

Field of Dreams



BIOMEDICAL
STUDIES

CONTRACT CONCENTRATION

Biomedical Studies

www.stolaf.edu/depts/biomed

With nearly 5 percent of each St. Olaf graduating class going on to medical school, the Biomedical Studies concentration offers students a broad and thoughtful exposure to the field of medicine.

“The focus of Biomedical Studies is help students develop career awareness and self-understanding,” says Professor of Biology Ted Johnson, director of the biomedical studies program. “We want to force students out of their comfort zones to explore at least three careers. Our most important achievement is helping them find their niche, find a satisfying career.”

Students design and implement a plan of study suited to their medical career goals and then explore three areas of interest. These interests range from traditional medicine, dentistry, osteopathic medicine, sports medicine, and occupational and physical therapy to hospital and public health administration, ministry and biomedical ethics.

“It gives them permission to think about their careers rather than going from test to test,” Johnson says. “Many have benefited from this program. For some, it’s discovering a career they didn’t know existed — going to osteopathic school, being a physician’s assistant or a nurse practitioner.”

Katie James, Johanna Savage, Peter Stiles and Matt Lohse participated in the program as seniors and now are pursuing careers in the medical field. Katie is attending graduate school at the University of Minnesota and

intends to be an epidemiologist. Johanna is studying at the University of Iowa Medical School, Carver College of Medicine. Peter is attending the University of Minnesota Medical School and Matt is on a full academic scholarship to Mayo Medical School. “St. Olaf doesn’t teach us *what* to think but rather *how* to think,” says Lohse, whose major was biology.

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Students incorporate many experiences into their biomedical contracts, looking at careers in an experiential way and including an ethics component as part of the concentration. In addition to outstanding classroom, lab and research opportunities, biomedical studies students participate in internships, practicums and off-campus and study-service programs such as:

- ▶ ACM Costa Rica: Tropical Field Research
- ▶ Athletic Training
- ▶ Independent Study in India
- ▶ Hospital Health Care and the Physician
- ▶ Global Health and Biostatistics in Geneva, Switzerland
- ▶ Study-Service at Satya Wacana Christian University in Salatiga, Java,
- ▶ Republic of Indonesia and Luther Seminary in Seoul, Korea

“Every year two students go to Germany and work with the German health care system,” says Johnson. “Students rotate through hospitals, nursing homes and clinics and are intensely involved in medicine for a month.” The German Maltese Hospital System collaborates with the biomedical studies concentration and the St. Olaf German Department. And, excluding airfare to Germany, all student expenses are paid. ■



“This concentration reinforces St. Olaf’s long history of students who go into the medical field. The program develops career awareness and self-understanding, and I don’t know of any other school that offers it.”

— Ted Johnson
Professor of Biology and
Director of Biomedical Studies



Cool Class

Our Peruvian Medical Experience partners St. Olaf students with Children’s Surgery International at hospitals, clinics and orphanages in Cusco, Peru. Students work with international physicians and pediatric patients, develop awareness of global health care and learn how to deal with patient confidentiality and patient interviews.