

2024



Annual Report

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Featured Photo from May 2024 Commencement:
Natalie Wonsettler, Eberly and Honors College Alum '24
Major: Biology
Minor(s): English and Medical Humanities and Health Studies
Current MS1 West Virginia University School of Medicine

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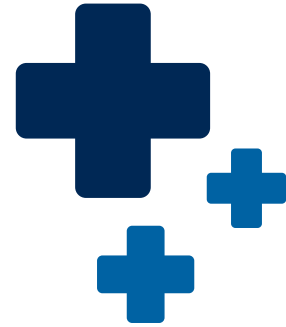
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Prepared by:
Kristin Grogg
Kensley Bergdorf-Smith
Rebeca Espinosa Garcia

About Us

The Pre-Health Professional Development Office at West Virginia University is dedicated to supporting students and alumni pursuing careers in the health professions to make conscious and thoughtful decisions about their future paths.



We provide a supportive advising environment for students and alumni to thrive academically, and to recognize how their academic and extracurricular experiences translate to healthcare professions. This is accomplished through individual mentoring, specialized programs and workshops, application preparation services, campus-wide announcements, advising guides, newsletters, and more.

Our Team



Kristin Grogg, MPH, PhD
Director

Kristin joined the Pre-Health Office in February 2019. She graduated in 2015 from WVU with her MPH in Epidemiology and in 2023 with a PhD in Clinical & Translational Sciences. Kristin is a West Virginia Native and completed her undergraduate degree in Exercise Physiology in 2013, also at WVU. Kristin loves meeting and working with new students excited to start their journey in the health professions field!

Kensey joined the Pre-Health Office in September 2024. She received two undergraduate degrees from West Virginia University: a Bachelor of Science in Immunology and Medical Microbiology and a Bachelor of Multidisciplinary Studies with emphases in Biology, Leadership Studies, and Political Science. She then earned her PhD in pharmacology at Vanderbilt University.



Kensey Bergdorf-Smith, PhD
Program Coordinator



Rebeca Espinosa Garcia
Graduate Assistant

Rebeca joined the Pre-Health Office in August of 2024 as a graduate assistant. She completed her undergraduate degree in English Studies at the University of Murcia, Spain. She is currently in her second year of a Master's program in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages and works as a graduate assistant at the Pre-Health Office. She has a passion for languages and education, having gained experience teaching Spanish as a graduate assistant last year.

Our Mission

The Pre-Health Professional Development Office at West Virginia University offers extensive programming and guidance to make the path of becoming a healthcare professional as accessible, transparent, and positive as possible, giving our students the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

Our Vision

Working closely with WVU's network of partnerships, the Pre-Health Professional Development Office aims to utilize a pan-university approach to support students as they navigate a career path in the health professions. We seek to generate highly qualified, well-rounded applicants through interactive programming and one-on-one, individualized mentoring sessions. In this way, we can ensure that all students have an opportunity for connection and exploration - ultimately helping us build a health professions workforce that serves West Virginia and beyond.



Our Goals

EXPLORE

Encourage students to engage in academics that suit their individual interests and fulfill prerequisite course requirements for their chosen field

ENGAGE

Aid in identifying meaningful co- and extracurricular experiences within West Virginia University and the community at large

DEVELOP

Promote development of health professional competencies

NAVIGATE

Guide students as they overcome academic, personal, or professional challenges

THRIVE

Support students in maintaining physical and mental wellness through self-care

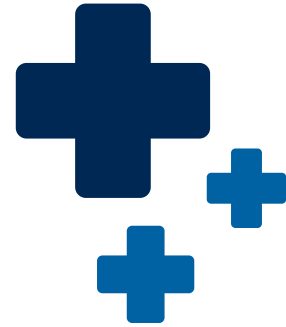
EMPOWER

Empower students to take ownership of their story and prepare a successful pre-professional application



