

Martin Arhin



Hi everyone, my name is Martin, and I am one of the third year UNC students at the Asheville campus. My hometown is Charlotte, NC. I studied psychology in my undergrad at Elon University. After college, I worked as a broker at Wells Fargo before attending Loyola University in Chicago for a master's degree. I enjoy staying active in the community through mentoring, serving on an arts and literary board, and biking on the greenways.

My decision to come to Asheville stemmed from my interests in having a close relationship with attending physicians and a desire to learn more from patients through the longitudinal curriculum. In my time so far, I have had the opportunity to explore my interests in specialties I did not consider previously. In addition, I've made many friends with classmates in our smaller sized cohort as well have built close relationships with physicians I've worked with. Outside of school, I've been able to explore the city and nature through hiking, tubing, visiting historical places.

Rachel Buchanan

Hey! I'm Rachel, one of the MS3s fortunate enough to be doing third year rotations in Asheville. I grew up in Fayetteville, NC and went on to study psychology at Duke. I then switched blues to come to UNC for medical school.

I chose the Asheville campus in large part due to the sense of community and the opportunity to participate in a longitudinal curriculum. I also wanted to see what it would be like to practice in a smaller hospital (though Mission isn't all that small). So far, the Asheville campus has been a wonderful experience and has given me the opportunity to learn about a wide range of pathologies, from diaper rash to necrotizing pancreatitis.

Outside of medical school, I enjoy hiking, working out, spending time with friends, and exploring local coffee shops and breweries. I'm looking forward to the rest of the year!



Stephanie Chien



Hi! My name is Stephanie and I'm a third year medical student in Asheville. I grew up in Cary, NC and studied Health Policy and Management at UNC-Chapel Hill. During college, I got a glimpse of the disparities between rural and urban in the local Chapel Hill area which is when my interest in rural health first started. I then took a gap year before med school and worked as a research assistant in psycho-oncology research at UNC.

Asheville has been a great fit for me because of the small cohort, relationship with my advisor and preceptors, and opportunity to see firsthand what healthcare in a rural setting looks like. Right now, I'm strongly considering psychiatry as my future specialty, but I feel like it changes every week! Outside of med school, I enjoy hiking, taking care of my houseplants, cooking, and exploring places to eat good food.

Leda Espinoza

Hi everyone! I'm Leda, and I'm excited to be spending my third year of medical school in Asheville! A quick life summary: I grew up in northern California, and my family moved to eastern NC a little over 8 years ago. I went to undergrad at Dartmouth College and spent a few years living and working in Boston before starting medical school at UNC.

In my free time, I love spending time outside in any capacity, especially hiking and climbing. You can also find me reading fantasy novels, feeding my sourdough starter, Lois, and eating more than my fair share of ice cream (check out The Hop!).

So far, I've enjoyed the flexibility that Asheville's curriculum allows, and I've gotten to work with amazing preceptors who genuinely care not only about my learning but also about my wellbeing as a person. The mountains aren't half bad either :)



Audrey Faber



Hi, my name is Audrey Faber. I've loved living in WNC with my husband, Darren, and our now 1-year-old, Ananda -- or "Nandi" for short. I knew I wanted to come to Asheville for third year ever since I entered the FIRST program for Family Medicine. I actually grew up in Hendersonville, NC and feel privileged to be able to come back to serve this area as a medical student (and hopefully in the future as a family medicine resident!).

My path to medicine was long and winding—I studied English, Spanish, and Arabic in college and then went on to pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature but realized after taking a health humanities course my first year that I needed to switch things around. I quit my program, spent a year volunteering in Burundi, and then returned to the US for a post-bacc pre-med program before working as a medical scribe and applying to my dream medical school (UNC, of course).

