

Julie Brown
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Student Letter Bio

IPAC

Where I am from:

I grew up in Vernon, BC, Canada. I am from the Okanagan Indian Band. I also have Cherokee and Shuswap ancestry.

My parents are Bernadine Marchand-Brown and Lee Brown.

My maternal grandparents are Rose and Ralph Marchand. My paternal grandparents are Viola and Francis Brown.

Work/ education experience prior to medical school:

My first job title was a computer graphics designer working for the Okanagan Indian Band (OKIB). I set up computer courses for the local youth as well as a summer technology camp for Native youth. I also updated the website for OKIB (1999).

My next job, I worked as an office assistant for the Native Courtworkers Counselling Association of BC. I became familiar with the court system and legal processes. I also attended court with the Native Courtworker to aid and support Native people in court (2000).

In 2000, I worked as a cashier at Little Kingdom Grocery store, located on my reservation (2000).

My next job, which lasted for four summers, was a research assistant for Dr. Adam Wei at Okanagan University College. Our research project examined the effects of large woody debris, forest fires, and clear cutting on the fish habitat and water quality (2001-2004).

I was trained as a fire fighter and worked as an emergency fire fighter in the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire in 2003.

I also worked during the school year as a computer lab monitor at UBC Okanagan (2005-2006)

My last job (2006) involved conducting environmental research for UBC Okanagan in collaboration with the Osoyoos Indian Band on the endangered species of Behr's Hairstreak Butterfly. I also studied the dispersal of a species of Leptoglossus ("stink bugs") at the Kalamalka Research Forestry Center in Vernon, BC.

Steps I took to get admitted to medical school:

I attended a pre-admissions workshop for two consecutive years at UBC that was organized by James Andew. This workshop was a few days long and was located at the First Nations Longhouse at UBC in Vancouver. This course was very useful because it told me what I needed to do in order to get into medicine.

I did a lot of volunteer work to put on my application for medicine:

- Candystriping at Vernon Jubilee Hospital 2000-2001 – this was my first volunteer position working in a hospital. I persued working here because I wanted to make sure that I enjoyed working in the health care system.

- President of the Okanagan University College Aboriginal Student Council (2004-2005)

- Member of the BC Native Women's Society (2004- Present)

- Executive member of the UBC – Aboriginal Student Council (2005-2006)

- First Nations Chief's Health Careers Initiative Role Model Campaign – I volunteered to do a poster role model campagain in order to encourage other Aboriginal youth to enter the health careers field

I took a course, provided by Kaplan, in order to prepare me to write the MCAT exam. I wrote the MCAT in the summer of 2004.

I remained an active member of my community. I attended cultural ceremonies, pow wows, and other community events.

Biggest challenges in medical school (pre- or post-admission) and how I have dealt with them:

I feel that it is very important to make medicine your own. A lot of times it feels as though the curriculum is based on molding me into a standardized, typical doctor. However, I feel that it is important to maintain my ideas, and personality.

I would like to retain my humility while in medical school. I am no better, nor no worse than anyone else.

I would like to become a stronger person.

I hope that I do not become desensitized to the death and pain that occurs around me and that I can express my empathy and compassion for those people suffering and in pain.

Biggest surprises (good and bad) about medical school:

It was a very interesting experience to work with cadavers. I wasn't familiar with what a cadaver was before I attended medical school (for those of you who don't know – it is a synonym for a dead body).

Things I learned along the way that I wished I had known prior to starting the admissions process:

How to go about getting into medicine. There are a lot of steps, and it takes a while to figure it out.

Why I decided to go to medical school:

To help people.

To improve the substandard health of Aboriginal people.

To incorporate Western Medicine with Traditional Indigenous Medicine.

Tips or any other messages for First Nations, Inuit or Metis people considering medical education:

I believe that anyone can be a doctor if they put their heart into it. I think it takes a lot of hard work and determination. However, anything is possible.