

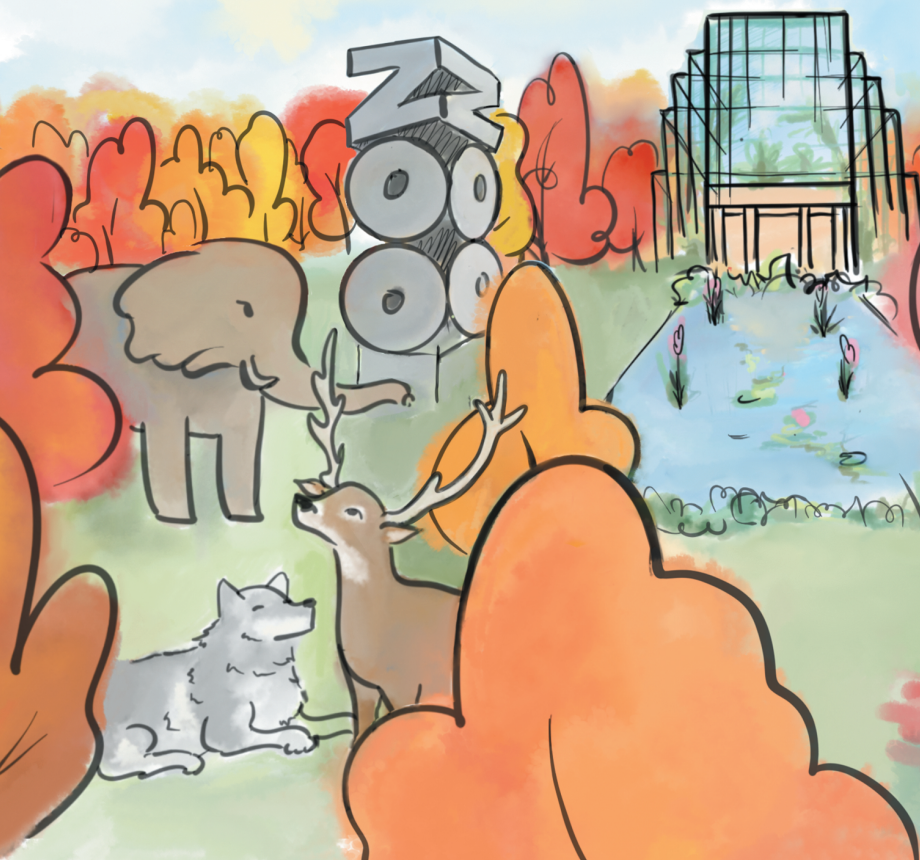


WashU Medicine

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2026-27
Dis-O
Guide

Dis-Orientation Guide 2026 - 2027



By WashU Med students,
for WashU Med students

The official student-produced guide to our school, city and life in medical school

The Dis-Orientation Guide offers valuable insight that you won't find anywhere else — because it's written by first-year medical students.

Find Dis-O online: diso.washu.edu

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Cover art by Iris Lee, M1



Welcome

The WashU Medicine Dis-Orientation Guide (Dis-O) is here for you as you enter medical school. Written by current medical students, for future medical students, Dis-O is your guide to WashU Medicine and the incredible city of St. Louis! Each Dis-O Guide is a snapshot in time captured by the first-year class. Before you enter the 2026-2027 guide, our dean of the medical school, associate dean for student affairs, associate dean for admissions, associate dean for diversity and other campus leaders warmly welcome you to WashU Medicine.

The entire WashU Med community wants to help you succeed and achieve your goals. We hope your time here is one of continuous growth, academically, professionally and personally.

Welcome to WashU Medicine and the Dis-O Guide. The Dis-O Guide is a uniquely WashU Medicine creation that is written by our students for you. It provides an up-to-date and behind-the-scenes look at our school by featuring our people, our spaces and our strengths. As you read this guide, you may be an applicant considering a huge decision surrounding where to attend medical school as you start your career, or you may be a matriculated student moving into your new home, getting accustomed to the Central West End and meeting your new classmates. Since 1987, the Dis-O Guide has been produced to let you know more about our medical school, our students, our community and our city of St. Louis. Hopefully, while reading, you will smile and recognize a part of yourself and your goals in these pages. The WashU Medicine vision statement calls for training the next leaders in biomedicine – attracting amazing students who will align with our mission and vision is key to our success.



Valerie S. Ratts, MD

For those still contemplating a decision, this guide will show you some of the possibilities available here. Through the Dis-O Guide, you can learn about our educational mission and the unique aspects of the Gateway Curriculum. Our goal is to prepare and train our students to meet the future challenges of health care and biomedical research. The guide also provides information on how our students thrive in St. Louis.

For those who have made their decision to attend WashU Medicine, the Dis-O Guide will provide insider advice on a great medical school and education.

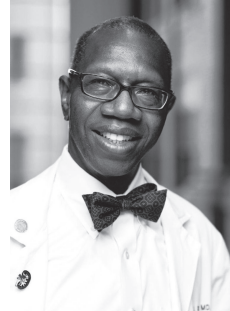
Finally, here are three pieces of my advice for you as a future medical student: 1) Rely upon the skills and characteristics that have brought you to this point. 2) Keep a positive attitude which makes all the difference. Remember this anonymous quote, “Successful people don’t win every time. They’re not born lucky. They just never quit.” 3) As you go through your training, keep your enthusiasm for medicine. You are starting down a pathway that will require diligence, sacrifice and hard work, but will also bring tremendous reward. Physicians play truly special roles in the lives of people. It is an honor and privilege to practice this profession.

Valerie S. Ratts, MD

Associate Dean for Admissions

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

Welcome to WashU Medicine! You are an elite group of students selected because of your impressive skills, experiences and attributes, including your scientific curiosity, caring for others and commitment to service. We need you here, for we in academic medicine are at a pivotal time, when we must connect our goal of training empathic practitioners with society's demand that we fulfill our obligation to keep it healthy. As you enter medical school, you will undoubtedly sense this urgency; for as soon as you sit for your first class you will long for the opportunity to address society's greatest problems. You will be a Phase 1 student still developing the complement of skills needed to resolve longstanding issues in health care, but you will be able to envision a path forward, by fully embracing the art of medicine along with the science of medicine. As you look among yourselves, you will see assembled a remarkable, diverse group of students who have excelled at the highest level as undergraduates. Over the course of your medical training and into the professional development phase of your career, you will all eventually master the science of medicine. However, as you encounter your first patient, you will soon find that science mastery is insufficient to effect complete healing.



Will R. Ross, MD, MPH

Your patients will not just bring their diagnoses and lists of medications to the medical encounter, they will bring their lives, full of family and caring, pathos and trauma. You will rely on the art of medicine to navigate your patients' worlds, to employ trauma-informed care by asking, "What's going on in your world?" as opposed to "What's wrong with you?" You will learn to practice what I call radical empathy, seeing each patient as a loved family member, even as yourself. William Carlos Williams, the noted writer and physician, stated emphatically that in medicine, "Peace of mind comes from adopting the patient's condition as one's own to be struggled with towards a solution." Empathy is a gift and a skill; you will be impressed by the remarkable faculty at WashU Medicine who are not just outstanding scientists, clinicians and educators, but individuals possessive of a radical empathy they will share with you as we collectively respond to the higher calling of medicine.

Empathy is the essence of effective cross-cultural communication. Indeed, our ability to address and resolve longstanding health-care disparities in our region involves active listening and responding to community-led and community-based interventions. Through organizations such as Casa de Salud, the International Institute and the Mosaic Project, you will also learn how to fully engage with communities of color and our foreign-born and new-American populations to deliver culturally appropriate care. As you marry the art of medicine with the science of medicine, you will be more equipped to work collaboratively with your colleagues to help heal our region, our nation and our world. Thanks for your decision to attend WashU Medicine. We want you; we need you.

Will R. Ross, MD, MPH

Associate Dean for Diversity

Alumni Endowed Professor of Medicine, Division of Nephrology

Dear members of the Entering Class of 2026,

Welcome to WashU Medicine. You were each selected from a highly gifted pool of applicants based on what we believe is your potential to be one of the health-care leaders of tomorrow. But just as importantly, you chose us. We are extremely fortunate that you have decided to begin your medical career at our school, where you'll find a medical program designed to support your unique talents and goals.

The mission of WashU Medicine — to conduct groundbreaking research, provide skilled and compassionate patient care and prepare the next generation of leaders in biomedicine — is complex, and its success requires the dedication of the community of scholars of which you are now a part.

As you experience the challenges and rewards of medical school, you'll be surrounded by a diverse group of peers with extraordinary talents and abilities, as well as distinct perspectives. You will learn with them and from them as you form connections that will influence your personal and professional pursuits for years to come.

One of WashU Medicine's greatest strengths is its faculty, whose members have an impact that reaches far beyond our school, into our community and communities around the world. They, too, have chosen WashU Medicine — as the institution where they work — to promote the mission of health care by training the next generation of physicians and scientists.

Mentorship is one of the hallmarks of our medical school, and students consistently cite their interaction with faculty as a highlight of their experience here. As you take your place within our collaborative learning environment, you'll be encouraged to use your talents and time to advance science and serve others.

Like WashU Medicine itself, the city of St. Louis is rich in culture and history, and it serves as an ideal location for you to gain an understanding of the challenges of modern medicine. Step outside familiar learning spaces and immerse yourself in the city's diverse communities, many affected by disparities in health care.

You have chosen to begin this significant chapter of your life at an institution committed to helping you acquire the knowledge and skills you'll need to achieve your full potential. I first chose WashU Medicine as a faculty member, and now I'm honored to lead this exceptional institution. Together, we will shape the future of medicine.

Best wishes,

David H. Perlmutter, MD

*Executive Vice Chancellor for Medical Affairs
Spencer T. and Ann W. Olin Distinguished Professor
George and Carol Bauer Dean, WashU Medicine*



David H. Perlmutter, MD

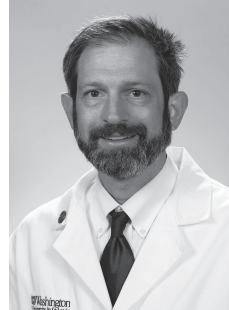
Welcome to WashU Medicine! When my wife, Andrea, and I were medical students, we used to laugh at our lecturers who described themselves as “WUMS 25” (this means a 25th-year WashU Medicine student). Now, we are those people.

Some things were different 20 years ago. There were a LOT of lectures, usually three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, unless we had lab or small group, which we also had a lot. Erlanger Auditorium didn’t have enough seats, so some of us would sit in the aisles because we all came to class. There was no video recording, but we made an audiotape, which someone would have to remember to flip halfway through the hour. Then someone in the class would type out the text, and we would get a printout in our mailbox.

Some things weren’t different at all. The gross anatomy lab has been frozen in time for decades. Forget about any “dungeon” stereotypes. The lab is on the top floor of one of our historic buildings and has windows on three sides that we used to open on nice days. If your eyes get blurry from too much dissection, you can look up at the teaching specimens that people have collected over the years. Then you can get back to rolling up little bits of fascia to make those nerves you couldn’t find before.

Back when I was an applicant, I heard that WashU Medicine wanted students with high grades and scores. This never quite made sense, since it seemed like high scores would help an applicant gain acceptance at any number of schools, among which they could then choose. The reality is that assembling our medical school class is a holistic process. WashU Medicine is looking for students who are well-balanced and who have amazing gifts that they will contribute to the future of medicine. Our students are very active and creative. The culture here is very collaborative, and we help each other to improve. I often say that at WashU Medicine, there are enough cookies for everyone. This collaborative feeling is the reason I am still here after more than 20 years. The faculty and our education team are here to support you, and you will also find that your classmates are supportive, inspiring and exciting to be around.

There are lots of great medical schools, but WashU Medicine is special because of our people and community. I hope you will see yourself as belonging to this family. Someday, you, too, will be able to reminisce about how things have changed and how they have stayed the same.



Ian S. Hagemann, MD, PhD

Ian S. Hagemann, MD, PhD
Assistant Dean for Admissions
Professor of Pathology and Immunology

Welcome to WashU Medicine! There is no way you are here by chance. You have worked so hard and for so long to be here, and we are excited to have you be a part of our family.

Your student affairs office is here to support you in every way we can. Our student body is amazing and provides you with the most updated information about all the “nooks and crannies” of who we are from peer perspectives.

Medical school isn’t exactly easy, which is why the biggest source of support is from each other. This will usually feel like peers in your medical school class but also includes your faculty and your administrative staff who are here to support you, teach you and mentor you. No one can do this adventure alone, but we can do it with support from the community around us.

The scope of our office includes helping to create your milestone events like your White Coat Ceremony, Match Day and Commencement. We also support extracurricular activities through student groups, Medical Student Government and academic societies. And finally, we are also here to support individualized career advising.

Never hesitate to reach out via email or in person — we’re located inside the Bernard Becker Medical Library on the third floor. If you’re ever wondering about your resources or whom to contact, we are here for you and will help direct and guide.

Our Office of Student Affairs includes:

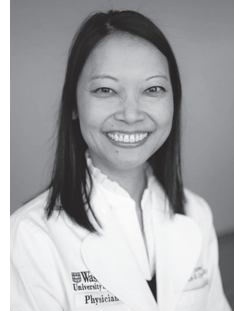
- Colleen Wallace, MD — Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
- Kathy Diemer, MD — Assistant Dean of Career Counseling
- Brady Griffith — Senior Manager, Student Life
- Angie MacBryde — Career Counseling Program Coordinator
- Kayla Young — Project Coordinator
- Jaye Maggiolo — Executive Secretary

Our team can’t wait to engage and interact with each of you. We are here to support you, so let us be partners together to help you begin your professional medical journey!

Tammy S. Sonn, MD

Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology



Tammy Sonn, MD

Welcome from the class president

On behalf of the student body, I want to extend a heartfelt welcome to the WashU Medicine community. You have worked incredibly hard to get to the point where you are, and that is something worth celebrating.

I know firsthand how difficult it is to choose a medical school and the countless aspects you feel like you should consider. You are likely weighing tangible factors like curriculum design, clinical exposure and research prestige; however, I encourage you to also prioritize your happiness. For me, WashU Medicine stood out not just for its academic excellence, but for the vibrant community that surrounds it. Whether it is exploring the amazing local restaurants or leaning on classmates during a tough module, the environment here is what keeps me going. Specifically, the people at WashU Medicine are what make this institution so special. You will be working alongside a student body that is remarkably kind, driven and intellectually diverse. Additionally, you have access to countless amazing mentors who are leading experts in virtually every discipline and truly want to support you.

Medical training is a marathon, and it is much easier to run when you are surrounded by people who cheer you on. We are thrilled at the prospect of you joining us. Congratulations!



Kyler Squirrell

Kyler Squirrell

M1 Class President

Meet the editors

Aneesa Bhakta (she/her)

Life in STL section editor

Hi! Welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Aneesa Bhakta, and I am from Houston. I graduated from UT Austin in 2023, then did research for two years in Maryland before coming to WashU Medicine. Prior to Second Look, I had never even been to the Midwest, but despite my worries I have loved it! At WashU Medicine, there are so many cool events to attend and groups to try out! Outside of school, I enjoy movie/game nights, reading, crafting and visiting new cafes and restaurants! Hopefully the Dis-O Guide does a good job of convincing you that St. Louis is an excellent city to live in as a medical student!



Jackson Brown

Housing section editor

Welcome to WashU Medicine! I'm from Jerome, Idaho, and I graduated from Brigham Young University in 2025 with my degree in microbiology. The journey to becoming a doctor is a long, exhausting road. Congratulations on reaching the next point in your story. I'm so excited to meet all of you! We housing editors are here to make it easy for you to settle into St. Louis with great housing options. St. Louis is a great place to live, with great, affordable housing options within walking distance of the Medical Campus and public amenities like Forest Park. There are also tons of great deals a bit further away if you're willing to drive 10 to 20 minutes. The Dis-Orientation Guide helped me find the apartment I currently live in (that and a tornado, if you want to hear a crazy story). We hope you find the insights from our classmates useful and find your next home for the next four-plus years!



Mika Campbell

Editor-in-chief

Congratulations! If you are reading this, you have made it to the end of your application cycle, which is no small feat. Your hard work, dedication and life, both in and out of the classroom, have brought you here, and you should be extremely proud of yourself. My name is Mika, and I am one of the editors-in-chief of the Dis-O Guide for this year. I graduated from Spelman College with a degree in mathematics in 2024 and my master's in neuroscience from Morehouse School of Medicine in 2025. I am a first-year MD/PhD student largely interested in algorithmic development for health care and computational neuroscience. I chose WashU Med due to its amazing research opportunities and unparalleled community! We are so excited to have you here, and we hope that this guide helps make the next steps of your journey a lot less overwhelming.



Ashrit Challa

Life in STL section editor

Hey y'all! My name is Ashrit, and I'm an M1 at WashU Medicine as well as one of the section co-editors for the Life in STL portion of the Dis-O Guide! I'm from Ohio and went to school in Philadelphia, so life in St. Louis is in that perfect Goldilocks zone for me in terms of peace and quiet while also being fun and having places to explore. I love to frolic in the park, play video games, eat a lot of new food and make memories with friends. I'm not saying this as a trick or ploy to get you guys to come to WashU Med (which you totally should do regardless, but I digress), but St. Louis is one of the first cities where I can see myself living long-term. Hopefully after reading through the Dis-O Guide, you can see where I'm coming from and can drum up even more excitement about med school life at WashU Medicine!



Caroline Coggin

Wellness section editor

Hi and congratulations! My name is Caroline, and I'm from Atlanta. I graduated from the University of Georgia in 2025 where I studied biochemistry and psychology. Having never spent much time in a place where the temperature drops below 30°, I was quite nervous about my move to St. Louis (and the medical school thing, too). Though I do wish I had bought a better coat before moving here, I truly cannot say enough good things about the place, the people and the program. I hope you enjoy this Dis-O Guide, and I can't wait for you to get to know WashU Medicine and St. Louis for yourself!



Nate Cohen

Wellness section editor

Congrats y'all! My name is Nate Cohen, and I'm from Highland Park, Ill., which is a suburb of Chicago. I attended Tulane University in New Orleans for undergrad and graduated in 2025 with a dual degree in neuroscience and philosophy. After four years down South, I've returned to the Midwest despite the St. Louis sports teams being rivals with my Cubs and Blackhawks. While I was a bit nervous about moving to a new city that's on the smaller end of the urban scale, I've found a family in my WashU Med community that has helped to turn this city into a true home. Enjoy the Dis-O Guide, and we can't wait to meet the newest additions to our WashU Medicine circle!



Cynthia Dong

Advice section editor

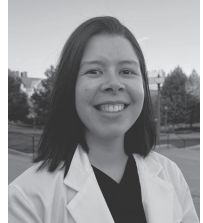
Hello, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Cynthia. I was born in Baltimore, spent my childhood between Kansas and China, and now my family lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. I went to Duke University for college and took two gap years, during which I worked in health policy research, medical scribing and at a cancer immunotherapy startup. I've really enjoyed my time at WashU Med so far and have found it both fun and incredibly rewarding. Outside of school, I love watching new shows and movies, dancing and trying new restaurants. As you make your final decision about where to attend medical school, I hope you take a moment to be proud of how far you've come. I also hope this guide helps you better understand why WashU Medicine is an amazing option for your medical training. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out!



