



*Focused on preparing a
diverse, culturally-competent
healthcare workforce
specializing in rural and
under-served areas.*



AHEC SCHOLAR YEARBOOK—

INTRODUCING

Southwest Idaho Area Health Education AHEC Scholars

SW ID AHEC is pleased to announce the AHEC Scholars soon to be graduating from the WWAMI AHEC Scholar Program, a nationally recognized interdisciplinary educational and training program that focuses on preparing a diverse, culturally competent healthcare workforce specializing in rural and underserved areas.

Upon graduation from WWAMI AHEC Scholars, this dedicated and diverse group of health profession students will have completed 80 hours of interdisciplinary didactic training focused on interprofessional education, behavioral health integration, social determinants of health, cultural competency, practice transformation, and current/emerging health issues. They will have also completed 80 hours of Clinical, Experimental, or Community activities in service to rural and underserved communities in an interdisciplinary environment.



2021-2023 AHEC Scholar Cohort

Karlee Black

- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine -
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Laura O'Brien

- Boise State University -
Nursing, Master of Science

Rebecca Gomez

- Idaho State University -
Nursing, Doctorate

Hilarie Perez

- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine -
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Hunter Gray

- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine -
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Madison Summers

- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine -
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Amneh Natouf

- Idaho State University -
Pharmacy, Doctorate

Lydia Webb

- Idaho State University -
Speech Language Pathology, Master of Science

Julia Nguyen

- Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine -
Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine

Stephanie Wyler

- Idaho State University -
Physician Assistant, Master of Science



Karlee Black

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine | Osteopathy, Doctor

I grew up in Bismarck, ND. I will graduate from the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2024. Although I am currently unsure what specialty I will pursue, I know I want to be involved in public health and research. In my spare time I enjoy going to yoga classes and connecting with family and friends. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because I want to be an advocate for change and progress. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is having the opportunity to collaborate with a diverse group of students as we learn about and interact with rural and underserved communities.

Rebecca Gomez

Idaho State University | Nursing, Doctorate

I was born and raised in Southern Idaho. I will be graduating from ISU's DNP-FNP program. My long term goals are to work as a Family Nurse Practitioner, as well as teach in the nursing program at a local university. I enjoy spending my free time with my husband and four children. I also enjoy baking, listening to true crime podcasts, and reading biographies. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because I am passionate about serving people & communities that have historically not received the best healthcare. I want to help them learn to trust our healthcare system, and I want to be able to provide the high quality care that they deserve. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is being able to learn how to be a better healthcare provider for my patients.



Hunter Gray

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine | Osteopathy, Doctor

My name is Hunter Gray and I am an OMS-I at the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine. I grew up in Round Rock, Texas and then graduated from Brigham Young University with a degree in Exercise Science and a minor in Gerontology. In my undergraduate program, I was awarded the Utah Lt. Governor Service Award, Presidential Service Award, and was named to the College of Life Sciences Academic Dean's List. In my free time, I enjoy watching Science Fiction movies with my wife Haley or hiking with our 2 year old Vizsla puppy named Atlas. In 2018, I participated in a humanitarian trip to Southern Uganda where I spent five weeks working with the Kigezi Healthcare Foundation. Working with local health workers, we coordinated medical outreaches to the rural regions of Uganda. Additionally, I participated in research centered on maternal health and the social implications of HIV/AIDS. From this experience I gained a deep respect for rural medicine and helping those with limited health resources. After Graduation, I plan to pursue a career in medicine. I really enjoy working with my hands, interacting with new people, and finding solutions to unique and complex problems. While I have not decided yet on a specialty — I know my focus will be with rural medicine. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is the ability to be a part of an inter-disciplinary team aligned in our purpose to help underserved/rural communities, but unique in our experiences and roles.



Amneh Natouf

Idaho State University | Pharmacy, Doctorate

It was born and raised in Syria. I came to Boise about 4 years ago. I am a Pharm D Student at ISU. My professional goal is to help patients and to deliver high quality of care. I am interested in travelling and learning new cultures. I have an adorable daughter who I love spending time with. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because I would like to help patients in underserved community get well and improve their healthcare and quality of life. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is the ability to work with other professional students and gaining additional knowledge and experience

Julia Nguyen

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine | Osteopathy, Doctor

I was born in San Jose, California, raised in Houston, Texas, and will be graduating in 2024 from the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine as a Doctor of Osteopathy. My long term goal is to advance my medical career in either a rural or underserved area in either the fields of emergency medicine or anesthesiology. I have two corgis that I love with all my heart and play the piano on the very little free time I have from medical school. To me, becoming a doctor isn't just about the science and the medicine, but also about the people who need it. My priority in my professional career is to use my education and resources to allocate medical care and attention to those living in trying circumstances or are just very remote from a medical facility. Growing up in San Jose, my family tried almost everything from simple over the counter medicine to herbal supplements to avoid having to take me and my brothers to the doctor simply due to cost. I hope that as a doctor and as an AHEC scholar, that I will be able to prevent that circumstance with other struggling families. My favorite part of the AHEC scholar program is the community that is involved with it. Meeting and talking with fellow scholars and with the coordinators of the program just once was enough to inspire my career track as a future doctor in rural or underserved areas. Having others on the same page as me is very reassuring that this field of medicine is only going to grow.



