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University of Alberta  
Class of 2009  
Hometown: Revelstoke BC  
Age: 24

I grew up in the National Park in Revelstoke, BC. After completing high school in Revelstoke I moved to Edmonton to start an Undergraduate degree at the University of Alberta. I entered into the Honours Biochemistry program. First year of university was a big change from high school. Getting used to the competition in the classes and the large sizes of classes was hard. My first year of university was a learning experience. After first year I began to feel more comfortable and confident in the university environment. I also began to meet more people in the biochemistry program, which allowed me to become more involved with the department. I had the chance to do research as a summer student in the biochemistry department after my second, third and fourth years of my degree. I believe this to have been a helpful experience in getting into medical school.

During my undergraduate degree I volunteered in the University of Alberta Hospital in a pediatric units. This exposed my to the health care field and got me interested in pursuing medicine as a career. Around this time I began to interact with the Aboriginal Health Careers Coordinator at the university. I was able to get advice on writing the MCAT, what the application and admissions process would be like and how to prepare for it. It also gave me a chance to participate in the Aboriginal Student Summer Science camp. I was able to meet other Aboriginal medical and dental students who were also assisting with the camp. Meeting other students who were already in medical school made the admissions process less daunting and more of a goal that could be accomplished.

The biggest surprise about medical school was that the first year was less stressful and more relaxing than my undergraduate degree. There are many student activities that you can become involved with in medical school and on a national level with IPAC. Another good surprise was that the learning environment was now non-competitive pass or fail grading system. The pass or fail grading system allows people to learn how to work together instead of compete for grades. After the stressful process of admission to medical school attending medical school has been very enjoyable.

I believe one of the best things about being an Aboriginal student is that you have an extra network of support that the other students do not get. At the University of Alberta the Aboriginal students know each other from the first day of class and have great support from our Aboriginal Health Careers Coordinator.