

Intricate chemical equations completely envelop the once blank pages of junior Landon Hackley's slightly worn notebook. He refers to it continuously while carefully filling the beaker with clear liquid. Meanwhile, sophomore Payton Wasemiller diligently works a physics problem on her dry-erase board for a UIL Science meeting. With each colorful stroke from her marker, she inches her way towards the bottom of the board and the correct answer. Both students enthusiastically plan to dedicate their future to science.

Hackley wanted to be a Cardiothoracic Surgeon. He was inspired to pursue his career of choice when a family member encountered a health problem.

"Last year my dad had open heart surgery so ever since then I've been interested in the human body and the heart anatomy," Hackley said. "I've always loved helping people too so I feel like this is the way to combine both of them together."

Hackley began preparing for the medical field in high school.

"I took biomedical science last year and it was a huge help since it was very specific to the medical industry. It was really beneficial," Hackley said. "I'm currently taking AP Physics and AP Chemistry. They're both very unique compared to my other classes."

Hackley claimed that taking extra science courses was helpful in guiding him toward his decision to work as a surgeon.

"Double blocking science has already paid off, especially biomed. If you want to go into nursing or anything in the medical field, biomed is a helpful course to take."

Hackley's determination didn't stop at his high school education.

"I want to go to Stanford University. To obtain the occupation I desire, I need four years of undergrad school and medical school," Hackley said. "After that comes a five year residency and finally two to three years of specific shadowing. Education alone is a minimum of fifteen years after high school, but I wouldn't want to spend my life doing anything else."

Sophomore Payton Wasemiller was enrolled in multiple science classes for her future career.

"I want to be an astronaut," Wasemiller said. "My main goal in life is to be successful and happy; the key to that would be going to space and living on Mars. I'm currently double blocking my science classes so I'm in AP Physics and PAP Chemistry. I want to triple block the next two years. I'd like to take Earth and Space and all of the physics classes."

Wasemiller was involved in science programs outside of her required curriculum.

"I'm in UIL science and that helps me," Wasemiller said. "Every Monday we study biology and chemistry until 4:30 p.m. and Fridays we do physics until 3:30 p.m. It's really fast-paced so you have to pack in a lot knowledge."

Although she is only a sophomore, Wasemiller already has plans after high school.

"I want to study astrophysics at UC Berkeley and get my doctorate. Once that's complete, I plan to intern at NASA and live on Mars from there." **by Alana Johnson and Nicole Safavi**