

I applied to medical school after two years of working a day job in Boston. Living in the city over that period was vibrant and exciting, and a city was 100% where I wanted to continue living in for medical school. Downstate, being in the center of Brooklyn, absolutely fit my desire to remain in a city. Another main factor that drew me to Downstate was the reputation for an outstanding clinical experience. Outside of New York, Downstate does not have the name recognition of several other prominent schools. However, after delving deeper and talking to former and current students, I heard stories of exposure to a diverse underserved population that exposes students to all the illness and issues we could possibly experience throughout our career, including some that we would never see anywhere else. In addition, I heard that Downstate students have the opportunity to become actively involved in healthcare through rotations at busy inner-city hospitals, and thought that it would be great to leave medical school with real hands-on experience before beginning residency. Finally, I was concerned about the enormous cost of medical school, and the cherry on top for Downstate was the opportunity to apply for NY State residency and qualify for in state tuition after one year.

Looking back as my fourth year comes to a close, I realize I was totally on the money with so many of my expectations. Our coursework during the first 1.5 years was rigorous, as expected of medical school, but it was well organized and integrated with preliminary clinical experience that put our newly learned textbook concepts into perspective as soon as we learned them. What most surprised me about these basic science years were how supportive my classmates were. Even in our large class of about 190 people, we all found unity in the goal to succeed in learning the material, and in our hour of need, we had nearly 189 other students ready to lend a helping hand. After transitioning to the clinical years, I realized where Downstate's reputation for clinical excellence came from. The breadth of pathology was amazing; in any one day we could see people with extremely early to extremely late stages of common and uncommon illnesses. In addition, students are given an extraordinary amount of responsibility when on rotations, including the capacity to make medical decisions for your patient, draw their blood, and assist with procedures. The level of responsibility increased with my level of experience, and at this point in fourth year, I am absolutely confident in my ability to function as a resident. I am extremely excited to carry forward what I have learned into residency, and I know that, wherever I go, I have the skills to become a leader in my residency class and beyond.

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