Jonah Kessler - Application packet (AMCAS 2026 and WashU supplemental application)

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Applying to: Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis MD program, 2026-27

Fictional applicant written for this sample. The person, his employers and his organizations are invented.

Academics

- Truman State University, Kirksville, MO: BS Biology, minor in Spanish, May 2024. GPA 3.61 (science 3.52).
- Organic Chemistry I: withdrew fall 2021. Retook spring 2022 and earned a C+. Organic Chemistry II: B+.
- MCAT: April 2025, 503. April 2026, 511 (CPBS 127, CARS 128, BBFL 128, PSBB 128).
- Languages: English (native), Spanish (intermediate; I can take a basic history slowly).

Work and activities (AMCAS)

1. **Clinical Research Coordinator, Confluence Renal Outcomes Group**, St. Louis (Jul 2025 - present, about 2,600 hours). *Most meaningful.* I coordinate a study of missed hemodialysis sessions at three outpatient units in north St. Louis and St. Louis County. I consent participants, run the transportation survey and match it against 14 months of attendance records. So far I have enrolled 212 of a planned 300 patients. I paused enrollment for two weeks in March 2026 after I found that four Spanish-speaking participants had signed English consent forms. The study now uses an interpreter and a translated form.
2. **Emergency Department Scribe, then Trainer, ScribeLine Medical Documentation**, at a 40-bed community ED in St. Louis County (Jun 2024 - Jun 2025, about 1,900 hours). *Most meaningful.* Ten-hour shifts documenting for emergency physicians. I trained 11 new scribes. During the January 2025 ice storm we ran triple-booked hallway beds for two days. In spring 2025 the company began piloting ambient AI note software. I helped compare its drafts with ours, then stepped down as trainer when I moved to research.
3. **Volunteer, Southside Wellness Collective free clinic**, St. Louis (Sep 2024 - present, 290 hours). *Most meaningful.* Tuesday evenings: intake, blood pressure and glucose checks, and calling patients about lab results, about half of them in Spanish. I built the clinic's no-show callback list.
4. **Undergraduate researcher, zebrafish kidney development lab**, Truman State (Jan 2022 - May 2024, 640 hours). Morpholino knockdowns of a gene tied to pronephros formation. Most of my first year of experiments failed because of an injection-volume error I didn't catch for two months. Poster at the Truman Student Research Conference, 2024.

5. **Physician shadowing** (2023 - 2025, 86 hours): nephrology (40, including rounds in a dialysis unit), emergency medicine (30, apart from scribing), family medicine in Cape Girardeau (16).
6. **Sales associate, Kessler Ace Hardware** (my uncle's store), Cape Girardeau (2016 - 2023, summers and breaks, about 1,800 hours). Keys, paint mixing, and explaining plumbing parts to people having a bad day.
7. **Co-founder and treasurer, Truman Bike Co-op** (2021 - 2023, 300 hours). We fixed donated bikes for students without cars. I stepped down as treasurer in fall 2021 when I withdrew from organic chemistry, then came back as a mechanic the following year.
8. **Hobbies**: goalkeeper in a Tower Grove Park rec soccer league, rebuilding old road bikes, and cooking Sunday dinner for my roommates.

Honors

- Truman Summer Research Fellowship, 2023.
- ScribeLine Scribe of the Quarter, Q1 2025.

AMCAS personal comments essay

Mr. Harold Weems missed his Friday dialysis three times in October. When I first read his chart as a scribe, the word next to his name was noncompliant. He came to our emergency department short of breath, with a potassium high enough that the physician I worked for ordered calcium before she finished taking his history. I typed what she said and believed the chart.

A year later I met him again, this time as a participant in the study I coordinate. Our transportation survey asks how patients get to treatment. Mr. Weems gets a ride from a county van that picks up six patients and does not wait. On Fridays his daughter works an early shift. He could take two buses and walk eight blocks, but he cannot walk eight blocks after dialysis. He was not ignoring his kidneys. He was missing a ride.

I had already changed my mind about the word noncompliant at the free clinic, where half the patients who missed lab follow-ups had phones that had been shut off. Mr. Weems made it personal. I had typed that word into charts dozens of times without asking a single question.

I have not always done things the smart way. I withdrew from organic chemistry my sophomore year after failing the first two exams while working 20 hours a week. I stepped back from the bike co-op, retook the course and earned a C+. I took my first MCAT without a plan and scored 503. The second time I studied around ten-hour shifts and scored 511. Neither number makes me proud. What I learned is that I don't fix things by pushing harder. I fix them by figuring out what is actually broken. Two months of failed zebrafish injections taught me the same lesson.

I want to be a physician because I like being in the room where the decision gets made, and I have watched good doctors make decisions with incomplete information at 3 a.m. Shadowing a nephrologist, I saw her spend ten minutes on a fistula and twenty on whether a patient could afford his binder. I want to practice the way she did, with the potassium and the van schedule in the same note.

WashU supplemental application

Please describe your activities since graduation and through matriculation.

I will keep working full time at Confluence Renal Outcomes Group through June 2027. I plan to finish enrollment by February and help draft our first analysis of missed sessions by ride type. I will keep volunteering Tuesday evenings at the Southside Wellness Collective and keep playing in goal on Sundays.

Why are you interested in WashU? (optional additional information)

I have lived in St. Louis for two years and work with patients from the neighborhoods WashU serves. Many of our dialysis participants were first diagnosed at Barnes-Jewish. I want to train where the Gateway Curriculum puts students in clinics early, where I could join the Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic, and where kidney disease and transportation research happen across the street from each other. I also want to stay. Patients here have taught me more than any course has, and I would like to keep showing up for them.

Is there a challenge or hardship you would like the Committee to know about? (optional)

My dad's hardware job ended when the store he managed closed in 2020. From then on I paid my own rent through college, which is part of why my sophomore year went badly. I don't offer this as an excuse for the W. I offer it as context for why I now plan my weeks in fifteen-minute blocks.