

## 2019-2020 UNC SOM Asheville Campus Student Bios

### Andres Lopez



Hey everyone- my name is Andres and I'm one of the students who has been fortunate enough for an Asheville/Hendersonville mixture for my 3rd year. After graduating from UNC I taught in Memphis for five years and saw my middle schoolers become college matriculants. I also became heavily involved in Memphis Inner City Rugby - a non-profit that brings rugby to predominantly low-income and minority schools. Despite all of this, my greatest accomplishment in Memphis was meeting my wife (us after hot yoga in the pic!) who also shared an interest in serving people who looked like us or grew up like us. This interest is ultimately what brought me back to Hendersonville/Asheville for 3rd year.

I grew up in Hendersonville and what brought me back is a burgeoning, heterogenous Latino community. A big draw of coming here was getting to serve that community, relate to my patients, use my Spanish, and examine how we currently serve this community. Despite growing up Latino in this area, I also relate to my patients about other "southern" things: Bret *The Hitman* Heart was my favorite WWE wrestler, I grew up at Smiley's Flea Market, and traveling to Asheville for the day was *going to the city*.

Despite the wonderful breweries, beautiful hiking trails, and progressive feel there are a lot of obstacles WNC patients, Latino or not, face: poverty, education inequity, and complicated social/home dynamics are just a few. These are the same obstacles as the underserved in a metropolitan city - they just look, sound, and feel a bit different. So if you want to serve those in need and learn in a small, intimate environment with patient and high quality preceptors - WNC is where you will get most bang for your buck.

### Anneliese Duncan



I'm Anneliese. I was born in Denver but grew up in Greensboro, NC. I am so excited to be here at the Asheville program; in fact, I tried to apply to this program before I'd even been accepted to UNC! Mountains have always held a magical power over me, providing some sort of calm and perspective, and I always seem to find myself back among them. I went to Dartmouth for undergraduate and came back home for a post-bacc program at UNCG before starting medical school. In my spare time I like hiking, running,

gardening, and karaoke. I've recently inherited said garden and am struggling to keep things alive, but loving working with my hands. I also just decided to try and teach myself piano! It's

going...slowly. In medicine I hope to work with Hispanic populations in the US and/or spend time abroad. I am also interested in learning how to better serve justice-involved individuals and generally how to provide more socially conscious care. I'm not sure what I'll go into yet, but I am truly enjoying the journey to finding out! Asheville has created the perfect environment for exploration of all of my interests (especially the mountains) and I feel very lucky and happy to be here.

### Bailey Allen



Hey y'all, my name is Bailey and I am thrilled to be spending my third year in Asheville. I was born and raised in rural eastern NC but spent many summers in the mountains of western NC as a kid and loved it here. Prior to medical school I went to UNC Charlotte and studied Biology and Public Health; I focused on better understanding the barriers that exist for groups to access healthcare based on geographic location and the resources in those areas, with special focus on the rural areas across North Carolina. This interest

led me to spend time working in non-profit urban centers with the Golden LEAF foundation in rural areas across the state, as well as abroad in South Africa for several months as an undergraduate. As a FIRST scholar at UNC SOM, I am continuing to build upon this passion of mine by committing to practice Family Medicine in a rural or underserved area of North Carolina after finishing medical school in three years followed by residency here at MAHEC in Asheville. You won't regret coming to Asheville for Application Phase: the small class size, hands on learning, white space to personalize your schedule, and more make it hard to beat. Not to mention the town itself. With an abundance of hiking trails, kayaking on the French Broad, the river arts district, 30+ breweries, good food, and great people just to mention a few perks – what's not to love? No matter what area of medicine you are considering, Asheville offers an awesome learning environment with a great work/life balance.

