

College Scholarship Essay

With my index finger, I traced the tiny embryo through the fallopian tube in the textbook and tried to comprehend how we were all once that small, how I had the same miraculous architecture inside my own body. It was not clear to me then, but that awe as a 12-year-old transformed into a full-fledged career path as an Obstetrician/Gynecologist. That same fascination with reproduction developed quickly into an interest in genetics and led me to take an undergraduate level course in Human Genetics during high school. I was enamored by how a simple construct of four letters could develop such complexity as that found in the human body. I have since found myself repeatedly drawn to the study of human genetics, embryology, and perinatal medicine.

Early in my medical education, I was torn between a career in Internal Medicine and one in Obstetrics and Gynecology. I enjoyed the diagnostic aspect and continuity of care that Internal Medicine offered, however ultimately found myself more drawn to hands-on procedures and the care of women. Soon after earning my undergraduate degree, I spent three months in Peru as an intern for Medicine, Education and Development for Low-Income Families Everywhere (MEDLIFE), a non-profit organization that provides free primary care services to indigenous women and children in the underserved Pamplona Alta region of Lima, Peru. I spent part of my time there shadowing physicians completing Pap smear examinations, delivering test results to women in the community, and accompanying them to the local hospital for follow-up treatment. Working with women in this intimate, informal environment led me to a career in Obstetrics and Gynecology as it allowed me to continue to advocate for women and support their needs over their lifetimes. More recently, the realization of the high level of specialized knowledge needed to practice Genetics in tandem with the fact that it is a fast-growing field has been intriguing.

Throughout my residency training, I have been drawn to the care of high-risk, underserved patients throughout the antepartum, intrapartum, and postpartum periods. I have had the unique opportunity to care for women carrying fetuses with multiple anomalies. Due to my residency program's affiliation with XXX Hospital, a comprehensive pediatric healthcare system that provides services to a vast catchment area in both Missouri and Kansas, I have witnessed a wide spectrum of congenital syndromes from DiGeorge syndrome to thoracopagus conjoined twins. While I have had exceptional training in managing these patients throughout their pregnancy and delivery, I noticed early in my education a void in answering these patient's questions regarding the molecular and genetic basis of their child's syndromes. The questions as it relates to preconception counseling, prenatal screening, advanced maternal age, and fetal ultrasound abnormalities became the topics I desired to explore in depth. To accomplish this, fellowship training in Genetics is instrumental.

My unique set of experiences has allowed me to develop many qualities that are essential for success as a Geneticist. Through the many leadership positions I have held, I have gained the ability to juggle multiple tasks, solve challenging problems, and collaborate effectively with others. My research experience for the Hospitalist Project at the University of XXX, XXX University's Asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) program, and as a fellow of the NIDDK Diabetes Research Program also speaks to my inquisitive, analytical, and detail-oriented nature. Furthermore, my quick promotions at the Hospitalist Project and at XXX University reflect the pride I have in my work, as well as my ability to learn fast. These traits exemplify my commitment to excellence and my continual quest for personal improvement.

Training in Genetics would allow me to satisfy my intellectual curiosity and provide me with the tools needed to provide comprehensive care for high-risk obstetric patients. It would allow me to care for the most fragile patients, while scientifically grasping the factors that lead to congenital syndromes. I am looking for a fellowship program that will challenge me to meet my full potential as a clinician in Genetics. As evidenced by my past experiences, I relish the chance to work with underserved populations and would enjoy a program with a diverse patient population and well-established outreach efforts with the community. I am excited to one day meaningfully impact the lives of a wide variety of patients with training in Genetics.

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