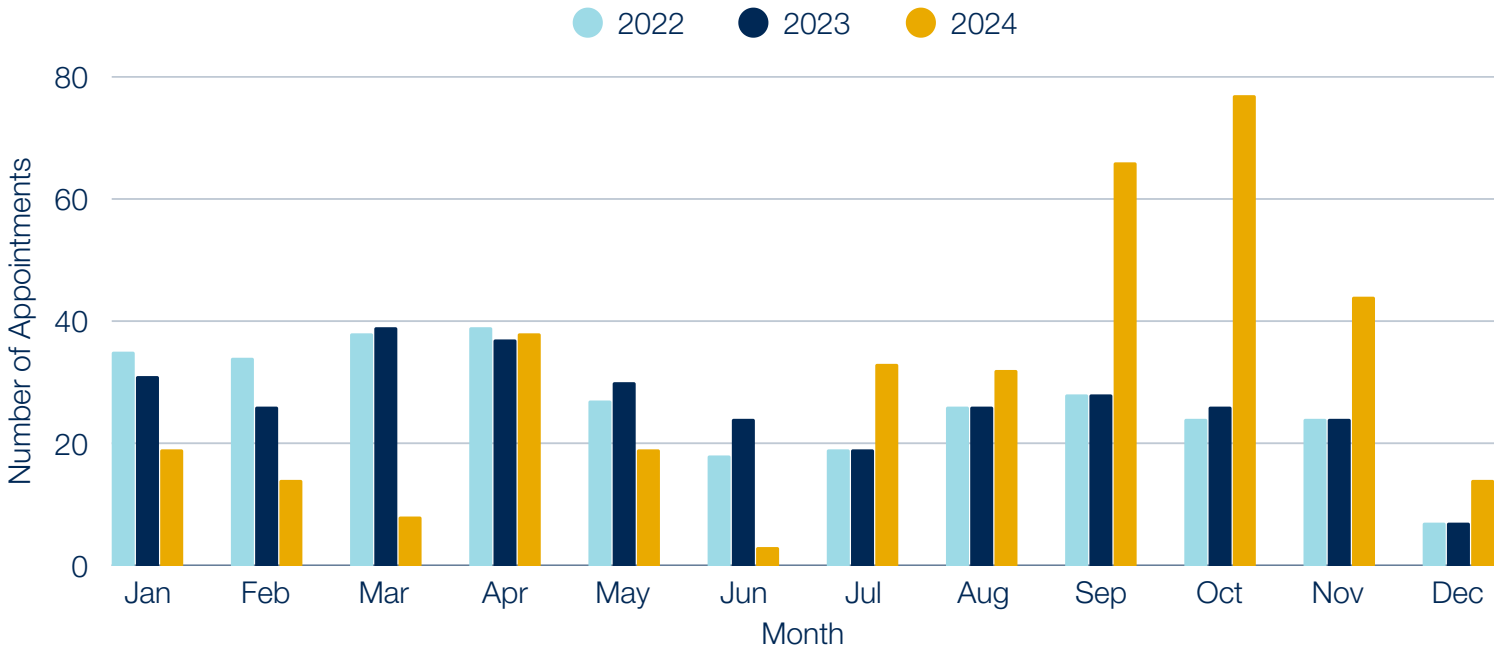
Services

The Pre-Health Office provides career services and advising to enhance candidacy for admission to health professional school. We are available for any current WVU students and alumni interested in pursuing a health-related career that requires a post-baccalaureate degree.



We provide students with dedicated one-on-one mentoring sessions to review their academic progress, extracurricular involvement, and evolving career goals. These meetings are a valuable opportunity to assess the students' timelines, strengthen their portfolios, and ensure they are on track for a competitive application cycle.

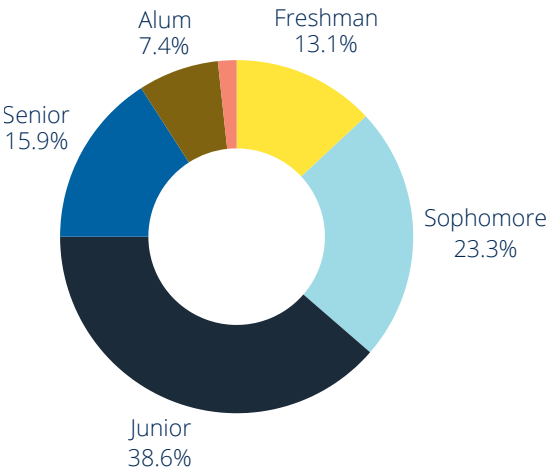
One-on-One



Students are encouraged to engage with the Pre-Health Professional Development Office early in their academic journey and are welcome to schedule appointments as frequently as needed. The majority of referrals continue to come from academic advisors, research mentors, and Honors College programming.

A notable increase in advising appointments was observed in the fourth quarter. This growth may be attributed to several factors: the onboarding of a dedicated program coordinator, the implementation of Microsoft Bookings for streamlined appointment scheduling, and increased visibility and accessibility following the office’s relocation to Eiesland Hall.

2024 Appointment Breakdown





Mock Interviews

We offer personalized mock interviews for students to practice and gain confidence. We provide tailored feedback on communication skills, professionalism, and responses. These sessions are designed to simulate actual interview formats (traditional, MMI, or group) and provide personalized feedback on communication, professionalism, and readiness.