### Ben Ashby



Hi! I'm Ben. I'm the guy frowning in that picture. I was frowning because I was at a wedding, instead of in clinic with one of my preceptors. Clinic is great. The Asheville campus is great. My preceptors are brilliant and kind and fun to work with. I've been really impressed by how well they serve their communities, without losing time with family or the joy of practicing medicine. I've got what feels like loads of responsibility in my outpatient clinics and have really enjoyed the

long-term relationships that you get to be a part of. I think this has been most apparent in my psychiatry clinic, since people are scheduled to come back every couple of weeks, and the visits are a lot longer so you get to know your patients really well. I've got absolutely no idea what I'll end up doing with medicine. One of the great things about the Asheville campus is that I've got a ton of flexibility in the outpatient months to look into different careers in medicine. There aren't as many fellows and residents and students at Mission, so your access to shadowing experiences is pretty incredible. I've gotten to follow developmental pediatricians, orthopedic trauma surgeons, and electrophysiologists. I don't know what it's like at other campuses, but it might be difficult to get a week's worth of 1-on-1 time with an electrophysiologist in a more traditional academic hospital center. But, one of the downsides of the Asheville campus is that I won't get a period of inpatient cardiology. The inpatient rotations that we do have are shorter here (1-2 weeks instead of 4-6), and it's harder to have an idea of whether you might like to devote your career to a specific area of medicine in such a short period. I guess I would say if you don't know what you want to do, Asheville is a great option. If you think you might want to do inpatient medicine, maybe going to a campus with more inpatient exposure makes more sense. Another thing that's either great or tough (depending on your studying habits), is the testing schedule in Asheville: Your exams will be condensed into the last couple of months of 3rd year. You've probably got more time to study here than you would at another campus, but you have to be sure to use that time proactively, since the external motivation of "oh man I've got a test in four weeks" isn't there. Anyway, something to think about with your studying style!

A bit about me: I'm from Nebraska, I studied biomedical engineering in college, I did some cancer/computer science research in my first 2 years at UNC, and my favorite block in foundation phase was cardiology (Hi Dr. Rose-Jones!). My favorite spot in North Carolina is Peacehaven Farm. It's an intentional community for adults with disabilities that's housed on beautiful farmland about 30 minutes from UNC. I've learned a lot about myself through my time there and would definitely encourage y'all to check it out!

## Ben Atkinson



Hey there! I'm Ben Atkinson, another UNC SOM student up here in the mountains of Western NC for my 3<sup>rd</sup> year. I was born in Pennsylvania, but I've now officially been a southerner for the majority of my life. I went to UNC for undergrad, studied business and economics there, spent an amazing semester in the Czech Republic, and ultimately landed in the business world as a management consultant in Atlanta. After a few years in consulting I realized I needed a career that was less

superficial, more intellectually challenging, where I could be genuine and help people. I realized medicine fits that bill perfectly, so I quit my job and moved back to NC. I enrolled at NCSU to take my med school pre-requisites while completing a Master's in Physiology. Shortly after I got into UNC Med and came back to UNC to make a second round as a Tar Heel.

There are many reasons why Asheville was my top choice for doing my 3<sup>rd</sup> year, and maybe chief among them is being surrounded by the beautiful green spaces of this side of the state. I have spent nearly all of my free time so far exploring, hiking, camping, and fly fishing in amazing places like Shining Rock Wilderness, Linville Gorge Wilderness, all over Pisgah National Forest, and many places in between. Another reason I chose Asheville is because it is so easy to lose track of balance and wellness in medical school and the Asheville campus leadership makes it a point to focus on preserving both.

Overall, I have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of my preceptors and education in Asheville and I have enjoyed every moment here!

### Bria Godley



I am one of the Application Phase students at UNC Chapel Hill's Asheville Campus. I was raised in Chapel Hill by two UNC physicians and received my undergraduate degree from Yale University, where I majored in Psychology and sang in several a cappella groups. Upon my graduation I was awarded the Cohen Public Service Fellowship and spent the subsequent year traveling the United States and interviewing millennials about their views on race. The fellowship led to a book which I am (supposed to be) editing.

Since starting medical school, I have partnered with my friend and fellow medical student, Diana Dayal, to update UNC's preclinical curriculum. We've collaborated with the Ackland Museum of Art, the Office of Inclusive Excellence and UNC's Social Medicine Department to design a curriculum that is humanistic and explicitly antiracist. The collaboration has produced a recurring art-based discussion called 'Can We Talk About Race?' as well as the Paul A. Godley Art of Medicine Fellowship, named after my father, the program's creator.

I have always been interested in psychiatry, particularly adolescent psychiatry and substance use disorders. For me, the choice to come to Asheville was an easy one. I feel extremely fortunate to participate in a longitudinal curriculum that affords me time to continue writing and the space to explore various subspecialties within psychiatry.

