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Alum Credits Dominican for Medical School Success

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While immersing himself in research gave Stegman a strong foundation in the sciences, it was his work in the [Dominican/San Rafael Kaiser Permanente Scholars and Mentors Program](#) that solidified his decision to become a physician. It also provided additional motivation to continue on the path to medical school.

The Kaiser Permanente program allows Dominican students to learn from and shadow physicians, providing rare opportunity for undergraduate students to see firsthand the responsibility and role of a physician.

“I shadowed physicians in six different fields, including vascular surgery, emergency medicine, internal medicine, infectious disease, nephrology, and neurology,” recalls Stegman, now attending medical school at [Loyola University Chicago’s Stritch School of Medicine](#). “The program gave me this extra burst of motivation because I finally had a tangible goal to work toward. I told myself I could be just like those physicians I shadowed if I kept working hard.” Stegman’s mentor, a vascular surgeon, allowed him to scrub in on several surgeries. Stegman also enjoyed his time shadowing the ER doctors, largely due to the fast pace and unpredictable nature of the work. These experiences helped him select a medical specialty.

“The Kaiser Permanente program led me to consider a career in trauma surgery, a field at the intersection of emergency medicine and surgery. I am in the process of meeting with some trauma surgeons here at Loyola to learn more about the specialty and schedule some shadowing times -- and this is all because I found my initial interests during the mentoring program.”

It was the opportunity to begin research his freshman year that originally led Stegman to Dominican in 2009. His first project involved investigating genetic mutation in the mustard plant. The research was accepted for presentation at the National Collegiate Honors Council conference in Kansas City. His sophomore year, Stegman worked alongside scientists from Dominican, UC Davis, Washington State University, and the United States Department of Food and Agriculture (USDA) in Dominican’s USDA-funded research lab, studying ways to [control the spread](#) of *Phytophthora ramorum* (sudden oak death) in infested soil.

During his junior year, Stegman started working with [Dr. Roland Cooper](#) in the [Department of Natural Sciences and Mathematics](#) on studies examining malarial drug resistance. After graduation, he remained a part of Cooper’s research team while studying for the MCAT and preparing his medical school applications.

Almost a year to the day after submitting his application, which was boosted by letters of recommendation from both Dominican faculty and Kaiser Permanente doctors, Stegman learned that he had been accepted by Loyola.

“Dominican prepared me for medical school in a lot of ways. The research experience was a huge help. In the coming months, I’ll be starting another research project of my own at Loyola, and I feel like my strong research background makes me a good candidate for some of the more competitive opportunities on campus. I also appreciate the early exposure to medicine through the Kaiser Permanente program. What I saw really motivated me to keep going, especially through some of the more difficult times.”

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