Suzanne Carpe Elias

Why WashU Medicine section editor

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Suzanne, and I am originally from El Salvador. I graduated from Trinity College in 2022 with a degree in biology. After college, I spent three years doing basic science research in Boston. I had never lived in or even visited the Midwest before (I have been told Chicago doesn't count...), so I wasn't sure what to expect when moving to St. Louis. So far, I have truly enjoyed my time here! First of all, the academic and research opportunities at WashU Medicine are truly outstanding. Perhaps most importantly, the community is beyond incredible — from the faculty and staff to fellow students and classmates, I have only received support and encouragement here. In my free time, I love running and walking in Forest Park, trying out new restaurants around the city and hanging out with my cat. I live near the Forest Park Metro station, so if you are thinking of living outside the Central West End and/or taking the train to school every day, please feel free to reach out with any questions you might have! I am also happy to talk about being an international student, being in a long-distance relationship, having pets in medical school, being part of the MSTP, and pretty much anything. I am beyond grateful to have the opportunity to be in such an inspiring and exciting place, and I hope that you choose to join us at WashU Medicine. Best of luck on your medical school journey!



Richard Fang

Advice section editor

Congratulations and welcome to the WashU Med community! My name is Richard and I'm originally from the Philadelphia suburbs (go birds!). I graduated a semester early from the University of Pittsburgh, and took my spring semester to backpack around Asia and Europe before starting here at WashU Medicine. My time here in St. Louis has been incredible so far, and I think both the city and our school have so much to offer. You can often find me running through Forest Park, climbing at Climb So iLL,



at a PLNK class or at the Core 818 gym on the med campus. Surprisingly, you can find an incredible amount of balance during medical school and WashU Medicine really supports us in maintaining lives outside of the classroom.

This is an incredibly exciting time in your lives, and I hope this guide serves as a resource as you navigate medical schools. WashU Medicine is truly an incredible school where I know I'm thriving, and I hope to see you here on campus.

Riley Felsher

Student groups section editor

Hello and welcome to the WashU Medicine family! My name is Riley and I am originally from New Jersey. I graduated from NYU in 2024 where I majored in neural science and Spanish. You must be eager to meet the classmates you will spend the next four to eight years with, and learn more about the city you may soon call home! When I was in your position, I remember scrolling through the Dis-O Guide and writing down all of the student groups I wanted to join. Moving away from home and starting a new chapter can be scary — I've been there. Trust me when I say that you will 100% find your people, and then some, at WashU Medicine!



Leah Genth

Perspectives section editor

Congratulations and welcome to WashU Medicine! I'm Leah, and I'm from Baltimore, Maryland. I graduated from Yale University in 2022 where I majored in ecology and evolutionary biology. Afterwards, I spent three gap years researching entomology for the US Forest Service and working as a medical scribe. I love St. Louis — especially running in Forest Park and biking on the Katy Trail. The faculty and your fellow students at WashU Medicine create a genuinely warm and welcoming environment, and it has made my adjustment to med school so much smoother than I thought it would be. I hope you find the Perspectives section of Dis-O helpful and I am excited for you to explore everything WashU Medicine and St. Louis have to offer!



Connor Grubbs

Editor-in-chief

Hello and welcome! My name is Connor Grubbs and I am from Charlottesville, Va. I graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in biomedical engineering in 2020 with zero intention or thought of going to medical school. In the five years between undergrad and starting med school at WashU Medicine, I did a lot ... aerospace engineering, getting married, having two kiddos and discovering a passion for medicine! I have found WashU Medicine to be everything I could have hoped for and more as an institution, community and place to grow and learn. I have also been very pleasantly surprised by how much I have come to love the city of St. Louis. I cannot wait to meet all of you!



Guhan Iyer

Editor-in-chief

Hey everyone! Congratulations and welcome to WashU Medicine! I'm Guhan Iyer and I grew up in Toronto before spending three years in southern California for high school and coming to St. Louis back in 2015 for undergrad at WashU. I've been in St. Louis and affiliated with WashU ever since, graduating with my bachelor's in neuroscience in 2018, working in basic science research for a while and then getting my Master of Public Health in 2022. I've spent the last three years doing global cardiovascular research here in the WashU Medicine Cardiovascular Division before starting med school. My time in St. Louis has been nothing short of life-changing — from getting my education, to exploring my interests and passions, to meeting my wife — and I hope you will find WashU and St. Louis just as wonderful and fulfilling as I have. If you have any questions at all about WashU or St. Louis, or just want to chat, please reach out. I'm very excited to meet you all!



Abby Kaplan

Housing section editor

We are so excited for you to join us at WashU Medicine! The medical school application process is grueling, but trust that you ended up in the right place. I was born and raised in Los Altos, Calif., and went to Cal Poly San Luis Obispo for undergrad where I majored in biology. I graduated in 2023 and spent my gap years working at a zoo (fun side quest). I've loved my time at WashU Med and in St. Louis so far. Moving to a new place for medical school can be super intimidating especially if you are coming from far away, like I was. The housing section of the Dis-Orientation Guide is how I found my apartment and hopefully can be a useful tool to all of you as well!



Uswa Khan

Editor-in-chief

Congratulations and a hearty welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Uswa Khan, and I grew up in Macon, Ga., but went to college and worked post-grad in Atlanta! I graduated from Georgia Tech with a degree in neuroscience in 2023 and realized there were a lot of things I wanted to accomplish adjacent to medicine. Before medical school, I worked at a public health nonprofit, volunteered with refugees and undocumented immigrants, contributed to the CDC's mission to invest in some of our most underserved communities, and traveled across the U.S. and globally! I have found WashU Medicine to be everything I could have hoped for and more as an institution, community and place to grow and learn. I have also been very pleasantly surprised by how much I have come to love the city of St. Louis. I cannot wait to meet all of you!



Sprihaa Kolanukuduru

The student experience section editor

Hi all! I'm excited to hopefully see you around WashU Medicine this coming year! My name is Sprihaa Kolanukuduru and I'm originally from the Bay Area, Calif., where I spent the first decade of my life before moving to North Carolina. I graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (go Heels!) in May 2025, with a bachelor's in neuroscience with minors in chemistry and medicine, literature and culture. If you have questions about the climbing scene or dance scene here in St. Louis, I'm your person! The true best thing about being here is the people you meet, and so while St. Louis might be a smaller city, it's a great place to make memories with amazing people!



Jacklyn Luu

Student groups section editor

Hi friends!!! I'm Jacklyn, and I'm originally from the San Francisco Bay Area. I went to Stanford University, where I studied psychology and earned a master's in biomedical informatics. After graduating, I joined the USA Artistic Swimming National Team, and at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, I had the incredible honor of helping Team USA win its first Olympic artistic swimming medal in 20 years. Outside of the pool, I've explored many ways to improve access to health care, education and technology. Now in medical school, I'm especially interested in orthopedics and rehabilitation, digital health and designing more human-centered approaches to care. My path to medical school hasn't been linear, but it's been deeply shaped by the people and communities I've encountered along the way. I chose WashU Medicine because every interaction I had during the application process felt genuine, supportive and grounded in a shared commitment to lifting students up as whole people. Since being here, I've found spaces that challenge me, support me and remind me why community matters in medicine. I hope this guide helps you find groups, mentors and friends that energize you, help you grow and make WashU Med feel like home to you too.



George Morcos

The student experience section editor

Hi everyone, congratulations and welcome to WashU Med! My name is George Morcos, and I am from Rochester, N.Y. I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2024 and spent a year doing research in the UK before coming to WashU Medicine. Despite not visiting the campus until move-in in August, the sense of community, emphasis on excellent clinical education and endless opportunities were clear from all my interactions with WashU Medicine throughout the application cycle, and living in the Midwest has been a good change of pace so far. Outside of school, I enjoy running in Forest Park and exploring local eats with friends. I'm excited for you all to explore WashU Medicine and St. Louis and see what makes this a special place to work, train and live.



Angel Obiorah

Why WashU Medicine section editor

Congratulations and welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Angel Obiorah. I'm a first-year MD/PhD student, and it's honestly surreal to be writing this. A bit about me: I'm Nigerian and moved to the U.S. in 2019. I went to undergrad at the University of Maryland, College Park (go Terps!). I never thought I'd have so much school pride, but here we are. After undergrad, I spent a year as a post-baccalaureate fellow at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). My research interests have always fallen under therapeutics development, with an eye toward biologics and drug delivery modalities. I'm still interested in that, but now more in the basic chemistry and biophysics of immune interactions – and how we can modulate them. I chose WashU Medicine first because of the amazing community within the MSTP and MD programs, and second for the outstanding research opportunities here. I've really enjoyed my time so far and have gone through so many eras – my yoga era, my driver era, my “what is this place?” era, my musical era, etc. I've grown so much in this first year, surrounded by so many incredible people. I'm very happy to chat if you have any questions about choosing a program, settling into St. Louis, things to do in St. Louis or research at WashU Medicine. Excited to meet you all, and best of luck with your decision-making!



Taylor Parker

Life in STL section editor

Welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Taylor Parker, and I am from Louisville, Ky. I graduated from Duke University with a degree in chemistry in 2024, and I completed my Master of Public Health degree through the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health in 2025. In starting medical school, I have been so impressed by the kindness and community cultivated by everyone at WashU Medicine, and I am so excited for you to learn more about all of the incredible opportunities available to WashU Medicine students. My dog (Apollo) and I have also thoroughly enjoyed exploring St. Louis, and from fabulous restaurants to the many attractions in Forest Park, there is something for everyone! I hope to meet you soon, and please reach out with any questions!



Mackenzie Sweeney

Editor-in-chief

Hello and welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Mackenzie, and since I was born and raised here in St. Louis, I can tell you (without absolutely any bias whatsoever) that WashU Medicine is the best place to be for medical school! I graduated from Truman State University in May of 2025 and I am so happy to be back in my hometown. As someone who was nervous about going to WashU Medicine from a rural state school without any gap year experience, let me take a moment to remind you that you deserve to be here and should be very proud of your hard work! My favorite thing about WashU Medicine is that there is truly a place for everyone here in our incredibly supportive community.



My classmates have become great friends who study together in the Bernard Becker Medical Library, host dinner parties and movie nights, run in our lovely Forest Park, go to Blues games ... the list goes on and on! And best of all, the students here care very deeply about becoming compassionate, intelligent and culturally competent physicians. I hope this Dis-O Guide demonstrates the wonderfully diverse experiences and individuals that await you here at WashU Medicine. I look forward to meeting you!

Evon Wang

Perspectives section editor

Hi everyone! Welcome to WashU Medicine! My name is Evon and I'm from Shanghai, China. I graduated from Tufts University in 2023 with a degree in biology and community health and worked as a lab research associate for two years before starting medical school. Having spent most of my life in metropolitan cities, I wasn't quite sure about moving to St. Louis. After living here for five months, the Midwest has truly captured my heart. I have met so many wonderful and supportive people both inside and outside of the classroom, making life here very exciting and fulfilling. Outside of school, you can find me in ballet class and ice rinks figure skating. I hope this guide offers you a glimpse into our lives here and helps inform your medical school decision. Hope to see you all very soon!





Why WashU Medicine

Committing to a medical school is an exciting but daunting process — trust us, we were in your shoes just one year ago! There are countless reasons why students choose to come to WashU Medicine. Everyone has a unique experience, so we thought we would highlight some of the reasons why members of our class chose WashU Med and how those perspectives have changed after being here for a few months.

We hope these thoughts help you make the decision that is the best for YOU! And if you already made the decision to come here, we are so excited! Congratulations on joining the BEST medical school ever (we are definitely biased). Here are some of the many opportunities and experiences you have to look forward to!

Section editors: Suzanne Carpe Elias and Angel Obiorah

The outstanding curriculum

WashU Medicine's Gateway Curriculum begins with homeostatic processes and foundations in immunology, dermatology, hematology/oncology and infectious diseases before moving into organ systems. This structure is intentional — it helps us recognize patterns that appear across many diseases and gives us a strong framework to build on later.

A major highlight is that many sessions are taught by physicians, scientists and physician-scientists who actively study the topics we are learning. Their expertise makes the material engaging, relevant and easy to connect to patient care. Faculty are incredibly accessible and invested, staying before and after class to answer questions and make sure concepts truly click.

Another unique strength is the Phase 1 clinical immersions. For three blocks during our preclinical phase, we join inpatient, outpatient and procedural teams to learn directly from attendings, residents and fellows. These experiences bring classroom learning to life and give us an early understanding of what different specialties actually look like in practice.

Overall, the thoughtful curriculum design, expert teaching and early clinical exposure make WashU Medicine a place where you grow quickly — in knowledge, confidence and your understanding of what it means to care for patients.

Shamel B., M1

A warm student culture and sincere faculty

Second Look Weekend is what truly cemented my decision to choose WashU Medicine. I already knew before Second Look that WashU Med offered everything I could need or hope for in terms of resources, opportunities, curriculum and reputation, but I was not sure if I would really be happy here. I did not know whether WashU Medicine would have a student culture that I would feel like home. After meeting the faculty and current students, I was sold.

When family and friends ask me what made me choose WashU Medicine, I always start with the same sentence: "How HAPPY the current students were at Second Look Weekend." Compared with students I met at other schools, the students at WashU Medicine were by far the most down-to-earth, friendly and genuinely pleased with their day-to-day experience of medical school. I am so glad to say, now that I am one of those current students, that I am truly happy with my choice of school and I ENJOY the day-to-day work and activities of being a medical student.

I seriously love all of my classmates and feel that I could ask any one of them for help if I need it. It is such a fun, positive and inclusive group of people. I can always find someone to study with or do something fun with. The impression I got from Second Look was that students at WashU Med

would be great people, and my classmates have surpassed my expectations.

The faculty here are equally exceptional. They are approachable and treat students with a lot of respect. They sincerely care about our success and well-being. I felt this way about the faculty I met at Second Look, and it has held true in my experience as a student. The faculty seek out and incorporate student feedback. The pace and structure of the curriculum facilitates learning and there is no “busy work” or unnecessary stress. I feel that I am fully supported and given everything I need to learn things well and grow.

Kate M., M1

Unparalleled support for MD/PhD and international students

As an MD/PhD student, I’ve found WashU Medicine to be an absolute research powerhouse. People here are working on all kinds of research — from cutting-edge immunotherapy and Alzheimer’s biomarkers to peanut-based superfoods to combat malnutrition. These are just a few of the projects I’ve seen or engaged with in the past month. What makes it even better is how approachable research is. As an undergrad at WashU, I had no trouble finding a lab, and as a medical student now, there are dedicated structures — symposia, research showcases and networking events — that bring opportunities even more directly to me.

WashU Medicine truly shines in its collaborative spirit. Interdisciplinary work and academia/industry partnerships are deeply encouraged. In neuroscience — my field — WashU programs like the Hope Center for Neurological Disorders, the McDonnell Center for Systems Neuroscience, the Global Health Center and Transcend Initiative Grants unite scholars across campuses and departments for talks, brainstorming and project development. WashU also has strong connections with Cortex, a major biotech incubator just a block away from the Medical Campus, supporting students and faculty in moving projects through patenting, trials and commercialization. A great example of this synergy is C2N Diagnostics, a company bringing plasma Alzheimer’s biomarkers to clinical use — technology that originated right here in the WashU Medicine Department of Neurology.

As an international student — and especially given today’s uncertainties — I wanted a place that would be truly supportive, understand the unique challenges international students face, and offer strong institutional resources. WashU Medicine ticks all three boxes. The Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) is exceptional. They provide individual advising and regular workshops on visas, maintaining status and navigating unexpected situations. Their in-house student portal has streamlined all paperwork, and they offer 24/7 support for emergencies such as issues at ports of entry.

Lastly, a really important but often overlooked point: WashU hosts a remarkably large community of international students — including within the MD and MD/PhD programs, which is extremely rare amongst U.S. medical schools. I feel valued, supported and understood here. If you're an incoming international student, you won't embark on your medical journey as an F-1 alone — there is real strength in numbers, and WashU Med makes sure you feel that every day.

Adrian L., M1

A collaborative environment and endless opportunities

As a “nontraditional” medical student with a former career and several previous jobs, I feel I bring a unique perspective. I don't want to paint an unrealistic, “rose-colored” picture — every school has its flaws — but I can honestly say that WashU Medicine is the most collaborative organization I've ever been part of. This is evident in many ways.

First, the scholarship support — both merit and need-based — is truly unparalleled. It shows from day one that the institution values its students, and it has created a far less stressful environment for my spouse, my child and me.

Second, the culture is incredibly supportive. Everyone in our class genuinely wants each other to succeed. If you've ever heard that WashU Medicine is full of “gunners,” I can assure you that has not been my experience at all. Classmates, upper-year students, residents, attendings and the medical school staff have all been nothing but encouraging.

Third, WashU Med's resources often feel limitless. Opportunities are everywhere if you seek them out. There are programs in virtually every specialty and subspecialty, and faculty are enthusiastic about getting students involved. Watching attendings work is inspiring — they are not only experts but also exceptional teachers.

Although I'm only four months into medical school, I've already scrubbed into multiple surgeries and been able to retract, suction, staple and cut sutures. Our education is delivered through many modalities — hands-on experiences, lectures, small-group discussions — and the faculty truly listen to student feedback. They aim not only to help us succeed in our coursework and on Step exams but to become excellent, compassionate physicians.

Chris M., M1

Support that uplifts

As the ever-eager medical school applicant does, you read all about WashU Med online: its prestige, its Nobel Laureates, its world-class research and technology. It has been humbling to join a community of incredible peers who share a deep aspiration to become excellent physicians and providers of care.

What I want to highlight, however, is something I'd call a "lesser-known fact." Applicants hear about it but few truly appreciate it until they arrive: the level of support at WashU Medicine is genuinely unrivaled.

Of course, you expect to find wonderful classmates you can rely on — that's true at many schools. What is not a given is the degree of genuine, consistent and caring support from the faculty. I was surprised by how open, honest and encouraging my coaching group mentor was. As a busy physician, I assumed they wouldn't really have time for us. But they do. They make that time.

And it's not just the coaches. It's the lecturers. It's the faculty you meet in the hospital. If you ask to shadow, they'll gladly take you on or connect you with others who can. If you raise a concern, the administration ensures it's addressed thoughtfully and thoroughly. If you fall behind, they're right there with you — they won't let you slip through the cracks. It feels like a race you're running together (maybe a relay with some handoffs).

There are countless avenues for emotional, mental and social support here, and it's genuinely moving. Whoever you are, however you are, WashU Medicine will stand by you and make every effort to help you succeed — in the classroom and far beyond, way past the finish line.

Tess A., M1

A place where you will grow

After a long application cycle, I was lucky to have several options for medical school. But as I read through website after website, everything began to sound the same: every school promises compassionate training, research opportunities and supportive mentors. WashU Medicine is not perfect — no school truly is — but it is the one place where I felt I could genuinely grow in all aspects of life: academically, professionally and personally.

The academics here are exceptional. Our systems-based curriculum combines lectures, case discussions and asynchronous learning in a way that deepens both understanding and curiosity. It's been an honor to learn from leaders in their fields — teachers who are brilliant, humble and genuinely invested in our success. Call me a nerd, but the wonders that the human body can do never cease to amaze me. Something that surprised me was how much the school values student feedback. It feels like a privilege to study in a place that prioritizes our growth so intentionally.

In my opinion, the community here is our greatest strength. Students support each other in a way I didn't know was possible. People will share study resources without hesitation, sit with you when you're stressed, celebrate your wins and remind you that you belong here. The Big Siblings program pairs each first-year student with a second-year student, and my Big Sib has become a mentor, role model and friend — someone who has truly guided me in this process.

