



Central
College
— 1853 —

CENTRAL GRADS

FOCUS ON HEALTH CARE

CENTRAL IS WHERE
UNDERGRADUATES BECOME HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

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HEALTH CARE: CENTRAL GRADS' TOP CHOICE FOR GRAD SCHOOL



Five Central graduates celebrated together at the University of Iowa white coat ceremony earlier this year. *Left to right: Ashley Radig '16, Sam Palmer '17, Abby Fyfe '18, Nick Lind '06 and Andie Arthofer '17.*

AN ASTOUNDING 58 PERCENT OF CENTRAL GRADUATES WHO GO TO GRAD SCHOOL DO SO IN HEALTH-RELATED FIELDS.

WHY?

BY: CINDY DEPPE
PHOTOS: LINDA STELTER

We talked to eight Central alumni doing graduate study in a physician assistant program as well as medicine, dentistry and occupational therapy. Each described a unique inspiration and path to studying health care. They sound like a well-orchestrated chorus when it comes to how Central prepared them. The harmonics vary, but the themes that inspired and nurtured them come through loud and clear, including:

- + **A well-rounded, interdisciplinary liberal arts education** that develops flexibility and creative problem solving.
- + **Personal attention**, support and mentoring from professors.
- + **Research opportunities.**

- + **Experiential learning** via community service, internships and job shadowing.
- + **Teamwork and leadership** experience in both academic and co-curricular activities.

Many of those we talked to said they found graduate study in health care much like their Central education: challenging, immersive, multi-disciplinary, interactive and rewarding, with academic, real-world and people-to-people aspects. Many felt better-prepared than their grad school classmates who had a lecture-based university education.

Their advice to current Central undergraduates? Take advantage of all that Central has to offer rather than concentrate on only prerequisites to graduate study.

"Focus on the journey," says **Riley Gray '17**, who is studying dentistry at the University of Iowa. "I see people in professional school who focused on the grindstone but weren't experiencing anything else. At Central, I got it all—athletics, academics, pre-professional advising—and I am very grateful."

Nick Lind '06, a medical student at the University of Iowa, goes even further. Well-rounded undergraduate experiences not only result in a richer life, he believes, but also a better chance at gaining entrance to a graduate program. "Enjoy life!" he advises undergraduates. "Study abroad, do service work. Those experiences can help you get in."



Abby Fyfe '18, center, studies anatomy with fellow medical students.



Riley Gray '17, practices his skills on a dental manikin.

CENTRAL'S RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Katelin (Gannon) Valster, lecturer in exercise science and Central's pre-health adviser, cites these reasons for Central's track record in placing graduates in professional health care programs:

AFFILIATE RELATIONSHIPS WITH HEALTH CARE GRADUATE PROGRAMS at Allen College of Nursing, Palmer College of Chiropractic and Washington University in St. Louis give Central students a leg-up into programs at those institutions.

HIGH ACCEPTANCE RATE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA'S TOP-RATED HEALTH PROGRAMS.

SAVVY STUDENTS. "Students understand the potential for health care career opportunities and are gaining experience in various settings earlier in their career," Valster says. They're also aware of the growing demand for health care workers, which is expected to climb 18 percent over the next 10 years due to demographic changes.

A LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION. "The liberal arts open up possibilities to study anything that sparks a passion," Valster says. "We challenge our students to think broadly and critically. Central students' communication and interpersonal skills and extracurriculars stand out. We believe a pre-health student can major in anything and be a successful applicant to professional school."

FACULTY MENTORING. "Our students have the opportunity to complete honors projects or research in one-on-one collaborations with professors," Valster says. "That enables faculty to really get to know students and provide them with hands-on experiences that they might not get at larger institutions. These faculty-student mentorships allow faculty to write strong recommendation letters for our students."

STRONG PREPROFESSIONAL ADVISING. "In this role, I work with everyone from first-year students curricular mapping to seniors who are completing applications and setting up interviews with professional schools," Valster says. "I also work closely with faculty and I'm in continuous contact with graduate schools about admission requirements and bringing counselors to campus."

REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCES. The Center for Community-Based Learning helps arrange service learning opportunities where students can test their interest in health care and other careers. The Center for Career and Professional Development helps students prepare résumés or hone interview skills for graduate programs as well.

THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS CLUB. This club matches underclassmen to upperclassmen with similar interests and connects students to professional schools and practitioners. **Nicole Palenske**, associate professor of biology and one of the club's two faculty advisors, says many first-year students arrive fixed on entering medical school. But through their exposure to alumni and other practitioners "find that other options such as physician assistant or nurse practitioner may offer a better fit." She says no matter what professional program they end up applying to, "these experiences make for more well-rounded students, which is attractive to graduate programs."

