

Laura Cone



Hey there! My name is Laura Cone, one of the medical students doing my 3rd year as part of the Asheville Program. I was born and raised on the coast in Jacksonville, NC. I went to undergrad at NCSU and am still a huge Wolfpack fan at heart. In fact, I still made it back to Raleigh for many football games this year. I studied Biomedical Engineering in undergrad and decided about halfway through that medicine was a better fit for me. I couldn't be happier about my decision to go into medicine and to spend my 3rd year in Asheville.

Having lived in the piedmont and on the coast, I thought I would give the mountains of NC a chance. I'm so glad I did because I have absolutely fallen in love with the community here. The program was very attractive to me because of the ability to form relationships with patients as you would as a practicing physician. You get to know their stories and can truly impact their lives even as a 3rd year student. I have been also able to personalize my curriculum to fit my interests and learn from incredible attendings in a one-on-one setting. The ethics curriculum and ED rotations are also such unique opportunities that have truly enriched my experience. Next year, I will be heading back to Chapel Hill for my MPH and will likely pursue a career in Family Medicine. Asheville itself is such an amazing city with great food, beautiful views, outdoor activities, and people. I highly recommend it to anybody ready for an amazing adventure for the 3rd year of medical school!

Ginny Crowder



Hi all! My name is Virginia Crowder. I originally grew up in Charlotte, NC, but I made my way over to the triangle region for my undergraduate at Duke, where I majored in Psychology. I took a year off after undergrad to do research in women's mental health at UNC and was incredibly excited when I got accepted in to UNC Med. I have loved being a medical student at UNC, and I love being a part of the Asheville program.

I came into third year with thoughts of going into psychiatry, neurology, or pediatrics, although I really have been one of those people who loves everything she does. This can be both good and bad, depending on how you look at it. Fortunately, I have had good mentors and experiences here to help guide my interests. My patients have also helped me learn too. They teach me not just about medicine but also about where I truly see myself practicing as a physician. I have

been fortunate to follow the same patients from an outpatient setting to the ER and then to the inpatient units. Through these experiences, I have found I feel most effective when I am caring for a patient in the acute setting. Who knew?! Thanks to these exposures, I am now considering careers in emergency medicine or peds critical care, a direction that I am incredibly excited about.

On top of great clinical experiences, the Asheville program has another amazing plus—Asheville. I never knew how much I was missing in the mountains until I lived here. The people, the activities, the city itself---they are all amazing. It never hurts that I can be on the parkway in 10 minutes after a stressful day at work. Despite the hectic life of third year, I still have time to run, climb, and hike-basically spend as much time outdoors as possible.

Rachel Harper



Hey y'all, thanks for taking a look at the Asheville program. My name is Rachel and I grew up in Raleigh, attended UNC for undergrad and didn't even know I wanted to be a doctor until senior year. Before medical school I lived in Thailand, which sparked my expanding commitment to global health. Although I bleed Carolina Blue, I decided to apply to the program in Asheville because I liked the idea of learning through building relationships with patients and preceptors. The Asheville Longitudinal Integrated Curriculum is a wonderful alternative to traditional medical education. As a third year student I have been able to develop my career interests, build meaningful connections with patients and feel responsible for providing quality medical care.

I have really enjoyed living in Asheville. The local, creative and delicious food options are continually difficult to choose between, but on a nice day, you will find me outside the city on one of the many hiking trails. Importantly, this town has two NPR stations, one of which plays bluegrass music almost all day long!

Lastly, my favorite part about the Asheville program is the freedom to explore all areas of medicine; not only is the curriculum built to include a wide array of experiences, but I have used my open half days to participate in cardiothoracic surgeries, get more time on labor and delivery, develop a good pediatric eye exam and

much more. With the support of our wonderful faculty and staff, I have even been able to lead a research project at the OB/GYN clinic. Right now, I am looking forward to fourth year and matching in either anesthesiology or medicine and pediatrics. I know that the experiences I have had in Asheville will only help me to be the physician I want to be.

Katie Jordan



Hi, my name is Katie Jordan. I grew up in Brevard, a small town in the mountains about an hour south of Asheville and went to Williams College in Massachusetts, where I studied psychology and neuroscience. In between college and medical school, I spent a year working with a small community based nonprofit in rural Alabama. I helped start a home for women with mental illness and also managed afterschool tutoring programs for local children.