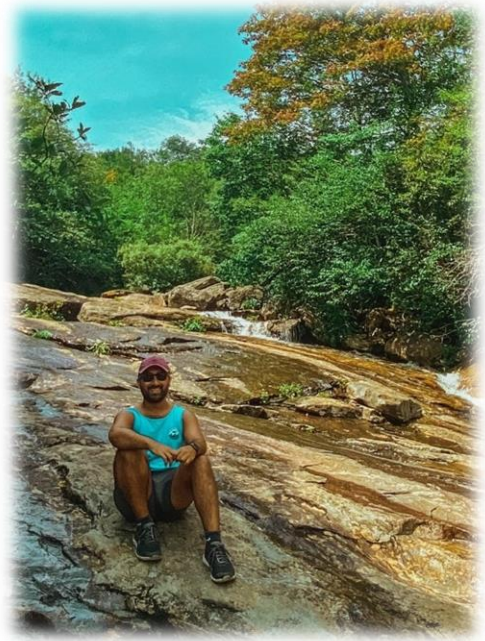
So far, the Asheville Longitudinal program has provided me with excellent companionship, amazing preceptors who take time to get to know me, and a broad range of exposure to many specialties and the unique issues that crop up in rural settings. A huge benefit to learning at the Asheville campus is the simulation center, where we actually get to practice running codes and working with ultrasound, both skills that I have used in real clinical settings. Our SHS curriculum is also the best—we meet monthly to share reflections about meaningful or difficult experiences, and it feels good to know that we are all on this journey together.

Amir Feinberg

Hello friends! I'm Amir and I'm one of the third-year medical students here at the Asheville campus. I grew up in Gastonia, North Carolina and I've been escaping to Asheville since I was a kid, so coming here has been an amazing experience. I went to Boston University for undergrad where I majored in International Relations and was planning on minoring in vocal performance and Spanish until I decided late in the game that medicine was going to be my future. While in college, I was super involved in our musical theater group, a cappella, and LGBTQ+ activism.

After graduating from BU, I spent a year completing a post-bacc at UNCC and then I spent two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the republic of Moldova. I taught health education to the students of my small village, and I also spent time in the capital working with NGOs raising awareness about human trafficking and LGBTQ+ rights in Eastern Europe. Since coming to medical school, I've been very involved in student government, I am in the global health scholarly concentration, and I volunteer with SHAC HIV. I'm currently interested in pursuing a career in urology focusing on gender affirming care, but come back to me in two weeks and that may be different!

I chose to come to Asheville for several reasons. The hospital in Chapel Hill is amazing, but I wanted a smaller community where I was able to work closer with the attendings and residents. Additionally, I loved the idea of working with my outpatient preceptors over a longer period of time, getting to know them and their patient populations just that much more. Plus who wouldn't want to spend their free time hiking and enjoying the breweries?



Aaron Fox



Hi everyone! My name is Aaron Fox and I'm from the bustling metropolis of Hickory, NC. I studied Experimental Psychology at the University of South Carolina (Go 'Cocks) before coming straight through to the UNC School of Medicine. The North Carolina mountains have always had my heart, and some of my favorite memories as a kid are of winding along the Blue Ridge Parkway under the cornucopia of fall colors.

When I'm not blasting classic dad-rock on my guitar, playing with knives too sharp for my own good in the kitchen, or pretending to be the next Hemingway with my typewriter, I dabble in studying medicine. I initially came to medical school to be a psychiatrist, but my first shift of Emergency Medicine smacked me in the face (in a good way) and I haven't looked back since. My spirit animal is a 9pm cup of coffee, so the ED feels like home. I am deeply passionate about education and travel, so I hope to work in a balance of clinical and

academic medicine one day, and I'll go wherever the wind takes me. The Asheville program has been a godsend; the amount of one-on-one time with preceptors and the clinical/procedural opportunities I have experienced has been unreal. My best advice: dive into 3rd year with both feet. With every "first," you will never feel fully comfortable, but do it anyways. If you do one thing a day that scares the daylights out of you, you'll live a good life.