MEET THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

Here's what eight recent Central graduates have to say about why they're interested in the health care field and how Central prepared them for graduate study.



ANDIE ARTHOFER '17

Hometown: Dubuque, Iowa
Central Major: Exercise Science
Now Studying: Medicine with Global Health Distinction
Institution: University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Why Health Care: "I always wanted to be in the field, but my classes in exercise science with Sara Shuger Fox, assistant professor of exercise science, piqued my interest in preventative, lifestyle-focused medicine."
How Central Prepared Me: "My service-learning experience with the wellness coordinator at Pella Manor while in Professor of Psychology Keith Jones' adult development class led to an internship the following year. Then I helped provide Spanish-language health care to immigrant farmworkers. My favorite research projects included the cognitive neuroscience research I did with Ashley Scolaro, associate professor of psychology, about prospective memory and co-authoring a presentation with Sara Shuger Fox on how vitamin D affects muscle in athletes."



RACHAEL BARNETTE '18

Hometown: McHenry, Illinois
Central Major: Psychology
Now Studying: Occupational Therapy
Institution: Creighton University School of Health Professions
Why Health Care: "I fell in love with the profession when I got a chance to shadow an occupational therapist in Pella. I've always loved helping others and working closely with other people. I plan to specialize in neonatal intensive care or in sensory processing and eventually work in a hospital or outpatient pediatric clinic."
How Central Prepared Me: "Central did a great job of helping me find relevant classes and taught me professional communication and teamwork skills that are already helping me tremendously. By providing me with diverse internship and volunteer experiences, my knowledge-base coming into an occupational therapy program is much wider than many of my peers."



ELIZABETH "LIZ" DANIELS '15

Hometown: Oconomowoc, Wisconsin
Central Major: Biochemistry
Now Studying: Physician Assistant specializing in either Emergency Medicine, Surgery or Cardiology
Institution: Nova Southeastern University, Fort Myers, Florida
Why Health Care: "A high school classmate died due to a congenital heart defect. As I watched his family and the entire community struggle to understand what could take the life of such a young person, I became determined to understand the medical aspect of what had happened. I chose a career in health care because I knew I could play an integral part in an educational team-based approach to patient care, and help those in situations similar to what my community went through."
How Central Prepared Me: "My four years on the women's soccer team instilled the values and skills of self-discipline and time management that are essential to any professional path. Also, the majority of my colleagues here went to large schools where class sizes were often over 300 students. At Central, I knew my classmates and my professors individually, and I was not afraid to ask for help, which is necessary when working on a team."



ABBY FYFE '18

Hometown: Pella, Iowa
Central Major: Biochemistry
Now Studying: Medicine
Institution: University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Why Health Care: At first I thought I wanted to do medical research. But after shadowing physicians and doing research at Central, I realized my heart was in patient care. And as an M.D., I can still do research. My end goal is to work in an academic medical center neonatal or pediatric intensive care unit in the United States and to travel abroad to help start ICUs in developing nations."
How Central Prepared Me: "Doing research at Central and the competitive internships I was able to get because of the research were the biggest things that prepared me for medical school. Organic chemistry research with Associate Professor of Chemistry Jay Wackerly helped develop my critical thinking skills as well as the ability to remain positive despite a lack of obvious results."



RILEY GRAY '17

Hometown: Waukee, Iowa
Central Major: Physics
Now Studying: Dentistry
Institution: University of Iowa College of Dentistry
Why Health Care: "Anyone who goes into health care wants to help people. I chose dentistry so I could have a lasting impact on the physical, social and emotional health of my patients."
How Central Prepared Me: "Liberal arts provides a different outlook on problem solving, which is something you do every day in dental school. As I talk with my peers here, I also appreciate how blessed I was at Central to have small classes and professors who wanted to see me succeed. Pella as a community is great, too. The health professionals allow you to shadow. I felt like the community backed me."



NICK LIND '06

Hometown: Fort Dodge, Iowa
Central Major: Cultural Anthropology and Religion
Now Studying: Medicine
Institution: University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Why Health Care: "I tried other careers in youth ministry and personal finance, but neither felt like a calling. Medicine is the only place where I feel like I can combine my passion to help others, feed my intellectual curiosity, explore new scientific horizons, empower individuals to improve their lives, impact my community and literally save lives. What could be better?"
How Central Prepared Me: "I learned interpersonal skills and teamwork from Steve Ybarrola, former professor of anthropology. The religion department, specifically Thomas Kopecek, emeritus professor of religion, and Terence Kleven, professor of religion, did their best to make me a competent writer. James Shriver, professor of chemistry, helped me to understand the concepts of organic chemistry during his office hours. My success in that class helped me to realize I can overcome past failures and is part of the reason why I'm here now. Finally, Chaplain Joe Brummel and his wife, Diana, taught me about selfless leadership. That kind of one-on-one influence is something you rarely get at a large institution, where most science classes have 100 to 500 students."

