

Hello! Welcome and congratulations on your acceptance to Downstate! My name is Cleo and I am a fourth year medical student applying to Family Medicine residencies across the United States (I'll tell you where I end up after Match Day). I was born and raised in Washington, DC but moved to NYC for college and stayed to work in clinical research, and so I entered Downstate as an in-state applicant. I came to medicine wanting to work with urban underserved populations, and am currently a National Health Service Corps scholar, meaning that I will work in a federally designated health-professional shortage area after I finish my residency.

I chose to come to Downstate for several reasons. First of all, I am a firm believer in the public education system. I believe that healthcare is a human right and thus education for doctors should be a publicly funded endeavor. Likewise, I wanted the opportunity to work in a public hospital system during my clinical rotations, which is possible at Downstate. I was similarly intrigued by the Brooklyn Free Clinic (BFC), which is Downstate's student-run free clinic for uninsured patients, of which I am currently one of the co-directors (It's great! Volunteer when you get here!). In addition to the opportunity to work with underserved patients, I heard from several practicing New York-area physicians that Downstate provides excellent clinical training and that Downstate graduates are particularly well known amongst residency directors in the tri-state area for their skills and competencies coming out of medical school. Lastly, NYC is the best city in the world, and Brooklyn is one of the most amazing places to go to medical school. I promise.

And so I started medical school at Downstate hoping to get a good education (on the cheaper – though still not cheap – side) in the city I love, while practicing medicine in a setting that speaks to my moral ethics. I figured I would work hard for four years, be miserable, and come out a doctor who was ready to practice medicine the way she wanted to. Girl, was I wrong. Downstate is *fun*. FUN. **FUN**. The people are amazing: brilliant, interesting, diverse, passionate, courageous, dedicated, and *great* dancers. I have made wonderful life-long friends amongst my classmates and met such incredible future colleagues amongst the faculty. From the annual Ski Trip (trust me, it's not about skiing) to the annual Spring Fling at the Brooklyn Museum, and all of the impromptu class get-togethers in between, there are so many ways that we get to explore Brooklyn and spend time with one another outside the classroom. When I was not having fun, I also had a wonderful experience learning medicine. I *loved* the accelerated pre-clinical curriculum that allowed for ample time to practice medicine on the wards, and I learned so much during all of my clinical rotations. There is no doubt that I feel fully prepared to enter residency and wholly competent to provide excellent medical care to those in need of it.

I love Downstate. If you choose to come here, I promise you will too.

Best,

Cleo