Mary-Frances Hall

Hi everyone, I'm Mary-Frances! I was born and raised in State Road, North Carolina where I grew up working in my family's restaurant, Speedy Chef. It's been open now for 55 years, and I try to find every opportunity to go home for definitely the best hot dogs in NC. I ventured to Virginia for undergrad at Washington & Lee, where I majored in Neuroscience and spent the majority of my time either in the science library or on the golf course as a member of the women's golf team.

Following graduation, I spent a year in Greenville, SC as an AmeriCorps member with Impact America before making my way to UNC SOM. Highlights of foundation phase were meeting so many wonderful



and talented peers, serving as a member of student government, and working with the Gender Affirming Care Clinic at SHAC.

I have always loved the mountains of western NC, so when I heard there was a UNC SOM campus in Asheville, it was an obvious choice in my mind. Several months into application phase, I am blown away by the compassionate and thoughtful administrators, clinicians, and preceptors that we work with on a daily basis. The longitudinal curriculum has facilitated stronger relationships with both my preceptors and patients, and the small student to faculty ratio has allowed for so many more hands-on moments that can be difficult to find in settings with a larger number of learners.

The memories I'm making outside of shelf studying and clinic with my cohort have provided much needed laughter, down-time, and reflection. I've been able to find great balance here whether it be hiking, indoor bouldering, or learning how to skateboard at Foundation in the River Arts District. If I were to re-select a campus, I would definitely still choose Asheville! There are not many places where you can leave the hospital after a Labor and Delivery night shift and see a beautiful sunrise coming over the mountains. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions at all about the campus or living in Asheville!

Cameron Harris



Hi everyone! My name is Cameron Harris, and I was born and raised outside of Hickory, NC. I attended UNC Chapel Hill as an undergraduate and majored in Biology with minors in both Chemistry and Spanish for the Health Professions. During my gap year, I worked as the lab manager of a UNC pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma lab and as a CNA in the UNC Burn ICU. I was very fortunate to continue my journey as a medical student at UNC Chapel Hill.

Medical school has been full of surprises, both wonderful and challenging. Among many things, I had the opportunity to work with medically underserved populations as a leader for the Samaritan's Purse Clinic at

Durham Rescue Mission. I married my amazing wife during the pandemic. Now, I have had the opportunity to return to the mountains I love at the UNC SOM Asheville campus.

Asheville has always felt like home for me. I love whitewater kayaking on the Pigeon and Nantahala Rivers, hiking the Blue Ridge Mountains, and visiting the local breweries isn't too bad either. As a medical student, I have leaned into the longitudinal curriculum the Asheville Campus offers with joy and couldn't think of better preceptors and residents to work with.

Looking towards the future, I am committed to going into OB-GYN. OB-GYN offers me the opportunity to serve a diverse group of women in both the surgical and primary care setting, from first-time expectant mothers to cancer patients, while maintaining the longitudinal continuity of care that drew me to a career as a physician. I also have a passion for the rural and underserved populations in North Carolina, and plan to help address health inequities as a future physician. I cannot wait to see where this journey leads me.

Joline Hartheimer

Hi everyone! My name is Joline and I feel so lucky to be spending my clinical rotations in Asheville around such awe-inspiring mountains and people. I'm originally from northern NJ and came to UNC SOM after studying chemical engineering and learning about rural emergency medicine in the Deep South at the University of Alabama – roll tide! While in Tuscaloosa, I spent my time trying to understand the microenvironment of drug-resistant cancer stem cells in the lab, programming yeast-printing robots to study gene-nutrient interactions on aging, giving talks about educational inequities in our public school system, scribing in the Emergency Department, and leading service-learning trips in the Southeast. I soon realized that what I love most is connecting with people and learning their stories, which brought me to medicine.



