

My journey always leads me back to the medical field, reaffirming my unwavering commitment to becoming a physician. I firmly believe that an exceptional provider embodies compassion, curiosity, adaptability, and effective communication. These qualities enable physicians to foster trust with patients in their care. Curiosity drives them to continuously seek knowledge and stay current with medical advancements, ensuring they deliver the best possible care. Compassion allows one to connect emotionally with patients, providing comfort and understanding. Adaptability empowers them to navigate the ever-evolving medical field, addressing new challenges with resilience and creativity. Effective communication ensures that they can convey complex medical information clearly and empathetically. These four core values have been the foundation of my personal and professional development, inspiring me to strive for excellence in my quest to become the best physician I can be.

Curiosity: During my high school years I was involved in the sports medicine program which opened the door to a field that I wanted to learn more about. Since then, I have chosen classes and extracurriculars that provided me with opportunities to learn and explore multiple aspects of the medical field. After graduation, I enrolled in the Red Cross Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) course in order to work directly with patients. As a CNA in a nursing home, I learned basic patient care and the value of simply listening, whether assisting with daily living tasks or companionship. During my sophomore year at Louisiana State University (LSU), I worked as a Physical Therapy Technician helping patients with mobility exercises and observing therapies such as dry needling and neck traction. Each experience has shown me different approaches to healing and deepened my drive to learn more about the medical field.

Compassion: Since graduating from LSU, I have worked in the main operating rooms at Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center as a Case Technician. I am part of the patient's surgical care team and am responsible for compiling the instrument sets for the cases and making sure the rooms are stocked with necessary supplies. Additionally, I help by scrubbing in to hold retractors or operate cameras, and I frequently make trips to the lab to support the surgical team. Being a critical part of the staff and positively impacting someone's life has demonstrated the importance of every role and the direct impact we can all have on each and every patient.

**Adaptability:** Spring semester of my junior year at LSU, I battled a recurring staph infection which resulted in being hospitalized with MRSA and facing a possible amputation. I was terrified, in pain, confused and uncertain about what would happen next. I had to constantly adapt to each new infection and regimen as well as continue to complete my assignments and study for my classes. My experience as a patient showed me how difficult it can be to juggle appointments and treatments, classes and work, and the fear that comes with it. As a physician, I will carry this experience with me and when it comes time for me to deliver difficult news or complex diagnoses I will be able to put myself in the patient's shoes and provide them solace. Knowing what it's like on the other side of the bed renders me more adaptable because I understand and will remain flexible and understanding in order to deliver the best care possible.

**Communication:** At LSU, I earned the Distinguished Communicator Medal through the Communication across the Curriculum program. I learned to communicate through writing, speaking, visuals and technology, culminating in an ePortfolio to showcase my achievements. Students in consideration of the medal must take courses that are certified for one of the four modes of communication. The GeauxTeach program at LSU allows students to graduate with a bachelor's degree and a secondary education teaching certificate. Through the program, I learned how to communicate complex topics for comprehension and not just memorization. In the field of medicine, continuous learning is essential, as physicians must stay current with emerging technologies and the latest research to ensure their patients are well informed and benefit from the most advanced techniques available. When a patient understands their diagnosis, they will be more comfortable with completing treatment plans and be reassured everything is being done to help heal them. Actively helping patients expand their health literacy is important to me as a future physician.

Throughout this gap year, I have dedicated myself to refining my core values and integrating them into my daily responsibilities. In the operating room, I consistently practice effective communication, adaptability, curiosity, and compassion, qualities that often intersect and collectively guide my approach to supporting patients during their most vulnerable moments. My experiences and accomplishments on the path toward medical school have not only strengthened these values but have deepened my understanding of what it truly means to help, listen, and lead within a healthcare setting.