

Senior Profile

Future physician's assistant Liz Hill

By Mary Lewé
Managing Editor

Liz Hill has learned a lot about herself during her time at Brevard College. “I knew I wanted to study biology and I had always been interested in medicine,” Hill said. “The more I got into it the more I realized that this is what I wanted to do.” Now, she’s ready to make steps toward a career as a physician’s assistant.

“I’m hoping to get a job in the medical field, possibly as a medical scribe or CNA. And then go from there to PA school,” Hill said.

PA school appeals to Hill since it’s a more direct path to patient care. “I don’t want to go through four more years of school and then four years of a residency, I want a job,” she said. “I love school, but I also enjoy working.”

Hill has learned more than human anatomy at Brevard College, though. “I really became an outdoorsy person when I came here and learned how much I love to be outside,” Hill said. “I kayak, I really like being outside so I like hiking and camping.”

In fact, it’s the gorgeous scenery that landed her in Brevard in the first place.

“I really liked the mountains and the Western North Carolina area. And I went to Rockbrook Camp when I was a kid,” she said. “I thought the school was just really cute when I came to take a tour, so I decided it was the place to be.”

Hill is from Virginia Beach, but Brevard has been worth the trips back and forth. “It has been awesome, I’m going to miss this place,” she said. “It [being at BC] really sparked a passion for learning and a passion for even other people’s degrees and majors.”

One way Hill was able to indulge her curiosity was in the completion of her senior project. “It [my senior project] was about the effects of urbanization on carabid (ground) beetles.

“I heat shocked beetles to see their response, and most of them passed out,” Hill said. “So what I learned from that is that beetles can’t cross roads during the summertime because it’s too hot and they’ll just pop over.

“It means that the population would become fragmented,” Hill explained. “If you think about a city area, you’ll have little patches of grass in between roads, that’s basically one population of beetles that won’t be able to expand out and find other beetles.” In these situations, the beetle populations essentially become inbred.

“There is a bit of adaptation in beetles that are in these environments, so there is still hope,” Hill said. “As far as areas like Pisgah, Dupont, and Bracken Preserve where there are dirt roads,

if you put an asphalt road there it would shock the population and they wouldn’t be able to cross it.” Luckily, the dirt roads in these areas do not absorb as much heat as asphalt roads, so our local ground beetle populations are safe there for now.

Dr. Sarah Maveety, assistant professor of biology and beetle expert, was able to coach Hill through her senior project. “I like bugs, and my project was constantly evolving,” Hill said. “I went through an entomology phase and thought ‘Maybe I want to do this and study this.’

“I also thought it would be a good, somewhat simple hands-on project that I could execute with the equipment that we have here,” she said.

Hill has enjoyed her time at Brevard College, although she looks forward to completing her last semester. “Finishing out the semesters is always great,” Hill said. “You get your grades back and all your stress and heartache turns into something great because you’ve accomplished a lot.”

The opportunities Brevard offers made her experience meaningful. “All my fieldwork has been amazing, taking entomology with Dr. Mo and being able to apply it in real life, even if just as a hobby, has been great,” she said.

“Just the relationships I’ve been able to establish with professors would not have been possible at a lot of other schools.”



Liz Hill (right) with her professor Dr. Sarah Maveety outside the Porter Center.



Liz Hill inside a cave in Laconia, Greece.