I chose the Asheville campus for the smaller cohort that feels like a family, the longitudinal relationships we get with our patients and preceptors, and the almost unlimited world-class hiking opportunities. Throughout my time here, I have felt extremely supported by the lovely administration and my fellow classmates, despite being a medical student during a pandemic. Most of my outpatient clinics are at Federally Qualified Health Centers and other safety net clinics, which has reinvigorated my interest in public health and is teaching me how to be a better advocate at every patient encounter. And our Ethics & Humanism class forces us to think deeply about the physicians we are becoming, and how we can keep pushing our profession towards social justice.

Outside of clinic, I can usually be found exploring new hiking trails, taking amazing (donation-based!) yoga classes at Asheville Community Yoga, meeting up with friends at one of our many tasty local restaurants (Goldfinch and Taco Billy are favorites), or playing with my new kitten Toast. Our white space has given me the flexibility to catch up on global health research projects, pursue my interest in nutrition, and take time for self-care during the craziness that is 3rd year. I'm an indecisive person with many interests but right now I'm hoping to pursue a career in women's health as an OBGYN advocating for underserved communities.

Scott Jaros



Hello my name Scott, I am originally from Rhode Island, but have lived in NC since 2008. I went to undergrad at UNCW where I majored in Biology. After I graduated in 2015 I worked several jobs. I was a CNA, research technician, construction worker, and bartender.

I'm really glad I chose Asheville to be my home for application phase. I've had great preceptors on the inpatient and outpatient sides of medicine. The longitudinal curriculum has really shown me how much I love longitudinal care.

There is something about seeing familiar faces and seeing how their lives change. I am still having a tough time deciding what I want to go into, but I do know I want it to have a good combination of medicine and procedures. When I am not in clinic or studying, my girlfriend Britt and I have really enjoyed going on hikes, checking out breweries, and finding things for our apartment at antique stores. I can't wait to find out what more I'll learn about Asheville and medicine!

Rahul Kathard

Hello! My name is Rahul Kathard, one of the MS3s at Asheville this year. I'm from all over the place, having spent time growing up in both Maine and New Mexico, but most recently I've been in Chapel Hill and Raleigh. I'm excited to be spending time here in Asheville for 3rd year with a thorough program in an incredible community setting for a period of growth.

The closeness with preceptors, an administration that always has our best interests at heart, both alongside the longitudinal curriculum made this campus a great fit for me. I studied Biomedical Engineering at NC State (Go Pack) and minored in Spanish, hence my interest in Ultrasound and medical Spanish. I enjoy the accessibility of point of care ultrasound for immediate answers to clinical questions as well as working with Spanish-speaking populations. I hope to be able to apply these skills as a future Emergency Medicine physician, which is helpful with the large breadth of experience provided here at Mission ED through the program.

When I find myself with some free time, I enjoy running around outside, reading, piano, cooking, and trying to learn a bit of banjo while in the mountains.



Lee Landess



Hey everyone! My name is Lee Landess. I went to UNC-CH for undergrad where I majored in music and then spent two years in the triangle after graduation working as a medical scribe. After another year and a half in Chapel Hill I was really excited about the opportunity to see another part of the state and another medical system.

I'm really interested in pediatrics and the program here has been incredibly supportive as I've explored my interests. It's been wonderful to find opportunities in white space to broaden my interests - I've had wonderful experiences in the PICU and working with various pediatric subspecialists. Also, the longitudinal program has allowed me to form relationships with kids and their families. Just the other day I had the joy of setting up the patient room with his favorite toys because I'd already

spent 3 different appointments with him playing blocks together. Of course I also need to also praise Ethics and Humanism whose practice or narrative ethics and reflective writing have really helped me stay grounded throughout the grind of third year.

When I'm not in school I've loved having such a beautiful place to take my dog for hikes, eat great food, and try to keep a little music in my life!

Claire McLaughlin

My name is Claire McLaughlin and I feel very fortunate to be spending my third year of medical school at UNC's branch campus in Asheville. Although I am originally from Raleigh, my mother grew up in Asheville, and I have always considered Western North Carolina to be a second home.

