

Getting there



Diversity Means More
Than **HUE** at ATSU



ATSU | A.T. Still
University

FIRST IN WHOLE PERSON HEALTHCARE

Getting there

Let ATSU light your way

A.T. Still University of Health Sciences (ATSU) is deeply committed to an educational and collaborative environment embracing cultural proficiency. Students striving to become the best healthcare professionals possible must understand and embrace society's diversity. This is also true for ATSU's faculty and staff.

ATSU is the founding institution of osteopathic healthcare, established in 1892 by Andrew Taylor Still, DO. As a leading health sciences university, ATSU is comprised of three campuses (Kirksville, Missouri; Mesa, Arizona; and Santa Maria, California) on more than 200 acres with seven prestigious schools.

More than an idea

“Getting there” is more than an idea at ATSU! The journey for most prospective health professions students begins at their earliest recognition of career opportunities. For others, a career in healthcare was sparked by a moment of enlightenment; they were either inspired by a health professional delivering care to someone close to them, or their own receipt of care. No matter what form of inspiration these young minds succumbed to, a dream of becoming a professional in healthcare was crafted, often with no clear pathway.

If students, particularly those from historically underserved groups, don't realize early in their K-6 education that these professions exist or don't believe they are capable of achieving this level of success, they won't be exposed to learning environments that prepare them effectively. In addition, these health professionals in waiting may be faced with systemic infrastructural barriers, that delay or dissuade their pursuit of these goals. Research suggests having mentors and allies whose life experiences and cultural backgrounds reflect this population improves their chances for succeeding in these fields.

The Getting There series accentuates ATSU's Dreamline programming and Graduate Health Professions Scholarship (GPS) program by connecting similarly situated mentors and allies for prospective students. The only way graduate health professions schools are going to effectively educate enough healthcare providers reflective of the populations being served, and stem the tide of an aging workforce, is to bring more prospective K-12 students into the healthcare delivery system who are on the right academic trajectory and connected to healthcare providers and educators throughout their dreamline journey.

This book contains the stories of just a few of ATSU's healthcare professions students, to show that if they got there, so can others.



Clinton J. Normore, MBA
Vice President, Diversity & Inclusion

Andrew T.

Hometown
Los Angeles, California

Career aspiration
Osteopathic physician

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Being an underrepresented minority in medicine, I wanted to become part of a family that fostered commitment to community service while practicing cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and compassion when delivering care to patients. I believe it is not about correcting people but empowering them to be the best they can be.

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My journey

My brother, Adrian, is the reason I am on the path to becoming a DO. When I was a sophomore in high school, Adrian was in a car accident and suffered a traumatic brain injury. As I observed the doctors care for my brother, I realized he wasn't receiving compassionate patient care. At the time, his doctors became fixated on aggressively treating his disease and keeping him stable, but never stopped to ask what my brother wanted or what my family thought of his treatment plan. From that day forward, I became motivated to learn more about treating patients in a holistic and humanistic manner, attending to their physical and mental health needs. Seeing the days pass as my brother spends his life in a vegetative coma, I feel appreciative of the opportunities that were given to me and propelled me to take control of my life.

Go where hope is needed most.

I want to be an advocate for the voiceless, as I believe in every individual's potential to achieve wellness. Working directly with communities I call home has reaffirmed my initial desire to fight for better health practices and policies. I look forward to delivering high-quality, personalized care with specialized skill sets of engineering, global health, and environmental science to provide infrastructure and community development in underserved communities.

I did it, and you can too.

I chose ATSU to complete my healthcare education because of its focus on whole person healthcare, community health, and access for underserved populations. Everyone deserves equal access to excellent education and healthcare. As an inner city youth of Los Angeles, I experienced the struggles accompanied with being an underprivileged community member. As a future physician and community leader, I wanted to participate in a program that provided educational tools necessary to empower individuals to take charge of their health.

Belema O.

Hometown
Phoenix, Arizona

Career aspiration
Dentist

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The GPS program is a chance to interact with other diverse professionals and become an integral member of Diversity & Inclusion. The financial support is, of course, an immense help. However, since I received the scholarship, I have gained opportunities and support I believe to be priceless.

The priceless rewards are why I chose this scholarship, and I am so glad that I did.

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My journey

A culmination of several events led me to dentistry. I always thought dentistry was an overlooked field in medicine, and I was right. If you are interested in truly helping people in more ways than one, then dentistry is a great field to get into. The peak point for me was when I did my mission trip to Morocco in undergraduate school. I presented some children with the first toothbrush they had ever seen. After that experience, I have never doubted my decision to pursue healthcare again.