And the support doesn't end there. The faculty will stop you in the hallway just to ask how you're doing. Deans keep their doors open and respond to emails faster than you'd ever expect. Coaching groups give you a safe space to reflect, decompress and process the tough moments. You never feel like you're walking this journey alone.

Opportunities at WashU Medicine are endless: whether you want to shape the curriculum as a module liaison, write the Dis-O guide for incoming students, conduct cutting-edge research, advocate for policy change or join any of the 100+ student organizations. Whatever direction you want to grow in, there is someone ready to support you, encourage you and help you get there.

What ultimately convinced me to choose WashU Medicine was Second Look Weekend. Current students were not just friendly — they were genuinely happy. They were smart, funny and kind. Now that I'm one of them, I can say the same. We work hard, but we still have hobbies, friendships and full lives outside of school. We love learning and we love caring for people.

Medical school will challenge you. You may be far from home, face difficult exams and care for patients you won't be able to help. But being surrounded by a community that supports you through every high and low is an honor that I hope I never take for granted.

WashU Medicine won't just give you an education — it will give you a home. It will launch you into a lifelong journey of becoming the physician and the person you want to be. This is a place where you will grow in every way, and where that growth will stay with you forever.

Suzanne C., M1

Final thoughts

We asked our classmates to describe something they appreciate/enjoy/value the most about WashU Medicine. These are the responses they gave us:

friendliness
 inclusiveness excellence
 mentorship
community
 holistic support
 kindness academics
 friendship authentic



The student experience

Navigating the ins and outs of our Gateway Curriculum can seem overwhelming at first, but we want to help you get an idea of the different things that make the WashU Medicine education so incredible!

Read on to hear about our day-to-day experiences, components of the curriculum that are unique to WashU Medicine and different strategies we use to succeed.

Section editors: Sprihaa Kolanukuduru and George Morcos



The Gateway Curriculum is special. From the unique Phase 1 clinical immersions to EXPLORE and carefully thought-out modules, Gateway is amazing at preparing us for the future.

The Gateway Curriculum

Adjusting to medical school

There's really no way to prepare yourself for being a med student (no matter what TikTok medfluencers say), but that's not necessarily a bad thing! I've found the best way to adjust to med student life is to come in with an open mind and as few rigid expectations as possible!

Starting with academics: you'll hear it a hundred times but there's no single method of learning or studying that works for everyone. I tried different approaches to lecture, study environments and experimented with varying levels of Anki usage. Just because something works for others doesn't mean it'll work for you. What matters most isn't how you're learning — it's that you are. Another thing I learned at the start of medical school is that you probably won't learn everything perfectly, and that's okay. You can always spend more time on academics, but it's important to find a balance between studying and the rest of your life.

The other half of adjusting to life as a med student is remembering that you're not just a medical student — you're still a whole person. Working out, doing hobbies and spending time with loved ones is technically time away from med school things, but it's an important aspect of staying a functional human being.

Believe it or not, medical school can also be a great time to try new things and explore new interests! There are so many groups to get involved in and places to explore, and getting involved with WashU Med and the greater St. Louis community is a great way to make friends. It's easy to get comfortable with the first groups or people you find and like, but if you try to branch out and step outside your comfort zone, you'll most likely

be pleasantly surprised! I've done all kinds of things I never would have expected a year ago!

My philosophy of saying yes to things that interest me and then stepping back from the ones I realize I don't enjoy has been working well so far! Try new hobbies, do things scared, but leave room for the people and activities that you know help ground you!

There will be growing pains, but that is okay, and lean on those around you!

Aneesa B., M1

Anatomy Lab

Welcome to WashU Med anatomy! We hope you will enjoy your anatomy experience as much as we love teaching it. Human anatomical dissection is a rare and privileged experience, and you will learn more from the process than from any textbook. Our body donors have given you an incredible gift from which to learn the geography of the human body and the variation therein. Take this gift seriously and honor their wishes, but enjoy the experience.

The Anatomy Lab is a vibrant place where you will spend much of your time engaging with faculty and peers as you work through the structures assigned for that week. You will dissect as a team with three of your peers, exploring the material through tactile discovery. Although there is a huge amount of material in the anatomical sciences, try not to let this overwhelm you. We are training you to be doctors, not anatomists. You will not retain every detail of the subject, but you will become familiar with the language and concepts of anatomy with more immediacy than you may have thought possible. Work closely with your team, and take advantage of the presence of the faculty and teaching assistants.

Remember that having fun is not incompatible with learning! We look forward to working with you in your exploration of the structure of the human body.

Amy L. Bauernfeind, PhD

*Associate Professor of Anatomy in Neuroscience
Vice Chair for Education*

Kari L. Allen, PhD

Assistant Professor of Anatomy in Neuroscience

Competency-based framework from Dean Emke

The grading system at WashU Medicine is probably the most confusing topic for prospective (and current!) students. WashU Med uses a “competency/no-competency” based grading system. Yes, this sounds like it's just a fancy way of saying pass/fail, but there are important differences!

Competency-based assessment sets a “threshold” students must meet to attain competency, similar to — though not exactly like — getting a certain percentage to “pass.” A significant difference, however, is that a student

cannot “fail out” due to a single test or module. If a particular overall threshold is not met at the end of a module or exam, the student is not asked to retake that module. Instead, WashU Med measures points attained longitudinally across multiple courses and various types of assessment, and students receive the designation of competent/not-yet-competent at the end of each phase before passing on to the next. This occurs for each of the three phases: foundations (pre-clerkship), clinical medicine (core clerkships) and specialization.

This concept is probably best explained using an example. Let’s say over four modules, a student has taken eight exams and had several other assignments that contribute to competency. All of these assess knowledge in different areas (i.e. biochemistry, health equity, health systems sciences, anatomy, genetics, etc.). WashU Med keeps track of progress in each of these areas over time. If a student is lagging in any given area, we discuss those areas for improvement with the coach or Student Success Team well in advance of the competency determination. That way, we can work to improve before reaching the point of earning a “not-yet-competent” designation. Preparing for exams is therefore less of a make-or-break situation, which helps students focus on being the best learners they can be.

Furthermore, students completing their core clerkships in Phase 2 may gain “competency with distinction” in foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning and interpersonal communication. This is similar to “honors,” but it is not competitive in nature and not decided in a single clerkship. It is awarded to any number of students at the end of the phase, and it is truly a merit-based recognition for outstanding performance in a particular area of performance based on how the students have done over the entire phase.

The final phase, specialization, also measures performance across multiple courses using many types of assessment. Students in this phase may apply for “competency with distinction” in systems-based practice (how we help improve the patient experience or health-care system) and practice-based learning and improvement (demonstrating how we have worked to improve an area of weakness or use literature to improve patient care beyond just the standard assignments).

In terms of competition, WashU Medicine does not keep internal rankings of students, and exam grade distributions are not available to the class. Furthermore, we do not participate in the student side of the nationwide Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) society ranking of graduating seniors.

Our goal is to facilitate a collaborative learning environment, and we find that this works! Classmates are always working together to compile resources in shared Google drives to learn the material (Anki decks, notes, useful guidelines, etc.). Each class makes a class-wide chat, and the students keep each other in the loop about upcoming deadlines, where to find resources, ask questions and so on.

Amanda R. Emke, MD, MHPE
Assistant Dean for Student Assessment

Health Equity and Justice Thread

The Health Equity and Justice (HEJ) Thread is so critical to our education as medical students. Being in St. Louis, it is so important that we are cognizant of the historical and current societal impacts that shape our patients' experiences and worldview when we interact with them as medical students and health-care providers. HEJ makes us think a lot about the way we choose to communicate with our patients, peers and community members and is a great way to keep centering our patients' humanity in our medical education. I personally cherish the opportunities that HEJ gives me to think about more than medicine and attempt to make an impact. Our thread leads are phenomenal resources for upstanding and making a difference. It is very refreshing to have medical education that centers the social and structural determinants of health, and that's what HEJ does for us here!

Sprihaa K., M1

Medical Scientist Training Program

The Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) here at WashU Med is a collaborative space where students are able to participate in cutting-edge research while learning new medicine in the context of the 21st century. The community here is really big which provides a great resource for students to connect with upperclassmen and MD/PhD faculty members and gain supportive mentorship for this long journey ahead. Throughout Phase 1, the Gateway Curriculum is well integrated with weekly journal club and Thursday seminars to further engage with the topics outside of the classroom. These journal clubs and seminars allow us to meet researchers and are also great opportunities for us to engage with the food scene here in St. Louis! The Medical Scientist Training Program administration does a great job at supporting our journeys and making sure we feel at home here.

Kevin H., M2

MD/MPH: Becoming a physician-public health professional

Many of you are coming to WashU Medicine with strong desires to get involved in fields related to public health, public policy or community advocacy in your future roles as physicians. You may feel ill-equipped to do so with the knowledge that you have while juggling so many other responsibilities in learning how to be a good doctor. If you find yourself in this position, the MD/MPH dual degree may be a wonderful addition to your training. The Master of Public Health degree is a graduate degree that provides the essential learning needed to become a practitioner in public health spheres, offered at WashU through our School of Public Health. WashU offers the opportunity to pursue the degree, normally a 1.5-2 year

program, as a one-year addition to your medical degree through cross-application of some of your MD coursework credits. You typically apply to the dual degree program in the winter of your M3 year (right at the end of clerkships) and start the master's program in the summer between M3 and M4. You'll return to the medical curriculum in early summer of your M4 year, still giving you plenty of time to finish getting your ducks in a row before you apply to residency in September.

With the new School of Public Health opening, this dual degree program gives you the opportunity to learn from national and international experts in their fields. You will receive foundational learning in fields such as epidemiology, research methodology, global health, health policy and health behavior. Skill labs and workshop classes in domains like program planning, biostatistics and coding will provide you with the essential tools you may need to pursue careers in public health and policy work alongside medicine. Through your practicum and capstone experiences, you'll also have the opportunity to synthesize your learning and showcase your ability to work and produce deliverable content in these fields, allowing you to feel more comfortable in pursuing these career opportunities in your future. I'm so grateful for the tools I've gained and the people I've met through my MPH, and I would highly encourage anyone thinking about a career in these fields to consider this wonderful opportunity!

Priscilla C., M4

Phase 1 modules

Phase 1 of the curriculum is WashU Med's pre-clerkship education and is split into seven modules. Each module lasts about seven weeks and exams are typically twice per module. The first module is an introduction to medicine, called Health and Homeostasis. The subsequent six modules are typically organ-system-based, such as Circulation and Breathing (Cardiovascular, Pulmonary), Ins and Outs (GI, Renal) and more! Each day, we can expect the morning to be dedicated to lectures relating to this content, which are typically a mix of in-person and online, small group vs. lecture-based, as well as required or recorded for later viewing. Three afternoons per week also include Clinical Skills, Coaching or Health Equity and Justice (HEJ). There are also plenty of early patient interactions built into the curriculum, such as our three clinical immersions, clinical mentoring with a fourth-year student and Standardized Patient sessions. Outside of the seven modules, students have one month in May-June to explore their interests through the EXPLORE program. Students can pursue a project in Advocacy & Global Health, Education, Innovation or Research through EXPLORE. Overall, Phase 1 of the curriculum does a great job of teaching us the clinical and scientific fundamentals to enter the wards, while still allowing flexibility and encouraging students to pursue their interests.

Nadia A., M4

EXPLORE

What is EXPLORE?

The EXPLORE program in the Gateway Curriculum is a formalized approach to career development that helps WashU Med students find their niche in academic medicine. It allows students to explore and define their individual career interests and aspirations, then to pursue those interests and gain exposure to academic careers.

EXPLORE is a longitudinal, immersive experience that begins during Phase 1 and continues throughout medical school. It connects students to physician role models and mentors, creates opportunities for scholarship in key academic pathways and provides core training in the respective career pathway.

Students select one of four EXPLORE pathways, catered to their career aspirations: Advocacy & Global Health, Education, Innovation and Research. During Phase 1, the pre-clerkship phase of the curriculum, there is a four-week period dedicated to the EXPLORE Immersion. Students develop their knowledge and skills in their chosen pathway by working closely with a faculty mentor on a scholarly project.

Quinn P., M4

EXPLORE — Advocacy & Global Health

If you have any interest in learning more about a career in global/public health work, public policy or health equity, the Advocacy & Global Health Pathway is the place for you! This pathway offers students unique opportunities to meet and network with local, national and global leaders with a wide variety of expertise and career models. Through this pathway, many students have been able to develop working connections and join research and advocacy groups that have helped shape the course of their future careers! During the pathway-specific sections, you get the opportunity to receive lectures in foundational topics that you wouldn't otherwise get exposed to in medical school — examples from years prior have included sessions on media training, HIV advocacy, planetary health, communicating across the political spectrum and writing labs! The pathway also brings in experts from all domains of public health, health communications and health policy, so some of your sessions may be delivered by the dean of the School of Public Health, Emmy-award winning news writers or even former Missouri governors. One of the other major highlights of the pathway-specific experience is the opportunity to try working in these fields alongside folks who have been doing it for decades — op-ed writing, the WHO simulation and the global health case competition at the end of the block are all perennial favorites for students! If you are looking for a

pathway that will forge a path for your voice to be amplified while creating lifelong supportive mentorship and networking connections, I would highly encourage you to consider the Advocacy & Global Health pathway.

Priscilla C., M4

EXPLORE — Education

I chose the Education Pathway not only for my interest in MedEd but also because every Education Pathway student in the year above me rated it 5/5 in the course evaluation (as did everyone in my year). Of course, you'll learn how to properly design course evaluation, in addition to the sciences of curricular design, assessment (yes, it's different from evaluation), presenting skills (yes, you have much more to learn; I didn't think I did), and qualitative and quantitative analyses. Part of the reason I chose WashU Med was to be part of a brand new curriculum with passionate educators, and as part of the formal MedEd training in this pathway, I was taught each pillar of medical education from the faculty member that brought that specific expertise to the design of the Gateway Curriculum. I came in passionate about climate change, and with the Education Pathway mentorship and training, I designed a Lecture+ (you'll learn about this too) on the health impacts of climate change that is now an integrated and required part of the curriculum. I am currently in the process of designing longitudinal modules to teach students more advanced topics at the interface of climate and disease ("spiral learning"), and in a few years I am hoping to have at least three publications related to making these resources freely available and implementing curriculum changes as a first-year medical student.

Joshua P.C., M4

EXPLORE — Innovation

The EXPLORE Innovation Pathway is unique because it teaches you topics and skills that are difficult to find in other areas of medical education, namely business. From the first week, it ramps up with quite a lot of work as you start learning about and conducting stakeholder interviews. You then "create" a prototype and explore the financial aspects of your project (how big the potential markets are, how your competition affects your market, etc.). You do weekly presentations as you go through your project, and you get direct feedback from the pathway leads. At the end of the three weeks, you'll get even more direct feedback from actual investors who look at your presentation as if you're actually pitching them your product, which is an experience you won't find elsewhere!

Theo M., Graduating Class of 2026

EXPLORE — Research

With WashU Medicine being well-known as a research powerhouse, I couldn't imagine missing out on the chance to engage with the school's incredible research faculty members and clinician scientists. For students eager to pursue research — whether it's basic science, clinical, epidemiologic or translational — the Research EXPLORE Pathway is a fantastic opportunity to acquire foundational statistical skills, including coding in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, hearing from premier physician-scientists at WashU Med, and even developing a research proposal and poster presentation for the end-of-the-year EXPLORE symposium.

Isabella G., Graduating Class of 2026

Immersion

What are immersions?

Clinical immersions are by far the coolest thing about WashU Medicine's Gateway Curriculum! You have three immersions in the settings of inpatient medicine, procedural medicine and a split of ambulatory and the emergency department. These are three weeks each and take place at various points through Phase 1, or the pre-clerkship year-and-a-half, and you amass so much additional knowledge that a regular preclinical can't give you. Immersions are a great low-pressure, high-learning environment to get us all feeling comfortable before we head off to Phase 2: Gateway to Clinical Medicine, a.k.a. clerkships!

Sprihaa K., M1

Immersion — Ambulatory/ED

The ambulatory/emergency department (ED) immersion is an excellent opportunity to practice clinical skills early, gain exposure to different clinical settings and begin building a medical and clinical knowledge base. Everyone in this immersion is assigned a few days a week in the ED and rotates through different pods (triage, psychiatric, trauma and discharge) with alternating providers, allowing students to meet and work with lots of emergency medicine attendings, residents and nurses. On the other days of the week, students are assigned to an ambulatory site (a federally qualified health center, an outpatient specialty clinic, a primary care clinic, among others). The variety of medical cases and clinical settings make this immersion a unique opportunity to explore completely different areas of medicine.

Haroutyun J., M1 & Kosta B., M1

Immersion — Inpatient

Immersion is absolutely amazing, and the inpatient one really stuck with me. In the inpatient setting, you are essentially functioning as a clerkship student, where you pre-round on your own patients, join and present on rounds and are an active part of your patient's care team. Coming into immersion on an adult medicine teaching team as a M2-month-old as I like to joke (because M2s are clerkship students in the second half!), I knew nothing. A week into my three-week rotation though, I had learned so much and was so much more comfortable. Everyone I met through the immersion left a lasting impact — I learned so much from M2s through attendings and connected with so many people.

Sprihaa K., M1

Immersion — Procedural

Your first immersion comes by faster than you'd think. After just a couple modules you've got to switch gears a little and immerse yourself in the clinical space rather than your Anki decks. I started off with my procedural immersion (these are randomly assigned so don't worry about picking which one you want to do first), and it's a truly phenomenal learning experience. People know you're a Phase 1 med student, so they don't expect you to actually *know* a ton, but it's a great opportunity to meet new people, get to know all the moving parts of a health-care team and acclimate yourself to the clinical setting. It also helps that people here LOVE to teach. I chose to do adult cardiology for my procedural immersion, and on my first day working with an attending, I was sitting in the "control room" right outside the cath lab and the attending just tapped me on the shoulder and said, "grab a lead and scrub in, I can't teach you if you're all the way in here!" People love to be asked questions and love interacting with students, so don't ever think you're being annoying!

Guhan I., M1

Clinical skills

Clinical mentoring

We have this really cool initiative called clinical mentoring, where two M1s are paired with an M4. We meet a couple of times with our M4 mentors and go to the hospital to actually meet patients and practice some of our skills (such as history taking)! This starts pretty early in



The first step to practicing with peers is making sure the stethoscope works!

the school year, and it is really nice to have 1) exposure to real patients for learning how to communicate and 2) experiences that make us all remember why we chose to do medicine when we are drowning in lectures. :)

Sprihaa K., M1

Clinical mentoring is a fantastic opportunity for both mentorship and clinical experience. There are no questions too simple or embarrassing to ask to your clinical mentor — they all remember how they began their clinical experiences a few years before and are always willing to answer questions both in your scheduled sessions and through text, email, etc. Mentors are also intentional about giving you advice and strategies for patient interactions and for any aspects of the Gateway Curriculum you may have questions about — and it's always interesting to hear how their experience was three years ago when they were in your shoes. Clinical mentoring starts early in M1, providing an opportunity to learn from your mentors, get some clinical experience and prepare for standardized patient encounters and your first immersion.

