

Season 5 Episode 1

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Hello college bound listeners. My name is Nicole Campbell and I am a current senior here at the University of Notre Dame. We are so excited to bring you another season of our podcast, The Post Notre Dame Experience; a conversation with Notre Dame graduates about what their life has been like after graduation. Whether that was attending graduate school, going into the workforce, or moving abroad, we are ready to share with you the endless possibilities that are at your hands when you graduate from Notre Dame. Kicking off this season, we have Miss Lauren Michels with us here today who will be talking to us about what her journey and career has been since she graduated in 2017.

00:00:33:01 - 00:00:35:02

Hi, Lauren. Thank you so much for joining us today.

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Hi. Thank you so much for having me. I'm excited to be here.

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Exciting. So let's start off, basic Notre Dame introduction. I'm sure you've given it a million times. You've got your name, your graduation year, your major, hometown, dorm when you were on campus. And where you're at now?

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I'm Lorne Michaels. I am originally from the suburbs of Chicago. At Notre Dame I lived in McGlynn and actually lived there all four years. I actually started out as Psychology and Pre-Professional and then the Neuroscience and Behavior major first founded when I believe I was a sophomore. So that's when I switched over to the neuro major. It was a pretty nice transition from what I was already doing, and that's what I graduated with.

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Where are you at now? Location wise?

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Now I am living in Chicago. I live in the city and I am a first year resident in Podiatric Medicine and Surgery, a hospital in the Chicago land area.

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Wow, that's so exciting. How do you feel? Like Notre Dame prepared you for your post undergrad medical education and where you're at now?

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I feel indebted to Notre Dame in so many ways for where I am now. It was actually one of my pre-professional advisors at Notre Dame who first introduced me to the field of Podiatry. So that's how I started shadowing some local podiatrist in the South Bend area. I kind of really first became interested in the field, and then just along the way, all the people I've been able to network with both while I was at Notre Dame and then also just through alumni connections afterwards and kind of just fell into this career path and I ended up taking the MCAT. I did a one year gap year and did a masters, which I think really helped as well. But overall, I think academically, Notre Dame prepared me really well. I think I was well ahead of a lot of my peers going into a master's degree as well as med school, just in terms of already being acclimated to a really intense workload from Notre Dame, and particularly with the science pre-professional path and then all the connections and just being familiar with what it takes to excel in the medical field. Being so familiar with so many of my peers and mentors who were doing the same thing was really helpful.

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Going off of your point, you were saying you're making the decision of gap year versus no gap year in your medical career. So many students today especially have that question of what they should do in their med school process. So what was your discernment like in figuring out what was right for you Post-Graduation?

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It's really tricky and I don't think there's a one size fits all answer by any means. A lot of my friends ended up taking gap year just because it is nice to get some more experience, have something else put on your resume. It's always good to get more academic training in the meantime. I think it's difficult or it can be difficult depending on what all activities you're involved in at Notre Dame to get all of those prerequisites done, take the MCAT, have all your applications in for med school, you know, to be doing all that junior year, if not like finishing up senior year is really difficult. So for me, the timing just worked out well to kind of take a gap year and take that time to figure out exactly what I wanted to do. At the time, I was actually debating, doing lots of different medical careers. I had some of my eggs in the physical therapy basket. I've always loved working out and fitness, and I just think I would have loved physical therapy, so I was really interested in that. But I also, you know, thought med school sounded really cool. Podiatry ended up being almost a nice marriage of the two in a lot of ways because I am a full doctor, licensed to see patients on my own, but we specialize in foot and ankle surgery and then we also see patients in clinic and do a lot of more type kind of biomechanical type things. So I really like that aspect of the practice and then also just getting to be a full doctor. It kind of took me a while to get here, but a gap year was a nice way to kind of fill the time and figure out what I wanted to do and get all those applications in. So I have a lot of friends who ended up, you know, working for a year or taking more classes or doing other things, too. But I think there's a lot of ways you could spend that gap year if it's something that you end up doing.

