

My name is Sara and I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY, so I've been aware of SUNY Downstate from childhood. My uncle did his Internal Medicine residency at Kings County and he would always say, "If you can survive County, you can survive anything." When I was applying to medical school, Downstate was my first choice by far. In high school and college, I became very passionate about advocating for people who were underprivileged or underserved. When researching medical schools to apply to, Downstate's social mission to take care of anyone who came through the door resonated with me and reinforced my desire to come here.

Once I got to Downstate, I realized that the strength of this school is the people. Faculty, students, and administrators are so incredibly supportive and facilitate an amazing learning environment. Before medical school, a couple of friends who were already in training (not at Downstate) told me that med school was the worst, but if I keep my head down and just focus, I'll get through it. My experience at medical school could not have been any more different than that. I have been stupidly happy these past four years. Yes, it is stressful--it's medical school! But it has also been the time of my life that I've come into my own and it is because Downstate is filled with kind and compassionate people who are driven to do good.

At Downstate, I found out firsthand that the work of a doctor does not end outside the hospital or office. Rather, we are taught to be active and aware of all the problems plaguing our patients--because how can someone be healthy if they do not have access to basic necessities such as food and shelter? Downstate trains the next generation of physicians to truly be advocates for our patients, no matter who they are or where they are from.

On top of how amazing it is to learn the true calling of a physician, at Downstate my hands-on training is unparalleled. Our patients are people who have not had regular access to care and come to us in the later stages of disease. Kings County is a very busy place; so medical students are readily pulled into the fray to work as actual members of the team. I cannot tell you the amount of stories I've told my friends at other schools and their reactions are, "You got to do what?!" My hands-on training rivals some interns at different institutions. On my interviews for residency programs, attendings take one look at the list of places I've done rotations at and immediately lean forward, eyes shining with excitement, "Tell me about Kings County!"

Bottom line: Downstate is a place to learn how to be a doctor who cares and can take care of the sickest patients all while being amongst an ebullient group of like-minded people.