I completed my undergraduate studies at UNC Chapel Hill in economics and public policy with a minor in women's and gender studies. After college, I relocated to California and worked as a consultant to the public sector in the workforce development space. Working in a role that was primarily data oriented inspired a realization that I wanted to interface more directly with people and ultimately, I decided to change industries altogether and pursue a career in medicine. Although I remain passionate about public policy and systems-level advocacy, I find it extremely fulfilling to work with individuals one-on-one and hope to someday strike a balance between these two roles by serving my community as a physician and an activist on behalf of my patients. I am particularly interested in issues that span both social and medical domains, including mental health and reproductive justice.



Outside of my responsibilities as a medical student, I prioritize relaxing with my spouse, Kevin, and our two dogs, Sandy and Raleigh. In Asheville, I enjoy exploring the trails and breweries. My newer hobbies include gardening (I have successfully grown several tomatoes and cucumbers) and roller skating (although I still haven't learned how to stop, so you better watch out if you see me on the multi-use path).

Aakash Mehta



Hello! My name is Aakash and I am another one of the third year students enjoying life in Asheville during application phase. I am originally from New Jersey but grew up mostly in Apex, NC just outside of Raleigh. I went to UNC-CH for undergrad, and studied Biology and Environmental Health Sciences and Engineering. I took a year off before medical school and did a ton of traveling while working as a medical scribe and EMT.

In my spare time, you will usually find me checking out a new brewery or restaurant, playing golf, or hanging out with my pup Moose. I chose Asheville largely to experience a different learning environment from Chapel Hill where I had been for the previous 7 years, the tight-knit community, opportunities for more one-on-one teaching and hands-on learning, and the immersive

emergency medicine rotation. I have truly been impressed by how invested the MAHEC team is in our education and how rejuvenating the Western NC mountains can be.

Daniel O'Connell

Hi, my name is Daniel O'Connell. I am from Cary, NC. I spent my childhood in the triangle and attended Duke University where I studied neuroscience and Spanish. After undergrad, I moved to Wisconsin for a year to work at Epic in Implementation. I loved Madison and moved to Asheville because it's a similar beautiful and active community. I am passionate about sports and enjoy playing basketball, hiking, and getting outdoors.

I love the Asheville program because it allows me to explore my academic interests of musculoskeletal medicine and orthopedics. All of the attendings I have worked with have been eager to have me work with them and invited me to come back during my



white space. The longitudinal curriculum has really enabled me to continue exploring sports medicine and developing my knowledge which I think will be very helpful in fourth year.

Tanner Orders



I was born and raised in WNC in the small town of Kings Mountain. I spent a lot of my childhood visiting the mountains and decided to attend Appalachian State University after graduating from high school. The Asheville Campus was my ticket back to WNC and I did not hesitate at the idea of coming home again. The Asheville program provides a unique opportunity to be submerged in academic-like healthcare with a serving of rural medicine. Not only can you expect diverse clinical exposure, but we are fortunate to be surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains. Outside of rotations I enjoy fishing and competitive archery. Asheville is a welcoming city for dog owners, so Willow and I love going on new adventures. My time here has

been amazing and I hope to carry it forward into my MS4 year.

Anna Osment

Hi everyone! My name is Anna, and I'm originally from Charlotte, NC. I attended Wake Forest University for undergrad where I majored in Psychology. I then spent a year working as a medical scribe in an Emergency Department in Gastonia, NC before making my way to Chapel Hill!



Growing up, I spent a lot of time coming to Asheville with my family, and I've always loved this area. I was drawn to the Asheville program because of its longitudinal curriculum, smaller cohort, and the program's emphasis on student wellness. With its supportive faculty and beautiful mountain views, Asheville has been a great place to spend third year! Our curriculum allows the opportunity to build lasting relationships with both preceptors and patients, and I've enjoyed caring for some patients multiple times throughout my time here thus far. Although I'm not 100% certain which specialty I'll be pursuing, I am passionate about women's health and hope to make this a focus in my future career. Flexibility in our schedules

has allowed ample opportunity to explore ways this interest can be pursued, so I'm excited to see what the future holds!