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I think it's awesome too, that it was sort of common ground amongst your friends and there was an ability from Notre Dame to kind of go in together and figure everything out before going down that med school path because it is a pretty time intensive path and to feel like you had that freedom and ability to be able to be prepared even after a gap year, I think really is powerful. Totally. Yeah. I think even just, you know, from going straight from the intensity of Notre Dame, you know, socially, academically, there's so much going on your senior. It's such an exciting year. So I. Think to go straight into med school. It's certainly possible. But, you know, med school is no easy feat. And I think you want to make sure that you're fully prepared and it's the right thing and the right time and everything. So I don't think anyone should hesitate to take a break if you need to.

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In that sense, how do you feel like the Notre Dame premed advising helped you in this sense?

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I think some of my friends are going more of the traditional medical school route, had more of an experience with the pre-med advising than I did. But like I said, my advisor is actually the one who first introduced me to podiatry. That's when I kind of started shadowing and really enjoyed it. But they're super helpful in reviewing your application, making recommendations for where you are, GPA wise, MCAT wise, extracurriculars, and even just monitoring you throughout your four years to determine like, okay, should I be focusing more on science classes? Should I be doing more research or whatever it might be to kind of boost your application? And there's so familiar with the medical school application process because they have such an amazing track record of sending Notre Dame students to med school. So it's a really, really great resource to have. And even after you graduate, you know, they're still there, which is really, really great to have.

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That's awesome. Are you still in touch with advisors or have you been at some point in your journey?

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Not so much since I graduated, I think maybe in the year or so after I graduated, I was a little bit, but once I kind of was into med school and had that all figured out, it kind of was sailing in terms of my path. From that point.

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They got geared on the right path and helped out in that regard. That's awesome. And then as a fellow Neuroscience major, I'm curious how your neuroscience work really benefited you and prepared you for your career goals and specifically in podiatry, I feel that it's a really interesting bridge to make between the two.

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Yeah, I kind of went from the brain to the foot, so it's about as far as you could go. The neuroscience major. I loved the major so much. I just enjoyed all the classes. Everything that we got to do from the human physiology course is anthropology, psychology and then of course, all the sciences. I think that all

of those classes are really invaluable in terms of just understanding evidence based approaches to learning and to medicine, and even just to people and working with people. You know, any type of medical professional has to be familiar with how people function, how people's brains work, how you know, what motivates people, things like that. Also, just having that kind of research oriented mindset. I think so many of the classes I took like food in the brain and I took a course on male physiology and even just your your general biology, chemistry, everything was really data driven, which I loved. And I think, you know, any science field and medical fields is that way and should be, you know, very evidence based. So I think just that critical thinking kind of approach is what I loved about neuroscience and has definitely translated into what I'm doing now.

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That's super cool. And I think it's funny, you basically went as far as you could in the body from the brain to the foot, but it all still kind of connects. And as somebody that does research as well, being research minded, especially going to a field like medicine, having that drive to want to learn more and really pursue that I think is really cool. Any specific research you you're involved in on campus?

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By senior year, I actually was involved in a little bit of research through one of the courses I took. We were involved in Rare Disease Day. I'm not sure if that's still a big event on campus. I was researching neurofibromatosis type one in terms of like laboratory bench type research I wasn't really heavily involved in and anything.

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I think that's okay too. You still get that mindset from the classes as well.

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Definitely. And I've always loved research and in my master's program I was able to kind of dive into research a little bit more. And then I've actually been pretty heavily involved in research throughout med school and my residencies. Notre Dame's approach in general is pretty, like I said, just kind of research, critically thinking oriented. So I think no matter what you end up doing at Notre Dame, if you're involved in science classes, you'll be well prepared to succeed in research if that's something you want to do later on too.

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That's amazing. Going now into your graduate time, how do you feel that the alumni network at Notre Dame and the connections you've made in your Notre Dame time as a student post life? How do you feel that that's been helpful in your career, in what you've been pursuing?

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I think no matter where you go, first of all, there's Notre Dame alumni, fans, people all over the country. So I think no matter where you go, having Notre Dame on your resume and being able to relate to people who have Notre Dame connections is huge. I think it's an impressive starter right off the bat no matter where you are. And also just in terms of having alumni that have been able to reach out to in my area or who are, you know, in my field, even just having other friends who are going through the med school

process because so many of my friends have been involved in applying to med school in med school, in residency.

