

Unlike many college students, I entered higher education knowing exactly what path I wanted to pursue. Athletic training is truly the only profession I have ever envisioned for my life's work. My passion for the field grew out of a strong personal dedication to injury prevention, evidence-based patient care, and human movement. Growing up and playing sports, I quickly realized the immense demand for specialized athletic healthcare and saw firsthand how unmanaged injuries can disrupt an athlete's physical health, mental resilience, and lifelong aspirations. Experiencing the athletic training environment as both an athlete and a student opened my eyes to the wide range of care handled under one roof—from immediate acute injury evaluation to multi-phase rehabilitation and return-to-play protocols. This early exposure confirmed for me the profound, lasting impact an athletic trainer can make in an athlete's life.

As I progressed through my undergraduate studies, I focused on building a strong foundation in human performance, acute care, and interprofessional collaboration. Ready to expand my scope, I actively sought out additional clinical and hands-on preparation to better serve future patients. I earned my Sterilization Technician credential through OSHA while working in a dental office, completed Stop the Bleed training, and obtained NFHS coaching and safety certifications. Alongside these, I developed practical skills in kinesiology taping, personal fitness programming, and individualized nutrition planning. Each certification added a new dimension to my understanding of patient safety, clinical protocol, and holistic wellness, reinforcing my commitment to becoming a well-rounded healthcare provider.

What immediately drew me to Culver-Stockton College's Master of Athletic Training (MAT) program is its distinctive blended curriculum format and intimate learning environment. The small 14:1 student-to-faculty ratio and the streamlined 3+2 structure offer an unmatched setting for rigorous, personalized preparation. I am particularly motivated by the program's unique approach to clinical placement, which integrates hands-on residential laboratory instruction starting in the very first semester, followed by flexible, immersive second-year rotations across the country. Furthermore, Culver-Stockton's emphasis on advanced skill-building—specifically instrument-assisted soft-tissue mobilization (IASTM) and point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS)—provides the exact competitive edge and clinical precision I want to bring to my future practice.

The mentorship provided by Culver-Stockton's experienced faculty and preceptors is precisely what I need to challenge and pass the Board of Certification (BOC) exam. Just as my early mentors instilled in me a deep respect for sports medicine, I am eager to contribute my work ethic, background, and dedication to the Wildcat Athletic Training Community. I am confident that the MAT program at Culver-Stockton will not only prepare me to step seamlessly into a dynamic healthcare career, but will also empower me to make a meaningful difference in the lives of the athletes and patients I serve.

Sincerely,

Donelle Wagner