I am happy to be back close to home for MS3- Asheville is a great place to live. My favorite local activities are hiking in the beautiful mountains of Pisgah Forest and eating delicious food at the local restaurants. The Asheville program has been fantastic. I appreciate the opportunity to form year-long relationships with faculty and patients. The faculty here goes above and beyond to help us learn. They want us to become knowledgeable doctors, but they also help us navigate the emotional and ethical aspects of our new clinical experiences with courses on ethics and the art of medicine. The Asheville curriculum has other advantages for the intellectual development of medical students. I love getting to explore different specialties during afternoons set aside for self-directed learning and we have the advantage of having an emergency room rotation during our third year. I am never bored and always learning. This year has challenged me and has been extremely rewarding.

David Kennedy



Howdy, my name is David Kennedy, better known as “DK.” It’s a pleasure to “edumacate y’all” about the Asheville Program. But first, a little about myself, I’ve always had a fascination with places and cultures and the human-environment interface. These interests led me to pursue a B.A. in Geography from UNC (that, and the fact that Michael Jordan was a Geography major). It wasn’t until my final semester in college that I decided to pursue a career in medicine. Up to that point, I was contemplating a career as an academic in the field of medical geography. Nonetheless, given my equally strong attraction to the biological sciences, I was eventually drawn to a career in medicine, and, to satisfy my social science background, likely a career in public health. In fact, next year I am taking a break

from medical school to complete an MPH degree from the School of Public Health at UNC. And this summer I am headed to the shores of Lake Geneva at the foot of the Alps to work at the WHO.

This is the Asheville Program in a nutshell: Today, I worked at the VA clinic and was able to incise and drain a boil (and listen to some remarkable stories from our veterans). Yesterday, I worked at the Family Medicine clinic where performed a bilateral knee injection, started a depressed 14 year old on an SSRI, and followed-up on a patient with symptomatic hypokalemia. Tomorrow, I will attend a radiology session in the morning and head to the psychiatry clinic to follow-up on my longitudinal patients there. I also had a half-day “off” earlier this week, so I was able to study for a Shelf exam and call a few of my longitudinal patients to relay lab results and coordinate specialty appointments. Another half-day was spent in the Emergency Department where I put in admission orders for a patient with urinary sepsis, smelled the “fruity breath” of a DKA patient, and witnessed the acute management of an obtunded patient with cyanide poisoning. Pretty cool, huh? And, if after all of that excitement you’re still not convinced, head on down to the Bywater (by car, bike, foot or boat) to enjoy some live music and a good local beverage.



Mimi Konitzer

My name is Mimi Konitzer, and moving to Asheville for my 3rd year of medical school has been a great decision for me in many ways. I graduated from UNC-Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Science in Biology in 2007. After college, I worked for AmeriCorps in Raleigh as an employment advisor to underserved populations. I returned to UNC for medical school in 2010. It was around this same time that I met my future fiancé on a women's fly fishing trip (he was the fishing guide!)

My decision to move to Asheville was based both on my professional and personal goals. Professionally, I knew that the longitudinal curriculum and the close collaboration with faculty would be most conducive to my hands-on style of learning. I also knew that the flexible schedule would allow for me to obtain extra experience in

areas of medicine for which I'm most interested. On a personal level, I was happy to move closer to my loved ones. I am completely content with life in Asheville whether I am working in the clinic with my preceptors or hiking on the Blue Ridge Parkway. I feel at home in Asheville!

Jacob Stein



My name is Jake Stein, and I'm really excited to be here in Asheville for my third year. I'm originally from Durham, NC, but have always loved the western part of the state, and am pleased to be back in the mountains. I did my undergrad at Emory University, in Atlanta, GA, where I majored in Creative Writing. After graduation, I returned to Durham, where I worked in PTSD research at the VA hospital before heading 11 miles down the road to begin med school. Since starting, I have found myself drawn to internal medicine, medical ethics, as well as in global health, which has led me to Mexico and Senegal for

opportunities abroad. In my free time, I get out into the beautiful mountains, play music, and enjoy the many great restaurants and breweries in Asheville.

My third year has been amazing, in large part due to this excellent longitudinal curriculum. Here, we have the opportunity to form long term mentoring relationships with our faculty members. We have ongoing engagement in patient care with folks that truly become *our* patients. We get the chance to work with providers in a wide variety of specialties, for direct exposure to any aspect of medicine that intrigues us. We have regular ER shifts, and see many folks in the acute phase of disease presentation and diagnosis. There are biweekly radiology lectures, giving us a strong foundation in the imaging modalities that are increasingly a major part of medicine. We have an ethics curriculum that explores some of the most challenging aspects of medicine that aren't often discussed.