George M., M1

Clinical skills

Of all the classes I look forward to, clinical skills sits at the top. Every other week we get an exclusive two hours of the “Tim and Jon Show,” led by Dr. Timothy Yau and Dr. Jonathan Mullin. Their energy is infectious and their dynamic is unmatched. Our lecture-oriented sessions are a mix of interactive and engaging activities where we learn more about history-taking and the art of effective patient communication. We also sometimes have small-group workshops in the weeks between the “Tim and Jon Show” where we practice taking vital signs and conduct physical exams. All of this culminates in standardized patient sessions where we take histories and do physical exams on actors. What I love most about these clinical skills sessions is the opportunity to integrate our theoretical knowledge with the essential interpersonal skills required to interact with patients. It's a unique blend of science and human connection that makes these classes not only educational but also deeply rewarding.

Cyriac M., M2

Grand Rounds

Grand Rounds are an excellent way to explore nuances in your specialty interest and become familiarized with faces in the department you're interested in! While some Grand Rounds center around morbidity and mortality (M&M) discussions, many feature guest speakers from visiting institutions or provide updates on the current state of the field. Lastly, but perhaps more importantly, Grand Rounds provide free breakfast for

attendees (disclaimer: some Grand Rounds, like plastic surgery, might reserve the food for expected attendees only and not medical students – it's always a good idea to ask before taking the food)!

Most department Grand Rounds occur weekly and last for an hour. You can find information on the specific time and location by Google searching “Grand Rounds *insert department* WashU Medicine.” Alternatively, you can always ask a resident/attending in the department as well!

Danyi W., M2

Shadowing

Shadowing throughout M1 is a great way to get exposure to a variety of medical specialties in a low-stakes environment. As a medical student, shadowing can definitely be more interesting and interactive than in undergrad. For example, if you're shadowing a cardiologist they will often let you listen to their patients' hearts. If you're in the OR and scrubbed in (sterile), then you will not only be closer to the action but may be asked to hold certain equipment or help position a patient. Many interest groups arrange their own shadowing opportunities: anesthesiology, interventional radiology and plastics, to name a few. If you are interested in shadowing a particular physician or speciality without a shadowing program, a short email expressing your interest is usually enough to get the process started.

George M., M1

Simulation/procedural events

The surgical nights that are organized by the WashU Medicine Institute for Surgical Education (WISE) are some of the highlights of my education. In these events we had the chance to get hands-on experience with laparoscopic surgery, endoscopy and suturing. The coolest feature, however, was getting to use the da Vinci Surgical System. I truly believe these events are a wonderful resource for those who have an interest in surgical specialties. For those who are not so sure about their choice of residency, they can also serve as a way to narrow down their choices and find their interests. Notable surgical skills nights include those held by the orthopedics, vascular surgery, urology and OB-GYN interest groups, among others.

Farbod K., M1

Support and resources

Bernard Becker Medical Library

The librarians and other library staff at Bernard Becker Medical Library are a tremendous yet often underutilized resource. If you have any (and I mean ANY) question about one of the many textbooks in the library,

how to use any of the available computers or want tips on how to use a research database to search a topic you found interesting after class, the library staff is readily accessible to help you get your questions answered. As WashU Med students, you have access to Clinical Key, a search engine specific for clinical findings and medical information. This massive database can sometimes be hard to navigate, but don't fear! All the library staff have plenty of experience in using the database and are willing to help provide you tips for using it! Throughout Phase 1, you will meet many of the librarians through dedicated interactive sessions, in which the librarians lecture the class on all the resources that the library offers. Finally, if you ever need a quick snack break while studying, the Becker Medical Library regularly has small snacks and candy waiting for you at the entrance.

Joshua L., M3



Dean Zehnder congratulates an incoming student at the White Coat Ceremony.

Class Resource Development Group

The Class Resource Development Group (CRDG) is a collaborative effort to bring together study resources for each class. The Google Drive is broken up into modules and contains Anki decks, study guides and notes. Each class adds to it and helps adapt the material to keep up with curriculum changes. The CRDG is just another great way WashU Med fosters a supportive learning environment.

Gabriel B., M2

Clinical research

So far, I have found that every door is open to you as an MD student. Both clinicians and basic scientists have been extremely supportive, regardless of prior experience. Upper year med students are often looking for help

with clinical data collection, and this is a great place to start out before developing your own novel line of inquiry.

Noah P., M3

Coaching

The Gateway Coaching Program pairs a small cohort of students with a faculty member who coaches students throughout their time in medical school. Through this program, you receive individual coaching from your faculty coach, which can include general check-ins, feedback on skills/competencies, career advice and more. Additionally, the small coaching cohorts provide a support system for students, as coaching sessions provide an inclusive space for open conversation and discussion of things both related and non-related to medical school.

Kelly G., M2

Faculty support

Medical school can be intimidating, especially at a large, highly-regarded institution like WashU Med. Luckily, the faculty here are a tremendous support for helping us navigate this thing we call medical school. The amount of faculty that have dedicated time for our own development and support is beyond what I could have imagined. In fact, there are so many resources that sometimes it is actually more difficult narrowing down which faculty you want to reach out to because there are so many great options! The faculty not only make the transition to medical school incredibly smooth, but they also continue to support students throughout all the phases of the Gateway Curriculum. There are small acts of support and larger ways in which faculty extend their support. For example, Dean Colleen Wallace (assistant dean for student affairs and Module 1 co-lead) made it her mission to memorize every student's name by the end of orientation, showing us that she truly cares about who we are. She even took photos of us holding "first day of medical school" signs on our first day of orientation. These small acts add up over time, making us feel included and seen. In a larger way, faculty go the extra mile to ensure our success. One example is when I was having car trouble, one of our professors offered to personally go out of their way to come pick me up so that I could attend a required class. While reaching out to some faculty does require a little more effort (e.g., if they aren't teaching lectures during that module), all the faculty that I have met respond very quickly and are willing to meet with you even in the midst of their busy schedules.

Joshua L., M3

Residency applications

Applying to residency can seem daunting, but overall I think the school set me up really well for application season. The Gateway Curriculum is conducive to having a lot of elective and even free time in fourth year, so I was able to include lots of specialty-specific rotations on my application and easily get letters of recommendation during those rotations. We had a few workshop sessions to work on personal statements, activities lists and more. I was able to work with a specialty advisor as well as a general student dean to come up with a list of possible programs, and I got great advice about what to look for in programs. WashU Medicine faculty members know a lot about programs all around the country, so oftentimes I could learn about the vibe of programs just from talking to people. We also got access to very helpful websites that effectively compare programs within each specialty. I felt well prepared for my interviews because I was able to practice with some residents, and many departments even set up interview preparation workshops specifically. Lean on the WashU Medicine residents, connect with older medical students in your field and ask lots of questions to the deans!

Alice J., M4

Support for each other, as a class

I've loved the support I've felt from my class since the start of classes! The class is warm and collaborative, and it's a more tight-knit and open environment than I experienced in undergrad. We have a shared Anki deck for lectures that allows anyone to contribute and use for studying. I also feel like I can strike up a conversation with anyone in my class — whether that's about their weekend plans, how they're studying or just how their day is going.

Joanne W., M2

The Big Sib program

The Big Sib program at WashU Medicine matches a first-year student with a second-year student who shares common background, interests and hobbies. My Big (a huge shout out to my Big Sylvia) is an invaluable resource in helping me navigate my transition to medical school. She is always there to share study tips for different modules, answer any questions when I was trying out different study styles and give me local food recommendations. Both my big and I love to dance, and I've always enjoyed our little dance conversations over different dance classes that we've taken in St. Louis. The Big Sib program helps to build rapport across the M1 and M2 class and provide a true sense of community very early on. I've had the opportunity to meet so many different M2s through Sylvia!

Evon W., M1

Third-party resources

I use third-party resources to consolidate lecture information and fill in knowledge gaps or areas I still find confusing. Third-party lectures are great if you're looking for concise overviews of pertinent topics and are an efficient way to review material when studying for exams. You certainly don't need third-party resources to succeed in the Gateway Curriculum, but I highly recommend trying them out to see what works for you!

Hannah N., M3



Student voices matter: the administration holds feedback focus groups to keep making our experience better.

Feedback integration

End-of-module feedback

If WashU Med faculty likes one thing, it's feedback from students! In fact, there is a whole team working behind the scenes to collect feedback throughout each module, and at the end, with a very thorough anonymous form. Students are asked to share their thoughts about specific instructors, overall workload, general organization or anything else that comes to mind. After this feedback has been collected, quality improvement experts look through the feedback and create a report that is given to module leads. From there, changes are made to improve for the next year – in other words, student feedback is highly valued AND acted upon!

McKayley G., M2

Lecture feedback

If you're so inclined, you can comment on the lectures you receive in real-time and provide critical feedback. A lecture was fantastic? A lecture was not as engaging as you would like? Something specific could have been better? Let your professors know! Believe it or not, they care about your feedback and are making consistent revisions to improve the curriculum for you and future classes.

Chris B., M3

Module liaisons

As a module liaison, I helped collate student feedback on the module. Despite sounding dry, it was actually a really rewarding experience! I got to work with my peers and the module leads (faculty) to organize the feedback into something actionable. The leads are incredibly invested in student feedback; their goal is really to optimize the curriculum for our future exams and (more importantly) our future practice of medicine. For the busy med students reading this (all of you), it was very manageable time-wise. In total, it probably took five hours for me. But you can also take longer if education and curricular refinement are your passions!

Andrew W., M2

Real-time feedback on exam questions

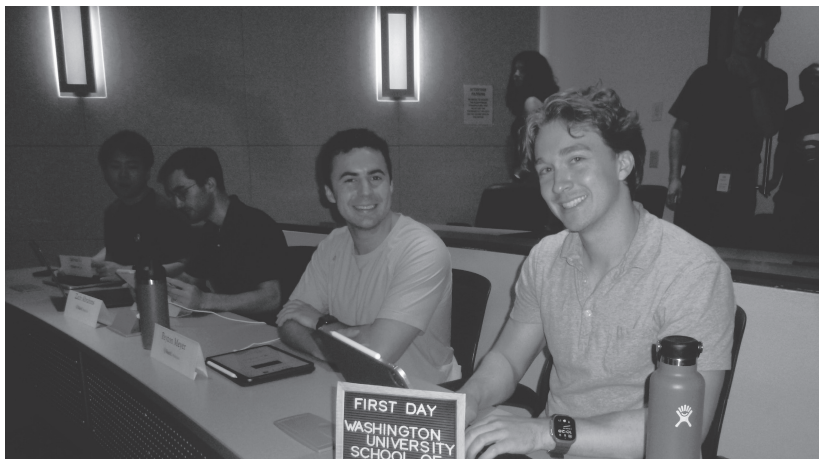
One unique thing about our exams that I've never experienced before is a feedback feature for each exam question. On the exam, there's a box that you can check called "Mark for Faculty Review" that allows you to leave a comment about the exam question. I've personally used it to flag questions that I thought were worded ambiguously, and I know students who have flagged questions on topics we hadn't fully covered yet. The faculty review these comments and may even throw away a question if applicable.

Joanne W., M2

Thread liaisons

As a thread liaison, you work with your thread leads over the course of Phase 1 to help solicit and communicate feedback and suggestions from classmates from their experiences within that thread. I am the Inpatient Immersion thread liaison and have really enjoyed working with the leads thus far to ensure open communication between students and faculty relating to the curriculum. WashU Medicine is dedicated to continuous curricular improvement, and the thread liaison position is a great way to get involved in this process while interacting with faculty and learning more about medical education.

Kelly G., M2



First day of classes! Our eyes were bright then ... now they're fueled by Kaldi's caffeine.

Study styles

What should I expect for studying?

As a pre-med, you have probably heard the phrase, “medical school is like drinking from a fire hose.” I am here to report that sadly, this is true — medical school is intrinsically difficult, not just because the content is more advanced, but because the volume of content is enormous. Luckily, there are a number of study strategies to help with this. In your first few months of medical school, it is useful to try a combination of study strategies and resources and see what works for you — you can attend lectures, watch third-party resources, read textbooks/online readings, use Anki, integrate AI, concept map, draw diagrams, etc. Different modules and topics within modules will require you to use different study strategies, and you will likely be changing or optimizing your study habits well into your M1 year — but this is all part of the normal M1 experience. Below you will find our classmates highlighting their study strategies. Good luck and welcome to a life of studying!

George M., M1

Going to class

Choosing whether or not to go to class is a very personal choice. You need to be honest with yourself about what environment you learn in best, because regardless of whether or not you go to class, you're going to be responsible for the material that's covered during the day's lectures. The vast majority of lectures do not require in-person attendance. That being said, I know that I get easily distracted at home and I know that trying to watch lectures

back at 5x speed just isn't going to work for me. I learn best when I'm able to absorb the lecture in person. I also live farther from campus, so coming to class every day gives me a great routine that I can stick to and keeps me accountable.

Guhan I., M1

Skipping class

I find myself going to non-required classes ... sparingly. As someone who has to drive to campus, on days where we have no required in-person classes, I just find I am more efficient from home. I also have two young kids and love the flexibility to take them to the park in the mornings or join them for a long lunch. WashU Medicine does an excellent job recording lectures and usually has them edited and posted within 24 hours, so even when I am a little more creative with my schedule, I never feel that I am falling behind.

Connor G., M1

I am very much a creature of habit. My early morning routines of stretching, biking to the gym and slowly steeping my tea are very significant to me and my wellness. More importantly, however, I am a slow reader. With both of these factors considered, I came to the conclusion during the first week of M1 that attending lectures in person was not for me. I like to take my time and carefully comb through each lecture slide to ensure I understand what I am looking at before I move on to the next. My immediate concern centered around that same desire for habit: when would the lecture recordings be posted? Would they be up by noon? 5 p.m.? Tomorrow morning? While I cannot say that the recordings are posted consistently at the same time daily, I have had minimal issues with sitting around during the evening waiting for the recordings to post. For the most part, I have been able to watch the day's lectures before dinnertime, giving me plenty of space to wrap up my studying and spend the rest of my evening however I please. For the sake of both efficiency and convenience, and also personal preference, I am very pleased with my daily routine and study style, and I have not felt the urge to make a change since I went asynchronous.

Sonny S., M1

Study locations

Pearls and spots

Best study spot: Farrell Learning and Teaching Center, third floor. There is a mix of study rooms and open tables, and generally it's not too crowded. Personally, the library just has stressful vibes for me, so I love having space on the Medical Campus where I can focus and get work done while being

right down the hall from a kitchen. Also the little set of three rooms next to the kitchen has decent windows so I can usually get away with no overhead lighting, which is a huge plus.

Connor G., M1



The Bernard Becker Medical Library is a great place to study throughout all of the medical school phases.



The library is great for studying and even better for occasional naps.

I find that I'm entirely unproductive in my apartment, so I do most of my studying in Bernard Becker Medical Library. Whether you want to chat with other students as you study or sit in silence by yourself, there are plenty of spaces that can accommodate a variety of study habits. Some of my classmates prefer to study in Farrell Learning and Teaching Center, where we have two student lounges on the third and fourth floor (that may or may not have massage chairs ...). I also like visiting a cute cafe on the weekends to get a break from campus (and some good coffee/pastries) — and there are plenty of cafes to choose from in STL! My personal favorites are the Annex in Webster Groves and Protagonist in Soulard.

Mackenzie S., M1

Besides Bernard Becker Medical Library on the Medical Campus, there are a number of other great study spots on the medical and Danforth campuses. On the Medical Campus, The Core residence has great lounges, a small study room and an outdoor study spot on the top floor of 818 building. The Farrell Learning and Teaching Center always has a ton of free study rooms (third floor and above). The Kaldi's Coffee locations on campus (one in Farrell Learning and Teaching Center and one in the Mid Campus Center) are also great study spots if you want a cafe vibe on campus. On the Danforth Campus, there are eight other undergraduate/graduate libraries and so many smaller lounges and study spaces just across Forest Park (short drive

The student experience

or two MetroLink light rail stops). The Central West End and the surrounding neighborhoods are also home to a number of cafes that can be great study spots if that's what you prefer. Will also plug studying at home if you can make that environment productive for yourself.

George M., M1

Below, you will find a little map I have made of places our classmates (and me!!) like to study! The best part about medical school has been being able to justify all the coffee shop visits I make now by saying I need to study. And once you get here, take all the time you need to discover your own favorite places!!

Sprihaa K., M1



1

WashU Medicine

Our home! The med school has many lovely study spots (see testimonials) from the med student-only study areas in Farrell Learning and Teaching Center and Bernard Becker Medical Library. There are huge windows and lots of natural light, making them lovely places to study. Plus, there are many food and coffee options on campus, making it a one-stop shop.

2

WashU Danforth Campus

The Danforth Campus — home to undergrad programs as well as the business, engineering and law schools — is lovely, with several libraries that are great places to study. Plus, if you like to romanticize your studying, Kemper Art Museum has chairs and tables inside and outside to take advantage of. Plus, it is a college campus and a great vibe.

3

Soulard

e.g., Goshen Coffee Roasters, Protagonist Cafe

4

Webster Groves

e.g., The Annex Coffee and Foods

5

St. Charles

e.g., Mocha Point Temeni Coffee Co.

From closest to farthest, these neighborhoods have many coffee shop options for you to pick from if that is your study vibe. These are good places to go explore and find your favorite place! Sometimes branching out to find different study spots helps you remember things, so worth checking out!

6

Forest Park

7

Tower Grove Park and the Missouri Botanical Garden

If you are an outdoor studier (doing Anki and other mindless studying can be lovely outside), these parks are for you! Forest Park is right next to campus and fun to explore to find the best spot. Tower Grove Park is around two miles away and has lots of trees!

Sprihaa K., M1



Society Tug of War 2025!

Social events

Red Dress Affair

Red Dress is a silent auction gala hosted by the American Medical Women's Association to support women's heart health! Attendees are encouraged to wear their nicest red attire and gather in the beautiful historic Holmes Lounge on WashU's Danforth Campus for a night of glamour. While munching on catered food and chatting with friends, students try to outbid their peers to win auction items like massages, theater tickets, cooking classes, etc. Last year's event culminated with a speech from one of WashU Medicine's cardio-obstetricians about the cardiovascular challenges that women face in pregnancy.

Michelle M., M2

Society social events

As new students, you will be randomly assigned into one of three societies: Erlanger-Graham, Cori or Lowry-Moore. While each society has their own events, every year the three societies compete in our "Society Cup." This is a field day where each team/society competes in outdoor games like tug of war in Forest Park. It was a really fun event and a great bonding opportunity early on in the year.

Vik M., M2

Student life social events

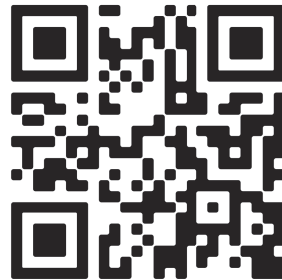
The Office of Medical Student Affairs holds the Student Life Office, which works with areas like student groups, wellness programming, the Gateway Coaching Program and the Office of Career Counseling. Our goal is to help our student body be happy and healthy by connecting them with all the resources they need. Some of our tentpole programs that we coordinate include:

- Gateway Orientation — We introduce our new students to everything they need to start their medical school journey and help them find ways to connect to other students!
- Student Activities Fair — We provide a space for students to find out more about all the fantastic student groups we have and how to get more involved. A little free swag never hurts, either!
- White Coat Ceremony — We celebrate our new students as they take a big step on their journey to becoming doctors by receiving their white coats.
- MedBall — With a team of students, we help coordinate our spring formal, a lively night of dinner, drinks and dancing.