Laura O'Brien

Boise State University | Nursing, Master of Science

I was born in Minnesota, but my family moved to Southeast Idaho when I was 10 years old. I will be graduating from Boise State University with a Masters of Nursing in their Adult Gerontology Nurse Practitioner program. My long-term goals are to work in Oncology in the outpatient setting. I enjoy skiing and spending time with my 11 year old daughter. I have lived and worked as a nurse in many rural communities since becoming a nurse, including in Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. I have seen the need for rural healthcare in all of these communities and it hits home for me. I want to be able to serve rural communities to the best of my ability. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with other scholars who are passionate about rural healthcare.



Hilarie Perez

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine | Osteopathic, Doctor

I am originally from San Antonio, Texas, raised in South Texas and Covington, Georgia, about an hour outside of Atlanta. Currently, I live in Nampa, Idaho and am in my first year at Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine (D.O. Program). Prior to attending medical school, I worked in healthcare for about 10 years, which greatly influenced my longer-term goals. I have yet to settle on specific area of interest (Neurology or PM&R possibly), but hope to address chronic illnesses, preventative and lifestyle medicine, and improving outcomes through research. Personally, I am a certified yoga instructor and love to spend as much time as possible with my husband, Corey, and my two-year old daughter, Sofia. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because my personal and professional background has made me very passionate about improving access to quality care for this patient population. Working as a clinical research coordinator at an urban, underserved center in Atlanta, I followed a diverse patient population, fed from various regional and community hospitals, sometimes hours away. Though this experience highlighted some of the inequalities facing patients in medically underserved or rural areas—the lack of accessible care, educational, language, post-recovery support, financial barriers, etc—were never more obvious to me than through the lens of my own family and community, growing up in South Texas. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is the additional opportunity to interact with the patient population I most want to serve, as well as other providers with similar goals.

Madison Summers

Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine | Osteopathic, Doctor

I was born and raised in Eastern Washington, and moved to Boise in the summer of 2019 after graduating from Central Washington University with a B.S. in Biomedical Science and a B.A. in Psychology. I matriculated into the Idaho College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2020, and will graduate as a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine in May of 2024. I am extremely passionate about mental health, Women's health, and addressing rural healthcare shortages, so I hope to integrate those passions into my future practice as a physician. Ideally, I'd like to end up practicing in a rural mountain town! I love being outside and find that I am happiest when I'm in the mountains. I love hiking, backpacking, camping and exploring Idaho. I also am a voracious reader and run a book club at ICOM. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because these are the communities that need the most support. Rural and underserved communities are traditionally left to the wayside in medicine, and individuals living in these areas often go without their basic medical needs being met. I want to be the physician that is able to help close that gap. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is networking with likeminded healthcare students! The interprofessional aspect of the program is helping us become team players that will be able to support other healthcare professions, and thus support our patients to the best of our abilities.





Lydia Webb

Idaho State University | Speech Language Pathology, Master of Science

I was born and raised in Richland, Washington. I am in the Master of Science in Speech Language Pathology program. I haven't nailed down what population I want to work with as an SLP because I love the entire field and have enjoyed learning about everything. My goal is to find a position where I can serve people of a variety of ages and disorders. I change my hobbies with the season. This summer I have enjoyed paddle boarding. I'm excited to go snowshoeing in the winter and watch Hallmark movies in December. I love trying new crafts when I have time. You can find me doing lots of new things with my friends! I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because people in these communities get limited access to healthcare and I believe that should be changed.

Stephanie Wyler

Idaho State University | Physician Assistant, Master of Science

I was born in the Chicago area but spent most of my childhood in rural Oregon. I have lived in the Boise area since high school. The reason I love this area is the proximity to outdoor recreation. I love hiking in the foothills and camping in the Sawtooth Mountains under clear starry skies. I am currently attending the Physician Assistant Program at Idaho State University. When I graduate I want to work in Psychiatry, Primary Care, or Urgent Care. When I am not studying I enjoy spending time with my family in the outdoors or reading. I want to work in a rural and/or underserved community because I have seen the tremendous impact on both patients and providers. Improving access to care including comprehensive services such as mental health and dental in addition to primary care can transform lives. Working with colleagues who share my values of patient care and cultural competence inspires me to be the best provider I can be and promotes a sense of community and quality care. My favorite part of AHEC Scholars is the opportunity to learn more about behavioral health integration and the needs of Southwest Idaho communities so I can improve health outcomes and increase access to care when I practice.



"You can't do it alone. Be open to collaboration. Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you. Spend a lot of time with them and it will change your life."

— Amy Poehler

The Southwest Idaho Area Health Education Center (SW ID AHEC), has been enhancing Idaho's healthcare workforce and community health in rural and under-served areas by partnering with educational institutions and state, regional, and national primary care proponents for 35 years. AHEC Scholars are tomorrow's healthcare champions for rural and underserved communities. Congratulations and thank you for your continued hard work and dedication in such challenging times. We know you are prepared to shine in today's team-based healthcare environment and we look forward to following along as each of you transition to your careers!



For more information about SW ID AHEC check out our website at www.idahoahhec.org; subscribe to our newsletter, Frontier Footnotes; and follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

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