

WWAMI Student Profiles



In the spring edition of Wyoming Medicine magazine, we take the time to profile Wyoming students who are in their first year of the WWAMI program. This year we asked them the following questions:

- 1. What is the name of your undergraduate institution and major? If you have a graduate degree, you can list that as well.
- 2. What has been the highlight of med school thus far?
- 3. What areas of practice are you considering and why?
- 4. What is something unexpected that you’ve learned, or been surprised by, as a WWAMI student in Wyoming?
- 5. What advice would you give to future med school students?

Lauren Scandrett Laramie

- 1. University of Wyoming, bachelor’s in physiology; Shepherds Theological Seminary, master’s in theological studies
- 2. My favorite part of medical school so far has been any time I’ve gotten to work with real patients, whether at hospital morning at Ivinson or during my preceptorship in Cheyenne. I love talking to people, building relationships and being able to use my class knowledge in real-life situations.
- 3. I’m leaning towards family medicine, because I love getting to know people and building strong relationships. I’m also interested in many different aspects of care, which fits primary care well. I’m not set on anything yet though, and I can’t wait for my clerkships so I can learn more about different specialties!
- 4. I’ve been blown away by how helpful, encouraging, and supportive the local doctors have been to our WWAMI class. They give us such amazing opportunities to learn and go above and beyond what is expected to help us learn and share their knowledge.
- 5. My advice is to be sure to make time for things that are important to you besides medicine. Set aside time to go hiking, spend time with your family, or whatever is life-giving to you. Don’t forget about the things you love!



Tyler Loose Laramie

- 1. University of Northern Colorado, sports and exercise science, master’s in biomedical sciences
- 2. Anatomy lab
- 3. Surgical specialty: I enjoy working with my hands and creating immediate change in order to benefit patients.
- 4. I’ve been pleasantly surprised by how many clinical experiences we are exposed to in our first year.
- 5. Get out of your comfort zone as much as possible.



Larissa Siirila Worland

- 1. University of Wyoming, Bachelor of Science in chemistry
- 2. For me the highlight of medical school so far has been fighting for Medicaid expansion in our state with my classmates. As someone who would be personally impacted by expansion and who has family that would be personally impacted it was incredibly heartening to watch my classmates work together to try and make expansion a reality. It was disappointing watching expansion be shut down in our legislature despite broad community support, but my classmates give me hope for the future of advocacy efforts in our state.
- 3. I’m primarily considering practicing family medicine. My main passion in medicine is treating the whole person: not just the illness. For me it seems like family medicine is one of the best places to practice like this and to build relationships with patients that last their whole life. I am quite a nerd though, so I’m interested in exploring a few of the subspecialties within internal medicine and want to explore psychiatric medicine in greater depth as well.
- 4. As a WWAMI student in Wyoming I think the thing that’s most surprised me is how much I like the smaller class size. Coming into the program I wasn’t sure what to think about spending every day of the next two years in a classroom with the same 19 other people, but it has honestly been one of the best parts of the program. With a bigger class size, it seems like it would be much easier to have struggles go unnoticed, but with 20 of us there is a sense that there’s no man left behind. In addition, the small class size allows us to get more hands-on experience in clinical scenarios and more one-on-one mentorship from local clinicians than would be available to us in a program with hundreds of students.
- 5. I have two pieces of advice for future medical students. The first is to take the path that feels right to you. If you’re doing things that don’t feel organic for you or forcing yourself into situations in order to be “more qualified” or get into a “better school” you’re going to make yourself miserable. Do and be what feels right for you and when you get into medical school you can be sure you are going to the right one. My second piece of advice is that it’s highly likely that you, like many of us, have high levels of generalized anxiety. I’d start addressing that and finding ways to manage it now rather than waiting for it to boil over during med school.



Michael Yeradi Wright

- 1. Morningside College, major in biology
- 2. A highlight of med school is getting to learn more about people I knew nothing about.
- 3. I’m very interested in cardiology and surgery. The cardiovascular system has always interested me and so has surgery.
- 4. One thing that has surprised me is how fast we are given clinical experience and how great of an opportunity that has been.
- 5. Make sure to schedule time for yourself and have a good work life balance.



