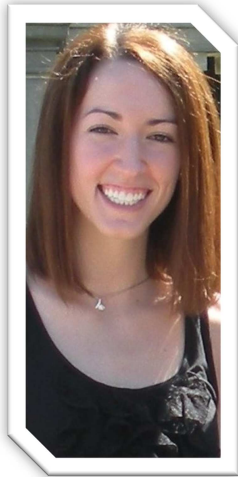




Education at URMC – Student Perspectives



Name: Rachel Zigler

Hometown: St. Louis, MO

Undergraduate Degree: B.S. in Biology and B.A. in Psychology from the University of Missouri

Graduate Degree: M.D. Class of 2012

Areas of Interest: Women's health, birth control, reproductive genetics, eating disorders

Background Information

I was born and raised in a suburb of St. Louis, Missouri (Chesterfield). No one in my family is in medicine—my mom is a teacher, my dad is a businessman, and my brother is a commercial real estate agent. My family is a pretty big sports family, so in high school, I played softball, basketball, soccer and lacrosse. I continued to play lacrosse at the University of Missouri and became a captain my sophomore year. That same year, we became champs of our league (Go Tigers!). Like many of you, I'm sure, I did way too many extracurricular activities throughout school in addition to sports, so I won't bore you any longer! Currently, I am a 4th year medical student and the President of the Class of 2012.

Why did you choose The University of Rochester Medical Center?

This is a question I get asked often as my home is more than 850 miles away. When I was making a list of schools to apply to, I knew I wanted a school with Problem Based Learning (PBL) since I got a taste of it in one of my college courses. I saw Rochester in the big purple MSAR book, and the rest is history. When I received an interview invite, my college advisors were like, really? Rochester? It snows a lot there. Seriously, though, it took less than 15 minutes on interview day for me to be completely sold on Rochester. The rest of the day was just icing on the cake. I went to interviews knowing that academics are similar among schools—yes, the way they are taught may be different, but the content is the same. I was looking for a place where I would be happy, and Rochester was just that. I had never seen happier students and faculty members, and I still find this to be true in my 4th year. I really felt, and still feel, at home here at Rochester. The small class size makes it easy to know everyone and the faculty is always there for the students. It was a fantastic bonus that our curriculum totally meshed with me, too!

Tell us about your program

I am in the MD Class of 2012 and also take part in our school's novel Medical Education Pathway (MEP). There are a ton of opportunities here at Rochester, and the MEP is just one of them. Through this Pathway, I have had the opportunity to create and deliver an original lecture to 2nd year students, teach patient interviewing skills to 1st year students in small group sessions, and facilitate problem based learning groups. The Pathway has been a wonderful addition to my education here at Rochester. Other than the MEP, I have really benefited from our early clinical experience in the Double Helix Curriculum. I realized this the most during my 3rd year when I felt totally comfortable speaking with and getting a story from patients in the hospital. It allowed me to jump right into my rotations full speed rather than having to spend time at the beginning trying to find my footing.

What are your career aspirations?

I am currently applying to residency programs in Obstetrics and Gynecology. It fits my multi-tasking style—some days you're in the clinic, some days delivering babies, some days in the operating room. I hope to continue teaching by staying in academic medicine. One day, I hope to cure the world with birth control. Or become Dean of a Medical School. Or both.

What are some of the things you have learned since you came to Rochester?

Besides the obvious, I have learned to take time out for myself. I know, it seems backwards to learn this at medical school, one of the most time consuming things I have ever done. But, I remember clearly during the first year Human Structure and Function course that the faculty urged us to do just that. It was one of the most beneficial things I could have done for myself. On another note, I have learned that the snow crews in Rochester are fantastic! While my mom calls me from back home saying they got 2 inches and have a day off school, we get 2 feet and can make it into school easily (no, I'm not bitter).

Any Advice for perspective students?

Find a place that makes you happy! Talk with current students when you interview and see if these are people you want to spend time with. You will be in school for at least 4 years, so you need to be at a place where you feel comfortable and at home. I ultimately chose Rochester over my cheaper state school, and I would do it again in a heartbeat. I have made it through with a smile on my face, and that, to me, is worth it.