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And I actually just was at church the other day and one of my favorite churches in Chicago. And I saw a girl from my dorm in McGlynn, and she's in her residency too. So, you know, the Notre Dame community is just so strong. And I think that's clear to anyone who's a part of it. So it's really just invaluable to to be a part of such a special community.

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It really is. Now, in my senior year, it's really cool to see how connected everybody is and have that sense of camaraderie and family. Even beyond your years at Notre Dame directly. With looking at students that are looking to apply to the university, especially in the neuroscience major. So it was created in 2015, I believe was the year and since then it has become one of the most popular majors on campus. So I was wondering if you had any specific advice for students applying to Neuro at Notre Dame? Yeah.

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And it's so cool to hear, too, because I think when I went into the major, there were only a handful of students the year above me who were just testing it out and it was brand new. It's cool to see how far it's come because I'm probably biased, but I think it is a very cool major and I absolutely loved it. You said just advice for anyone wanting to go into it?

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Yeah. So I guess if there's a prospective senior that's super interested in studying neuroscience at Notre Dame, what would your advice be to them?

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Stay curious. Stay open minded. One great thing about Notre Dame is it's not mandatory to decide definitively what you want to do from the get go. So you do have some time to, you know, take your general science courses, see how they're going, maybe take some psychology courses, talk to professors, talk to upperclassmen. You know, I was lucky to be in one of the STEM dorms, so there were a lot of girls involved in science classes and science majors in my dorm. So I was able to reach out to them and kind of get their perspectives. So I think being able to kind of feel things out freshman year is really helpful and then just kind of see what you're passionate about and see how, you know, you want to spend your time and spend your four years and kind of go from there. But I definitely loved the neuro major, so I would highly recommend it.

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I'm biased as well. I absolutely love the neuroscience major internship. It's been so incredible to be a part of and to speak to people that have that experience beyond Notre Dame and having seen how cool it's been since the inception of the major as well, makes me very proud. And then I guess, looking at current students at Notre Dame, do you have any specific advice for Notre Dame students that are either in the middle of applying to med school or they're preparing for that transition into their post-graduate life?

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Use your Notre Dame connections as much as you can. If you know upperclassmen from your dorm who are applying to med school or people who have recently graduated try to reach out as much as possible. Those connections are, like I said, just so valuable. And having somebody who's gone in front of you who has kind of gone through a similar path is so helpful. And I guarantee you any recent Notre Dame grad is so happy to reach out and explain their path to you and offer any advice or help or encouragement that you might need. I would say that's a big thing. Definitely focus on, you know, trying to keep that GPA up as much as possible, eventually having your sights on the MCAT, but that doesn't have to be while you're at Notre Dame, you know, be realistic with yourself, but also don't limit yourself. If somebody tells you you can't. There's really no can't, in my opinion, with regards to what you want to do with med school. I know people who have gone, you know, back to school ten years later or who are in their mid thirties and forties and just starting med school. So if you want to make it happen, it absolutely can happen. It's a long road, it's a hard road, but it's so rewarding. And if your dream is to be a doctor, don't let anybody tell you that you can't because it really just comes down to how hardworking you are and how far you want to go to make that dream a reality.

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I think that's super amazing. So thank you so, so much for your time. That is all the questions I have for you currently. Do you have any final parting words you'd like to give to the listeners?

00:13:40:07 - 00:13:59:28

Oh, gosh. Well, obviously I loved my time at Notre Dame, so for prospective students, can't recommend Notre Dame enough. Current students. Just enjoy your time there as much as you can. It goes by so, so fast. Just make the most of it while you're there. And if anybody has any questions or wants to reach out, I'm happy to talk further with anybody if they have any questions.

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Perfect. Amazing. Thank you so much.

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Yeah. Thank you, guys.

00:14:03:26 - 00:14:19:25

Thank you, listeners, for joining us today for another episode of College Bound. We hope that you enjoyed getting to hear one perspective about what your time at Notre Dame can look like. Make sure you listen to our past seasons of college bound on Spotify, Apple, or wherever you listen to your podcasts. See you next time and Go Irish.