## Bronwyn Fadem



I grew up in Western NC in a small town called Rutherfordton. Joining the Asheville cohort for my 3rd year rotations allowed me to reconnect with the land of my heart and soul, the Blue Ridge Mountains, and find a strengthened identity as a Western North Carolinian.

Returning to the area where I grew up has reinvigorated my sense of belonging to this community in a way I didn't expect. I highly value the place and purpose of every individual

here and feel that I learn my greatest lessons from daily interaction with others. I have specific interest in collaborating with people from traditionally disenfranchised parts of the community who are dealing with the added hardships of homelessness, poverty, immigration, discrimination, and trauma.

Since before medical school, my interests have revolved around sustainable agriculture and food systems, building community, exposing myself to different cultures and physical activity outdoors. Living in Asheville this year has allowed me to come full circle with those interests and has re-connected me with a community that also values these things. In medical school, I've been energized by working in free clinics, especially for immigrants and Spanish-speaking individuals, educating middle school-aged kids, improving my Spanish, and supporting my fellow classmates in their own endeavors. I am grateful to be in a physical location that allows me to thrive personally and an academic program that values the same high-quality, community-based medicine I hope to practice one day.

## Brooks Keener



My name is Brooks and I am a third year medical student at the UNC School of Medicine Asheville Campus. I grew up in Fayetteville, NC before heading off to Winston-Salem to attend Wake Forest University for undergrad where I studied chemistry. I started out thinking I wanted to be a chemist but quickly discovered that the lab bench was not the place for me. There were a number of people and experiences that led me to pursue a career in medicine in college. In particular, a semester I spent studying public health in three different countries solidified my desire to practice medicine. After graduation in 2017, I made my way a couple of hours east to Chapel Hill to begin medical school, and now I am here in Asheville!

The opportunity to be a part of the Asheville campus has been incredible so far. The students and faculty here are a special group that have made this place feel like home. I have really enjoyed

the longitudinal element of our curriculum, which has allowed me to experience the true spectrum of patient care and develop relationships with providers and patients in a meaningful way. And living in Asheville has been great! It is an awesome city that always has something interesting going on. I have loved the chance to get outside and hike, camp, and fish in the beautiful mountains surrounding Asheville. I don't think there could be a better place to be as I engage in discovering the type of medicine I want to practice and who I want to be as a physician. I am thankful to be here and looking forward to the rest of my time in Asheville!

### Daniel Johnson



Hey y'all! My name is Daniel and I am a native of WNC. I was born and raised in Murphy, NC, and I am a seventh generation native of Cherokee County. I knew from a young age that I wanted to be in the medical field, but it was my 9<sup>th</sup> grade biology teacher who pushed me to pursue medical school rather than another area of medicine. I completed my undergraduate degree at Young Harris College where I majored in chemistry. I then spent a year volunteering at our local hospital, and I became an EMT. I worked for several months in EMS before moving to Chapel Hill for medical school. Shortly after beginning medical school, I married my lovely wife, and we recently welcomed our first son in February 2019.

After spending almost two years in Chapel Hill, it has been a nice change to return to the mountains of WNC. I have always been fond of Asheville, and I can't think of any other place where I would want to complete my training. This opportunity has allowed me to be closer to my family and friends, and I truly feel like I am right at home. The administrators here are amazing, and I have the most awesome preceptors to train me for a career in medicine. I have time built into my schedule which allows for research, shadowing, volunteering, extra clinical experience, or even relaxing at home with my family. Attending UNC School of Medicine – Asheville has been one of the best decisions I have ever made!