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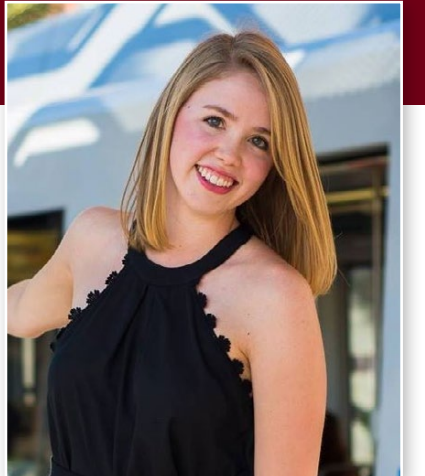
Amanda Galambas Gillette

1. Montana State University, Bachelor of Science in chemistry, Bachelor of Science in cell biology and neuroscience
2. One of the biggest highlights of med school for me has been all of the clinical skills that we have been taught. The flu shot clinic, IV clinic, suture clinic, skin skills lab, and advanced exam labs have been a fun escape from the classroom and a way to practice skills in a low-stakes setting. It's amazing how quickly our clinical knowledge is growing thanks to these activities coupled with our class-work, hospital mornings, preceptorships and simulated patients.
3. I like how technical and artistic procedures can be and I think I would find a lot of satisfaction in being able to drastically change someone's life in a matter of hours. Right now I have strong interest in interventional cardiology, vascular surgery and pediatric orthopedics, which I will be exploring this summer through research at Seattle Children's Hospital.
4. I have been pleasantly surprised by how many people are truly invested in our education. It means a lot when your instructors, block leads and the other staff members know you by name and genuinely care about what you're up to and how you're doing with the curriculum. I don't know of any other medical school in the country where you can call the program director's cell phone when you're in a pinch. I'm really grateful that I get to obtain my education in such a tight-knit state.
5. I would tell future med school students that the hardest part is getting in; once you're there and you start to see your dreams materialize it's smooth sailing. Of course medical school is incredibly difficult, but I think that learning the foundations for the career of your dreams overshadows the hoops you have to jump through before and during your training.



Chae Sutherland Casper

1. University of Southern California, Bachelor of Science in human development and aging
2. So far the highlight of my medical school experience has been being able to apply my growing medical knowledge to the patients I have seen in hospital mornings and my primary care practicum. It has been so rewarding to see all of the hard work I have put into studying and developing my clinical skills start to show as I understand more and more about what is happening in every patient encounter.
3. I am still keeping a very open mind in regard to specialty. Right now, I am mainly considering a career in primary care because I feel it will provide me with the best opportunity for creating long lasting relationships with my patients. I look forward to experiencing even more specialties and beginning to narrow my interests!
4. I have been surprised by the variety of cases that I have already had the chance to see in Laramie. I have seen so many interesting cases and presentations so far. There is much more diversity than I expected in the patient population of Wyoming! I look forward to seeing even more patients and the variety of diagnoses they provide.
5. Always be yourself. Only participate in things that you are truly interested in and make your own path to medicine. Never join an activity because you feel like it is the best way to get into medical school, only join it if you really like it. When it comes time for a medical school interview, you have to be able to tell your own story so make sure it is one that you have enjoyed and that you are proud of!



Bradley Lutz Casper

1. Bachelor's in physiology and an honors minor from the University of Wyoming
2. Feeling like we, as medical students are poised to make the lives of those in our state better. As we've traveled around and met with different populations it has become apparent that our citizens are in need of long-term medical care. The pride and honor I feel from working toward making my home state stronger has been the biggest highlight.
3. I began my career in medicine by becoming a volunteer paramedic and fire-fighter in rural Wyoming communities. Being able to help someone through a crisis has become ingrained in my personality, and with that comes a desire to serve as either an emergency room physician or critical care hospitalist.
4. Just how much support the WWAMI program has within our state. From political leaders to individual citizens stopping us to say how happy they are to see homegrown Wyoming physicians; it is evident how many people are rooting for us. I didn't fully comprehend just how many supporters were/are working to make our education possible.
5. While going through the education and stress, it can be easy to lose sight of why you have gotten into medicine. Develop a strong desire to help others and be sure to reflect on that when times get tough.