Document Review

Additionally, we provide individualized document review services to support students and alumni applying to health professional schools. Advisors offer detailed feedback on key application materials including personal statements, resumes/CVs, secondary essays, and mock applications. Reviews focus on clarity, structure, content, and professionalism, helping applicants effectively convey their experiences, motivations, and readiness for a health career.

70+
MOCK INTERVIEWS

500+
HOURS ADVISING

1,000+
ONE-ON-ONE
APPOINTMENTS

Alumni Spotlight



Makaela Quinn

BS in Biology, May 2025



I want to go into the healthcare field and help others, specifically, children.”



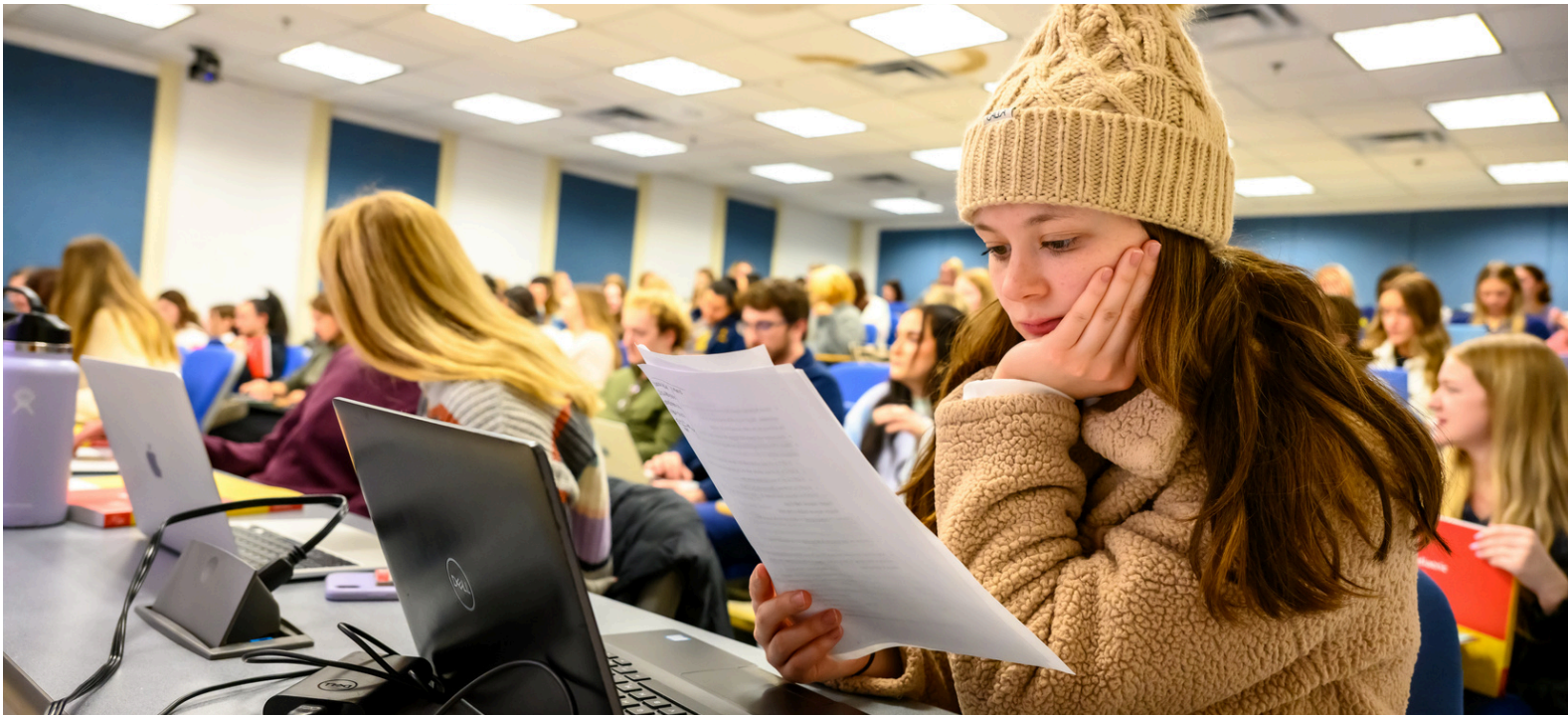
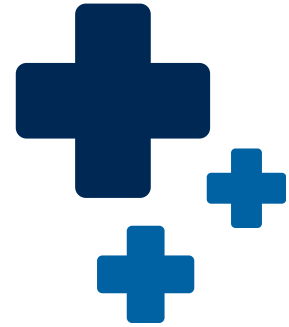
My hardest class at WVU was BIOL219, the Living Cell, with Dr. Huebert Lima.”



I have grown so much since my first year at WVU and I see a different woman in the mirror now than I did freshman year.”