We also plan other events around the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Eight Dimensions of Wellness model, which highlights eight categories: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social and spiritual. Our programming is focused on helping students in their wellness journeys, and we've done this through events like our Mindfulness and Nutrition Workshop, Living on a Medical Student Budget session, our Career Talk Series, Match Week events and more. Follow us @WUMSWell and contact us at mdstudentlife@wustl.edu with any questions you might have.

Brady Griffith
Senior Manager, Student Life

Campus tours
Enjoy these clips
showcasing just
a few of the many
notable spots
around campus!



diso.washu.edu/campus



Student groups

We have around 100 student-run organizations that explore a wide range of interests and hobbies, and new groups are formed every year. Learn about a few student organizations below.

Visit the MD Program website for a full list of student groups: md.washu.edu/all-student-groups.

Section editors: Riley Felsher and Jacklyn Luu



Tears will be shed. Games will be won (or lost). Can you handle the heat for your society?

Academic societies

Cori Society

Cori (yes, named after THE Coris who won the 1947 Nobel Prize) is one of the three academic societies you could be a part of at WashU Medicine! The academic societies are an awesome way to engage with your peers as well as students across different phases. Many faculty also hold personal connections to their academic societies as well! The events hosted by each society are really informal and a good way to connect with people outside of academics — ironic given that they’re called “academic societies.” Where else can you watch Dean Wallace (proud Cori member) lay it all on the line during a game of dodgeball? Absolutely electric stuff. Erlanger-Graham loves to say they’re the best, but real ones know Cori is where it’s at. Can’t wait to see you all next year!

Guhan I., M1

Erlanger-Graham Society

The Erlanger-Graham Society is one of the three academic societies at WashU Med! The societies provide a great way to connect with students in other classes as well as faculty in an informal manner. Our first event of the year was hosted at Flight Club, a dart bar where we met our new classmates while enjoying a game of darts! There have also been events that include all of the societies — such as dodgeball, Halloween contests and Minute to Win It — where we can earn points for our society. We can’t wait to welcome you into [objectively] the best society: Erlanger-Graham!

Riley F., M1

Lowry-Moore Society

At WashU Med, we have three academic societies: Erlanger, Cori and Lowry-Moore. Lowry-Moore is obviously the best, and I say that with absolute objectivity.

Being part of the Lowry-Moore Society has been a fantastic experience. During our first week of school, we were welcomed with a social at a local mini golf course, which was a great way to meet fellow students. Beyond that, Lowry-Moore leaders organize monthly networking events with faculty, ranging from brunches at local spots to gatherings at physicians' homes.

We also compete in the Society Cup, where all three societies face off in fun games like dodgeball and tug-of-war for the ultimate bragging rights. Overall, Lowry-Moore has been a fun and relaxed way to meet new people, grow professionally and explore St. Louis!

Siddhant B., M2

On academic societies

Each student is assigned to one of three societies when they first arrive: Erlanger-Graham, Cori or Lowry-Moore. Your society comprises students in all four years in addition to faculty and is a great way to make friends when you first arrive and to connect with professors and faculty. Throughout the year, the societies will hold different events including game nights, dinner with professors and the esteemed society cup, an annual competition that pits the societies against each other in a friendly yet spirited series of events. Societies are a great way to connect with your peers and build lasting relationships within the community.

Trevor M., M2

Advocacy and community outreach

Asian-Pacific American Medical Student Association

The Asian-Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) is a student group that aims to promote the Asian-Pacific American identity at WashU Medicine and in the greater St. Louis community. We partner closely with St. Louis University's APAMSA and WashU's APALSA (law) through networking and cultural events and with WashU undergraduate students through mentorship events. We work closely with St. Louis's vibrant Asian population by offering medical translation services, are looking to expand our engagement and outreach in the coming years and are excited to form new partnerships with other organizations, both at WashU and in the community. We also hold events around cultural holidays like the autumn festival and Lunar New Year, with catering and homemade Asian cuisine.

Joey L., M1



Association of Women Surgeons chapter at WashU Med surgical skills event

Association of Women Surgeons

The Association of Women Surgeons (AWS) is a student-run community that supports women in surgery and allies by building mentorship, visibility and belonging in surgical fields. We connect students with women surgical residents and faculty through presentations, panel discussions and mixers, so you can hear candid perspectives on training, surgical skills nights, specialties, research and life inside and outside the OR. Whether you're surgery-curious or super excited, AWS is a great place to find guidance, sponsors and friends early in medical school.

Madison D., M1

CHOICES for Youth in Detention

CHOICES (short for Choosing Healthy Options In our Community, Environment and Schools) is a student-led organization that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of teens incarcerated in juvenile detention. We cover subjects like safe sex, mental health, healthy relationships and addiction. Our program sends trained student volunteers to a local juvenile detention center about once a month to carry out a workshop with small groups of students. Given the sensitive nature of our workshop topics, we use

a peer-to-peer format of education to connect with the teens and are always happy to see how engaged they are speaking with volunteers who are not too much older than they are — they love picking our brains on things from the workshop material, to life in medical school, to even more personal thoughts they are grappling with. In addition to giving WashU Medicine students the unique opportunity of working with this marginalized and underserved population, our program provides them with a powerful introduction to disparities in health literacy, obstacles in health education and issues in correctional medicine.

Sameeran D., M1

Dementia Understanding Opportunity

Dementia Understanding Opportunity (DUO) is a student group that pairs medical students with a community member who has been diagnosed with dementia. The student and mentor meet monthly (going on a walk in the park, getting ice cream, visiting local shops, etc.) over the course of a year to discuss life from the mentor's perspective and to learn more about the true lived experience of having dementia. I think it is a wonderful way to become a more empathetic human and future physician while also developing a meaningful relationship with a member of the community.

Caroline C., M1

Health Career Collaborative

Health Career Collaborative is WashU Medicine's chapter of a greater national organization. This student group provides mentorship, health curriculum and exposure to health careers to high school students from underrepresented backgrounds. We host monthly workshops for students at Clyde C. Miller Career Academy. Past events have included heart and brain dissections, interprofessional panels, tours of the Washington University Medical Campus and hands-on experiences in the Surgical Simulation Skills Lab. This is a fantastic opportunity to work closely with your classmates to design meaningful workshops and give back to the greater St. Louis community!

Sam W., M1

Medical Students for Choice

Medical Students For Choice (MSFC) is a student group focused on advocating for and having discussions about reproductive health care and access in Missouri — a battleground state for abortion rights. MSFC connects students with advocates in the WashU community, from physicians to community organizers to policy experts. We host interprofessional discussion panels (most recently on Amendment 3, a Missouri constitutional amendment up for vote in 2026 that would restrict abortion and gender-

affirming health care), organize menstrual product drives, attend lobby days in Jefferson City, Mo., (the state capital) when applicable and connect students with volunteer groups like Planned Parenthood. Other past MSFC members have written published op-eds advocating for abortion access! We are excited to have students get involved and strengthen our commitment to women's health at WashU Med!

Laura D., M1

NICU Cuddlers

NICU Cuddlers is the best volunteering opportunity ever! After getting trained, you have a weekly three-hour shift at St. Louis Children's Hospital, where your role is to hold and comfort babies in the NICU. My shift is Tuesday evenings and it is the perfect way to unwind after a long day and get a break from studying. I love NICU Cuddlers because you are able to spend so much time one-on-one with a single baby, whereas a lot of medicine is very fast paced, jumping between patients. All of the babies are monitored by the wonderful nurses, so your only concern is comforting the baby. Whether you are a future neonatologist, pediatrician or just love little ones, NICU Cuddlers is an amazing experience!

Abby K., M1

Science and Healthcare Abilities Coalition

The Science and Healthcare Abilities Coalition (SHAC) is WashU Medicine's disability affinity and advocacy group. We are a local chapter of the larger national Medical Students with Disability and Chronic Illness (MSDCI) group, and we work to unite and advocate for disabled students and allies across the graduate health sciences programs here at WashU. We prioritize community-building, social support meetings and discussion surrounding incorporating disability-oriented content into the Gateway Curriculum. Both students identifying with disability or chronic illness and allies of the community are welcome. We are proud to be one of only a handful of medical schools in the country with an MSDCI chapter, and we strive to be leaders in creating more inclusive educational and professional environments where all students can thrive!

Laura D., M1

Unhoused Health

Unhoused Health is a student group here on campus that offers a wide variety of opportunities for WashU Medicine students to interact with, advocate for and support the unhoused community of St. Louis. So far this year, we have partnered with other local organizations to offer mobile showers, host packing parties to make NARCAN® Nasal Spray and hygiene

kits, and host a winter clothing drive. We are excited to welcome you to St. Louis and hope to see you at an Unhoused Health event soon!

Liesbeth V., M1



Graham Chapel provides a non-denominational space for students of all faiths to practice reflection and prayer.

Faith-based

Christian Medical Association

The Christian Medical Association (CMA) is a body of students (in the MD, PhD, PT, OT and graduate medical programs) here at WashU Medicine who come together to share in their Christian faiths whatever their backgrounds may be. Weekly meetings on Thursday evenings are a fantastic time to discuss themes at the intersection of faith, medicine and more. It's a great way for medical students to meet, be encouraged and be inspired by students from other backgrounds, in other programs and farther along in their training. Events include talks with faculty, community members and meals together, and we'd love to meet you!

Sam H., M1

Jewish Medical Student Association

The Jewish Medical Student Association (JMSA) organizes events that support Jewish culture and community on campus, including a lunch and learn series led by a local rabbi, big community Shabbats with grad students from across the city, faculty career panels, rooftop parties, bagel and challah making and more. Whether you are looking for recommendations on where to go for services or just want to enjoy Jewish food and culture, we're excited to welcome you!

Leah G., M1



The options are endless — ranging from AI in medicine to doing medicine in the wilderness, we have got it all!

Interdisciplinary groups

Global Health & Medicine Interest Group

The Global Health & Medicine Interest Group is dedicated to promoting a better understanding of global health in the medical community, increasing engagement in global health-related work at WashU and providing medical students with opportunities to work in the greater St. Louis community and abroad. This group offers a fantastic way to see what global health initiatives are ongoing at both the medical school and on the Danforth Campus. We host a variety of lunch talks, speaker series and skills nights, and there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in research with faculty conducting work around the world. No matter your level of experience in global health coming into medical school, we would love to support you in your interests!

Sam W., M1

Medical Innovation & Technology

Medical Innovation & Technology (MIT) focuses on how emerging technologies and innovative thinking can improve patient care and health-care systems. In MIT, students are exploring how artificial intelligence, digital health, medical devices, data science, entrepreneurship and health system sciences can be leveraged to tackle real challenges in health care. MIT connects students with research opportunities, mentors and resources to support their development in becoming clinicians, founders and leaders. Opportunities include practical experience through case discussions, lectures, workshops and project-based opportunities, with guidance from founders and experts in the St. Louis innovation ecosystem.

Anonymous



Students explore all the awesome student groups at the activities fair.

Interest groups

Cardiovascular Interest Group

The Cardiovascular Interest Group (CVIG) has countless opportunities to engage with the cardiothoracic surgery and cardiology divisions here at WashU Medicine. We welcome anyone and everyone from those who absolutely know they love the heart and everything to do with it, to those who might have the tiniest curiosity. CVIG hosts breakfast talks with faculty, skills clinics and opportunities to get involved with research or shadowing. People here LOVE to teach and are extremely passionate about their work. From left ventricular assist devices (LVADs) to coronary artery bypass graft

surgeries (CABGs) to heart transplants — you name it, someone's doing it at WashU Medicine and we'd love to have you along!

Guhan I., M1

Dermatology Interest Group

The Dermatology Interest Group (DIG) provides several opportunities to connect with the WashU Medicine Division of Dermatology and explore your interest in skin health and dermatologic care. There are many ways to get involved, including hands-on skills nights, where dermatology residents teach students essential clinical skills, and mentorship opportunities with faculty and residents who are incredibly supportive for students through their career explorations. The division is deeply committed to teaching and is always willing to help students prepare for residency applications through strong advising, personalized mentorship and structured guidance. There are also numerous opportunities to participate in clinical and translational dermatology research, perfect for students interested in getting involved with scholarly work!

Joey L., M1

Internal Medicine Interest Group

The Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG) is a great place for students to explore what a career in internal medicine may look like. One of the coolest aspects of internal medicine is how many different types and styles of medicine you can practice after going into internal medicine. For that reason, IMIG is a good resource if you want to learn about a specific field, and it facilitates lots of faculty panels from a wide variety of subspecialties. In 2025, events included GI and cardiology panels, but in years past there have been many other specialties featured too. One of my favorite parts is meeting students and faculty because they often will reveal to you a path you didn't know you could take!

Sam H., M1

Obstetrics & Gynecology Interest Group

The Obstetrics & Gynecology Interest Group (OGIG) allows students to explore OB/GYN and its many subspecialties via connections with residents and attendings. OGIG hosts faculty career panels, lunch talks, a procedure night and breakfast talks (small group networking). Procedure night is a great way to get exposure to the hands-on work that OB/GYNs do and practice your skills, including suturing, simulated vaginal deliveries and laparoscopic surgery simulations!

Laura D., M1

Oncology Interest Group

The Oncology Interest Group (OIG) has several opportunities to get connected with the WashU Medicine Division of Oncology and explore your interest in cancer care. There are lots of different ways you can get involved. Examples include community outreach opportunities (PECaD Vans and Pedal the Cause), attending physician panels about cancer care and getting paired with fellows through a mentorship program. The attendings and fellows in the department are really nice and very willing to help. There's also plenty of exciting research if that's something you're interested in!

Cynthia D., M1

Ophthalmology Interest Group

Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG), not to be mistaken for the other OIG (Oncology Interest Group), is WashU Medicine's student group for all those interested in ophthalmology. We offer many opportunities to explore what a career in the specialty may look like, including shadowing experiences in both the clinic and operating room, subspecialty panels and hands-on skills nights. OIG also collaborates closely with community initiatives such as Kids Vision for Life (KVFL), which provides free vision screenings and glasses to students at underserved public schools, and Health Protection & Education Services (HPES), which serves immigrant communities. OIG also maintains a dedicated research database that directly connects students with attending physicians. Whether you are interested in finding a mentor, engaging with the St. Louis community, pursuing a research project or simply learning more about what ophthalmology is all about, OIG has something for you!

Sam W., M1

Plastic Surgery Interest Group

The Plastic Surgery Interest Group (PSIG) is designed to be your gateway into the diverse and innovative world of plastic and reconstructive surgery. It is a fantastic way to develop a comprehensive understanding of what the specialty truly has to offer, reaching beyond aesthetic procedures to include complex reconstruction and microsurgery. The group offers unique opportunities to connect with dedicated faculty mentors, engage with residents and sign up for shadowing experiences to see the work firsthand. Whether you are aiming for a surgical residency or just curious about the field, we would love to help you explore your interests!

Kyler S., M1

Vascular Surgery Interest Group

The Vascular Surgery Interest Group (VSIG) is a student-led community for anyone curious about vascular disease, endovascular or open surgery, and

the tech/innovation side of the field. We host casual meet-and-greets with vascular surgeons and residents, skills workshops and panels on careers, research and away rotations. Whether you're 100% set on vascular surgery or just want to explore, VSIG is a low-pressure way to find mentors, get early hands-on exposure and meet other students interested in surgery.

Madison D., M1

We have many more medical interest groups!

These include but are not limited to:

- Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG)
- Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)
- GI Interest Group (GIIG)
- Infectious Disease Interest Group (IDIG)
- KTGF Child Psychiatry Interest Group
- Med-Peds Interest Group (MPIG)
- Neurosurgery Interest Group (NIG)
- Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group (OSIG)
- Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (PsychSIGN)
- Student Interest Group in Neurology (SIGN)
- Student Interest Group in Pathology
- Urology Interest Group (UIG)

Medical Student Government

Class president

Serving as the M1 class president has been a unique privilege and rewarding experience. My primary role has been to effectively represent and advocate for the needs of my peers. Achieving this responsibility involves regular collaboration from my fellow M1 Medical Student Government (MSG) representatives, MSG members from all other class years, as well as key administrators like the deans for Medical Student Education and Medical Student Affairs. These meetings offer a vital channel to elevate the concerns of my classmates, provide curriculum feedback, navigate student funding and coordinate class-wide events. Furthermore, they provide a unique

window into the institution’s operations, allowing me to benefit from the wealth of knowledge and perspective that our deans provide. It’s important to note that this position requires a decent time commitment, involving a lot of work and coordination with faculty and classmates. Overall, the role of class president resembles acting as the “glue” that keeps the class connected and informed about curriculum and events, which has been an awesome experience.

Kyler S., M1



Our Medical Student Government is committed to serving and advocating for the needs of our student body.

Officer of student representation

Hi there! Being my class’s officer of student representation (OSR) has been an incredibly rewarding experience and is a great role for anyone interested in student wellness and medical education.

The position has three main components. First, you serve as the class wellness representative by planning social and wellness events open to all four medical school classes. Past events have included a “Hallo-Wellness” with mini pumpkin painting, a Friendsgiving potluck, a Memorial Day weekend picnic, a summer book swap and more.

Second, you represent WashU Medicine in the Association of American Medical Colleges’ (AAMC) Organization of Student Representatives (OSR). This role offers the opportunity to attend biannual national, regional and local conferences — fully funded by WashU Medicine — where students and deans from institutions across the country discuss the evolving landscape of medical education.

Lastly, you act as a liaison with the Office of Student Affairs. This

includes providing input on new student organization applications and events, meeting with Medical Student Government representatives across classes and working directly with faculty and deans to advocate for student needs and concerns.

Jacklyn L., M1

Community engagement representative

As the community engagement representative, I help ensure there are ample opportunities for students to engage with local organizations and serve the people of St. Louis. WashU Medicine does a great job at working with and supporting stakeholders in the community who are doing amazing work in health, equity and social support, and connecting students to opportunities they feel passionate about. Additionally, I serve as a liaison to the greater graduate student body as a representative on the Graduate Professional Student Council. It's my goal to help students feel excited and passionate about how they serve the people of St. Louis, and to encourage a stronger connection with the city.

Trent R., M1

IT liaison

As the IT liaison, I work closely with the Educational Technology and Innovation Unit (ETIU) and the Office of Education (OE) to keep things running smoothly around campus. Whether it's suggesting improvements for Keystone (WashU's in-house, customized learning management portal), making sure we have access to Epic (system for patient health records) before we start our first immersion, sharing tech tips with students or fixing people's Anki remote setups, the IT liaison is here to help figure things out! Just please don't ask me to help set up a TV; I won't know how.

Iris L., M1

Medical education representative

One of my favorite parts of WashU Medicine is the Gateway Curriculum. Because Gateway is relatively young and has many unique features, the administration wants to know what the students think about it. The main role of the medical education representative (MER) is to facilitate student feedback via informal conversations with my classmates. The MER then helps consolidate these opinions into formalized reports and supports presenting the student opinion to the administration at the end of each module, clinical immersion and EXPLORE immersion. Effectively, the MER is the administration-facing advocate of their classmates. This position shows how the deans really care about the students: they want to hear the students' voices, and they actually implement change each year based on

what last years' class said.

Additional MER responsibilities include regular attendance at MSG meetings, coordinating the Distinguished Service and Teaching Awards, which recognize outstanding faculty, and continuous collaboration with my fantastic fellow M1 MSG representatives.

Sam H., M1

Committee on Medical Student Education

The Committee on Medical Student Education is composed of medical students, deans, thread leads, professors and other faculty that support the educational mission of WashU Medicine. I serve as one of the student representatives for my class and the general student body by bringing recommendations, concerns or important student perspectives to the table. I also serve as a representative on the Phase 1 operations committee and work closely with the MER and module liaisons to elicit and organize curriculum feedback. One of the most rewarding parts of my role is that our faculty share a genuine desire to incorporate student perspectives into their process of curriculum building. I also thoroughly enjoy working with my fellow MSG members to continue making WashU Medicine a vibrant learning environment.