In my free time, I love to read, exercise, explore new coffee shops, breweries and restaurants, and travel! Feel free to reach out with any questions about the Asheville program!

Amanda Osta



Hi there, my name is Amanda, and I am so happy to be spending my third year of medical school in Asheville! I was born and raised in Greenville, NC, but spent most of my summers in Lebanon with my family. I studied chemistry at UNC while doing research on RNA 3D structure (yay for mRNA vaccines!), and I was fortunate enough to stay for medical school. The Asheville program was my top choice for many reasons- the longitudinal curriculum, small cohort, fantastic faculty, beautiful location- and it was one of the easiest and best decisions I have made.

In terms of my medical interests, though I continue to keep an open mind, I am finding myself leaning towards emergency medicine. In my free time, I love to play with my dog Teddy and bake/cook for friends and family. Being in Asheville has also given me the opportunity to go on more hikes and enjoy the mountain views daily, which never disappoint!

Puja Patel

Hello everyone! My name is Puja and I am one of the third year students at the Asheville Campus this year for application phase. I grew up in Fayetteville, NC and went to the University of Southern California for undergrad where I studied computational neuroscience. Between undergrad and starting medical school I did genetic sequencing research and software development in a stem cell lab at USC, and worked at the Violence Intervention Program, a clinic at LA County Hospital that serves children in difficult situations.



I am so happy to be in Asheville this year! The longitudinal program unique to our campus has been extremely rewarding, and I have loved seeing and learning from my patients week to week.

The great preceptors, and our smaller cohort have helped me get a lot of hands on experience both in the clinic and hospital. Outside of school, I love to hike, paint, cook, and explore this beautiful place.

Laiken Price



Hello everyone! My name is Laiken, and I have loved doing my third year of medical school in Asheville. I'm originally from Boone, NC, so I was very excited to come back WNC and be a part of the care of all of these wonderful mountain people. It has been awesome to learn with a smaller cohort, and experience all the benefits that a longitudinal program has to offer.

Before medical school, I majored in cellular and molecular biology at App State and followed this up with a master's in physiology at NC State. I worked a few years between both degrees while prepping for the long (but worth it) journey that is medical school. When I'm not in school, I enjoy taking my dog Ace (named after angiotensin converting enzyme) on hikes and to breweries. Asheville has a plethora of amazing brunch options if you're into breakfast foods like me,

so we like to explore those as well. I am interested in a couple of very different specialties currently and look forward to the process of narrowing down what I want to be when I grow up as third year comes to a close. The Asheville campus has been the perfect place to do this.

Megan Pugh

Hello! My name is Megan Pugh and I had the privilege to get to grow up in Asheville! I could not resist the chance to come back to the mountains and get to see my family regularly while I continued my education. I stayed in Asheville until it was time for college and then went to UNC-Chapel Hill for undergrad. I was a global studies major focusing on health care disparities in Latin American countries. Learning Spanish along the way, I developed a passion for underserved population care. I plan to be an OB-Gyn and work with low income and uninsured birthing people. After graduating I worked as a medical assistant and interpreter in a low cost family medicine clinic in Charlotte, NC.



While at UNC-SOM I became involved with the Kenan Urban Scholars and I plan to continue work with urban populations after my time here in Asheville. I plan to use my interpersonal skills and medical knowledge learned at my hometown to spread reproductive and health care justice throughout NC! One of the best parts about being in Asheville, other than my family and colleagues, is the incredible food. I loved the food growing up and it has only gotten better as I have been able to enjoy the breweries with my partner and our German shepherd, Junebug.

Cath Rueckeis



Hi everyone! I'm Cath. I'm originally from Germany and moved to the US for my bachelors at UNC in 2014. Asheville is only the second place I've lived in the US!