Programming

Since its founding in 2016, the Pre-Health Office supports WVU undergraduates and alumni aiming for graduate-level health professional programs (e.g., MD, DO, DDS, PA, PT, OT, PharmD, Vet Med) by offering advising, application assistance, interview prep, and more



In addition to one-on-one advising sessions and mock interviews, the Pre-Health Office offers seminars and workshops regularly throughout both the Fall and Spring semesters to help students understand how to become a competitive applicant. At these seminars, students learn tips on how to prepare and how to apply to professional schools and programs.

Presentations

How to Become a Competitive Applicant Seminar

Learn what health professional schools seek in applicants and begin building your personalized action plan. Ideal for all pre-health students, especially those early in their undergraduate journey.

Resume Building Workshop

Learn how to create or enhance a professional resume for graduate school, recommendation letters, research, and job opportunities.

Personal Statement Writing Workshop

Learn how to craft a compelling personal statement that highlights your strengths and experiences. This workshop provides tips on structure, content, and style to help your application stand out.

Interviewing Workshop

Learn the basics of interviewing for graduate health professional schools and practice your skills. Open to pre-health students who have completed at least one year of undergraduate study.

Planning to Apply Seminar

Learn what to expect and how to prepare for health professional school applications (e.g., Medical, Dental, PA, PT). Recommended to attend the "Competitive Applicant Seminar" first, available on our website.

How to Apply Workshop

A step-by-step guide to completing health professional school applications. This workshop covers key components, timelines, and tips to help you submit a strong and timely application.

Writing About Your Experiences Workshop

Learn what health professional schools seek in applicants and begin building your personalized action plan. Ideal for all pre-health students, especially those early in their undergraduate journey.

*Individually Tailored Presentations

The Pre-Health Office will tailor presentations, seminars, and workshops upon request of student organizations, classes, and other requests as necessary.

Application Prep

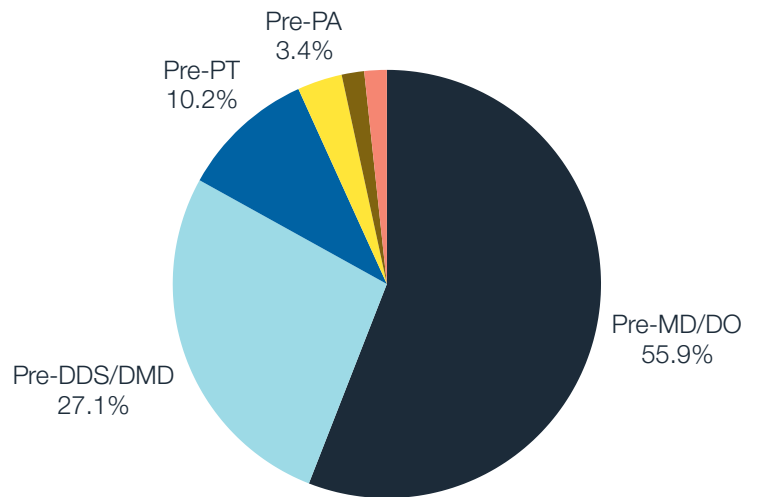
The Pre-Health Office offers a comprehensive support system designed for students and alumni applying to graduate health professions (e.g., MD/DO, DDS, PA, PT, OT, Vet, Pharmacy, Optometry)—offered each spring in the year before matriculation.

The Application Prep Program effectively equips applicants with:

- Self-reflection tools to identify strengths and areas for improvement
- Customized feedback on application documents
- Confidence-building through mock interviews
- And optional, coordinated letter packet assembly that can simplify the application process

By providing structured guidance, targeted feedback, interview practice, and coordinated letter support, the program enables applicants to present polished, competitive applications and substantially improves their likelihood of success.

2024 Applicant Programs

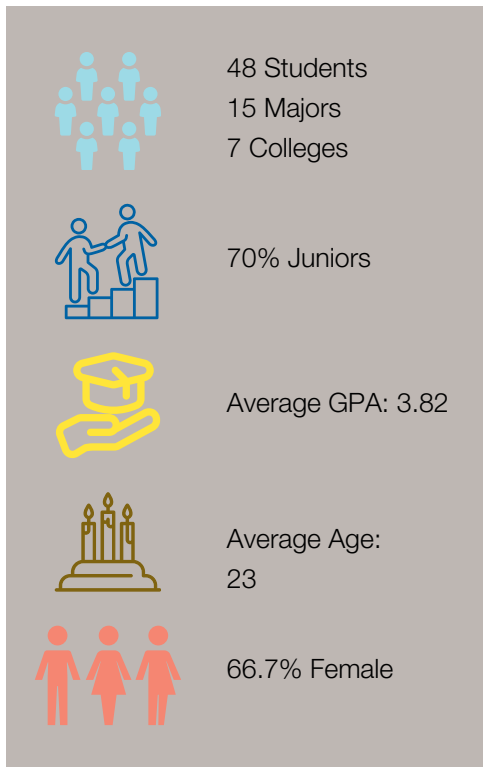


This process begins in the spring semester ,but continues throughout the summer months. So we are often working hard, wishing we were in the sand with a cold drink!