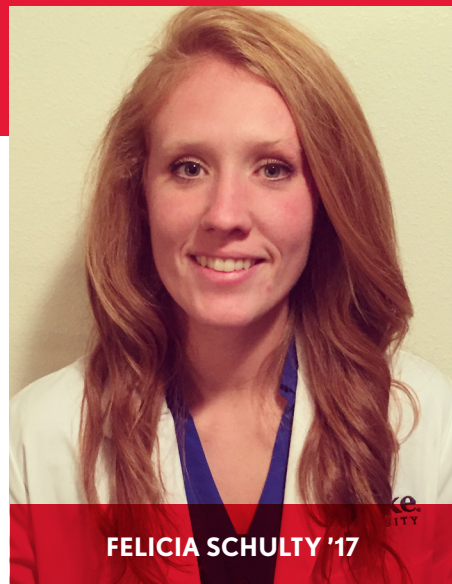


Andie Arthofer '17, right, discusses a medical procedure with a classmate.



SAM PALMER '17

Hometown: Pella, Iowa
Central Majors: Biology and Biochemistry
Now Studying: Medicine
Institution: University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Why Health Care: “My mother, uncle and grandfather were doctors. I saw that a career in health care could combine my passion for people and relationships and my passion for science. Medical school and medicine are interdisciplinary by nature.”
How Central Prepared Me: “My classes and independent research experiences encouraged self-directed, lifelong learning. I spent a semester abroad in Wales, sang in the A Cappella Choir, completed a cancer research internship with a Central alumna, conducted independent chemistry research and was a teaching assistant for introductory biology labs—all while completing a double major and minor. In the always-changing field of medicine, diverse experiences and self-directed, lifelong learning are vital for success.”



FELICIA SCHULTY '17

Hometown: Wellman, Iowa
Central Majors: Psychology
Now Studying: Occupational Therapy
Institution: Drake University
Why Health Care: I became interested in the field through family experiences and an interest in providing hands-on health care. **Keith Jones**, professor of psychology, and **Ellie DuPre**, professor of biology helped me find occupational therapy and my passion grew from there. I also got a hands-on glimpse of the field as a volunteer at Pella Regional Medical Center in oncology and obstetrics and at Hospice House.”
How Central Prepared Me: “I was a member of the health professions club. The club’s faculty advisor, **Ellie DuPre**, brought in professionals who knew what careers were out there for us. **Keith Jones** helped with every aspect of my success at Central. He pushed me in the classroom, in my research experiences and on the softball field. He went above and beyond to be sure I succeeded.”

PRACTITIONERS IN WHITE

Many Central alumni are already health care professionals. They include senior living facility administrators, nurse case managers, palliative care physicians, nuclear pharmacists, family physicians, endodontists, cardiologists and more. Two of the latest to begin practicing:

MEGAN LEHR '10

Hometown: Indianola, Iowa
Central Major: Biology
Graduate School: Des Moines University
Now Practicing: Family Medicine
Location: Indianola, Iowa
Why Health Care: In a story in the *Des Moines Register*, Lehr said her father was a doctor, but never really pushed her to enter medicine. “I kind of grew up in the clinic so it just felt like home,” she said—and that it was her love of science and fixing things that drew her to medicine. Now, she and her father work together in the same clinic.

