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TIPS FROM CURRENT D.D.S. AND D.H. STUDENTS

NINE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD APPLY TO SMDEP TODAY!

Posted by [Marteki Codjoe](#) on November 13, 2014

In 2011, I decided to apply to the Summer Medical and Dental Educational Program (SMDEP). I was so happy to be accepted to SMDEP at Case Western Reserve University, and I had no idea I was about to have the best summer of my life. Three years later, I am actually a dental student. As an SMDEP alumna, I want to share my thoughts on why you should [apply today!](#)

1. It's a productive use of your summer.

What you do during your summertime in undergrad is crucial to making yourself an attractive dental school applicant. I always made a conscious effort to be productive and do something worthwhile when I was not in school—summer programs, traveling, study abroad or working. I wanted to further explore the field of dentistry, and during school I was constantly bogged down with academics and extracurricular activities, so the summer was the best time to learn more about dentistry. SMDEP gave me the opportunity to do something that was within my desired career during the summer months. Participating

in SMDEP was the perfect way to spend my summer, and I was very pleased with those six weeks I spent in Cleveland!

2. You get great exposure to the field you are interested in!

As an undergraduate student, I constantly looked for opportunities that would help me learn more about the dental profession. I was able to shadow various types of dentists—general dentists, pediatricians, oral surgeons and endodontists at SMDEP. I even got to be in the operating room, which was really cool!

SMDEP granted me access to pretty much every type of dentistry in one setting. We got a good feel for the different things we would likely experience as a dental professional through the rotations we did and the procedures we watched.



SMDEP is both a medical *and* dental program, so I was able to get a feel for the medical field as well. In addition to doing rotations, we supplemented our knowledge of these fields with discussions of other professions within the field (such as public health), current issues facing the health care professions, and personal stories from the physicians, dentists, students and faculty.



3. SMDEP looks great on your application.

SMDEP is a national program. When you fill in “SMDEP” in the “activities” section of your dental school application, the admissions officers will instantly recognize the program and associate its name with the caliber of student that it fosters—it is an impressive program that selects highly qualified individuals.

4. Your SMDEP classmates will be friends for life.

I don’t know how they choose the people for this program, but my classmates really enriched the

SMDEP experience for me. It’s crazy how close we got after only six weeks! We knew everything about each other and were always hanging out. We would stay up until 3 or 4 a.m. (even though we had class) just talking and getting to know one another. SMDEP has different social activities built into the program, like ice-skating, amusement park trips and baseball games. Going on all these adventures with my SMDEP family just made each experience exponentially better. One day we even took an impromptu trip to Niagara Falls in Canada!

My classmates were and still are my family. They motivated me to continue to pursue dentistry (there were times I was hesitant). They motivated me to keep on track when I was back in undergrad. We held each other accountable and always kept track of one another. I was always pleased to hear news of friends getting into dental or medical school. I actually ended up going to the same dental school as one my SMDEP friends! Trust me, if you ask anyone the top two reasons why they loved SMDEP, I guarantee they will say they loved their classmates as one of those answers!

5. You will learn so much.

We took biology, chemistry and other courses that were really beneficial for both undergrad and in preparation for the DAT/MCAT. The pre dental students had a class about some of the basics of dentistry, including dental anatomy and terminology. We even got some hands-on experience. I remembered that information I learned in class and used it when I was shadowing dentists and volunteering. They were impressed!



When I came to dental school, I already knew some dental terms, which was surprising because SMDEP was so long ago for me. Other than science courses, we took some really interesting classes including how to study, sociology and how to write a personal statement.

6. It's basically FREE and you get a stipend!

Housing = paid.

Most meals = paid.

Stipend = So helpful!

Some sites even offer help for travel costs. Need I say more?

7. Helpful networking opportunities.

All of these program sites are within large medical areas. There are SO many physicians, surgeons, dentists and pediatricians (and every profession you can think of) around. I got to meet with the faculty, several dentists and admissions officers, and I even got a chance to have a mock interview with the Dean of Admissions! There are plenty of chances for you to network during SMDEP. As an SMDEP alumna I have attended some alumni events and have been able to network there as well. The benefits of SMDEP don't end when the summer does.



8. SMDEP will help you confirm your desire to pursue your career choice.

As cliché as it might sound, I've known I wanted to be a dentist for a long time, but I must admit, when I began undergrad, I started feeling very hesitant. Admissions officers often came to our Predental Society meetings and their presentations about acceptance rates and stories about how hard dental school can be really scared me. I questioned if I had the drive and determination in me to get accepted to dental school and then endure the rigors of being a dental student. I also wasn't sure if I wanted to be

in school another four years, to be honest. So many of my engineering friends had jobs right out of school, and I thought I wanted that.

SMDEP totally put my mind at ease, and my insecurities about pursuing dentistry vanished. Doing SMDEP helped me confirm that dentistry was the profession I was going to pursue ... no matter what. It was so refreshing to be in an environment where there were so many people striving for the same goal. The people inspired me, the staff supported me and the dentists taught me so much. I came back to Tech with a fire in me and finished my last two and a half years very strong. Then, I applied to dental school, got accepted—and now I'm here as a UAB dental student.

Some other students from SMDEP decided that the medical/dental field wasn't for them. That's okay too! Everyone has his or her own story and own path. Either way, SMDEP helped bring everyone to their respective conclusions.

9. The one of a kind experience.

I could honestly go on about SMDEP forever. I'm a huge advocate for participating in the program and have encouraged several students to apply. If you ask any of my SMDEP family or the students I encouraged to go, they will tell you it was the best summer of their lives. What made it so memorable for me were the people, being able to experience the field that I wanted to pursue and realizing how much I wanted to do anything to become a dentist after the program was over. SMDEP had a huge impact on my life, and I hope you can experience the same thing. [APPLY TODAY!](#)

Keywords: [Dental School](#), [Studying](#), [Shadowing](#), [Predental](#), [Opportunities](#), [SMDEP](#), [Summer Enrichment Programs](#)

ABOUT MARTEKI CODJOE:



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Ms. Codjoe was originally born in Alberta, Canada, but spent most of her upbringing in Dalton, GA. She attended Georgia Institute of Technology, where she earned a B.S. in Biology and a minor in Spanish in 2013. During her undergraduate years, she was involved in several extracurricular activities, including the African Student Association (ASA) and Predental Society. She held numerous leadership positions in both organizations. She also danced for ASA in performances both inside and outside of school.

Ms. Codjoe also maintained several jobs throughout her college career, including working in a testing center for students with disabilities, as a suite attendant for Georgia Tech football games, as a seasonal sales associate in Macy's, as the International Student Welcome Week Coordinator for the Office of International Education, and more. She spent her summertime studying abroad in Spain, traveling to Ghana, working, attending SMDEP and enjoying friends.

Ms. Codjoe has also been involved in several volunteering opportunities, including Team Buzz, Women's Day of Service, Books for Africa, the Global Soap Project, and more.

She enjoys dancing, cooking, and spending time with friends!