Samantha Pettigrew Cheyenne

1. University of Wyoming, bachelor's in physiology
2. I've enjoyed our opportunities for real-life patient interactions. As we've progressed, I've not only learned more about the medicine behind a patient's situation but also how to better interact with them socially. When the course load grows overwhelming, talking with patients reminds me why I decided to pursue medicine. I love that.
3. Through our different courses, I've found unexpected interest in many specialties. Despite this, I think my goal remains to be an OB/GYN in a small Wyoming town where I can develop lasting relationships with my patients to improve their long-term health care.
4. One thing that surprised me about WWAMI is how accessible and friendly the faculty is. I expected medical school lecturers to be distant and unapproachable. Luckily, this is far from true! Our lecturers and full-time faculty are always willing to answer questions and help us in any way. It's a great program.
5. My advice to future medical students is to find enjoyment in every step of the process. It's common to focus on the future so much that you forget each day is an important part of your journey. Life doesn't pause while you're in school, so remind yourself to be present in what's happening right now.

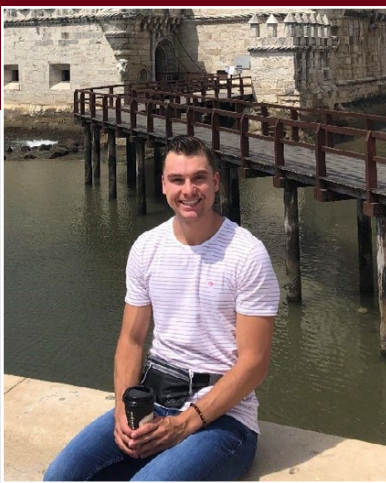


WWAMI Student Profiles



Anthony Menghini Cheyenne

- 1. University of Wyoming, Bachelor of Science in chemical engineering with a minor in molecular biology, Master of Science in chemical engineering
- 2. My experience with my primary care provider in the emergency department has been a greatly enjoyable and educational experience. I was able to quickly utilize the knowledge I obtained in my coursework in a medically relevant environment. There is substantial attention to detail demonstrated by all preceptors, faculty and administration which provides each student with a tailored medical school experience and opportunities designed around the individual.
- 3. I am most interested in pursuing a surgical specialty. Engineering is a discipline that continually reinforces the importance of precision and accuracy in one's work. Surgery is a highly technical specialty where I believe a methodical and analytical mentality will work to my advantage. I enjoy the intense atmosphere of the operating room and the ability to directly observe relatively quick and successful patient outcomes.
- 4. I have been surprised by the efforts made by the Wyoming WWAMI administration to ensure that specialists, whether clinicians or research scientists, teach material within their realm of expertise. Nearly every lecture is taught by an expert in the field. I am thankful for the willingness of clinicians and research scientists from around the region to enhance our medical education.
- 5. My advice to future medical students is to take full advantage of opportunities provided by the Wyoming WWAMI program that go beyond the primary medical school curriculum. Do not be afraid to ask for supplemental educational experiences if they are of interest to you. For example, our physician mentors were willing to put on workshops of our interest, including flu vaccine, suture, intubation, phlebotomy and birthing simulation workshops. These extra opportunities provide an excellent chance to learn essential medical skills that are beyond the core curriculum coursework.



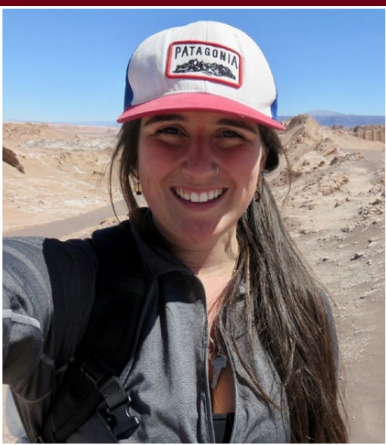
Natasha Radosevich Casper

- 1. Bachelor of Science in microbiology, minors in honors and French
- 2. The highlight of med school thus far has definitely been being able to connect what we learn in class to the patients that we see on mornings at the hospital, or in my primary care preceptorship. It really makes the information we learn in class more interesting and so much easier to remember when I know I'll be able to apply it to a real patient even in the short term.
- 3. I'm definitely still considering all areas of practice. So far, I've enjoyed everything I've seen and I've liked a lot of the material we've covered in class.
- 4. I've been pleasantly surprised with the amount of resources available to us. I've loved being able to work with the simulation robots, having access to Iverson Memorial Hospital, all of the physicians from around the state and region that come to teach us, and just the overall feeling that as a class we're really supported.
- 5. The advice I'd give to future medical students is to work hard and be kind!