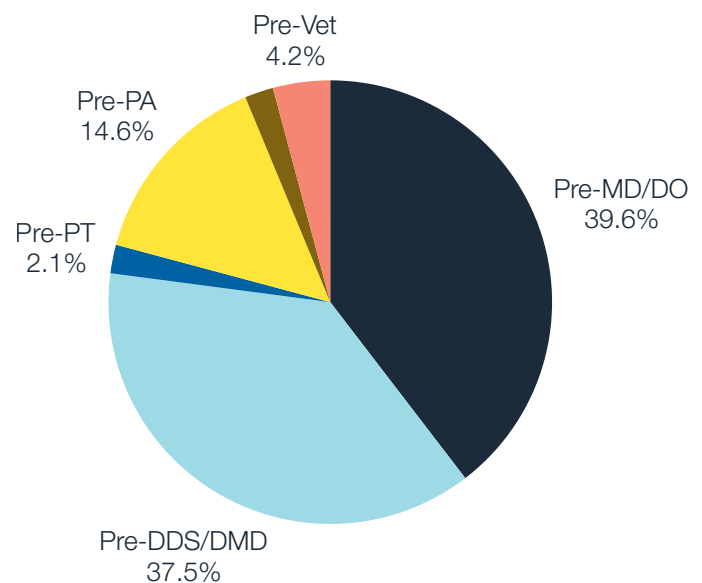


2023 Application Prep Program Data

The application process for most health professional programs is a year-long process. Therefore, we are reporting data from the 2023 cycle since the 2024 cycle is ongoing.



2023 Applicant Programs

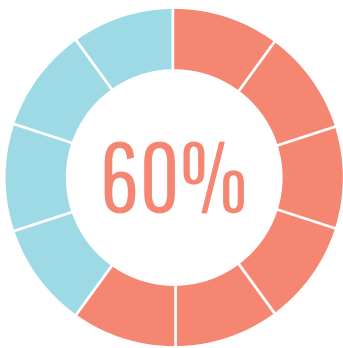
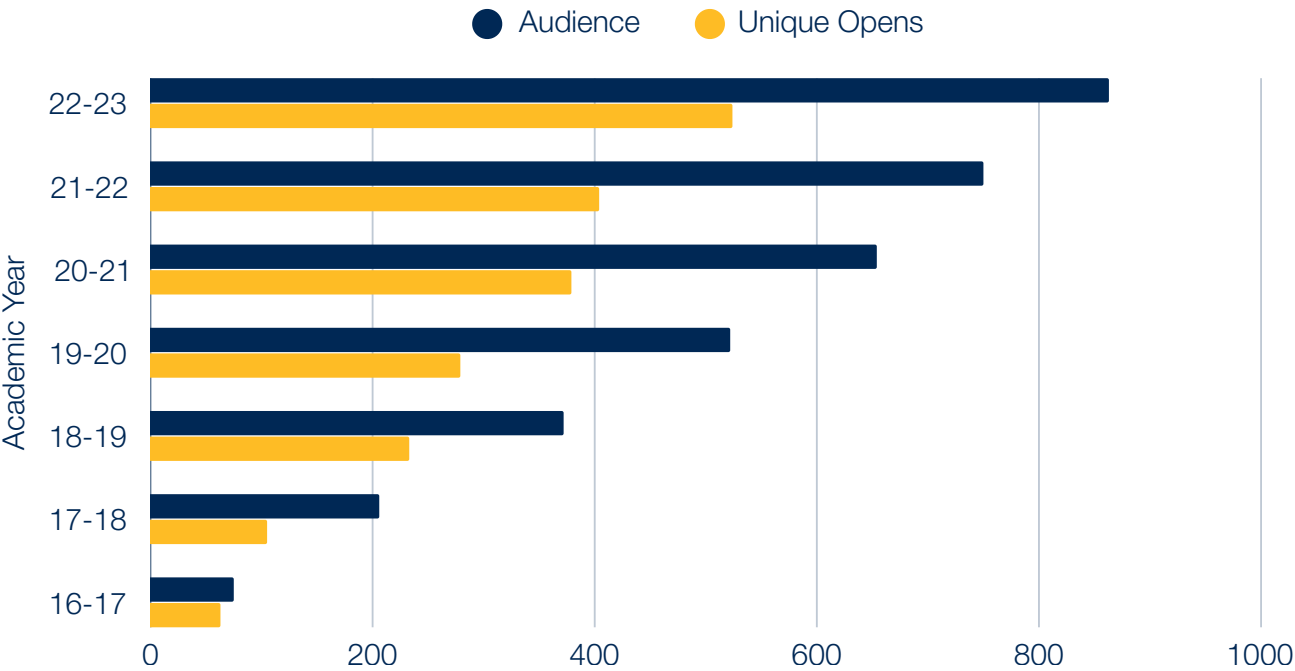