James S., M1

Social chair

We spend money to prevent insanity.

Sahil M., M1

Treasurer

As the newly minted treasurer (and secretary), I am honored to be serving on the Medical Student Government! I feel so fortunate to collaborate with the fabulous M1 representatives, and the M2 and M3 class presidents were extremely helpful in my transition to the role, working with me to answer all my questions. The deans and staff were also incredibly kind in welcoming me to the MSG team. Since my role is so new, I am looking forward to helping define the responsibilities of the treasurer (and secretary) over the course of this year, and I am excited to put my spreadsheet and organizational skills to good use. If you like organizational systems, financial planning or being a persistent communicator, this role might be for you next year!

Taylor P., M1



Students participate in charity cycling event.

Wellness, performance and social

ACE Inhibitors

ACE Inhibitors (WashU Medicine Tennis Club) is WashU Medicine's tennis community. We are open to all skill levels and focused on wellness, inclusion and connectedness across med students and other trainees (and even faculty). The club keeps barriers low so it's easy to jump in and typically meets about once a week in the evenings, often playing outdoors in Forest Park when weather cooperates.

Madison D., M1

Med School Musical

The Medical School Musical is an annual Broadway production entirely directed, produced, designed and performed by students of WashU Medicine-affiliated programs. It's a great chance for students with all levels of experience to live out their theater dreams while meeting and connecting with students across the WashU Med-affiliated programs, including MD, PT, OT, PhD and PACS. Previous shows include Little Shop of Horrors, Grease, Beauty and the Beast, Legally Blonde and more!

Hayley Q., M4

Narrative Medicine

Throughout your career in medicine you will collect many stories — those of your patients, their loved ones and of your own experiences as you navigate your role within the health-care system. Narrative Medicine aims to explore the humanity that can be found at the center of health care within these stories, ultimately fostering the understanding and empathy that drives patient-centered care. Join us for group discussion and storytelling, reflective writing, speaker events with notable physician writers and more. We hand out free journals at our first writing event of each year — and if you find that exciting, then Narrative Medicine is definitely the place for you!

Mackenzie S., M1

Wilderness Medicine Interest Group (WildMed)

I heard about WildMed at Second Look Weekend and it was honestly one of the things I was most excited for at WashU Medicine. WildMed is a student group that gets together to hike, camp and learn about handling medical emergencies in low-resource settings (e.g., the middle of the woods). WildMed also facilitates Advanced Wilderness Life Support certification and participates in the yearly MedWar in Tennessee that consists of a three-day camping trip and competing with other med students to best address simulated medical emergencies. WildMed also has a massive inventory of camping and hiking gear that WashU Medicine students can borrow for their outdoor adventures! Epic, I know!

Kate M., M1

Music in Medicine

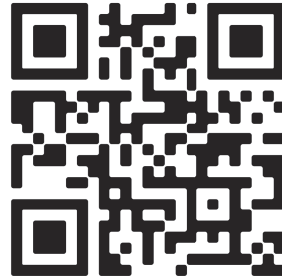
Music in Medicine is the club on campus for all things musical. Our goal is to build a community of music lovers, and the club is open to everybody whether you just enjoy listening, want to learn or have been playing your whole life. We organize trips to concerts, jam sessions, performances for patients in the Center for Advanced Medicine and much more. Music is medicine!

Taylor B., M1

Student groups

We have almost
100 student groups —
these are just a few!

See the student
group directory here:



md.washu.edu/all-student-groups



PERSPECTIVES

Perspectives

Wondering what it's like here if you're from the West Coast? In a long-distance relationship? Muslim? LGBTQIA+? We share words of wisdom and diverse perspectives on navigating life at WashU Medicine from multiple interests and backgrounds.

Section editors: Leah Genth and Evon Wang



Coach Preeta George, MD, associate professor of anesthesiology, in the Division of Pediatric Anesthesiology, poses with students after the White Coat Ceremony.

Identities

Being Persian

Anecdote: I went to Dillard’s to buy a button-down shirt for our White Coat Ceremony, and a Persian employee absolutely hooked me up, sticking with me for an hour while I was poring over the various options he gave me. Speaking to the larger community, it’s small but it does exist, and there are some pretty cool spots to eat in St. Louis (check out Taste of Persia in Tower Grove).

Chris B., M2

Being South Asian

Prior to moving to St. Louis, we were nervous about what the Indian community would be like in the Midwest. Since moving here, however, we’ve found a community of South Asians within WashU Med and beyond. We’ve gone to see a Bollywood movie in theaters with a group of other South Asian classmates; a bunch of us went to Garba at Saint Louis University (which is about a 10-minute drive from our campus and also has a huge South Asian community); and we’ve hosted a Bollywood movie night at our apartment (open to all!) with mini samosas as well. Also, the WashU Danforth Campus has a large South Asian presence and has a popular Diwali show every year. It’s not hard to find Desi friends with similar cultural experiences, which has consistently been a comfort over the past few months.

Mansi G., M2, and Nikita S., M2

Being LGBTQIA+

As a queer South Asian who came out in college, finding a safe and affirming environment was a priority for me when choosing a medical school. While I was initially hesitant about moving to St. Louis, I've honestly been so pleasantly surprised by how welcome I've felt on campus and in the city. From small things like faculty and students wearing inclusive pride flag lanyards to hosting lunch talks for Transgender Awareness Week, WashU Medicine has made it clear that it cares about its LGBTQIA+ students. Fellow students and faculty are also very approachable and willing to engage in difficult and nuanced conversations, including discussions about recent policies and their implications for the LGBTQIA+ community within and beyond WashU. The LGBTQmed student group has hosted some really fun social events and even surprised our class with cupcakes for National Coming Out Day. One of the deans also had an OUTMed networking dinner at his house, and we got to connect with students across different programs, faculty and providers over tasty food and drinks!

Outside of campus, St. Louis has a really vibrant queer culture and community. The Grove is a short commute from campus and has some really fun places to go out (I really like Rehab and Handlebar) and get some food! And while I can't speak for everyone, many of my queer classmates and I have talked about feeling safer than we expected while expressing ourselves and our identities in ways that feel most authentic to us throughout our time here so far. Like many other places, WashU Medicine is by no means perfect, and many members of its student body, faculty and staff are committed to holding the institution accountable and helping it grow in its capacity to support the LGBTQIA+ community at large. I can sincerely say that regardless of the identity you hold or where you are in your coming-out journey, we will welcome your authentic self with open arms here.

Karan M., M2

Being Hispanic/Latinx

As someone who was born and raised in El Salvador, my culture and upbringing is at the core of everything I do. I was a bit hesitant to come to WashU Medicine and not know if I would feel like an outsider or if there would be support for any initiatives I would be interested in. However, after being here I have realized that there are so many opportunities to be involved at school and in the community. For instance, you can become part/participate in events by the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), which organizes events to practice Spanish, volunteer with health screenings in the community and become certified to use Medical Spanish in the clinic. I also know that there is a growing interest to build mentorships with established physicians and researchers, which is something that I am very interested in helping expand! We definitely need more Latinx representation

in medicine, and we can definitely find people at WashU Medicine to support us. At the same time, if you don't identify as Latinx but are interested in learning more about our culture and language, all events are open to the public and you can always come hang out with us and join our initiatives!

Suzanne C., M1

Being Black

Is it wild to move to a city without knowing much about it? Probably. I feel as though I had an idealistic vision of what my experience would be. When I thought of St. Louis, I thought of a place with an abundance of Black people where I would be able to enjoy this vibrant Black community throughout all spaces. There is a very diverse community of Black people here with vastly different experiences and perspectives. It's been very refreshing getting to meet them as I was coming into WashU Med. I've loved the opportunities provided by WashU Med and beyond to learn about and interact with the local community. In knowing St. Louis, you come to better understand the socio-economic disparities largely affecting the Black community and much of the history that has contributed to this. This knowledge of both past and present has made me feel much more empowered as a Black individual in medicine. I'm better able to appreciate the need for Black patients in these communities to see someone who looks like them and who has the education to approach their care with full sensitivity. So much of medicine is focused on having the answers or solutions, but I've come to realize that we don't get to fully understand the questions we're attempting to address before we begin to offer remedies. I greatly appreciate WashU Med's intentionality in pushing us to understand our environment from multiple perspectives, including the social aspect, before attempting to provide solutions from a medical point of view. This allows us to develop a habit of truly treating the full human, and I hope I'm able to continue to serve and leave as lasting a mark here in St. Louis as it has left on me.

Anonymous

Being Asian

I grew up in Hawai'i and then spent college and my gap years in the San Francisco area — both of which were quite populated with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Moving to the Midwest was definitely not something I imagined for myself, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't nervous to live in a place with very few Asian Americans. I was even more apprehensive about not finding Filipino or Southeast Asian communities specifically, given that even Asian American/Asian affinity spaces tend to skew East Asian. But I'm here to say that I was not only surprised with the Asian American presence in St. Louis and at WashU Medicine, but have also managed to find pockets of home and comfort. Pan-Asia Supermarket and Jay International

Foods both have a vast array of Asian ingredients from all over Asia. When perusing the Tower Grove Farmers' Market, I found a few Asian-owned food vendors serving comfort foods like samosas and spam musubis. My Filipino friends and I even managed to find an authentic (and yummy) Filipino restaurant with the cutest, most rambunctious titos and titas. Even my apartment building hosted an apartment-wide Diwali event with local catering and good camaraderie. Admittedly, all these examples are of food. But needless to say, Asian and Asian American visibility exists — it's just a matter of seeking it out and integrating with the local community. I hope this helps, and welcome to St. Louis!

NJ M., M2

Being disabled

I came into medical school in 2016 knowing I was disabled, afraid to say anything about it and without formal paperwork. I didn't need accommodations for preclinical coursework, so I let that be for the first two years, although I know people who did need such accommodations and were able to have them arranged. During my PhD, I planned ahead for clerkships: getting my formal paperwork done and disclosing to the Dean of Student Affairs (the old accommodations system) and my thesis advisors. I was connected with the Student Success Team to discuss my needs and practice skills in clinical environments to be able to go into clerkships as prepared as possible; I jokingly called this "pre-mediation" (as in the thing you do to head off potentially needing remediation later). I also took my own initiative to shadow a clinical student to better understand what I'd need to do in clerkships and therefore what accommodations I'd need; admittedly, I was a bit jealous of the Gateway students, as I think this would be accomplished better and with less hassle just through doing the immersions of Phase 1, which you, reader, will do! Especially for clinic, I strongly recommend having discussions about your needs early and often. It took a few months between my clinical accommodations discussion with Dr. Matt Sullivan (the person at Disability Resources who specializes in Washington University Medical Campus students — the new accommodations system) and getting my accommodations letter. During clerkship year, I met with clerkship leadership during the assessments, reflection, coaching and community (ARCC) week one block (two months) ahead of each rotation to make sure we were on the same page about my needs and accommodations. They've been really supportive and worked with me to ensure my rotations would be accessible and educational. Now, as I get close to Phase 3, I'm having discussions with Career Counseling about how to navigate disclosure in applications. I'm open enough about being disabled to be writing this piece at all, and I'm excited to see what the future holds. Good luck!

Peppar C., M4

Abstaining from alcohol

While you might think that teetotaling in medical school may leave you feeling isolated, I haven't found that it ever hampered my ability to have fun with my medical student friends. Never once have I felt left out in social activities or pressured to drink alcohol. Sure, as the default designated driver, you might find yourself driving everyone around on weekend nights, but you can still have a great night out without a lick of booze! If you fancy bars, then you're in luck! Head on over to Pieces for a game night with games ranging from Battleship to Catan. If you're more of an arcade gamer, Up-Down STL is the place to be! In the mood for some salsa and bachata? Drop in on Thursday and Saturday evenings to Club Viva for a Latin dance lesson before the floor opens for you to show off what you learned! No alcohol, no problem! As long as you keep an open mind, you'll find that St. Louis still has a ton to offer for those who don't drink!

Samik P., M2



Kyler Squirrel, M1 class president ... and his intimidatingly cute dog squad. Do we dare pet them?

Our furry friends

Having a cat

For all my friends with cats: 1. I'd love to meet you and your cat(s); 2. I'd love for you to meet Kobe — my cat — who is a 6-year-old cuddly tuxie! But back to business. The St. Louis region has lots of resources for cats (in case

you don't know, Purina is based here). For animal hospitals, I personally recommend the Webster Groves Animal Hospital (comprehensive facility with emergency services) and the Kingsbury Animal Hospital. For supplies, there is Treats Unleashed (on Euclid, very close to the Washington University Medical Campus), Petco and PetSmart. Lastly, make sure to talk to landlords about pet policy – such things vary a lot in St. Louis, ranging from one-time pet deposit to monthly pet rent and other stipulations.

Adrian L., M1

When I moved to St. Louis, I was really excited to live on my own and be able to adopt a cat! I went to a few local shelters including the Humane Society of Missouri and Animal House Cat Rescue and Adoption Center. I fell in love with a 3-year-old tuxedo cat at Animal House, and I adopted him that same day! Even though he had a difficult past including surviving at least one St. Louis winter as a stray and undergoing eye surgery before our paths crossed, he has truly blossomed into the most loving and playful companion I could have asked for. I decided to name him Alfie (after the word for Alfajor, a pastry in Latin America). I love going home and having Alfie welcome me by the door! He is always either sleeping on my lap or in my desk whenever I am studying at home (he particularly enjoys looking at Dr. Crouch's histology slides), so I think he should also earn an MD after these four years... In general, I definitely recommend having a cat! They are super independent which is very convenient as a busy medical student (especially if you live alone). If you don't have a cat when coming to med school (or would like to expand your furry family), I would also recommend checking out the many shelters around the area! Most of them take walk-ins, and there are so many furry friends in need of a loving home!

Suzanne C., M1

Having a dog

Having a dog in medical school is a ton of fun and a ton of work. My 2-year-old Belgian Malinois, Apollo, is a class sensation, the best study partner and an avid adventurer of Forest Park. He is a great excuse to take a break from Anki, and he always reminds me to take care of myself, timing my meals and sleep schedule to maintain his routine. Importantly, having a dog is also a major responsibility, and sacrifices must be made. I'm not in the library with friends as much as I'd like, and regardless of my plans for sleeping in, I get a 6 a.m. wake-up call to give him breakfast. My classmates know that I spend our hour-long lunch breaks running home to let Apollo out. I spend my study sessions throwing stuffed toys over my shoulder for him to fetch. But I love every minute of it. So, while not for the faint of heart, I am here to say that having a dog during medical school is possible, and Apollo loves WashU Med as much as I do.

Taylor P., M1

Pet sitting

I knew I would miss my dog coming to medical school, so I signed up to dog sit through Rover when I got here in August before school started. I can set a flexible schedule depending on how busy I am or when I want to travel and extensively vet the dogs who are interested in staying with me. Usually, I do a meet-and-greet with the dogs and owners to make sure it's a good fit. Since our class schedule is very flexible, I've had no issues taking care of the dogs during the day. My friends love when I bring pups to our social events as well! So far, it's been a great way to get my dog-fix, better my mental health and make a little money!

Kenzie B., M2



Most of our days are filled with budding smiles, growing stories and the start of lifelong friendships.

Relationships

Having a family

I want to make sure it is said loud and clear for anyone having doubts about what they can or can't accomplish as a parent: You can do this. Everyone's situation is unique, and I do not want to diminish that. I am fortunate to have an astoundingly supportive husband and my mother to help out when school demands more of my time, and I am very aware of how their help makes this possible for me. It does take a village. What I will say is that no matter what your village looks like, there are always ways to make it work. Planning is a must, but it is important to be flexible and give yourself grace

when things don't go according to plan. My experience being a mom/med student has been the most rewarding experience I've had. I come home every day to the best motivators a student could ask for, and I am constantly reminded of the powerful example I am setting for my children. The key to success is communicating with your family to ensure everyone is always on the same page and to set expectations. Your weekends will look different than your classmates', and that's okay. Try not to compare yourself to anyone, because your experience as a student will be vastly different than the majority of your peers. It is a balancing act, and some days are harder than others, but overall, it is way more manageable than I imagined it would be. The WashU Medicine Office of Medical Student Affairs has exceeded my expectations in the support they offer for students with children. They are always accommodating when I need to miss class to take my kids to the doctor or end up getting sick myself because of all the sickness they bring home from preschool. Bridget O'Neal, Director of Financial Aid, offered me tons of guidance in finding daycares/preschools that fit my needs and assisted with increasing my loans to help cover the costs. It still amazes me how much of her time she willingly and enthusiastically put in to helping me get settled here. There is also a beautiful little community of parents at WashU Medicine, and St. Louis has to be one of the most affordable places to have a family. Many students with children are actually able to afford purchasing a home that is within a five- to 10-minute drive to campus. There are tons of free family-friendly things to do in this city. WashU Medicine has to be one of the best, if not the best, medical school for students with children.

Quinn P., M4

Dating someone in medical school

You're going to meet a lot of special people in medical school, and one of those people might be extra special, if you're lucky enough. Dating a fellow medical student can be daunting but so is starting any relationship. Personally, having a partner going through the same adventure as me has been monumental. Whether it's practicing neuro exams, proofreading research emails or sharing career aspirations, it's reassuring to know there's someone in your corner who truly gets it. You get to celebrate accomplishments together while supporting each other through challenging moments. Just make sure there's time for both of you to take a break from medicine; it's not a throuple!

Tim H., M4

Being single

The possibilities: endless. The reality: limited, but better than nothing! The singles of the Entering Class of 2022 have not abandoned hope, not yet at least. Although some of us looked within our cohort to find our

love interests, some of us have taken to the apps — swiping, liking and commenting our way to a conversation, story or maybe a relationship. Dating is what you make of it here! You could, for example, make every first date a double date (highly recommend this — got to share the love). Or you could even choose ironic first date locations, like Applebee's, and jokingly invite your classmates to “watch” (would recommend this less so ...). But all this to say, it can be fun. We all agree there are some good fish in the sea; although we are in Missouri, there are still some good fish in the river too. So as with fishing, patience is key. Do be warned ... the St. Louis dating scene is surprisingly small. You will likely match with some of your friend's matches, match with a previous date's roommate(s) or run into previous dates in coffee shops and restaurants. These are all real possibilities; I speak from experience. If dating is not a priority for you starting out school — you'll be fine. Although it may seem that everyone is in a long-term relationship, engaged or married, don't feel pressured to date just because everyone else is! It's not research or volunteering; residency programs won't axe you for being unlovable, trust me. We are all adults here (or at least kids with adult responsibilities), so you won't miss out on anything really because you're single. If anything, it frees you up to get to know all your classmates, go on trips and live your best independent life!

Carolyn C., M4 & friends

Long-distance relationships

Unfortunately, we have to do hard things and live many miles away from our loved ones to pursue things that are fulfilling for our academic careers. However, there is more time in medical school than you realize to still invest in your partner and find time to see them even though you live miles away. Phase 1 is forgiving since you're at least guaranteed your weekends off (as opposed to Phases 2 and 3), so I have been trying to take advantage of that and see my partner when I get a longer weekend. Sometimes I'll get lucky and have no mandatory classes on a Friday or a Monday, allowing me to travel and spend more time with my partner, but sometimes it'll be a while before I can see them. While long-distance is definitely a challenge with our schedules, I have found that many of us in the class are facing the same struggles, and my friends (and classmates!) are so supportive when the distance has me feeling down. Everyone finds their balance, and having a successful long-distance relationship is very much feasible — the community you find here at WashU Medicine will set you up all right for it!