## Hannah Angle



My name is Hannah Angle, and I am so excited to be spending my third year of medical school in beautiful Asheville, NC. I grew up in Winston Salem, NC and attended UNC-Chapel Hill for undergrad where I studied chemistry, biology, and UNC men's basketball (#GoHeels). I didn't decide on medicine until undergrad, but once I made that decision, I knew that I wanted to stay at UNC. Since starting medical school, I have met some of the most inspiring and incredible people and future physicians I could ever imagine. I initially assumed I would stay in Chapel Hill for my third-year clinical rotations, but on a whim decided to attend the Asheville campus open house since several of my friends were attending. Despite the rainy and gloomy weather all weekend, I instantly fell in love with this program and the close-knit community it fosters. I loved the idea of spending the better

part of a year with the same preceptors who could really get to know me and mentor me, and the appeal of learning in a smaller environment was very enticing for my introverted personality. Since arriving, I have been continually blown away by the support and encouragement I have received from the administration, my preceptors, and my peers. Also, getting to enjoy the wonderful restaurants, breweries, and breathtaking nature Asheville has to offer has been an incredible way to spend my down time and has been very restorative throughout a stressful year of learning. Although I had never lived in Western NC prior to this year, I already feel very at home here and am so thankful for the opportunity to learn and grow in such an amazing place.

## Helene Kirschke-Schwartz



My name is Helene and I'm originally from Nashville, TN. I enjoyed four lovely years at UNC for undergrad, where I majored in African Studies and Chemistry. After graduation I didn't know what the heck I wanted to do but knew I cared about public health, so I took a job in New Orleans as an HIV Tester/Counselor. I loved talking to folks about sexual health, knowing their status, and advocating for better allocation of health resources. Eventually I turned right back to NC and worked as a sexual health counselor in

Durham before starting research at the BATLab (sadly, not actual bats, but the Behavior and Technology Lab at UNC). I was mainly involved in health technology development for HIV+ adolescents and young adults. I wrote content for medication adherence apps and a virtual reality program that helps people practice disclosing their HIV status. Finally after a long road of exploring, I walked two whole buildings over to start med school at UNC!

For me, part of the appeal of UNC was the Asheville program. I wanted a longitudinal curriculum and smaller cohort for third year. I couldn't recommend it more – the staff are incredible and encouraging, I am surrounded by brilliant classmates & friends who inspire me every day, and I have preceptors who are excited to have and teach medical students. Plus, the mountains of NC bring me so much joy that it is hard to have a bad day here. Rock climbing has been a big part of my life for many years, so being a quick drive away from some of the best climbs in the South is a dream. The hiking, food, and kind people make for a very, very special place to live and learn.

### Jessica Stevens



Hi everyone! I'm Jessica and I'm a third-year medical student at UNC SOM Asheville Campus! I absolutely love living in North Carolina and I've lived most of my life in Apex, right outside of Raleigh. I attended Appalachian State for undergrad, where I majored in cell biology. I also studied snail distributions in southeast Asia and Fraser fir tree ecophysiology during those four years. Going to UNC Chapel Hill for medical school was always a dream of mine and I was ecstatic that I would also have the opportunity to live in the NC mountains again while completing this program. I always knew I wanted to do my third year at the Asheville campus, so I packed up my goldfish, moved, and am so happy to be living here with this group of wonderful, interesting, brilliant classmates. I've enjoyed all of

my rotations so far—so much that I was only more confused about what I wanted to do! I'm now discovering that I'm particularly interested in primary care and family medicine. You might find me running, yoga-ing, hiking, picking veggies, or floating down the French Broad!

### Jonathan Plyler



Hey everyone, my name is Jonathan Plyler and I have the privilege of being a third-year medical student at the UNC School of Medicine campus in Asheville. I grew up just thirty minutes away in Hendersonville, NC, and have always felt at home in Western NC. My father practiced medicine in the area and it was through him that my interest in medicine began to develop. I also was able to vicariously experience the challenges he faced providing healthcare and practicing medicine in our rural community and these experiences drive many of my medical interests today.

In an effort to obtain a better understanding of the health issues my community faced, I attended the University of South Carolina and received a degree in public health. I then decided to pursue a medical degree and I was particularly interested in applying to



UNC because their Asheville campus would allow me to develop my knowledge of medicine in the place that I grew up and with the communities I hope to serve one day. This campus has given me that opportunity and so much more; the amount of time that I have had to work one-on-one with preceptors and interact extensively with patients has been invaluable. All of my preceptors have been exceptional teachers who have taught me not just medicine, but also how to navigate common issues faced by the underserved in need of healthcare in these communities. My interest in primary care has been confirmed by my experiences here and it has been such a fulfilling experience to spend my third year here.