Go where hope is needed most.

I am pursuing a master of public health degree concurrently with the doctor of dental medicine degree at ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health. After I graduate, I plan to stay in Phoenix and work in a public health facility that caters to underserved pregnant women and children because I am very passionate about that vulnerable population. After working for a while, I hope to open a public health facility of my own and continue to serve the community I grew up in.

I did it, and you can too.

After going to my interview at ATSU, I knew it was where I was headed if given a chance. The environment was so inviting, and although I knew the rigor students were being put through, they all seemed genuinely happy. It was important for me to find a place with a good curriculum and faculty. But more importantly, I needed an institution that prioritized supporting and respecting students above all, and that is what ATSU does.

Jillian M.

Hometown
Las Vegas, Nevada

Career aspiration
Occupational therapist

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I chose the GPS program to gain experience in a variety of cultures, customs, and ethnicities so I can better serve my future patients by building trust through an increased level of communication and by understanding the challenges they may be experiencing.

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My journey

While working with the School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) in Southern California, an occupational therapist was helping students who had difficulty counting with hand therapy. The occupational therapist was not fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) and had taught the children inaccurate hand signs. Children began signing the number 3 as 6 and could not accurately count to 10. I noticed this error and quickly corrected it. This is when I realized I could use my communicative disorders degree and second language in ASL, in conjunction with a higher education occupational therapy degree, to bridge the gap from patient to therapist. My specialized skills will offer DHH patients an increased level of comfort and confidentiality.

Provide hope for those who need it most.

I am interested in hand therapy for the Deaf and acute care with spinal cord injuries. I believe hand therapy intervention for Deaf children is important with an occupational therapist fluent in ASL. Early interventions will set a foundation of the language and prevent home signs made up by non-ASL signing family members. Supporting language early can increase the amount of mainstream Deaf students into a hearing classroom, where they have the support of an interpreter and peer equality. The spinal cord is also my favorite part of the human body, and I hope to help future patients who have lesions within this area return to their normal routines.

I did it, and you can too.

The University supports students to become the best healthcare professionals possible by understanding and embracing society's diversity. I was attracted to the idea of learning and servicing diverse, underserved, urban, and rural communities across America for clinical rotations. My skills will allow me to build trust through an increased level of communication, and the causes of patient challenges can be confidently expressed and addressed more effectively.



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Quotasze W.

Hometown
Lambert, Mississippi

Career aspiration
Dentist

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As an underrepresented minority, I am truly passionate about serving the underserved. The GPS program is designed to support individuals with intents to serve in underserved areas. GPS not only provides me with financial support, but it also allows me to connect and build relationships with other scholars whose life contributions and experiences are very similar to mine.

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My journey

The first event that led me to pursue healthcare was meeting a family member who was an oral surgeon at my great grandmother's repass. Literally seeing this family member exposed me to something I had not seen my entire 18 years of life, a black doctor. As a recent graduate from high school and having scored high on Mississippi's state biology test, I was encouraged to major in biology prior to attending college. After briefly speaking to my cousin at the repass, he asked me if I had ever thought of pursuing dentistry, and if not, I should research it as a possible career option. After conducting my research and learning dentistry aligned with my passion of service, I decided to pursue it as my career.

Go where hope is needed most.

I plan to return to my home in the Mississippi Delta. Ranking among the poorest areas in the country, the Mississippi Delta is an area many individuals would avoid, but for me, it is home. Returning home and sharing the knowledge and skills that I am currently equipping myself with will provide me an opportunity to have a positive impact and be a leader in my community.

I did it, and you can too.

While working at the Houston Health Department in Texas, I saw a YouTube video about ATSU's Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health (ATSU-ASDOH). In the video, the School's inaugural dean spoke about ATSU-ASDOH's guiding principles involving whole person healthcare and serving the underserved. After listening to him speak on contributing factors related to oral health, such as poverty, obesity, substance abuse, etc., ATSU immediately became an interest of mine, being that I was raised in a community impacted by those very issues. He continued to speak about ATSU-ASDOH's mentoring environment, innovative technology, and caring and compassionate faculty. That video moved my spirit, and after applying and interviewing, I knew ATSU was the place for me. I chose ATSU because I did not just want to be a tooth technician but a caring, compassionate healthcare provider.



Getting
there

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ATSU believes excellence
requires understanding, affirming,
and valuing human difference.

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 623.251.4705 [Arizona campus](#)

 623.251.4705 [California campus](#)

 660.626.2210 [Missouri campus](#)

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 diversity@atsu.edu

Diversity & Inclusion