Sprihaa K., M1

Being married

As a married med student, it might seem overwhelming to balance your commitments to school and to your significant other. I know I was worried

about how our dynamic would shift as I committed more time for school, but after starting I feel like the time outside of school that I spend with my wife is way higher quality. I think it also helps balance obligations and priorities, and communication is 100% the key here. I always (try to) keep my wife in the loop with all the classes, Standardized Patients and extra events going on at the medical school. WUMS Plus One is also a great interest group on campus that connects students and their significant others so we can all hang out and get to know each other outside of class.

Guhan I., M1



The Student National Medical Association at WashU Med showed our class how to make jerk chicken and meat pies for the “A Taste of Nations” event — and let’s just say nothing was left on the plates.

Religion and spirituality

Being Muslim

Growing up in the Atlanta suburbs, I had a spectrum of experiences as a Muslim and hijabi, but I was still a little worried that St. Louis might be a harder place to find community and resources as a Muslim. After moving here though, I was pleasantly surprised. There are many mosques in St. Louis, some major ones being the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis (a 25-minute drive out) and Masjid Bilal on Saint Louis University's campus (much closer to WashU Medicine). These mosques serve the large and incredibly diverse Muslim community of St. Louis and are very involved in serving the general St. Louis community with various charities and free clinics run by members of the community. If you eat halal, it's fairly easy to find halal meat in St. Louis, and there are plenty of great restaurants to try too! On campus, you can find space to pray in the Danforth Chapel right on the Medical Campus, and there are also chapels within the hospital where you can pray (including Jumma prayers). Oh, and now WashU Medicine has an official Medical Muslim Student Association (MMSA), so be sure to check us out when you come to WashU Medicine! We look forward to welcoming you.

Aseeyah I., M4

Being Jewish

Coming from an East Coast city with a big Jewish population, I wasn't sure what to expect here in St. Louis and at WashU Medicine, but I have been really pleasantly surprised by the amount of events and the presence of the community here. Within WashU Med, the Jewish Medical Student Association (JMSA) hosts events including holiday celebrations, Shabbat dinners and faculty career panels. Outside of WashU Medicine, there is JGrads, a Chabad specifically for grad students in St. Louis, which is a great way to meet grad students outside of just med school. JGrads hosts great events like challah bakes, Shabbat and rooftop parties. There are also other Chabads nearby and many local synagogues (Reform, Conservative and Orthodox all within a 10- to 15-minute drive from campus), so regardless of what kind of Jewish community you're looking for, it can be found in St. Louis and at WashU Medicine.

Leah G., M1

Being Christian

Since coming to WashU Medicine, I've found many wonderful opportunities for Christian community both in and outside the medical school. At WashU Med, I've enjoyed going to the Christian Medical Association (CMA)'s weekly gatherings, where we hear physicians and other health-care professionals

share about their journeys and how their faith relates to medicine. It's always a warm and encouraging space. The group includes students from OT, PT and social work programs as well, which I appreciate. I've also attended some very stimulating dinner discussions through the Carver Project, which fosters dialogue around contemporary issues. Outside of WashU Medicine, there are many good churches of various denominations that students can plug into. A couple of classmates and I visited churches together at the start of the school year, which was a lot of fun. Committing to a local church community has been a great way to meet people from the broader St. Louis community as well. Amidst the stress of medical school, it's been good to be immersed in rhythms of rest and worship, prayer and breaking bread, laughter, learning and service.

Nancy J., M2



We've made it through the week. Now we rejoice!

The medical school journey

Being a first-generation medical student

Navigating medical school (and higher education in general) as a first-generation student definitely has its obstacles, but WashU Med does its best to provide as many valuable resources as possible. My coach has been super helpful, and it's been especially meaningful to have a physician who has a lot of shared life experiences as a role model and mentor whom I can always go to for advice. Additionally, we now have the First-Generation Medical Student Association! It's also been helpful to connect with older medical students through experiences like clinical mentorship, because they're also super happy to give you any advice that'll help you through understanding the "hidden curriculum" of medical school. Overall, there's a wide variety of resources and ways to find mentors, and there's no shortage of people at WashU Med who are super happy to give you advice and help you navigate medical school as a first-gen student!

Aya A., M2

Learning that many of my peers had multiple family members in medicine made me feel self-conscious about being the first person in my family to attend college (or high school) for the first time. Initially, I felt out of place or that I was somehow already behind my peers. Thankfully, the support from coaches, mentors and other students alleviated those self-imposed concerns. After all, WashU Med isn't about judging where you came from but preparing you for where you want to go.

Tim H., M4

Being a young student

I started medical school at 21, and I'm still 21 as I'm writing this. Full disclaimer: I'm not the youngest person in my class, and if some of you reading this think, "But I'm younger than you or not even 21. How will I fit in?" — know that it'll be ok. There are many age-inclusive social events within and beyond campus, and, aside from a few remarks about how young you are, you'll fit right in and likely find great friendships with the more senior members of your class.

Chris B., M2

Being an international student

The Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) is an incredible resource for international students. I was connected with my OISS advisor very early on after I committed to WashU Medicine, and she was always there to answer any questions I had. As I transitioned my student status

to WashU Med, OISS constantly helped me navigate the many logistical nuances. They were also extremely speedy in terms of issuing necessary paperwork. Having such an incredible office makes me feel very supported as an international student.

Evon W., M1

Coming from a large state school

Starting medical school with a class of 123 compared to my college graduating class of around 5,000 people is definitely an adjustment! And coming from a large state school, I was used to not knowing many people that were in my class. With such a small class size, that's definitely not the case here at WashU Medicine. I have found myself experiencing many more "wow, it's a small world" moments here than I did back in Chapel Hill (my college town). It's very fun though, since you build a close-knit community with your medical school class. It's definitely an adjustment coming from a larger school, but you find your people and you settle in. It's very nice having more focused attention built into the structure of the school compared to a large state school where you had to go hunt for mentors. My advice would be to embrace the smaller community, get to know everyone since you're not trying to meet a thousand people, and take advantage of how easy it is to find mentors!

Sprihaa K., M1

Coming from a non-ivy

Coming to WashU Med from a "non-elite" undergraduate background was intimidating. At Second Look Weekend, it felt like every other person I met was from an Ivy League, elite public or well-known private school, while I was from a school best known for tailgating and frat parties. I worried I wouldn't "fit in" with my classmates, but I've discovered that our class benefits from the diversity of different undergraduate experiences, and it's fun to share about my alma mater and my college experience. It's very real to feel imposter syndrome when you compare yourself to others, but I have to remind myself that no one makes it here by accident. Each person admitted to the class is chosen for a reason, and it might just be the experiences you gained at your "non-ivy" school that have shaped the unique skills and talents you'll add to the class.

Sydney W., M2

Coming from a smaller school

Coming from a small school is understandably intimidating, as many of your classmates may have come from larger, more well-known institutions. I came from the University of North Florida, a lesser-known state school

in Jacksonville, Fla. While I was not particularly concerned with how the administration would perceive me in class (I thought, “They did pick me, after all”), I was concerned about how my peers might perceive me. Thankfully, it took less than five minutes on campus to see how welcoming everyone was. Once you’re at WashU Med, people don’t care about your MCAT score or what school you came from. Everyone knows that each student worked tooth and nail to get where they are. We all want to see each other succeed, regardless of how we got here. So, if you’ve come from a small school, rest assured that it will not impact your time here at WashU Med.

Nicholas S., M2

Coming straight from undergrad

I was initially worried about facing burnout associated with going straight from undergrad to med school, but so far this has not been an issue. If you are also going straight to med school from undergrad, or even transitioning from working full-time or getting additional post-grad degrees, I definitely recommend being intentional about how you spend your time the summer before classes start! Try to enjoy as much downtime and R&R as you can. Spend time with your family and friends. Read the books you never had time to read. Don’t get out of bed until noon. Do all the things that bring you peace and joy! I definitely don’t recommend anticipatory studying — because I was lazy all summer, I felt refreshed and ready to face the workload when classes started in August. You’ve gotten into medical school ... you’ve more than earned a break!

Mackenzie S., M1

Taking gap years

I took three gap years before coming to WashU Med. Taking a break allowed me to really consider whether medicine was what I wanted to pursue and gave me more perspective to feel confident in having made the choice to do so. I was initially daunted by the prospect of having to get re-acquainted with school and its routines — studying, taking exams, etc. — but I think WashU Med does a great job of acclimating everyone during orientation and the first few modules, so there’s no need to worry that you’ll be a fish out of water. Lots of people take gap years, so it feels completely normal and you have loads of support — your peers, big sibs in the M2 class and amazing faculty — to help you adjust to being back in school.

Leah G., M1

Being a career changer

When I graduated undergrad I had zero intention or thought of going to medical school. Instead, I had a really fulfilling and amazing early career as

an aerospace engineer. The road to medicine from there was complicated, but the question I get often is, “Do you feel out of place at WashU Medicine with this non-traditional background?” My answer is a resounding no! I am constantly amazed at the diverse backgrounds, journeys and stories of all my classmates, as well as our faculty. In the admissions process, it was clear to me that WashU Medicine valued my journey and what perspectives I brought with me, and I have loved sharing insight with my classmates as I learn from them. WashU Medicine wants you to bring all parts of yourself to school with you to make us the best class and future physicians we can be. For me, that means sometimes framing things as an engineer would and always showing pictures of the cute things my kids did this weekend.

Connor G., M1

Getting involved in extracurriculars

Medical school extracurriculars look a little bit different than extracurriculars in undergrad. Gone are the days of trying to get involved in as many student groups as you can to impress admissions committees. Instead, you can join as many or as few student groups of your choosing, without feeling forced to be president of three different groups (although, if you are passionate ... by all means!). At WashU Med, there are so many different groups to get involved in with varying levels of commitment. Another great thing about medical school extracurriculars is that you determine how much or little that you want to be involved in an organization. If you want to go to every event that an organization hosts, you can. If you forget your lunch and want to attend a lunch talk that an interest group is hosting and learn some valuable information while you eat, you can. Even more, if you are very passionate about a particular interest (maybe you love food and want to get involved with the Culinary Medicine Group), you can apply for a leadership position and plan all of the events for your fellow classmates. It really is what you make of it. Maybe your commitment is one hour per month simply attending an event you find interesting or one hour per week as a student leader creating fun, educational events. Obviously, your academics come first, but attending events or getting involved with any of the organizations on the Medical Campus is a great way to learn, meet other students and have a little bit of fun all at the same time!

Joshua L., M2



We could have been studying on our snow day ... but sledding on Art Hill won. We'll catch up later, we promise.

Where we've been

Being from a big city

I grew up in Singapore (a city of over 5 million) and moved to St. Louis from New York City (a city of over 8 million). I miss many things about living in cities: the efficient public transportation, the cultural vibrancy, the thrill of brushing shoulders with so many different people from all walks of life. Here in St. Louis, I live on the edge of Forest Park. On Zoom class days, I see more trees than people. It is a quieter existence (in part because of the nature of medical school ... so much time spent in study land), but no less joyful and surprising. The city of St. Louis has its own unique history (so worth understanding!), a vibrant theater and arts scene (especially in the summer), gorgeous green spaces and culinary diversity. Though the city itself is not very walkable, it's nice that many of my classmates live within walking distance. At the end of the day, I'm glad to be living in a city that is big enough for unfolding friendships and wide enough for hot air balloons to fill the sky.

Nancy J., M2

Being from a rural area

I grew up in central Missouri on a cattle farm but have also spent a few years in a city. For me, living in St. Louis means I have access to all the fun of city life, and the family farm is a short drive away. I think if you are from a rural area and are worried about missing it, you will be able to find places and

people who feel like home here in St. Louis. “Wide open spaces” are not far away. I think there is also a big presence of outdoor adventurers and people with agricultural/small town roots in the city.

Kate M., M1

Being from St. Louis

As someone who was raised in St. Louis, went to college here and is now in medical school here, I can confidently say I’ve been around for a long time. We’re home to the infinitely dense gooey butter cake and the infamous amalgamation known as Provel cheese. Yet somehow, when people ask me for restaurant recommendations, my mind still goes blank. Jokes aside, I genuinely find St. Louis to be a lovely place. What we may lack from the bigger cities, we more than make up for with passion for our hometown. We ask each other what high school you went to, and on Halloween, you have to tell a joke to get candy. After living here for essentially my entire life, I’m still discovering new things about the city. Even after moving from the Danforth Campus to the medical school area, I’ve felt like I found a whole new side of St. Louis. Exploring new restaurants and bars in the Central West End and The Grove has been an unexpected surprise to me. And if you start to feel restless, it’s easy to get away for a long weekend; Chicago, Nashville and Kansas City are just a road trip away. Nonetheless, I’ve loved seeing St. Louis through my classmates’ eyes as they discover its charm. I couldn’t be happier about choosing WashU Medicine and continuing to live in the city I grew up in!

Sam W., M1

Being from the East Coast

I’ve spent my whole life on the East Coast. In true coastal fashion, I was hesitant about moving to the landlocked Midwest. I didn’t have time to visit before committing to WashU Med, and I moved here with little understanding of what St. Louis entailed, other than the Arch. Yet, as I first moved into the Central West End, where the Washington University Medical Campus is and where most students live, I remember feeling pleasantly surprised — like I could call this home, easily. The Central West End is so incredibly walkable, diverse and consistently bustling. It reminds me of all the things I loved about the East Coast. Now, as I’m exploring the rest of St. Louis outside of the Central West End, I’ve again been pleasantly surprised by how I never run out of things to do — from the countless free museums, to the food scene (as my fellow East Coast classmates and I have brought Beli to St. Louis), to the countless culture festivals that pop up every weekend. The one part of St. Louis that felt most unlike the East Coast was the cost — I appreciate that I can actually go out here without feeling guilty,

especially as a student. Finally, if I ever miss home, the St. Louis Lambert International Airport is a Southwest hub and thus has a lot of cheap, cancellable flights!

Kavya P., M2

Being from the Midwest

I spent my childhood on both sides of Missouri, growing up in St. Louis through elementary school and later moving to Kansas City, Mo., where my family still lives. I then went to college in Philadelphia, and although university provided me many deeply formative experiences in a different part of the country, I'm incredibly excited to be back in Missouri for medical school. One of the greatest advantages of living in the Midwest again is how much easier it is for me to visit my family and vice versa due to the decreased travel time and cost, and I'm so grateful to have such increased accessibility to my support network. St. Louis has all the friendliness of the Midwest combined with a wealth of activities and a rich culture to tap into. Whatever you're looking for, whether nightlife, sports, concerts, historical sites or restaurants, you can find all of this and more! I also appreciate that all four seasons are divided equally throughout the year to help mark the passage of time, which I sorely missed in Philadelphia. St. Louis boasts beautiful fall colors, snow in the winter, rainstorms and dogwood blossoms in the spring and good old Missouri humidity in the summer. I could not be happier to be spending the next four years in what feels like a home away from home!

Pallavi J., M2

Being from the Mountain West

I am originally from the mountains of Boulder, Colo., but I moved to the Midwest to attend WashU for undergrad. I loved it enough to stay through my gap year, bringing my total time in Missouri to five years and counting. Coming from Colorado as an avid runner, the change in trail availability was initially a tough pill to swallow. However, Forest Park quickly became my sanctuary; it is an absolutely amazing place to explore and is just expansive enough that I never find myself getting tired of the routes. For those looking to get off the pavement, the Wilderness Medicine Interest Group hosts hikes through various state parks in the area. While I've noticed the max elevation gain doesn't quite rival the Rockies, the trails can be deceptively hilly and still provide some solid vertical movement. Missouri also hides some unique natural gems that are genuinely fun to explore, with Johnson's Shut-In State Park being a standout favorite. Overall, the terrain is certainly different from home, but the region has its own unique appeal that affords endless opportunities to maintain an active, outdoorsy lifestyle.

Kyler S., M1

Being from the South

I grew up in Houston and went to college in Austin, Texas, so moving to the Midwest was a big change. While we do have a lot of students from the Midwest, I was pleased to find that my classmates came from all over the U.S., with several others from Texas! While I have to admit that I do miss Tex-Mex food, and the food scene here doesn't quite live up to the diversity and choice of Houston, St. Louis is still a great place to live! I have enjoyed exploring the city, trying out different restaurants and cafes and learning more about the Midwest in general. It's also awesome how much there is to do for free here! The weather is definitely colder than I'm used to, and if you come from a similarly warm state and plan on driving, I highly recommend looking into all-weather tires or you might end up sliding a bit during your first freeze (I'm speaking from experience).

Aneesa B., M1

Being from the West Coast

The biggest change I experienced in St. Louis was the weather. The winters here are not nearly as bad as Iowa, Minnesota or any of the Great Lakes states. If you use Chicago as a reference, St. Louis is on average 10-15 degrees warmer. Still, be prepared for days in the 40s and 30s, as it doesn't feel easy to walk or to bike places in the cold air during this time of year. I invested in a real winter coat, which I shopped for in St. Louis rather than California since they don't tend to sell those back home. I also try to drive slow if it's below 38 degrees since St. Louis is notorious for black ice — which is very difficult to see — on the roads. While smaller in scale, I found that almost all of the fun things I could do in California are in St. Louis except for the beach and the mountains. The difference is that most things to do are indoor in the winter. While being in St. Louis can seem isolating at first compared to the West Coast, I'm confident that the friends and experiences you'll have here will make this city feel like home in no time!

Laith F., M2



Wellness

“I will recognize my limitations and act within my capabilities. I commit to practicing humility, remembering that I am a lifelong student. I will safeguard myself so that I may care for others. I promise to anchor myself in the humanity I share with my patients so that I may find joy in healing.”

— Excerpt from the Entering Class of 2025's class oath

Section editors: Caroline Coggin and Nate Cohen

Emotional wellness

I am definitely not an expert on the matter, but I have found a few strategies to keep my balance throughout medical school so far. For one, having a strong support system is so incredibly important. Whether that is hometown friends and family or the wonderful community that I have found here, it pays huge dividends to be able to lean on people when I need it most. I also find it super valuable to make time for the hobbies and activities that I love outside of being a medical student. Going on runs or bike rides around St. Louis, playing guitar, visiting the free museums and scoping out local coffee shops are some of my personal favorite ways to spend free time. Lastly, and arguably the most difficult, I have found it really worthwhile to TRY (key word being “try”) to not complain about studying, lectures or assignments. It’s super easy to fall into the habit of grouching about the daily tasks of being a medical student, but I find myself in a much happier — and frankly, more productive — state when I remember how lucky and grateful I am to be where I am.

Caroline C., M1

Environmental wellness

One way that I try to practice environmental wellness is to dedicate time to appreciate the beautiful green space that is available in and around St. Louis. I particularly enjoy taking my dog for walks in Forest Park and Shaw Park!

Taylor P., M1

Tip: On Thursdays, there’s a farmers’ market on campus. You can sign up for the WashU Farmers’ Market newsletter to see what goodies are coming each week! Also, several places near the Central West End are on the Too Good To Go app where restaurants/grocery stores sell food at a (highly) discounted rate to limit food waste.

