A gap year is typically defined as the year between attending high school and college or the year between college and graduate or professional school where a student takes time off to travel, volunteer, work, or research. The reasons for such an experience are diverse.

Reasons for a Gap Year
- Students who are planning to apply to graduate or professional programs may feel they need a “boost” to their application. A gap year that includes meaningful experiences can be the help needed to be competitive for graduate or professional school.
- Biomedical Science students are 21 or 22 years old, or sometimes younger, when they graduate with a Bachelor of Science degree. It is reasonable to want to take time off before moving on to a new experience.
- Graduate and professional school programs can often be four years and longer in length. Take a break before you jump back in!
- Give back. Most BMS students have had wonderful and enriching opportunities available to them. Consider giving back to someone else.
- Experience other parts of the country or world. Travel can enhance a graduate or professional school experience in the future by exposing students to the diversity of the world.

Examples of Possible Experiences
- Travel. Internationally or in the US.
- Volunteer. Internationally or in the US. There are many places where one can volunteer in underdeveloped countries across the world or in communities in the United States. Programs such as Americorp, City Year, and Teach for America offer organized service experiences. Students can also find experiences on their own.
- Work in a lab, research facility or at a diner in another area of the country! There are few times in your life when you will have the flexibility to do something for a year. College graduates typically have fewer family and financial responsibilities.

Tips for a Successful Gap Year
- Plan ahead. Students who wish to travel abroad will need to obtain a passport, work visas, or other legal documentation that can take time.
- If you are certain you want to go to graduate or professional school, consider applying for admission and then deferring your admission to the following year.
- If you plan to apply to graduate or professional programs during the gap year, apply early and ensure that you are able to meet the application deadlines. If you are out of the country and are unable to interview for a program, communicate with the program to discuss alternatives.
- Discuss options with friends and family. Gap year is a newer concept in the United States and more opportunities become available to students all of the time.

Online Resources
Americorps (http://www.americorps.org/)
Teach for America (http://www.teachforamerica.org/)
City Year (http://www.cityyear.org/home.aspx)
Planet Gap Year (http://www.planetgapyear.com/)
Center for Interim Programs (http://www.interimprograms.com/home.asp)

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