



A2 ACHIEVE COLLEGE & CAREER ALIGNMENT MADELEINE WHARTON

The Big Picture

Madeleine, the more I look at your profile, the less I think "well-rounded" is actually the best way to describe you. You are **multi-dimensional**, but several dimensions are unusually developed.

There is a strong pattern of **achievement + organization + creativity + precision + independence**.

You describe yourself as driven, ambitious and a leader. Your friends see you as dependable and supportive; your parents see you as strong-willed, independent and artistic; and your teachers see you as creative, punctual and organized. What catches my attention is how consistently those traits show up in your actual life.

You don't just say you're competitive...you became a state champion.

You don't just say you're interested in medicine...you work in dermatology.

You don't just say you're artistic...you've won art competitions and sell commissioned work.

You don't just call yourself a leader...you've repeatedly been elected or selected to lead.

That consistency strengthens your application considerably.

Academic and Intellectual Fit

Biology makes sense. It's your favorite subject, you've taken advanced science coursework, you research medical specialties independently, and you've gained real clinical exposure.

But I don't think biology is your *only* logical major. For pre-med, I want you to understand something important: **medical schools generally do not require you to major in biology**.

Depending on the college, I would also investigate:

- Biology
- Biochemistry
- Neuroscience
- Microbiology
- Human Health/Human Biology
- Health Sciences
- Public Health

The better question isn't "Which major sounds most medical?" It is: **Which subject can you genuinely enjoy, excel in and use to complete the prerequisites for medical school?** For you, Biology may still be the answer.

Dermatology

I think dermatology deserves serious consideration because your interest is already unusually grounded. You've worked in an actual dermatology practice. You know something about the patient population and procedures. And when you were asked to envision your future, you specifically described yourself as a dermatologist offering cosmetic services and helping people in your community. That is alignment.

But I still don't want you making a decision about your entire professional life at seventeen. I'd like you to learn what the path actually feels like. Talk to physicians about:

- medical school
- residency
- specialty competitiveness
- patient load
- call
- private practice
- cosmetic versus medical dermatology
- practice ownership
- flexibility
- family life

That's particularly important because you've been very clear about something else: your definition of success includes **family, community and lifestyle**, not just occupational prestige. That matters when choosing medicine and eventually choosing a specialty.

Your Creative Side

I absolutely would preserve art/design somewhere in college. You aren't casually interested in it. You say you lose track of time doing art and would make art or design homes even without being paid. That is worth protecting.

Maybe that's Interior Design.

Maybe it's Studio Art.

Maybe it's a Design minor.

Maybe you simply continue taking studio courses and commissions while studying Biology.

We don't need to force medicine and design into one career. You're allowed to have two serious interests.

The Kind of College Environment I See for You

You told me you want college to give you lifelong connections and that you want to be around people who are driven and have goals. You are excited about finding the right path and the right people, while leaving your family is one of the things that makes you nervous. That tells me fit is going to matter.

I think you should look especially closely at colleges with:

- strong pre-health advising
- access to clinical opportunities
- undergraduate research
- a genuine campus community

- serious but not one-dimensional students
- leadership opportunities
- active campus traditions
- opportunities to continue art/design
- NCAA track and field
- enough flexibility for you to explore
- a social environment where you can build the kind of relationships you value