Most of all, here in Asheville, I feel a part of the medical community – an integrated member of the health care team. Each week, I'm building on my skills and my responsibilities, and gaining confidence with the autonomy and trust I am afforded. This is an excellent program – a place where you can get an elite education, accompanied by support, rather than burnout. I feel tremendously lucky to have had this opportunity to be here in Asheville for my third year, and I would strongly encourage anyone else to consider it.

Eli Tiller



Hi there! We Asheville students are very happy you've taken an interest in our program. I am just one of two handfuls of students fortunate enough to spend a third and fourth-year of medical school in the Asheville Longitudinal Program. My favorite parts of the program are few of its main tenants: the close work with individual attending physician preceptors, the daily adventure in jumping from one area of medicine to the next, the adult learning model, the continuity with individual patients throughout the year, and the tight-knit

group of my fellow students. What's more, Asheville is a beautiful fun place to live, and there is a great need for dedicated physicians in the NC Mountains.

Throughout the course of the year, I have the opportunity to cover details of each patient's long-term healthcare needs: from acute visits, to chronic illness management, to specialist consults and hospital visits. For example, a recent patient came to the clinic for a follow-up on diastolic heart failure on Friday, he called later Friday afternoon for a developing fever and chills, and I followed him to the hospital Saturday morning for worsening respiratory distress. Fortunately he is doing well this

Monday morning, and fortunately for my education I was able to see the course of his illness from start to finish.

Anna van der Horst



Hello! My name is Anna van der Horst and I'm here to say spending my 3rd year in Asheville was one of the better life decisions I have made. The longitudinal program is a perfect fit for me, as it is designed for students to shape their education exactly as they envision it. For instance, I realized early in the year that I love surgery, so even though my official surgical rotation ended in September, I have been able to regularly scrub in with surgeons in multiple different specialties. I love that I get to practice different forms of medicine every day of the week,

allowing me to integrate different specialties with every patient I see. A patient with headaches usually doesn't only have headaches, of course. And because we work in all the specialties throughout the year, we end up forming solid professional relationships with the physicians.

I had never lived in Asheville before this year. I grew up in Chapel Hill, then spent the year after high school in Atlanta with an AmeriCorps program. After that, I attended college at Oberlin in Ohio, studying everything from Neuroscience to West African dance. Before medical school, I worked in a research lab in San Diego for two years, though I spent plenty of time playing Ultimate Frisbee on the beach. I've lived in many fun and interesting places, but none compare to Asheville. In my free time, I have



been enjoying the beautiful local hiking and cycling opportunities, excellent food, and top-notch music shows. I also enjoy spending time with my fellow Asheville students, whether it is going for a run, playing music, or enjoying the many local microbreweries, all peppered with comments like "how lucky are WE?!"

Rachel Weiner

Hi all! My name is Rachel Weiner and I am one of the 10 lucky students who are spending their third year in Asheville. I am a North Carolina native, growing up in Charlotte and then heading to UNC-Chapel Hill for my undergraduate degree. In undergrad I was indecisive and excited about everything and went from wanting to study physics to graduating with a degree in Spanish and the recently realized desire to go to medical school. I took a year off before starting medical school and worked in D.C. as a case worker at a sliding scale clinic that served mainly Latino patients. That clinic, La Clinica del Pueblo, was a pillar in the Latino community, and it was an incredible and challenging year. I became much more fluent in Spanish and also learned how confusing and overwhelming our health system can be for patients.

Third year of medical school, no matter where you are, is a transformative experience. In the past several months, I feel like I have truly embarked on the task of becoming a 'physician'. I love exploring ethical issues in medicine, getting to know 'complicated' patients, and talking with patients about behavioral change, and this year in Asheville has given me ample opportunity to do all of the above. Whether it's Monday night ethics discussions (where we can vent frustrations, reflect on the emotional experiences of stepping into our patient's lives, or discuss the shortfalls we all experience in medicine); Monday morning Internal Medicine at the local free clinic (where we sit down with the physician to discuss with excitement the advances in medicine and updates on patients); or just sharing dinner with my amazing classmates and reflecting on our experiences, I have felt supported in this often overwhelming, always exciting journey.