In 2023, our program supported students in balancing rigorous science coursework, with over 60% earning a GPA of 3.8 or higher. Nearly half volunteered in their communities, and 35% engaged in research to build scientific and critical thinking skills. To gain real-world experience, 75% completed over 100 hours of clinical shadowing. Additionally, 68% held leadership roles, reflecting the program's focus on holistic preparation for healthcare careers. With these statistics, we are pleased to announce the 2023 process concluded with a:

70% Acceptance Rate!

Newsletter

We communicate with students through our biweekly newsletter. In this newsletter, we share upcoming Pre-Health hosted events, student opportunities on campus, virtual events, national opportunities, and international opportunities with students. The audience of the newsletter has grown over the years and the engagement with posts remains quite high.



Average Open Rate

Due to limited staffing and resources, the newsletter was not prepared or delivered throughout the 2023-2024 Academic Year. The newsletter has made its return as of the Fall 2024 semester and we look forward to the continued engagement with students, faculty and staff.

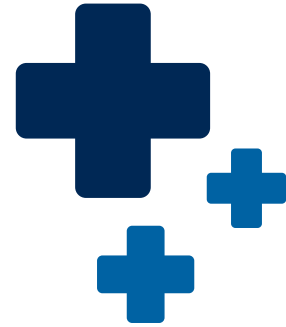


Featured Photo: The Mountaineer Mascot receives his annual flu vaccine from First-Year School of Pharmacy Student, Hannah Jandrain - who traveled to Estonia with the Pre-Health Office in 2023!

Hannah is a 2023 Biochemistry Alum from the Davis College of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Design and the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences

Engagement

The Pre-Health Office is dedicated to providing enriching experiences for students both within and outside of the classroom. These initiatives are designed not only to educate, but to build a vibrant, connected community of aspiring health professionals.



We foster campus engagement through a variety of interactive and enriching experiences tailored to pre-health students. These include book study courses that explore topics in healthcare and ethics, as well as faculty-led spring break trips that offer hands-on learning and exposure to health professions.

Collaborations

WVU Institute for Community and Rural Health

The WVU Pre-Health Office continues to collaborate closely with the West Virginia Institute for Community and Rural Health to offer impactful programming that connects students with rural and underserved communities across the state.

Through initiatives like RUSH (Rural Undergraduate Shadowing in Healthcare), PREP (Pre-Rural Experiential Program), and Rural Health Day, students gain early exposure to rural healthcare environments, shadow healthcare professionals, and engage in community-based learning experiences.

These programs not only deepen students' understanding of the unique challenges in rural health but also encourage future providers to consider serving in these high-need areas.

Let's Go... PRO!

We are excited to continue our partnership in 2025 on the Rural PRO (Professional Readiness Opportunity) initiative, a forward-looking program that will provide pre-health students with enhanced professional development, interdisciplinary training, and real-world preparation for careers in rural and community-based healthcare.