### Julia Jordan



My name is Julia Jordan, one of the UNC MS3s fortunate to call Asheville home during our clinical rotations. Originally from a small farm in Summerfield, NC, I studied biology and studio art at Davidson College, worked in clinical cardiac research at Moses Cone Hospital in Greensboro, and then matriculated to UNC for my MD. The longitudinal format of the Asheville program really appeals to me, and I endeavor to cultivate the same long term rapport with my own patients in my future practice. When not at the hospital, I can be found hiking or paddle boarding with my partner and his sweet dog, working out with friends at CrossFit, traveling, and spending time with my family, including my parents, sister, brother, three Connemara ponies, and four dogs.

### Justice Echols



I grew up in Detroit, Michigan. I attended Spelman College where I majored in Biology and became a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. During college, I spent my summers traveling and participating in medical summer programs that solidified my love for serving others through medicine. After graduating, I completed the Medical Education Development Program at UNC-Chapel Hill which further confirmed that I was capable of making my dreams come true. The mentorship and camaraderie of the program was life changing and I could not wait to be a part of the tarheel family.

My favorite quote, “Be a rainbow in somebody else’s cloud” by Dr. Maya Angelou, perfectly embodies my experience here in Asheville. The Asheville campus is a great place to learn and evolve as a third year medical student and as a citizen of the world. The longitudinal curriculum has allowed me to have more personable interactions with my patients and my preceptors. It is an environment that encourages you to be that rainbow that Maya Angelou speaks about. On a day to day basis, I have been able to have more hands on experience and more involvement in my

patients' care. I have enjoyed learning from the medical models that many practices in the area follow when it comes to serving underserved, under-resourced areas. I am passionate about using what I have learned in this longitudinal program in order to serve underserved communities in a creative and personable manner.

### Katie Pannier Basskin



Hello to the future doctors reading this! I still vividly remember sitting at my computer at Warren Wilson College in Swannanoa five years ago wondering if medicine was right for me, if I could do it, and what that would look like, then stumbling upon these bios of UNC SOM students right here in Asheville. They got me excited about the possibilities of doing medical education a little bit differently and being able to give back to this mountain community that has given me so much. I can hardly believe how much has happened since then but I am so happy that it has all led me back to this beautiful little city and the amazing leadership and expertise at our growing campus.

I grew up in Ft. Lauderdale, FL where I developed a deep love for being outdoors through Everglades walks with alligators, windsurfing, and ocean swims, but I yearned to know mountains. This landed me at Warren Wilson College, where I found deep community, discovered the pure adrenaline joy of mountain biking, and fell in love with chemistry. Other highlights of the past few years include serving at Pittsburgh Mercy Family Health Center with National Health Corps, working with adolescents in wilderness therapy, touring a rural health clinic on my way to Everest Base Camp in Solukhumbu, Nepal, riding on a very bumpy “chicken truck” on UNC’s annual women’s health clinic trip in Honduras (see photo), and getting married to my favorite human and adopting two kittens! Somewhere along the way on this circuitous journey, I developed a deep passion for women’s health, reproductive justice, and inclusive care.

I hope to carry that attitude of doing things a little bit differently forward into a career as an Obstetrician/ Gynecologist working with underserved communities wherever my wandering heart and the currents of life pull me next. Between Asheville’s diverse clinical rotations, the fellowship of my talented and caring colleagues, and other special Asheville bonuses like our inquisitive Ethics and Humanism course, I feel fully supported to follow my dreams and support the dreams of my community!

## Kelly Maiche



Hello! My name is Kelly Maiche. I am the daughter of a North Carolinian mother (from Saluda, NC) and a French father, but grew up moving around quite a bit and spent most of my childhood in Cuba. I went to college in the States, at a small liberal arts school on the beach in St. Petersburg, FL, called Eckerd College. After graduating with a BA in psychology in 2010, I moved to Thailand where I taught preschool and kindergarten for 2 years. I then spent a few years here in Asheville, bee-bopping between my laid-back mountain life, backpacking adventures

around the globe, and trips to Haiti, where my parents have lived for the past few years. It is there that I first became involved and interested in healthcare, volunteering at a group of pediatric, palliative, and wound clinics. One thing led to another... and here I am in medical school!

