

Throughout medical school I have committed myself to finding the one specialty that aligns perfectly with my personality and future goals. While this task seemed straightforward and uncomplicated, I soon realized during my third-year clerkships that every area of medicine offered aspects I enjoyed. After exploring other specialties, I reflected on the qualities that I wished to possess as a physician. I envisioned myself as compassionate, respected, and knowledgeable, traits which I realized embodied the field of internal medicine. My intense self-reflection, combined with my medical school experiences, solidified my decision to pursue a residency in internal medicine.

The first patient I admitted while on my third-year internal medicine clerkship was an African American lady who was diagnosed with sarcoidosis. After I completed my history and physical, I realized the questions I had asked relied upon my ability to combine my knowledge of pathophysiology along with the clinical presentation of a disease process. At last I comprehended the importance of the basic science years as it related to patient care. I continued to follow this patient every day, and the responsibility of caring for someone's health had both a significant and fulfilling impact on me. I gained immense satisfaction from treating the whole person: her emotional needs as well as her medical needs. After completing my twelve weeks on internal medicine, I discovered that four months later this patient was re-admitted for a pulmonary embolus, which combined with her diminished lung function, ultimately resulted in her passing away. Although I was only a small part of this woman's care, I still felt connected to her. While her death saddened me, it also made me conscious of the potential rewards, such as lasting patient-doctor relationships, which could only come out of providing a lifetime of care to each of my patients.

Upon the completion of my third-year rotations, I felt that the role of the internist most closely matched my interests and abilities. The variety and complexity of the problems I encountered offered the intellectual stimulation that I desired in a medical field. I admired my attendings' breadth of knowledge across various medical disciplines, and I took pleasure in collaborating with physicians of all specialties, especially when the diagnosis proved to be difficult. The opportunity for close patient contact was also an appealing aspect. With fewer responsibilities than an intern, I found that as a third-year medical student I was able to spend more time with my patients, explaining how a diagnosis is made and what treatments might be required. Encouraged by these experiences with my patients, I was inspired to learn more about their conditions, not only for my own personal knowledge but also for their education as well.

I have many attributes to contribute to internal medicine. My experiences as a secondary education school teacher, Special Olympics swim coach, and elected class officer attest to my ability to lead and educate others. I am also analytical and detail-oriented, characteristics which originally led me to complete an undergraduate degree in economics. After my first year of medical school, I was awarded a scholarship to conduct research in the field of trauma surgery, an experience which enhanced my problem solving skills. In addition, my years as a varsity swimmer at Duke University have endowed me with certain traits that will not only make me a successful internist but also a well-balanced physician. These qualities include a never-ending quest for personal improvement, pride in my work or training, and the ability to focus on several tasks while balancing personal and professional obligations.

I value a program with a talented faculty that is eager to teach, as well as a program that will provide me with a broad exposure to the various sub-specialties of internal medicine. I seek a residency program that will support and encourage my curiosity and provide me with opportunities for clinical research. My enthusiasm and drive to excel will be among the strengths I will bring to a program. I feel comfortable working in a team environment, and I possess the interpersonal skills necessary to communicate among various physicians. As I embark on my journey to become a knowledgeable internist, I look forward to finding the program that is not only the right fit for me, but also the program that finds me the right fit for them.