USU Eastern-Blanding Celebrates 50th Student Accepted to Medical and Dental School | Eastern

03/16/2016

Travis Frazier is the 50th student from USU Eastern-Blanding to be accepted to a medical or dental school.

Travis Frazier, a Native American student at Utah State University Eastern-Blanding, recently became the 50th student from the campus to be accepted into medical or dental school.

Frazier moved to Blanding with his family at the age of 10. The move from American Fork to Blanding was an adjustment for Frazier, who was not accustomed to living in a rural area, especially an area with a strong Native American population and culture. Frazier, who is of Navajo heritage, had to leave the comfort zone of his early youth to reach out and engage with other Native Americans, a process that would prove beneficial later in his life.

USU Eastern’s impact on Frazier’s academic life began while he was a student at San Juan High School by offering concurrent enrollment courses. Frazier was able to graduate high school with a full year of college credit already completed, allowing him to finish his associate degree at USU Eastern within one year of high school graduation.

After finishing his associate degree, Frazier thought to follow in the same career footsteps as his father, an engineer, and began studying electrical engineering at Southern Utah University (SUU). However, while at SUU his father encouraged him to look into a medical internship at the Northern Navajo Medical Center (NNMC), a hospital located in Shiprock, NM. Initially hesitant, he took his father’s advice and accepted the 6-week internship, which would alter his academic and career path when the internship sparked his interest in medicine.

His love of the Navajo people and culture was also reconfirmed to him while working at the NNMC. After living in an area without many Native American influences for many years, Frazier was inspired by the deep connection he felt to the Navajo people he was working with, and determined to continue serving them throughout his career.

Following his new-found interest in medicine, Frazier began studying exercise science at Utah Valley University (UVU), and planned to attend medical school after earning his undergraduate degree. After a year at UVU, he decided to take two years out of education to serve a mission in Alberta, Canada for his church. While in Canada, Frazier’s connection to native cultures was strengthened through working with the Blackfoot and Cree nations. His experiences adjusting to life in Blanding proved beneficial in helping him get to know the members of these Native American groups in a different area of the world.

After completing his mission Frazier enrolled in Brigham Young University. His coursework at UVU filled most of the class prerequisites for medical school, and Frazier decided to take the opportunity to study language while at BYU, knowing he would have his fill of medical coursework later in medical school. He completed his bachelor’s degree in French at BYU, along with the few remaining medical school prerequisites.

He began immediately applying to various medical schools, and attended several interviews at schools in New Mexico and Arizona. He was not accepted into a school initially, so he rewrote his applications and reapplied, only to not be accepted once again. Unsure if he wanted to apply a third time, Frazier began the medical assisting certification course at USU Eastern-Blanding, and graduated in Spring 2015 with a 96% on the exam—a fantastic result. He began working in Blanding’s San Juan Clinic, and determined to change his focus with regards
to choosing medical schools to apply to. He started a third round of applications. This time, he focused on schools that would cater more to his desire to work in family medicine in a rural setting. The change in focus proved successful. Travis was accepted into two medical school programs—Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine and the University of North Dakota.

Frazier is excited to start medical school in August, and hopes to use his life experiences from living in Blanding, his various education experiences, church service, and future qualifications while pursuing his medical degree and ultimately practicing family medicine in rural areas.

“I wouldn't give up my experiences for the world,” said Frazier. “The setbacks I faced only pushed me to work harder, and they taught me lessons I'll be able to use for the rest of my life.”

For more information about USU Eastern-Blanding’s course offerings, visit usueastern.edu/areas-of-study.