As my background might suggest, I love to travel and explore new places, people, cultures, foods, art, and music. I am a beach bum at heart but am happy in most any naturally beautiful environment, including these magical Blue Ridge Mountains. I have an itty-bitsy elderly dog, Dante, who I love a bit too much. I am engaged to a talented artist and art educator named Ben Hamburger, who I love slightly less than Dante but still quite a bit. And I have two siblings, both currently living in Los Angeles, CA, who are my best friends.

I am grateful to be at UNC SOM's Asheville campus this year, in a smaller cohort of wonderful classmates. I am still figuring out what path most interests me in medicine, but am very driven by meaningful relationships with patients, and was drawn to Asheville's program in part because of its longitudinal structure that allows me to get a taste of those relationships even now as a student. I also appreciate the emphasis that this program places on students' wellbeing and on making this experience a wholesome one—where we are encouraged not only to study medical concepts, but also to strengthen our understanding of ethics, mindfulness, and compassionate care. Meanwhile, we get a little additional free time in our “white space” to take care of ourselves and to explore specialties and/or research that interests us. And of course, I am happy to be back in this gorgeous area, close to old friends, cousins, and my grandmother.

## Kyle Bingham



Hello! I'm Kyle Bingham and I grew up in Rutherfordton, NC. I went to Chase High School before attending NC State University. I graduated with B.S. degrees in Chemistry, Biochemistry and Biology and minors in philosophy and political science. My interest in medicine was cemented the summer of my junior year after shadowing a family medicine physician in my hometown. I decided to attend UNC School of Medicine because of my desire to practice rural medicine in my hometown. I am very excited to

be a rural scholar in Asheville for third year because it is so close to where I want to practice.

Unique about my third year experience is that I am living in my hometown (~1 hour to Asheville) in the house my grandmother left to me. This has been especially rewarding since I get to see my future patient population. Some of my longitudinal preceptors have even been within twenty minutes of where I live.

## Laila Knio



Hi there! My name is Laila, and I am one of the lucky ones spending Application Phase at the Asheville campus. I was born in Lebanon and lived in a small town south of Beirut until I was 11 years old. I moved to Raleigh after that, and have been in North Carolina ever since.

My journey to medicine has been anything but linear. In high school, I thought it far more likely that I would become a writer or an actress or a reporter. Maybe an ambassador. I went to NC State University where I first majored in textile engineering (an unlikely choice, even then) before switching to psychology with a minor in French. But I suppose what planted the seed for pursuing a medical career was a love I've always had for stories and storytelling, an awe for the unpredictable ways that our lives intersect. A medical mission trip to Ecuador during my sophomore year, and a surgical internship at UC Davis the summer after that cemented my decision.

I have always been attracted to adventure. I studied abroad in Lille, France during undergrad, and returned to France the summer before my senior year to conduct two months of research at the Pasteur Institute in Paris. It was there, working on med school applications in a coffee shop in the 7<sup>th</sup> arrondissement, that I read about UNC's longitudinal clerkship program in Asheville. I knew with absolute certainty that this is where I had to be. This is where I wanted to learn how to listen and how to heal.

Through Workaway, I traipsed back across the pond after graduating – the summer before med school began – to help renovate a mansion on the west coast of Ireland and to work on a yoga farm in the South Bohemian region of the Czech Republic. I look forward to my next adventure, whenever that may come and in whatever form it may be.

Asheville has met all of my expectations. I loved the energy, acuity, and rich learning that I experienced during my inpatient rotations, and am now enjoying developing relationships with my outpatient preceptors. In my free time I love writing and reading, traveling to visit my partner (whom residency has taken a couple of states away – sad face) and in turn – sharing Asheville with him. Most recently, after being a violinist for several years, I am learning to play the cello!

I anticipate pursuing a career as an adolescent psychiatrist. I am fascinated by the impact that our pasts, the societies in which we live, and our relationships have on our internal life. One of my long-term goals, in homage to the place that has irrevocably formed me, includes traveling back to Lebanon to provide mental healthcare to adolescents and young adults.