Marley Realing Casper

- 1. Bachelor of Science in microbiology and environment and natural resources with minors in honors and Spanish
- 2. The highlight of medical school for me has been getting to delve deeper into topics that I was passionate about as a pre-med. This year I have gotten to continue working with the Downtown Clinic in Laramie, be a part of the group of students that went to Cheyenne to lobby for Medicaid Expansion in Wyoming, and really learn about how that the health of Wyoming citizens is impacted by their environment.
- 3. As of right now I am open to pretty much every specialty. I have always been interested in infectious disease, but I have really enjoyed my time in the emergency department this semester, and who knows what I will end up liking during my clinical rotations!
- 4. I have been very surprised by the support from the state. It was always stated that there was public buy in for this program but having physicians come in from all over the state to work with us on cases and take time to teach us has been remarkable. It really provides a sense of community that so many people are willing to take the time to educate us and it is really appreciated.
- 5. My advice to future medical students is to remember that you are a person outside of medicine as well. Taking time to do things you enjoy and be with people who care about you is always worth it. The best way to be a good medical student, and a member of this community is to be kind to yourself so that you can be there for other people.



Caleb Hardt Casper

- 1. University of Wyoming, bachelor's in finance
- 2. The highlight of medical school so far has been the various clinical experiences offered to us in our first year. I am able to practice my clinical reasoning and physical exam skills through my family medicine preceptorship. I also had the chance to scrub in and assist on multiple surgeries, which is an incredible opportunity for a first-year medical student.
- 3. I am still in the process of deciding which area of medicine I would like to pursue. I am currently interested in emergency medicine and internal medicine, but I am excited to experience other fields while doing rotations in my third and fourth years of medical school.
- 4. I was surprised by how much I would enjoy the small class size offered with the Wyoming WWAMI program. While visiting other medical schools during the application process, I became excited about being part of a large class of medical students. I realize now that having a small class where everyone knows each other is great for both support and friendship.
- 5. My advice to future medical students is to constantly remind yourself how truly lucky you are to have this opportunity. There are many people in the country and world that will never have the chance to pursue their education this far and there are many people who apply that don't get accepted. There will be times during your medical education where you will feel discouraged and it can be very helpful to count your blessings during these times.



WWAMI Student Profiles



Tom Fenn Sheridan

1. I attended the University of Wyoming where I got my bachelor's degree in physiology with minors in neuroscience and honors
2. Being in the WWAMI program, you are offered a variety of opportunities that a lot of other students around the nation don't get. The best part of medical school thus far has been all the hands-on and incredible opportunities, whether that be scrubbing in on surgeries and helping assist in the procedure, or watching a patient deliver a baby, even in the first year of medical school.
3. Currently, I am still unsure what medical specialty I would like to pursue, but as of right now I am leaning towards a surgical specialty. Surgery has this certain complexity of intensity, being skilled with your hands, and the incredible detailed knowledge that goes into each procedure that I would like to pursue further.
4. One of the most exciting aspects that I continue to learn being a part of the WWAMI cohort, is the fact that we have a lot of support at our backs. Truly, everyone involved in the program wants us to succeed and be the best physician we can be; whether it is our instructors, physician mentors, or the many others involved in the program, we truly have a team around us that continually teaches us a variety of aspects that goes into being a physician.
5. My biggest advice to future medical students is that failure and scrutiny is not always bad—it helps you advance your knowledge and technique; and to delve yourself in your medical studies to try and learn as much as you can to be an excellent physician. It truly is a privilege to be a physician and know and help our patients in ways many others never will.