Moving here has been such a refreshing experience. After an eternity of online studying from my small apartment in Chapel Hill, moving to the mountains and beginning practical learning experiences beside my incredible peers and encouraging mentors has brought me back to life. I wake up every morning with all the purpose and excitement that I had lost during the rigors of foundation

phase (although yes, often I definitely do wish I could get a couple more hours of sleep). I love the small cohort here; not only are the individuals that make up the cohort incredibly smart, sensitive, and fun-loving, but I also feel seen, and important to the program, and like I have the tools to be me and thrive.

Outside of medicine, living here has been like my own personal Disney World. I love trail running, hiking, backpacking and road cycling past all the gorgeous mountain views. I've made friends who have taught me how to mountain bike and white-water kayak. I've also made a ridiculously long spreadsheet of all the trails around, so if you want the link, let me know!

Adriane Spiro

Hey everyone, my name is Adriane and I am one of the 3rd year students completing Application phase here in Asheville! I grew up right outside the Durham/Chapel Hill area before moving up north for college. I studied neuroscience at Bates College in Maine and then explored my interest in research by working as a lab manager in a cognitive neuroscience lab at Brown University for 3 years before coming back to the triangle to start medical school. Outside of medicine, I love to bake (especially decorating cakes for any occasion I can come up with), craft, break out of escape rooms, get outdoors, travel, and greet every dog I see.



The Asheville campus was a natural fit for me because I have always sought out smaller learning environments where one can more easily develop strong working relationships. I was drawn to Asheville's small student cohort and the opportunity to work more closely with preceptors and patients, both in the inpatient and longitudinal outpatient setting. I also liked the idea of training at a hospital with less residents and fellows, where medical students could play a larger role in patient care and work more directly with attendings. And the mountain views from the hospital certainly don't hurt! Asheville's unique longitudinal curriculum also offers an interesting opportunity to explore one of the potential benefits of a career in primary care: seeing the same patient multiple times over the course of the year. Though I have not yet settled on a specialty choice, I am currently leaning towards OBGYN or family medicine with a focus in women's health.

Taylor Stack-Pyle



Hey everybody, my name is Taylor and I have been loving third year in Asheville. I'm from Cullowhee, NC and studied Chemistry at Western Carolina University. I've always wanted to return to the mountains of North Carolina and was excited for the opportunity to do rotations in the rural areas surrounding Asheville. The tight-knit teams and smaller cohort drew me to the Asheville campus and the flexibility of the longitudinal has allowed me to get involved in the community. I really enjoy working with my preceptors and the one-on-one time I get with them is very beneficial for my learning. I especially look forward to our monthly ethics class dinners and didactics in the simulation center.

In my free time I enjoy rock climbing, running, and playing with my dog. My husband and I have enjoyed all that Asheville has to offer, from exploring local trails to enjoying wine at the Biltmore. This area is amazing and I'm so thankful to be able to do rotations in this area.

Lauren Sugarman

Hi everyone! My name is Lauren Sugarman and I am one of the third-years who is currently in Asheville! I grew up in a few different places, but my family settled in Apex, North Carolina when I was 10 and it has been home ever since. I went to UNC for undergrad and studied biology, and then spent a gap year working as a medical scribe at UNC's Emergency Department before starting medical school. Needless to say I became Chapel Hill's #1 fan very quickly. I am still undecided on what specialty I want to pursue, but I am really enjoying figuring it out!

If you would have asked me where I was going to spend third year when I started medical school, I would have told you there was a 100% chance I was staying at Central Campus. However, as I continued to go through foundation phase, I started to want a smaller cohort and more of a one-on-one learning environment with my preceptors. Since I had missed the initial campus visit, I decided to drive to Asheville and back in one day for a tour (shout out to Aakash Mehta for being my car buddy). Based on my interactions with the Asheville staff, current students and the tour itself, I had a feeling that this was the right place for me. That decision has been confirmed since the first day of orientation. Our preceptors and administration staff care so much about us here. I have



loved our close-knit cohort and we have gotten to do so many fun activities together like hiking, brewery-exploring, and tubing. Since we are a smaller campus, the learning environment is so supportive, can be personalized to help you pursue your interests, and is full of hands-on opportunities. It also has been incredibly refreshing to adventure outside of Chapel Hill and this has allowed for a lot of growth over the past several months. All in all, there is truly nowhere else I would rather be for my third year!

