

CHOREOGRAPHING HER OWN WAY:

Lauren Borowski

It seems only natural for Lauren Borowski to be studying medicine: both of her parents are physicians. In fact, they are also Hahnemann alumni. Yet, Borowski isn't exactly following in their footsteps – rather, she's dancing in them. Taking the road less traveled, she arrived at medical school by way of a Bachelor of Fine Arts in dance from New York University.

A dancer since she was 4 years old, Borowski enrolled as an undergraduate in dance, but she so enjoyed a freshman anatomy course covering the kinesiology and physics of movement that she began thinking premed. “I knew going into college that I loved dance, being creative, working that way, but I also loved science and academics, and I kind of knew I wanted something more academically challenging in addition to that.”

Borowski also saw a need. Dancers, she says, are prone to overuse injuries, stress fractures, and other issues stemming from spending so much time on their toes. “A lot of my classmates started to get injured, and they were frustrated with the care they were getting,” she says. “It seemed that the physicians they were seeing didn't understand the demands dance placed on them. You dance eight hours a day, that's your job, with not a whole lot of other classes besides movement.”

Still, she did not abandon dance, going on to earn her BFA in three years. She then started taking post-baccalaureate biology and physics classes part-time, also at NYU, while working as a medical assistant. It was important to her to make her own way and provide for herself. “This is a really odd thing, but since I was little, I wanted to be financially independent, support myself,

rely on myself,” she says. The following year, she worked as a physical therapy aide. “I was living in New York City, I had roommates, and I was living comfortably, and saving money. I was able to fend for myself.”

When Borowski started looking at medical schools, the Clarks Summit,

Pa., native applied in both Pennsylvania and New York. “What really set Drexel apart – people talk about how you'll know when it feels right – was that I was comfortable. I had a student interviewer, and I had a great conversation with that other student. A faculty interviewer asked whether I could handle so many science courses at





a time, since when I was a dance major I had taken only one at a time. [But the rigors of the dance program] made it hard to fit in more than one or two at a time. It was upsetting, but I think she wanted to see how I would handle her questions, how much I wanted to be there. It all worked out well; I really had a great feeling about the program and the place.”

What Borowski actually found difficult wasn't the science work – it was all the sitting. “From dancing seven days a week, eight hours a day, I switched to sitting eight hours a day. It was tough. I didn't have time in med school, my first and second year, to do a lot of dancing.

I am slowly getting back into it now, as a fourth-year student.

“I think all my classmates would agree, fourth year is great; it's awesome to have electives, to decide what kind of medicine we're seeing and learning.” Borowski has chosen to work with the critically ill right now.

“To be completely honest, it kind of scares me to take care of someone who is that sick. I wanted to be more comfortable with it.” She is also on the search committee to find the next assistant dean of student affairs and takes dance classes at a studio that allows participants to come in whenever

it is convenient rather than at a set time.

Borowski, who applied for a residency position in family medicine, was looking forward to a busy spring after Match Day. She and her husband plan to travel to Guatemala with three other classmates for a medical-Spanish immersion program: four or five hours of one-on-one Spanish tutoring, and then clinic in the afternoon. From Guatemala, the couple will head to Costa Rica for a delayed honeymoon: the pair married on a Saturday last October, and Borowski was back in class on Monday morning.

Longer term, Borowski is thinking about sports medicine, with an eye to helping her fellow dancers, among others. “I specifically would like to work with dancers, because that's my background. I think they are athletes, similar to all different types of athletes. I see myself working with other athletes, not just dancers, but because of my background in dance, I have a personal connection, and could help them more. Also, there is a similarity to other sports, like wrestling, in the eating habits of dancers, nutritional deficits they might have, and the psychological aspect of performing.”

Having patients who are dancers could combine sports medicine and service, Borowski says. “A lot of the work I do now in family medicine is with underserved populations – people who have less access to healthcare, who are underinsured or uninsured. A lot of my friends are still dancing, working five or six different jobs to live, and a lot of them don't have health insurance.”

Even so, Borowski says, “performing is a lot of fun and I miss it. Being around dancers will make sure I keep that part of my life,” she adds.

And yet, while Borowski certainly has a natural propensity for working with the dancer population, she is keeping her options open. “I do have an interest in doing general family medicine, as well – having a varied panel of patients, but still having a focus on sports medicine,” she says. And will there be dancing? Yes, no matter which specialty she pursues, she will always continue to dance herself. ■

Read more about Family Medicine at Drexel.