Courses

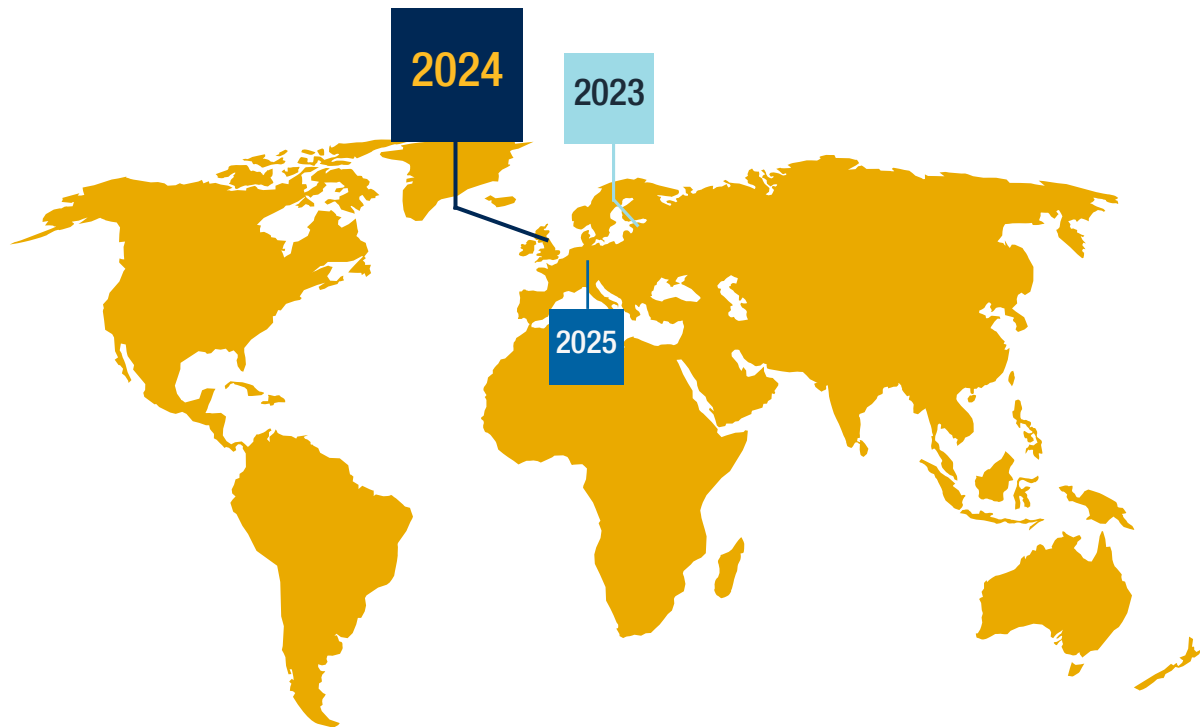
In conjunction with the Spring 2024 study abroad program to the United Kingdom, students read “The Butchering Art” by Dr. Lindsey Fitzharris. This compelling narrative traces the transformation of surgery in Victorian England through the work of pioneering surgeon Joseph Lister. Students examined the intersection of medicine, history, and public health, exploring how antiseptic practices revolutionized surgical care. Paired with site visits to key medical institutions in London and Edinburgh, the book provided critical historical context and enriched students’ understanding of the evolution of modern medical practices.

In Fall 2024, we offered a faculty-facilitated Honors book study course centered on “Extreme Medicine” by Dr. Kevin Fong. This interdisciplinary exploration invited students to examine the limits of human survival and the evolving role of medicine in extreme environments while engaging in weekly discussions on ethical and scientific challenges faced by healthcare providers in crisis settings from mountaintops and space missions to war zones and disaster sites.

GoodReads

We’ve created a Goodreads list featuring recommended reads that explore healthcare, ethics, and the human side of medicine to inspire reflection and broaden students’ perspectives.





Spring Break



The Pre-Health Office has supported a series of faculty-led spring break programs designed to immerse students in global health perspectives through academic, cultural, and experiential learning.

In 2024, we took students to the United Kingdom, with academic sessions and site visits in London and Edinburgh focused on comparative health systems, medical education pathways, and the integration of healthcare and policy.



Featured Photo: Nursing students enjoy a cool day outside the surgeons museum in Edinburgh, Scotland on the 2024 Health Sciences in Great Britain Spring Break Faculty Let Trip (from left to right)

Rebekah Williams, Nursing BSN 2025

Regan Smith, Nursing BSN 2025

Kinley Zeigler, Nursing BSN 2027

Sophia Brown, Nursing BSN 2025

Edinburgh

During the first half of our 2024 spring break, faculty-led program, students traveled to Edinburgh to explore the city's significant contributions to the history of health and medicine. Highlights included a healthcare-themed walking tour led by a local expert, a visit to Mary King's Close to examine public health during the plague era, and a tour of Edinburgh Castle to connect political history with the evolution of healthcare.

The academic focus of our time in Edinburgh centered on the city's history of medical curiosity. Traveling through the city brought to life Edinburgh's remarkable medical legacy, from its pioneering institutions to its more macabre chapters, including the grave-robbing practices of the 18th and 19th centuries. We stood before the oldest medical institution in the English-speaking world and learned how the city's innovations shaped modern medicine.



The experience provided students with a rich, immersive understanding of how historical and cultural contexts have shaped medical practices over time.

London

We then traveling by train to London, where students explored the historical and modern intersections of healthcare, public health, and medical innovation. Highlights included visits to the Florence Nightingale Museum and the Old Operating Theatre Museum, providing insight into the origins of nursing and surgical practice. A guided medical history walking tour and time at the Wellcome Collection deepened students' understanding of how medicine has evolved alongside culture and society.



