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Transfer student-athlete scores medical school in Utah

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Transfer student-athlete scores medical school in Utah

The road to medical school for Mckenna Kimball '15 started at the United States Air Force Academy, but really took off at Dominican.

Mckenna was recruited to Dominican to play soccer, yet, when she was nominated by Utah Senator Orrin Hatch, she decided to go to Colorado Springs and become a cadet. However, that plan hit a road block when she realized during her freshman year that it would be a longer and more difficult path to go to med school.

“Becoming a doctor was my highest goal, so I decided to transfer,” says Mckenna, who last May graduated from Dominican as a [Biological Sciences major](#) from the [School of Health and Natural Sciences](#) and this August will enter the University of Utah’s School of Medicine. “For as long as I can remember I have wanted to be a doctor. I was first inspired by my pediatrician whose knowledge and compassion fascinated me. From a young age, I would bring a notepad to my check-ups so I could take notes and ask questions.”

That inquisitiveness and drive came with Mckenna to Dominican. She was impressed with the “happy and peaceful feeling” she had on campus when she visited while in high school and the support and attention paid to her even after she enrolled at the Air Force Academy by then Dominican director of soccer Jon Delano. Now the Associate Head Men’s Soccer Coach at Harvard University, Delano welcomed McKenna’s desire to play for the Penguins beginning her sophomore year.

At Dominican, Mckenna was an Honors student. She thrived in Dr. Ken Frost’s environmental chemistry class; she was selected into the [Kaiser Permanente Scholars and Mentors program](#), and became more connected with the elderly in the community through intergenerational conversation. She led campus events as a [Student Ambassador](#), and conducted meaningful research under Dr. Linda Green in the [Department of Health and Natural Sciences](#).

Mckenna also volunteered weekly at the Marin Aids Project, and helped impoverished HIV positive individuals overcome economic and social hardships by finding housing, food, and medical care.

“Each of those experiences has informed and strengthened my life-long desire to be a physician,” says Mckenna, who married her longtime boyfriend Connor Coletti last July. “I have built a foundation of compassionate leadership, teamwork, and a dedication to lifelong learning that will allow me to thrive in medical school and beyond.”

Athletics at Dominican also provided valuable life lessons. Mckenna played three seasons for the Penguins. She was the soccer team’s “Most Outstanding Player” as a junior and senior and its co-captain all three of her years in [Dominican athletics](#).

“I saw and continue to see academics and athletics to be irreversibly tied,” Mckenna says. “Soccer challenged me in ways different from the classroom. In class or on a test the highest achievement is an A, or possibly 100 percent, but in athletics, there is no definite ceiling. You can always work harder and achieve more. Being a student-athlete helped me learn many lessons about defeat, teamwork, and persistence which most definitely enabled my acceptance into medical school. I intend to carry those lessons with me through my training and beyond as a medical professional.”

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