### Luke Ford



Hello, I'm Luke. I was born in Atlanta, GA but moved to Durham, NC as a young kid and consider it my hometown. I went to Elon University for undergrad and was a Biology major. I had a wonderful time at Elon and had a great education in the basic sciences. Upon graduating, I was unsure about if I wanted to go to medical school, so I took some time off and worked in research for the EPA. During this time, I also had the opportunity to teach as an organic chemistry TA at Duke University's SMDEP program and as an MCAT instructor for Kaplan. It was teaching that ultimately allowed me to realize that I wanted to have a job where I could work directly with people and incorporate my love of science. I went to medical school after 2 years of working and couldn't be happier!

Although I don't know what specialty I will be going into yet, I am interested in settling down and practicing in a rural area. Being part of the Hendersonville Campus has allowed me to work with doctors that provide healthcare to rural western NC and I have learned so much from them. In my free time, I enjoy fly fishing, hunting, backpacking, and Brazilian Jiu Jitsu. Although 3<sup>rd</sup> year really cuts into your free time and hobbies, it is important to find time for the things you get enjoyment out of, so I try to make time for these things.

## Mary Shell



Hi y'all! I'm from Bryson City, NC, which is west of Asheville and minutes away from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I started at UNC Chapel Hill my freshman year of college. After spending a summer working as a raft guide back in WNC, I realized how much I'd missed the opportunities in this area. I decided to transfer to UNC Asheville, where I studied psychology and got to spend my free time hiking, kayaking, and exploring downtown. While at UNCA, I had the chance

to volunteer in the ED, shadow amazing doctors at MAHEC, and work in mental healthcare – all experiences which helped solidify my interest in medicine. Having had such a great experience with the people at MAHEC as an undergraduate, I knew that I wanted to return as a medical student.

I'm thrilled to be back in the mountains for my third year as a Kenan Rural Scholar and part of the longitudinal program in Hendersonville! The small student-to-faculty ratio here allows for a lot of hands-on experiences. The longitudinal program is also unique in that it lets you build relationships not only with your preceptors but with your patients as well. I've been interested in mental health since high school, but have also loved my experiences here in the operating room. Regardless of specialty, I plan to practice in WNC, and I'm thankful that the people in this area are shaping my education!

## Safiyya Adam



Hi all! My name is Safiyya and I am one of the students at the incredible UNC Asheville campus! I grew up in Murphy, NC which is a rural town two hours west of Asheville. After high school, I moved to UNC-Chapel Hill to earn my undergraduate degree and explore a life outside of the mountains. While it was terrifying in the beginning, I learned to love Chapel Hill and all of its "big city" ways. During undergrad and one year afterward, I worked as a Nursing Assistant at UNC Hospitals. While I had known for some time that I wanted a career in medicine, it wasn't until I worked as a CNA that I truly realized how meaningful practicing medicine while connecting with patients and their loved ones would be to me, and so began my journey to medical school!

I had known about the Asheville campus for some time before starting medical school, and remember thinking, "How cool would that be?!" when I first learned of it. When it came time to choose a campus, I knew my answer right away- Asheville would be a perfect place for me because I'd get to spend a year doing what I love in the mountains I call home. Now that we're six months into the

program, I can say that I love the Asheville campus for many reasons, but what I love most is that the longitudinal curriculum encourages me to develop lasting relationships with patients, preceptors, staff, and the community. As a Kenan Primary Rural Scholar, I also love that the Asheville campus has robust connections with rural communities which have allowed me to learn in places such as Burnsville, Clyde, and Cherokee. While I'm not certain which direction medical school will take me, I think primary care and rural medicine are extraordinary and I'm thankful that this campus allows me to continue fostering my interest! When I'm not working, I enjoy spending time birding, hiking, and spending time with my family.

### Sarah McShane



Hey friends! I'm Sarah, a current third year medical student at the Asheville MAHEC campus and Kenan Primary Care Scholar. I grew up on the "eastern shore" in Delaware for most my childhood, lived in Vienna, VA during high school, and then moved to North Carolina in 2012 for college at UNC. I fell in love with NC's mountains early on and feel very lucky to now call them "home"!

I studied biology and chemistry in college, but also spent a lot of time as a volunteer doula with UNC's Birth Partners program, lived in an amazing house of ten women, and competed with UNC's Club cross country team. My inner geek combined with my deep respect for human relationships led me into pursuing medicine. After a year working administratively

for the Birth Partners team, I returned to UNC to continue my medical school dreams!