Students also participated in a forensics workshop led by local experts and engaged in dialogue with a UK public health official, gaining perspective on contemporary public health challenges. The experience blended academic enrichment with cultural exploration, including visits to the Tower of London and a historical “Jack the Ripper” tour, offering a well-rounded look at London’s impact on the history of health and medicine.

Where to next?

In 2025, the program will take place in Germany and Czechia, where students will explore medical ethics through the lens of World War II history, visiting key historical sites, participating in interactive seminars, and reflecting on the ethical responsibilities of healthcare professionals in times of conflict.



Alumni Spotlight

Sarah Zanabli, a second-year dental student at WVU School of Dentistry, has been awarded the WVU Dental Tuition Waiver for the 2024–2025 academic year. A 2021 graduate of the Eberly and Honors Colleges, she earned a B.S. in Biology and worked with the Pre-Health Office prior to her acceptance.



Featured Partner

AdventureWV

The Pre-Health Office teamed up with AdventureWV to offer incoming first-year students in pre-health majors a structured, outdoor-based experience before the fall semester. This initiative was aligned with AdventureWV's First-Year Trips (FYT), which combine outdoor adventure (rock-climbing, whitewater rafting, backpacking) with peer-led leadership and reflection sessions.

Students in the pre-health cohort joined a summer 2024 "Quest" track (July 22–26). This program helped to deliver early friendships, resiliency-building experiences, and emotional readiness for the academic year ahead.

This collaboration aimed to:

- Help pre-health students build peer networks before classes start.
- Introduce wellness, resilience, and informal academic preparation outside the classroom.
- Reduce summer transition anxiety and foster mental health awareness tied to the Carruth Center's focus on coping and resiliency.

This partnership proved wildly successful as one of the first FYT to reach capacity! We look forward to future collaboration with AdventureWV.

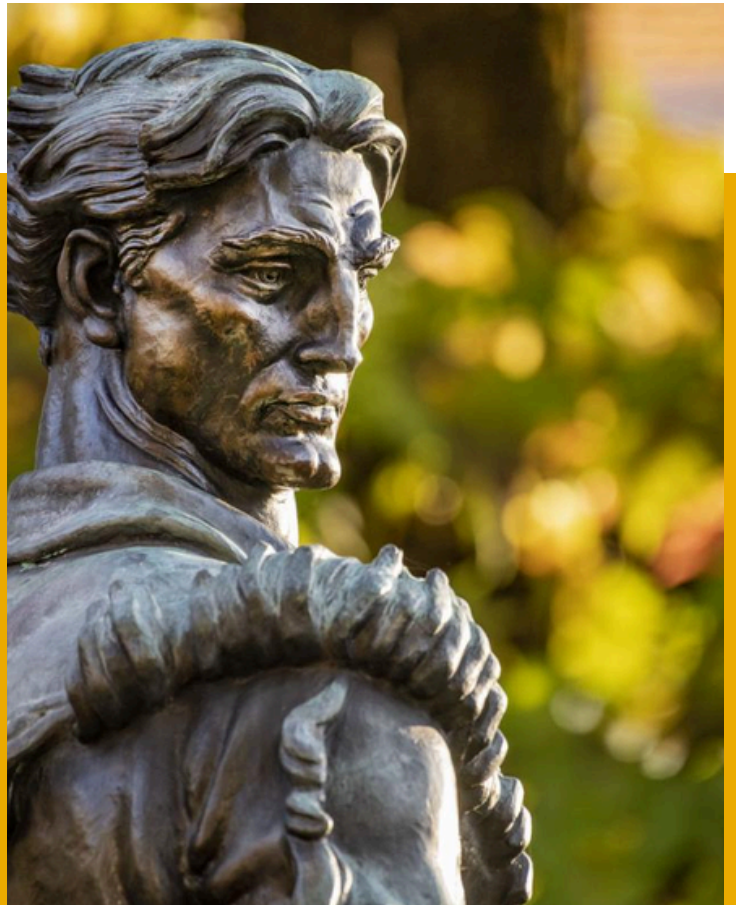


Summary

The Pre-Health Office experienced a year of significant growth in 2024, marked by a substantial increase in one-on-one advising appointments as more students sought personalized guidance in navigating their pre-health journeys. This surge reflects both the growing interest in health professions and the Office's continued commitment to providing individualized support.

Looking Ahead

The Pre-Health Office remains focused on enhancing access, strengthening mentorship opportunities, and developing innovative experiences that prepare students to become thoughtful, equity-minded leaders in healthcare.



Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to review our Annual Report, which outlines our accomplishments for 2024. As we reflect on the past year, we take pride in the significant growth our office has achieved in addressing the needs of our students.

We are equally enthusiastic about the ongoing expansion we are currently experiencing.

Our office relies on the support of our partners both on campus and beyond, and we sincerely appreciate your contributions.



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