



A conversation with student Antoni Popovski – about motivation, medicine and the road to Virginia Tech

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Antoni Popovski, a graduate of the NOVA International School, will continue his education at Virginia Tech, where he will study medicine. The main reason for choosing the university is the high level of the educational program and the opportunities for practical experience in medicine, which are perfect for his ambitions. Antonio told us about what it is like to be so young and ambitious, how he discovered his passion for his desired profession and useful information about the application process itself.



1. Anthony, congratulations on your acceptance to Virginia Tech University! How do you feel about starting the next chapter of your education there, and what attracted you most about this university?

– Thank you! Honestly, moving to another country and changing schools after 13 years at NOVA still seems unreal to me. I am so excited to start a new chapter with Virginia Tech. What really attracted me to this university was the robust science program and their focus on research and real-world experiences. I want to study medicine, so it is important to me to be in a place that allows for learning both in and out of the classroom. Also, when I visited, the community seemed welcoming and I met so many great people, so I could picture myself there.



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2. You have been a student at NOVA literally since kindergarten – an entire childhood spent in the same school. How has that influenced who you are today, and the choice of your academic path? What is it that you will take with you from NOVA and beyond?

– Being at NOVA my whole life has definitely influenced the person I am today. I grew up in a community that makes you think globally, but also pays great attention to utilizing the full potential of students. It helped me see medicine not only as a profession but also as a way to help people on a higher level. The professors at NOVA really believed in me, and the support I received from kindergarten all the way through the International Baccalaureate Program in my third and fourth years helped me stay motivated. I think what I will take with me is the love, support, and motivation I received every day from my professors and friends.



3. You attended summer programs at Oxford, American University... You spent hours volunteering in a hospital, seeing what patient care means up close. How did those experiences help you understand what it really means to be a doctor? Did those experiences also help you choose a university?

All of those experiences changed my perspective on where I wanted to study and what. In both programs, I had the chance to explore science in a deeper way and make friends with similar interests from all over the world. Going to camps in Europe and America helped me realize that I would rather continue my studies in the US than in Europe. Volunteering in a hospital and seeing how doctors treat patients, not only physically but also emotionally, made me realize that medicine is much more about building relationships than science. All of the camps and volunteer experiences really helped me realize that medicine was the right choice for me and something I would enjoy doing as a career.



4. Besides academia, you are active in the student council, work on youth policies, and volunteer every summer at the NOVA camp. How have those experiences helped you develop as a person and a leader? Are all additional activities valued in the entrance exams?

– Participating in extracurricular activities has helped me a lot in my development. In the Student Council and in my engagement with youth policies, I learned how to listen to others, how to take initiatives and how to really try to make a difference. In the camp organized by NOVA, I worked with younger children and became better at being patient and creative. These activities taught me how to work with different people and how to manage my own time, which I think is a very important skill both in terms of college and in terms of life in general. Extracurricular activities are extremely important, especially when applying to colleges in America, because they use them together with the personal statement to understand what kind of person you are and what is important to you.

5. You applied to various universities and were accepted to many of them, but what was your process like in deciding where you really wanted to go? What do you think was the most convincing factor in Virginia Tech accepting you?

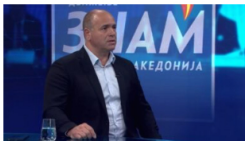
– Choosing wasn't easy. At first, I was more focused on getting accepted. Once I had my answers, I had to think about what would make me feel good not only academically, but also personally. Virginia Tech stood out from other universities because it had everything I was looking for: strong science, research opportunities, and a supportive community. Being able to visit the campus also helped me a lot because it showed me how big and supportive the community really is. I think they accepted me because I showed them that I wasn't just interested in science, but that I had already taken steps to explore medicine, but also to give back to the community through volunteer work, summer programs, and opportunities to demonstrate leadership. I tried to show who I was, beyond my grades, that I was someone who was curious, motivated, passionate, kind, and wanted to make a difference.



6. For someone who dreams of studying medicine abroad but doesn't know where to start – what would you recommend? What is the most important thing you learned from the entire application process?

– Start early and be honest with yourself. It's okay if you don't know everything right away, I didn't either. What helped me the most were the activities I was involved in outside of class, like volunteering, summer programs, and connecting with people in the profession. That's how I discovered what I was most passionate about. Also, don't be afraid to ask for help from your professors, family, and friends. That step can make a huge difference when it comes to your support. The most important thing I've learned is that your own story matters. If you can show why you care about what you're going to study and how you worked on it, people will know.

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