The medical school journey has been anything but easy, but the Asheville campus has been a gift in reminding me every day that I am "living the dream" one step at a time. I'm thankful for my compassionate preceptors, the integrated medicine longitudinal curriculum, my cohort of talented and kind peers, and the everyday exposure to life's struggles and people's impenetrable resilience. I'm also eternally grateful for the mountains, which provide perspective on my drive home and invite me back outside to run, hike, swim, picnic, float, and experience all the craft beer and art Asheville has to offer.

## Shane Bierly



Hey there! My name is Shane and I'm a third year medical student in Asheville, NC. I grew up in a couple different places including Virginia, California, and North Carolina. However, I call the sleepy family vacation town of Emerald Isle, NC home. I went to Duke for undergrad and studied neuroscience and Russian lit. After college, I took a gap year and worked for Epic Systems in Wisconsin for a year before coming to UNC. I also have two younger sisters—one who went to Duke and one who goes to UNC, so I come from a family divided!

I'm a big fan of the outdoors and spend much of my time on the water, in the mountains, or trail running. One of the best decisions I made besides deciding to come to Asheville was adopting a dog when I moved here. Her name is Charlie and she is the cuddliest dog you've ever met. She spent the first half of her life growing up on a farm in Belgium, so I make it a point to regularly take her to New Belgium Brewing down the street so she can get in touch with her roots. The structure of the Asheville curriculum allows us to get experience in nearly all of our rotations in just the first few months. While I'm not 100% sure what I want to specialize in, this has been extremely helpful in the selection process. I'm also the Whitehead rep for Asheville so feel free to reach out if you have any questions about the campus or third year in general!

## Will Johnson



Hey yall! My name's William Johnson, and I'm a UNC medical student spending my third year with the Asheville Program. I was born and raised on the other side of North Carolina, in Wilmington, NC, about five minutes away from beautiful Wrightsville Beach. I got a degree in Biology from Davidson College (Go Cats!). At Davidson, I was a defense advisor for the Honor Council, a trip leader for Davidson Outdoors, played club volleyball and fencing, and taught photography at a home for children. After Davidson, I moved to Providence, Rhode Island, and taught 9th grade biology with City Year.

I first heard about the Asheville Program in undergrad, while volunteering in Honduras with Asheville's own Benjamin Gilmer. He emphasized how cool it was to do a different specialty every day of the week and how rewarding it was to build relationships with patients over an entire year. Even better, the Asheville Program students I traveled with were all happy, kind, and inspired people. I applied to UNC SOM knowing I wanted to study in Asheville and am so happy to be here.

There are obvious reasons as to why a year in Asheville is fun: Mountains! Rivers! Community! Beer! Crunchy Folk! It is such a great change of pace after 2 long years of living amongst the



undergrads in Chapel Hill. But more importantly, you will have a completely unique experience for the most formative year of medical school. You'll meet down to earth physicians that are happy to teach and mentor. You'll be in less crowded settings, where you can take responsibility for patients and not have to vie against residents for learning opportunities or attention. You'll have time to live your life, and will be around doctors that encourage you to care for yourself and have fun. You'll work with program staff who genuinely care about you and your wellbeing. It's been such a blessing to be a part of the Asheville program. Come on up to where the air is fresh and the people even fresher!

### Zach Fisher



Hey everyone! My name is Zach Fisher. I grew up in Greensboro and went to Elon University for undergrad, where I studied protein functions on cancer cells and built houses with our campus Habitat for Humanity chapter. After graduating, I worked for a year at the Alamance County Health Department enrolling people in health insurance and planning programs to improve access to mental health care. In 2017, I finally made it to UNC - the home of the best basketball team on the planet and also a pretty good medical school. After studying for a year and a half and helping to lead our chapter of the American Medical Student Association (and eating too much Carrburritos with my friends), I made the trip to Asheville to start rotations. I have loved my time in Asheville and am so grateful for the patient, preceptor and cohort relationships. When I'm not in clinic, I enjoy hanging out at all the local restaurants, breweries and hiking trails. I'm interested in going into family medicine after graduation and providing comprehensive primary care for people with limited health care access.