For the full story:
dmreg.co/2wNhlTl

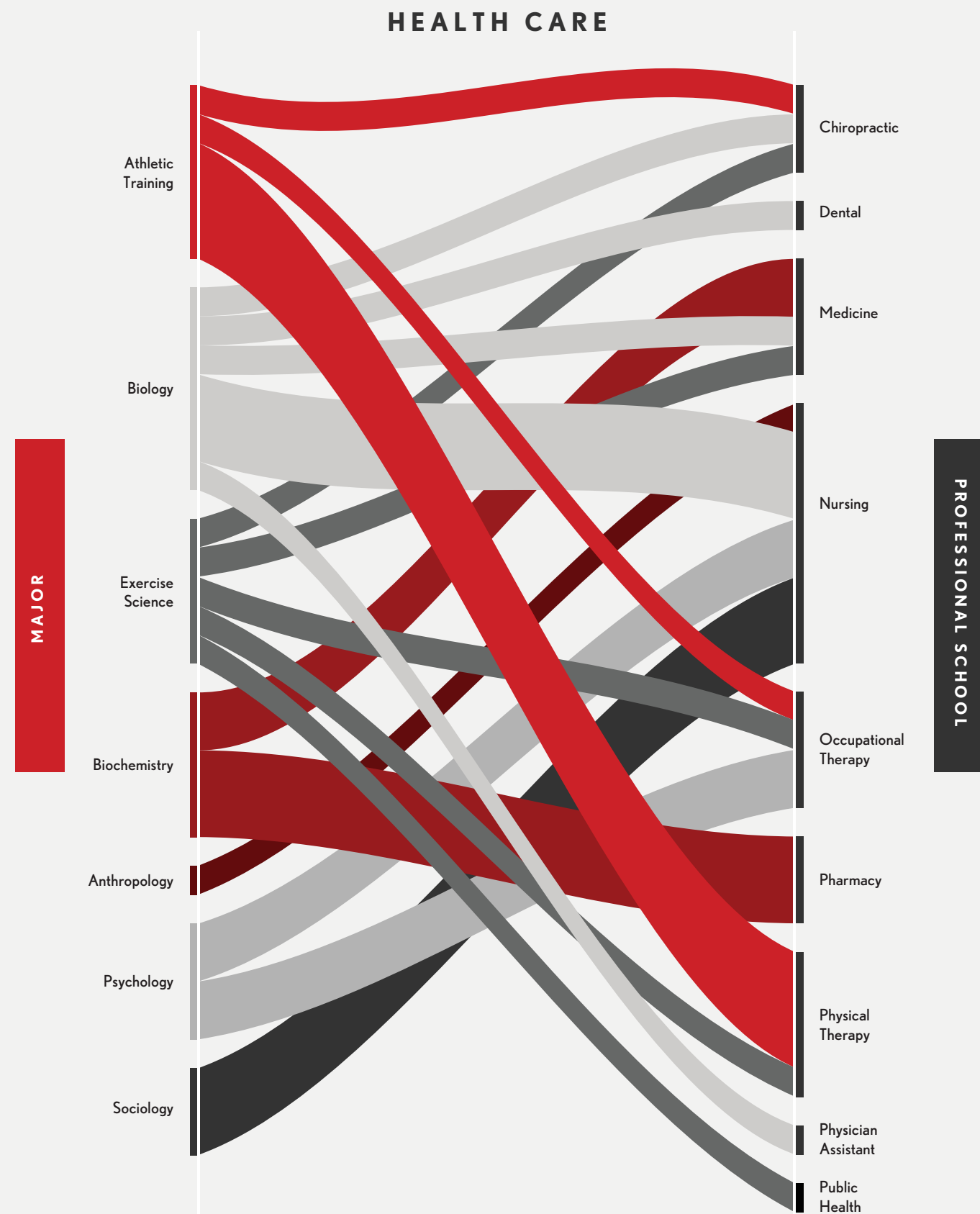
TYLER WALLINGFORD '11

Hometown: Atlantic, Iowa
Central Major: Athletic Training
Graduate School: Creighton University; University of Iowa College of Dentistry
Now Practicing: Dentistry
Location: Fort Dodge, Iowa
Why Health Care: “Central’s athletic training program allowed me to explore other healthcare options. When I was on rotation in Pella, something caught my eye at the dental office.”

How Central Prepared Me: “The athletic training program allowed me to interact with athletes in a clinical setting. Not many people get to do that before their professional training. The patient experience at Central allowed me to be more comfortable in interactions with patients during dental school and early in my career.”

WHAT MAJORS GO WHERE?

This diagram tracks Central alumni whose majors led them to pursue health care graduate programs. The thickness of the connecting lines correspond to the relative number of students.



“MY CENTRAL CLASSES IN EXERCISE SCIENCE, ESPECIALLY WITH DR. SHUGER FOX, HELPED ME DEVELOP A PASSION FOR PREVENTATIVE, LIFESTYLE-FOCUSED MEDICINE. BASED ON MY STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE IN MÉRIDA, MEXICO, SEEING FIRST-HAND HOW PROFESSIONALS FROM ALL CULTURES AND SPECIALTIES CAN WORK TOGETHER, I PLAN TO PURSUE THE GLOBAL HEALTH DISTINCTION CERTIFICATE.”

- ANDIE ARTHOVER '17



" MY STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE IN MÉRIDA AS WELL AS MY SUMMER RESEARCH EXPERIENCE ARE LEADING ME TO CONSIDER A SPECIALTY IN NEONATOLOGY. MY GOAL IS TO WORK IN AN ACADEMIC MEDICAL CENTER NEONATAL OR PEDIATRIC INTENSIVE CARE UNIT IN THE UNITED STATES AND TO TRAVEL ABROAD TO HELP START ICUs IN DEVELOPING NATIONS."

– Abby Fyfe '18

Major: Biochemistry

Now Studying: Medicine

Institution: University of Iowa Carver College of Medicine
Iowa City, Iowa



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