Katka Swaim



Hi there, my name is Katka! After moving to the US when I was young, I grew up in Charlotte and then spent all of my adult life in the Triangle. Between undergrad and med school I worked as a medical scribe in a neurology clinic, where I was able to work with the same provider and see the same patients over the span of two years. I loved being able to follow patients over time and watching their treatment progress first hand, an experience that drew me to Asheville's longitudinal curriculum. (An unexpected real-world example of continuity of care: some people coming back to MAHEC's COVID vaccine clinics and remembering that I gave them their first shot, too!) Besides,

what more beautiful place is there to pretty much study abroad during med school? When I'm not doing med student things, I enjoy browsing the North Asheville Tailgate Market, sampling the newest seasonal flavors at Sunshine Sammies, improving my snatch technique, and snuggling with my cat sons.



Ambika Viswanathan



Hey everyone, my name is Ambika and I'm one of the MS3s who gets to call Asheville home for clinical year! I grew up in Chapel Hill just a few minutes away from UNC's campus before going to Princeton for undergrad where I studied Computer Science. After college I spent one year working at a biotech company before coming back to NC for medical school.

Coming into med school I thought I would stay in CH for my clinical years, but my two roommates (who are both here with me!) convinced me to come to the visit day. After visiting AVL and meeting some of the

incredible preceptors here, I was hooked. And now that I am here, the preceptors have been even better than I thought, teaching me clinical medicine but also about how I want to carry myself as a future physician.

Outside of clinic I have really enjoyed eating at many of Asheville's delicious food spots, hiking on weekends, and just went on my first backpacking trip! The Asheville cohort as well is a family that I'm so honored to be a part of! Even though COVID has made it hard at times, everyone has done such a wonderful job of staying close and creating a beautiful community.

Linnea Westerkam

Hi, my name is Linnea and I am one of the students doing Application Phase in Asheville. I grew up in South Carolina and then moved to New York City to attend Barnard College where I studied Tibetan Buddhism, language, and culture. After graduating college, I worked for the Undiagnosed Diseases Program at the National Institutes of Health. I was very excited to be attending UNC for medical school and am very happy completing Application Phase in Asheville. The staff, faculty, and my preceptors have been amazing and are a big reason I chose this campus. I was also drawn to the longitudinal program, which has allowed me to follow patient care over months while also providing the time to explore my different interests in medicine. Outside of clinic and the hospital, I've loved exploring Asheville and spending time with family. I'm looking forward to continuing 3rd here and am happy to answer any questions!



Clark Williamson



Hey everyone! My name is Clark and I am spending my year of clinical rotations in Asheville. I am originally from Statesville, NC and I grew up taking trips to the Blue Ridge mountains with my family on a nearly monthly basis, so I feel very fortunate to be spending the year up here. I graduated from UNC several years ago with a degree in public health, which led me to spend a year in the Andes mountains working for a public health organization combatting childhood anemia and working to reduce the prevalence of communicable

diseases. These experiences have made me desire to incorporate as many preventive measures in my career as possible.

In my spare time I enjoy cooking and baking, forever trying to replicate my mother's recipes and falling short more often than not. I also find meals to be an adventure worth savoring, so living in a food city like Asheville has been a real treat this year. I played tennis growing up and through college and I enjoy playing any chance I get. I like running, but I'm starting to think it's mainly because it gives me a reason to make a smoothie afterwards. I have a healthy relationship with coffee, and pride myself on the pour over I make every morning. I'm looking forward to many more hikes, beers, and experiences to come while living among these wondrous mountains!