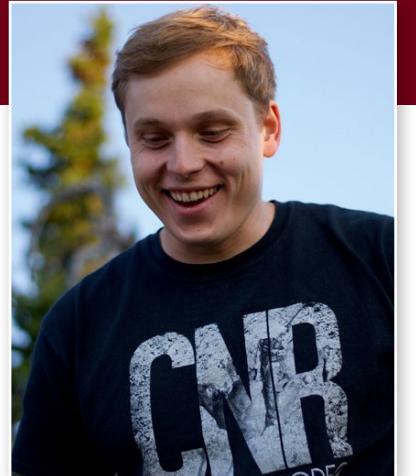
Daniel Lancaster Green River

1. University of Wyoming, Bachelor of Science in physiology and Bachelor of Arts in Spanish; Colorado State University, Master of Science in biomedical science
2. The highlight of medical school so far has been working with primary care practitioners, it is really great being able to work with patients and actually do procedures and interview them. It is an opportunity to practice our clinical reasoning skills, diagnostic skills and get experience with patients.
3. I really don't know what areas or specialties I would like to go into at the moment, we had a rheumatologist come in and he was a great teacher and piqued my interest in rheumatology. I would like to have more exposure to more of the specialties to really make a decision and I am excited for the summer RUOP experience in a clinic.
4. As a WWAMI student I was surprised by how quickly they taught us the physical exam and then let us practice on real patients. Having little clinical experience beforehand it was terrifying the first time, but now it is exciting to see patients and be able to hear their stories and ailments and then try to help them as much as possible.
5. For future medical students I would say to keep an open mind and be willing to adapt. I always considered myself a great student and yet have struggled at times in med school. Take care of yourself and enjoy the process because it is very rewarding and well worth it.



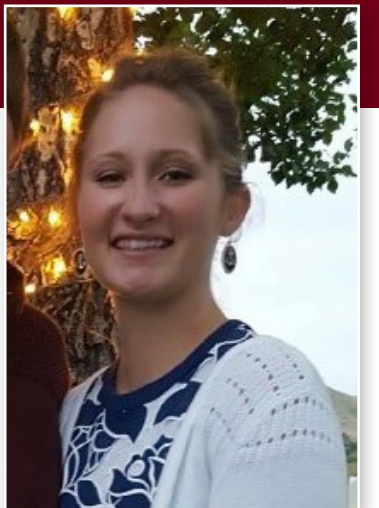
Jacob Kennedy Cheyenne

1. University of Wyoming, bachelor's in molecular biology
2. So far, the highlight of medical school for me has been our first week at National Outdoor Leadership School in Lander. I've also really enjoyed all our clinical opportunities and experiences.
3. I am not sure what I want to specialize in. I am interested in too many fields to narrow it down right now, and I hope to get some experience in as many specialties as possible in my next few years of school.
4. I was surprised at how much clinical time I was able to have during this first year and how meaningful it has been. It has been a great correlate to the classroom learning we have done.
5. My advice to future medical school students is to enjoy their last summer before school starts!



Annie Smidt Sheridan

1. University of Montana, Bachelor of Science in human biological science
2. The highlight of medical school for me thus far has easily been my primary care practicum with Dr. Kim Westbrook in obstetrics and gynecology at Iverson Memorial Hospital in Laramie. This has been a fantastic opportunity for me to practice my clinical skills, get to know the patient community in Laramie, and feel more confident in my interactions with both patients and other health care professionals. My favorite part of this experience has been the privilege of observing three birthing experiences, all of which have been moving and inspiring.
3. At this point in time, I am not sure what specialty I would like to pursue. I have enjoyed my exposures to everything from family medicine to obstetrics and gynecology, and even dermatology. I have so much left to learn, so I'm excited to keep exploring my options and see where the following years in medical school will take me.
4. I feel very fortunate to be part of the Wyoming WWAMI program, and I think it is very unique that we are given the opportunity to meet clinicians from all over the state and the surrounding area. With our small class size of 20, we are able to have one-on-one interaction with these physicians in many different specialties. It is yet another great way that this program is able to allow us exposure to all different kinds of medical specialties before we set foot in our third-year clinical rotations.
5. I think my best piece of advice to future med students would be to take advantage of your "down time." It is important to remember the things in your life that bring you joy outside of school. Whether it's going to a movie, baking, spending time with friends or family, or getting outside and doing things like walking your dog or skiing. I have learned that those kinds of things are my "non-negotiables," meaning I need them in my schedule in order to find balance in my life and feel ready to tackle the week's challenges.



