



Troy Stallard

Hometown: Roanoke, VA
Radford University Carilion



Degree/training: I'm a first-generation senior dual majoring in the Biomedical Science and Emergency Services programs at Radford University Carilion. I'm a medically retired USAF Paramedic, educator, and leader.

Career Aspiration: My aspiration is to gain admittance in medical school with the aim of performing reconstructive plastic surgery for veterans and victims of traumatic accidents. "If I can externally heal the scars of trauma, the process of healing the invisible wounds can begin."

Why did you choose your career path? I've spent over a decade practicing Emergency Medicine on a variety of platforms, but it was medicine that chose me and not the other way around. The military needed me to be a medic and every step of increased certification has reinforced my love of medicine. Through my research and time spent healing wounded warriors with my background in mental health this is where I can make the most impact.

What advice would you give those who are guiding students into health careers? Being a first generation student there's a plethora of programs and resources provided to fund and accomplish your academic goals. I've learned this lesson one step at a time and advisement for these individuals is crucial. Every year champions of equity and inclusion break the barriers of the past and underserved populations receive better opportunities. We are the future and agents that effectuate these changes. Health sciences can be a deeply rewarding path of service that only passionate individuals will outlast. Start small and explore all your options, a good portion of my peers are not on their original career path.



Describe any volunteer experiences that contributed to your decision to pursue training in a health career?

Volunteering is the first critical step in deciding what health science career you want to pursue. There are so many positions beyond being a doctor or nurse and every one of them matters to providing adequate care to a population. Shadowing, volunteering, internships are required for most graduate level programs and help to enrich the experience of your journey. Find what your passionate about and there's a good chance someone else is as well, develop your sense of service early and it will help to ensure your success in health sciences

What courses do you wish you took to prepare you for current health career training?

Health sciences is a unique field that you can work while gaining higher licensure or certification while building experience. Start with a certification then work your way up to your final goal. Network, build relationships, and skills not relating to medicine are invaluable as it's a customer driven ecosystem.





Mikel Cawley

Hometown: Jackson, Michigan
Virginia Tech



Degree/training: Northern Michigan University (Bachelor of Science in Biology), Northern Michigan University (Master of Science), and currently Virginia Tech (Ph.D. in Translational Biology, Medicine and Health)

Career Aspiration: I aspire to conduct research at an R1 university as a tenure-track faculty or as a Senior Investigator with the National Institute of Health focused on mitochondrial biology in brain diseases.

Why did you choose your career path? Continuing my education in the Translational Biology Medicine and Health program has provided extensive technical training in my field, the opportunity to build academic relationships and networks, training that fosters an inclusive environment for younger scientists in my community, and frequent opportunities for scientific collaborations, which are all fundamental to the future of scientific research.

Where did you hear about a health career path and how did you enter this path? I first became aware of research in cellular and molecular biology as a senior undergraduate student. I began volunteering in a lab funded by the National Institute of Health, which led me to continue my education and focus my research goals towards translational biology and medicine.

What advice would you give those who are guiding students into health careers? Make sure students know that success is not linear. You will frequently take steps back in your journey before moving forward, but this is still progress. Often, these moments provide the most valuable lessons and motivation to continue forward.



Describe any volunteer experiences that contributed to your decision to pursue training in a health career. In my junior year of undergrad, I was volunteering in a hospital and first began to question if I wanted to go to medical school. I felt scared to change my mind, but I started asking doctors and nurses about other career options in health and medicine. I received excellent advice from several mentors and quickly realized I should try volunteering in a research lab at my university. It is never too late to learn or try something new!

What courses do you wish you had taken to prepare you for your current health career training? I wish I had taken the time to learn and speak multiple languages.

