterinarian, a professor, etc. My goal has always been to help and treat people, but I was unsure of which route I wanted to take. Becoming a Medical Scribe exposed me to the different occupations in the medical field and it has helped me make my decision. I am now sure that I want to be a PA and know this is the best decision for me as I feel genuinely excited about it.

Apart from being a Medical Scribe in the hospital, I am also a Scribe Ambassador. This means that I visit universities in South Florida and speak to different students about the great opportunities that we have to offer. This position has also helped me become a more confident student, especially with my public speaking skills, and networking to gain more key contacts. This is another example on how being a Medical Scribe can open new opportunities and help you develop as a young adult. It is a great experience that I would recommend to any undergraduate student pursuing a career in medicine.

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**BREAKOUT SESSION 5**

**My Path From Farquhar College of Arts and Science to the Field of Medicine**

Presenter: Crystal Romero, MPH, MD  
Farquhar College Graduate of (2005)  
MPH—Epidemiology Concentration [Biostatistics Sub-concentration], 2011, Florida International University  
MS1, George Washington University  
crome007@fiu.edu  

As an undergraduate student in the Farquhar College of Arts and Sciences I was confident that I wanted to be a physician; however, I was also intrigued by the field of Public Health. Consequently, I pursued a Master’s degree concentrating in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Personally, I saw the attainment of this degree as a means of developing a skill set for future practice as a physician. Public health concentrates on community health needs, while medicine focuses more on the needs of an individual patient. During this time I worked on a project at the Broward County Health Department that allowed me to investigate the Descriptive Epidemiology of dengue fever. In 2012 I started medical school, where I became actively involved in health policy and took a leave of absence. During that time, among other things, I worked as an external candidate for the CDC/W policy office on Capitol Hill. Being a part of the dynamic interplay between politics and medicine was enthralling; finding a profession that ignites such passion should be the ultimate goal. One of the life lessons I have learned along the way is a willingness to adapt to change and the unexpected nature of life. The true goal in any profession is a balance that allows me to help and treat people, but I was unsure of which route I wanted to take. Becoming a Medical Scribe exposed me to the different occupations in the medical field and it has helped me make my decision. I am now sure that I want to be a PA and know this is the best decision for me as I feel genuinely excited about it.

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**BREAKOUT SESSION 5**

**My Journey Through the Pharmacy Profession**

Presenter: Jennifer Gershman, PharmD, CPh  
Dual Admissions Pharmacy Program  
Farquhar College Graduate 2004  
Doctor of Pharmacy, 2006, Nova Southeastern University  
Medical Reviewer, RxWiki  
jennifergershman14@gmail.com  

You can definitely say the pharmacy profession runs in my family, as both my father and sister are pharmacists. My father inspired me to pursue a career in pharmacy, through his dedication to the profession. Pharmacists play such an important role in patient care, and I wanted to make a positive impact on the community. I completed the Dual Admissions Pharmacy program and then went on to receive my Doctor of Pharmacy degree at NSU. Postdoctoral training was the path for me, so I completed a Drug Information Residency. This residency inspired me through my role as a teacher, mentor, and researcher.

I served as a professor at NSU College of Pharmacy for 6 years, and I truly enjoyed my experience. Through teaching, research, service, and scholarship I played an integral role in the education of student pharmacists. I managed the Drug Information Center where we answered medication questions from patients and healthcare professionals. I also had the opportunity to publish research in various scholarly journals.

Currently, I am a medical reviewer with RxWiki, which is an excellent online drug information resource for patients. It is a truly rewarding experience to work with pharmacists who review and write cutting edge drug information for patients. I’ve always believed that pharmacy is a lifelong learning profession, as new medications and research are always on the horizon. I am excited to share my journey through the pharmacy profession with you, so welcome aboard!
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