WWAMI Student Profiles



Perry Smith Gillette

- 1. I graduated from the University of Wyoming with a bachelor’s in physiology
- 2. The highlight of medical school so far has been the primary care preceptorships. I greatly enjoy being able to learn actual, clinically relevant medicine on top of the pre-clinical coursework.
- 3. I change my mind at least every few months. Right now, I think I could see myself doing anything, with a slight bias towards emergency medicine or anesthesiology.
- 4. I’ve been quite surprised with how invested faculty is in students. From our deans, to the assistant director, to block leads, to individual professors, everyone is not only willing to chat with and help us students but will actively seek us out to make sure everything is going well. The support provided to Wyoming WWAMI students is far beyond anything I’ve seen or heard at other schools.
- 5. While I’m certainly not qualified to give advice, I would encourage entering students to enjoy all the fringe benefits of Wyoming WWAMI; have fun and explore when they send you to National Outdoor Leadership School, develop personal relationships with all the doctors you’ll rely on in the future, go skiing, hiking, and swimming. You’ll certainly enjoy your time in Laramie more if you do.



Savannah Richter Pine Haven

- 1. University of Wyoming, bachelor’s in chemical engineering
- 2. My highlight of medical school has been my primary care practicum in family practice. I really enjoy taking what I have learned in class and applying it to patients and practicing my clinical skills such as the physical exam or patient interviews.
- 3. My top choice right now would be OB/GYN. However, I am still not for sure and am excited to learn more about each specialty in clerkships.
- 4. I have been surprised by the amount of support that we have received as WWAMI students in Wyoming. Physicians come from all around the state of Wyoming to help teach us. We were able to be introduced in the state Senate and House of Representatives and meet Governor Gordon. As well as the continuous support of the Wyoming WWAMI faculty.
- 5. My advice to future medical school students is to make sure to take time for yourself.



Hayden True Casper

- 1. Casper College, Associate of Science pre-medicine; University of Wyoming, Bachelor of Science physiology
- 2. Thus far, my highlight from medical school has been my preceptorship in the emergency department. I’ve loved getting to participate in hands-on care and engage with patients in a more organic setting. It’s been a great reminder about why I went into medicine in the first place and it’s nice to take a break from the classroom once in a while.
- 3. I always joke that asking a first-year what specialty they want is like asking a freshman what major they are choosing; they might have a new answer every time you ask. I like fields with high stakes and variability, so we’ll see where that goes. Emergency? Surgery? Only time will tell!
- 4. As a WWAMI student, it’s been fun to step into the Wyoming medical community. There seems to be a special note of camaradery and shared interests that is really enjoyable to be around. The docs I’ve gotten to work with are truly fantastic and speak highly of their colleagues, which highlights the dynamics and relationships that working in Wyoming can provide.
- 5. My advice to future medical students is to give yourself plenty of grace as you transition into medical school. Be sure to give yourself room to adjust and figure out the nuances and challenges that come up. It might take several tries to figure out what study habits, scheduling and social time works for you. That’s ok! Take your time and trust the process. You’ll figure it out.



Peter McCullough Lander

- 1. Wyoming Catholic College, bachelor’s in Liberal Arts; Franciscan University of Steubenville, bachelor’s in biology
- 2. The highlight so far has been my first week in Thermopolis as a TRUST student. Seeing rural medicine in action was eye-opening. Watching a family practice physician deliver a baby, do his own ultrasounds, run a code in the emergency room, place a chest tube, see a couple sick kids, and then read X-rays while preparing to do a minor surgery was incredibly interesting and thrilling. It definitely solidified in my mind my desire to work in a rural area.
- 3. Pediatrics—preferably in a rural area. I’m the middle of seven children and absolutely adore children. I believe they are the world’s greatest resource and giving them the gift of good health would be the absolutely best job I could think of.
- 4. The wide variety of different kinds of classmates I have. I think that sometimes people look at Wyoming as a rural state with all the same type of person. WWAMI did a great job of choosing people from incredibly different backgrounds from all age groups. It’s been great getting to know people from all the small corners of the state.
- 5. Grades are important, but a well-rounded background and lifestyle will get you much farther when trying to get into medical school. Every medical school on the planet has its choice of 4.0 science undergrad students who were part of one or two clubs, but there are very few people to choose from with truly well-rounded backgrounds. Find some new hobbies, get out and volunteer, and spend a few hours a week in a nursing home visiting with the elderly people and get an idea of what suffering really is. Even things that you can’t put on an application will shine through in your interview.

