



## Office of Faculty Development

### Pathology & Immunology



My name is Leigh Compton and I am an assistant professor of Pathology and Immunology in the division of anatomic and molecular pathology. My largest role is dermatopathologist at the Washington University Dermatopathology Center where I also serve as the medical director of our clinical laboratory and the director of our dermatopathology fellowship program.

I grew up in a suburb of Houston, TX where I spent my childhood swimming at the neighborhood pool, playing tennis, reading, and babysitting (starting at age 10, a different time for sure). A career in medicine wasn't a consideration until AP biology during my senior year of high school, thanks in large part to a very dedicated teacher (thanks Mrs. Bonatati!) who taught us anatomy through fetal pig dissection and about genetic syndromes and advances in molecular biology.

At Centenary College of Louisiana, a very small liberal arts college, I had an unwavering focus on a career in science and medicine that was fostered by a community of committed and caring professors. I spent my summers doing cancer biology and biochemistry research at UT Southwestern and Harvard, respectively, and one studying local cultures in Taipei, Taiwan on a grant from the U.S. Department of Defense. From there, I entered the Medical Scientist Training Program at Vanderbilt University. My graduate studies focused on the intersection of the pharmacology of transforming growth factor beta receptors and embryonic heart development. Leaving graduate school and re-entering medical school, pediatric cardiology was my top career choice. At the beginning of my final year of medical school I made the difficult decision to not apply for residency - my father had died of metastatic cancer during graduate school and my mother was diagnosed with a terminal cancer- it was not the time to make a life-long career decision. During these three years away from clinical work, I continued in research and worked for a healthcare consulting firm. This break was an essential time in which I evaluated who I am personally and professionally (slightly obsessive in nature, curious, and introverted) before re-entering medical training.

I completed anatomic pathology residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. I didn't enter residency with a particular subspecialty in mind but a few weeks on dermatopathology rotations with an argumentative, quirky, smart, and dedicated group of dermpaths had me scouring text books for entities such as erythema elevatum diutinum and the infundibulocystic variant of a basal cell carcinoma - I was forever sold on skin pathology and wanted to join the club! I remained in Boston for my dermatopathology fellowship in the Harvard Combined program, receiving training from a dozen or so awesome attendings across three institutions.

I came to Washington University in 2017, very excited to join an academic outreach center with a dedicated clinical lab and many teaching opportunities. I no longer spend time in the research lab but am excited to collaborate with those who do. My own academic interests have developed from interesting cases and observations at the microscope and include cutaneous infectious diseases, histiocytoses, and mesenchymal neoplasms. While I will never tire of routine dermpath practice, the rarities and unusual presentations that come our way keep me wondering and scouring the literature.

Outside of work, my husband, Nathan, and I can be found chasing our busy 6-year-old daughter, Juniper, who has been known to dress as a puffin on occasion, and 2-year-old son, Brooks, who would like you to stop copying him. We also tend to a very needy 118-year-old home in the Central West End and enjoy working in our yard which now has a squirrel-proof vegetable garden. We try to situate ourselves by the ocean as often as possible. St Louis has been an awesome place to raise a family!