Financial wellness

Budgeting has been one of the most useful skills I’ve picked up as an MSTP student living on a set monthly stipend, and I think it’s just as important for medical students using loans or any fixed income. What works best for me is looking at my past spending and figuring out realistic monthly averages for things like groceries, utilities, rent, parking and anything else that consistently shows up. Then, I just set up a simple template in Google Sheets, Excel or whatever software you like, just to track transactions and categorize spending. This kind of system also makes it really clear where small, unnecessary expenses add up over time. Sometimes you don’t realize how much you’re spending on something like grabbing coffees a few times a week at Kaldi’s until you see it on a spreadsheet and realize that money could’ve gone toward something you care more about. From there, I can

map out how the year will look and still plan ahead for things that matter to me, whether that's travel, a big purchase or supporting family. Financial stress is really common in med school, but having a budget makes me feel more grounded and in control of my day-to-day spending choices. Once I set it up, I can usually stop thinking about money all the time, and if I follow the budget, I'm not constantly second-guessing every decision.

Madison D., M1

Tip: WashU Medicine students get TONS of discounts at places in the Central West End and around St. Louis in general. Check out md.washu.edu/resources/wellness/financial/ for more information.

Intellectual wellness

Intellectual wellness can look different for many people. For some, the content we learn from our lectures, readings and clinical experience is sufficient to fulfill this dimension of wellness. For others, they require deeper dives into lecture materials or research of their own to fill this need. Still remaining are the people who prefer to learn about the world beyond science through books, documentaries or even trips to the World Chess Hall of Fame (just a 10-minute walk from campus featuring the world's largest chess piece). Whatever satisfies your thirst for knowledge, you can find it at WashU Medicine. Most lecturers provide additional resources to read scientific papers with evidence to learn beyond their lectures, and there is an abundance of research opportunities for those who seek them out. Plenty of us find time to engage in intellectually stimulating hobbies like reading, playing musical instruments and engaging in creative projects. In my opinion, intellectual wellness is the easiest to achieve at WashU Medicine because we are offered such a great deal of academic content that it is hard to get bored, but alternative outlets for intellectual wellness are encouraged throughout the community.

Nate C., M1

Occupational wellness

Medical school is unsurprisingly hard. There are classes, days and sometimes even weeks when there is so much content to learn and activities to do that balancing everything seems impossible. While I cannot help you avoid these moments, as they are just the reality of med school, I can encourage you to center gratitude each and every day. I feel so incredibly lucky to be a medical student here at WashU Medicine, learning everything I am learning and doing everything I am doing. Like every pre-med/now medical student, I have spent years working to be exactly where I am. I think back to how pre-med me would feel about attending these lectures, interacting with real-life patients or touring the Anatomy Lab for the first time. Suddenly, the

endless tasks and responsibilities for the day are transformed into exciting opportunities I am lucky enough to do. Every day in med school, we have the opportunity to learn and do amazing things. Even when it is difficult, I like to remind myself that it is an immense privilege to train to be a future physician.

Liesbeth V., M1

Physical wellness

WashU Medicine offers lots of options for wellness, though you can find easier, more convenient options if you are willing to pay subscriptions to local gyms or studios. I personally visit WashU's undergraduate gym to participate in their free classes (which involves a 10-min drive to get there) on a semi-weekly basis, along with using my apartment gym. Many med students use the gym at The Core Apartment Residences, which is for grad students and decently large but does get packed at peak hours. Many students also pay for local Pilates and similar classes (PLNK, Pure Barre, etc.) because there are many studios directly in the Central West End. As med school is full of running fanatics, many folks run (or bike or walk) in Forest Park on a daily basis! It is easy to find ways to be active at WashU Medicine if it is a priority for you, though you may have to drive a bit further if you want to hike in a state park and explore true outdoorsy environments.

Laura D., M1

There is an AMAZING variety of workout classes available in St. Louis, all of which are only a 15-minute drive maximum (most likely) from where you live. I LOVE going to Lagree Method classes at PLNK in the Central West End (very similar to Solidcore), themed dance and heels classes at Yes Honey Studio and yoga classes at Shanti Yoga and Central West End Yoga! You really get to pick your poison (or really — avoid it) here, many of which are affordable for students or provide intro offers so you can try out each studio!

Uswa K., M1

From my perspective, students maintain physical wellness through a variety of accessible methods, with running being a standout favorite thanks to the expansive Forest Park located right next door. Beyond solo runs and annual races, students stay active through student-led running groups or by joining community clubs in neighborhoods like Dogtown and Tower Grove, which offer a great way to connect with people outside of medical school. For strength training, the on-campus Core facility is a reliable resource despite peak-hour crowds, though many of us utilize apartment amenities. Personally, I frequently use the well-fitted gym at Metropolitan Flats. Additionally, the student body shares diverse athletic interests, with groups consistently attending a local mixed martial arts gym (Watson

MMA) or utilizing student discounts at a nearby indoor rock climbing facility (Climb So iLL).

Kyler S., M1

Tip: If you run in the park, just remember that you are never more than two(ish) miles from a giraffe/tiger/penguin/polar bear/[insert your favorite zoo animal here] at any given time. This also means that you can go and physically see said favorite animal literally whenever you want (so long as it is during zoo operating hours). Check out our running tour of Forest Park here: diso.washu.edu/forest-park

Social wellness

I think it is super important to spend time with classmates outside of the classroom! Personally, I love to host people at my apartment! In the fall, I hosted a weekly Dancing with the Stars watch party, and I'm hoping to keep up the tradition with a new series in the spring! I also have started going on runs with friends in Forest Park when it's nice out (a 2-for-1 because you get to explore the park at the same time!). Some classmates have hosted holiday parties, potlucks and game nights. We have an amazing community filled with so many great people!

Riley F., M1

Tip: Join classmates in the BJC cafeteria between classes on long lecture-heavy days. Students get 25% off and it's a great opportunity to make friends and build camaraderie!

Spiritual wellness

There are a lot of ways to explore spiritual wellness at WashU Medicine and in St. Louis more broadly. Religious groups are a great way to engage in spirituality, and I am part of JMSA (the Jewish med student group) for that reason. However, there are also very meaningful non-religious spiritual communities in the area — two that I have found are a local meditation group and the St. Louis Ethical Society. Whatever form your spirituality takes, I think there is community to be found at WashU Medicine and in St. Louis. There is also a group of M1s planning to form a meditation meet up within the med school this year as well, so I think it's relatively easy to make your own spiritual community if you find that what you're looking for doesn't yet exist, and your fellow students are likely spiritually engaged in similar ways.

Leah G., M1

Tip: The interfaith chaplain (the office is right next to Bernard Becker Medical Library) usually brings homemade treats on Wednesday afternoons, so make sure you stop by and say hi.



Housing

Whether you're looking for a studio close to nightlife, a big house with space to roam, or something in between, we can point you to the options that will help you feel right at home.

Section editors: Jackson Brown and Abby Kaplan

In the neighborhood — Forest Park

Forest Park borders the Medical Campus and is one of the largest urban parks in the country. The park has lots of trails for running and biking, kayak and SUP rentals, golf courses, soccer fields, ball diamonds, museums and the zoo. It's also the site of annual events like the Shakespeare Festival, music and film festivals, a vegan food fair, a hot air balloon race, St. Louis Earth Day and so much more!

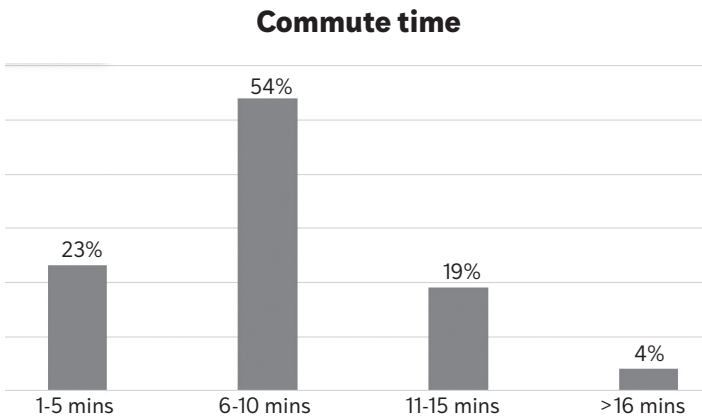
Explore Forest Park
 A favorite St. Louis spot for many medical students is also close to home for those of us who live by campus.



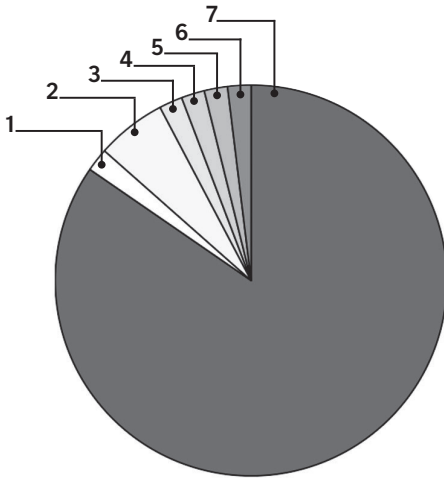
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Housing stats

We surveyed our classmates about their living situations, and we've got the highlights to help you out! These stats are based on responses from 52 classmates!

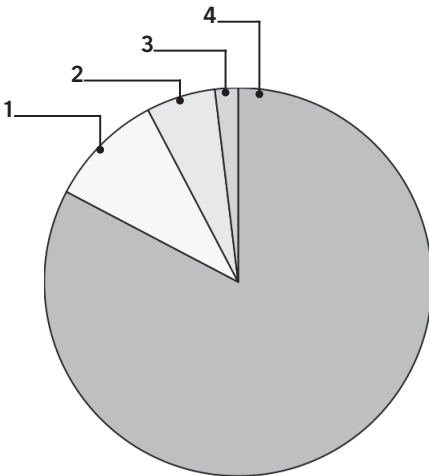


Neighborhoods



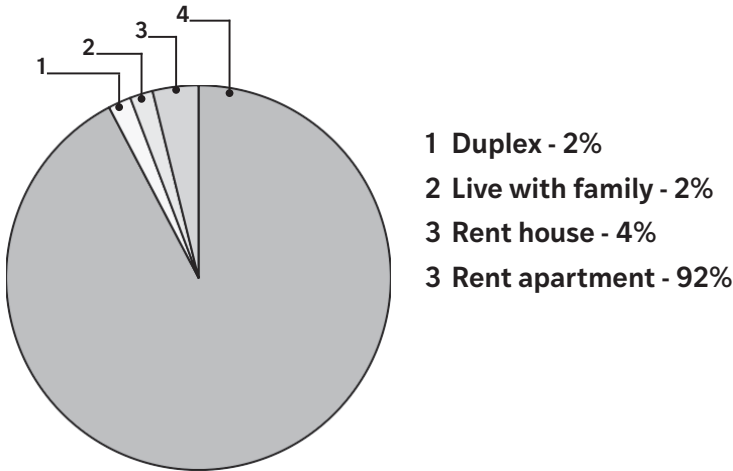
- 1 Skinker-DeBaliviere - 2%
- 2 The Grove - 6%
- 3 St. Louis County - 4%
- 4 University City - 2%
- 5 Shaw - 2%
- 6 Dogtown - 2%
- 7 Central West End - 84%

Method of commuting



- 1 Drive - 9%
- 2 Bike - 6%
- 3 Public transit - 2%
- 4 Walk - 83%

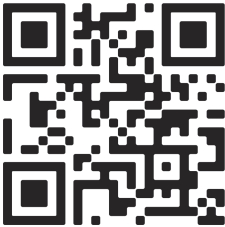
Housing type



Apartment complexes

There are so many places to live around campus! To get you started with your search, here are some of the apartments we live in.

Comparison guide
 Visit the Dis-O Guide website for an interactive apartment map and comparison guide!



diso.washu.edu/apartment-guide

The Core Apartment Residences

The Core is an incredibly convenient place to live! I've really come to appreciate living just a three-minute walk from class. It's nice to be able

to walk home to make lunch, wake up late sometimes and be close to events and things. The staff has also been really friendly! I will say that my apartment is quite small (I live in one of the studios), but it's enough space for me personally, and I think the pros outweigh the cons (utilities included, affordable rent, in-unit washer/dryer). Definitely see myself renewing for next year!

Verina G., M1

Residences at Forest Park

I really enjoy living here! I think it is a great deal considering the size of the apartments and the in-unit washer and dryer. It also has an outdoor area for dogs if you plan on bringing or getting a pet. It's roughly a 12- to 15-minute walk to the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center, depending on how fast you walk. It is also very helpful that Whole Foods and Shake Shack are right across the street. Management is new this year, but so far they have been very helpful and attentive. I think the space inside the apartment is great, and it was very clean/put together when we got it. Also, the windowsills are huge, which our cats love, so that is a bonus. Don't get scared if the pictures online make it look weird (they decorated the fake apartments horribly) — I definitely recommend living here!

Trent R., M1

The View at Forest Park Apartments

The View is a large, beautiful building right across from the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. Though relatively removed from campus since it is a 15- to 20-minute walk (or five-minute bike ride!!), the area is safe and the amenities (including a pool, pickleball court and game room) are truly worth the distance. Also, a clear separation from school to home is never a bad thing. The apartments are large with two-bed/two-bath and one-bed/one-bath options. The AC is a LIFESAVER in the summer. Though there is no in-unit laundry, the laundry room is kept clean, and I have never had to wait for a washer or dryer. People love coming over all of the time since the space is so lovely and we have a balcony, so you do not have to worry about feeling isolated so far away from campus. There are two garage facilities available at \$125/month. The staff is lovely, and saying "hi" to our doormen is one of the best parts of our day. The package room is very high-tech with a code assigned to you that opens individual lockers.

Deborah A., M1

The View is a great apartment complex to live in! There's a 24/7 doorman, and the amenities are genuinely impressive — a beautiful outdoor area, pickleball court, pool and gym, all of which are kept very clean. I live in a renovated two-bed/two-bath unit, and it's incredibly spacious, modern and

comfortable (I've never seen any bugs, etc!). The only downsides are that the bathrooms don't have exhaust fans and it's a bit farther from campus (about a 15- to 20-minute walk or five- to 10-minute bike ride). That said, I've always felt completely safe walking to and from campus. The bedrooms are a great size, and the balconies are a huge plus, especially in the summer. Many students live nearby in smaller complexes too, so it still feels connected and lively rather than isolated. I'd say the units are affordable and utilities aren't too pricey either — together, me and my roommate pay around \$80! Another plus is that maintenance is usually very responsive.

Shreya N., M1

Metropolitan Flats

Metropolitan Flats is a great place to live. I really like the proximity to the medical school campus, and ease of access to the campus link when the weather is really cold (you just need to cross the street). The walls of my apartment are pretty thick (I practice piano out loud) and well insulated. Though it has an underground parking garage, it doesn't have a pool. Another downside is that it is one of the more expensive apartment options, but you do really get what you pay for.

Eric W., M1

Montclair on the Park Apartments

I recommend living in Montclair on the Park! It is just under a 10-minute walk to campus and borders Forest Park, with great park views. The main pros include: decently priced (~\$2,000 for a two-bedroom), plenty of square footage, a super friendly front desk, a big communal rooftop, excellent proximity to campus, fairly modern appliances in the kitchen with a dishwasher but no garbage disposal. Cons include: NO in-unit laundry, the apartment gym is okay but not huge, radiator heat with little control over temperature, and window AC units. There have been complaints of cockroaches in the building, though I have not seen any. My main reasons for choosing Montclair was proximity to both school and Forest Park, decent rent prices, plenty of square footage and a gym.

Laura D., M1

Tribeca STL Apartments

I wanted to live alone in a one-bedroom apartment with in-unit laundry and access to a gym for a decent price, and I found out that the apartments in the Central West End that met all these requirements were a bit above my budget. However, I did not want to have to drive to school, so I decided to look into nearby, less popular areas. I eventually decided to go with the DeBaliviere Place neighborhood. I live in the Tribeca STL Apartments, but

I know there are several other places nearby. I love that there are so many WashU students living around and that I am able to take the train or bus to school every day (which is around 20 minutes door to door). Since we get a free MetroLink pass through WashU, I don't even have to pay anything. I am easily saving \$400-500/month in rent compared to what I would be paying in the Central West End. I have many friends in the Central West End who love living there, so if you wanna live there, by all means go ahead! However, if you can't find what you are looking for in your budget, definitely consider DeBaliviere!

Suzanne C., M1

Marlowe

I had to figure out housing fairly last minute and ended up signing a lease before ever stepping foot in St. Louis. While this was maybe not the ideal way to go about arranging a place to live, I was lucky and it turned out great. I currently live in a studio in Marlowe. My apartment kitchen and bathroom are great, there is so much storage, and the in-unit laundry is a life saver when I get caught up with med school responsibilities. There are also a lot of shared amenities for all residents, including a gym, pool, study spaces and even a grill area. I have taken advantage of some of the outdoor seating for studying, hanging out or just getting some much needed time in the sun. My only complaint is the slight lack of sunlight in my apartment, but if you're more strategic about choosing an apartment with some more sun, it shouldn't be too big of a problem. Overall, Marlowe is a great place to live, is very close to campus and offers great amenities.

Liesbeth V., M1

Del Coronado Apartments

I have really enjoyed living at Del Coronado so far. I have an updated one-bedroom apartment (which just means the kitchen, floors and bathroom have been redone recently) and have plenty of room! I was able to put my desk in my living area to have some separation of school from sleeping, and all my kitchen appliances are new! Everyone who works at Del Coronado is very nice and responsive, and I have never had to wait long for maintenance — I got something stuck in the washer and he was there within two minutes! Compared to some of the other one-bedrooms in larger apartment complexes in the Central West End, I think Del Coronado's rent is really fair. There is a gym within the apartment complex with treadmills, a weight rack and some other machines/fitness equipment. The only thing I was worried about was not having in-unit laundry, but Del Coronado has washers and dryers on every other floor, and the laundry room is just right down the hall from my apartment and I've never had any trouble finding open machines. It's only about a 10- to 15-minute walk to class (depending on if you make

the crossing light!) which is perfect. My favorite part about Del Coronado is it's about a block away from one of the main entrances into Forest Park, which is perfect if you love to run/walk/bike in the park like me. I plan on staying here next year too. I would highly recommend Del Coronado to anyone looking for somewhere to live!

Abby K., M1

The Euclid

The Euclid is in such a perfect location! It is less than a 10-minute walk away from campus, right across the street from Whole Foods and just a block away from Forest Park — what more could you ask for? There are studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units available in the building. One of the biggest selling points for me was the gym in the building; it makes it super convenient to get a workout in before class when I'm feeling brave. Some other amenities that come with the building are a coworking space, an outdoor balcony with a grill and freezers with a built-in icemaker (score!). You will also have central heat/AC, in-unit laundry, and there is a parking garage attached to the building. The only con I can think of is that, being right on Euclid, it can be noisy at night. This hasn't been an issue yet, but during night shifts, I will probably be investing in some earplugs. That being said, I love living in the Euclid and I will definitely be staying in my apartment next year!

Riley F., M1

West Pine Terrace Apartments

I live in a one-bedroom, 600 sq. ft apartment in West Pine Terrace; here's my completely honest review! If I had to give it a rating, it would be 6/10. The pros of living here are that it's pretty cheap for a one-bedroom (not just a studio; my rent is \$1150), it has gated parking and a parking garage, there is central air and heating, and management is pretty reliable and communicative. The downsides to it are that it's a pretty old building (there have been a few small things that I've had to deal with, e.g., a cabinet doorknob falling off, window doesn't fully close shut), management is pretty old school (you pay rent through a physical check, not by card or online portal), and there aren't any extra amenities (e.g. pool, gym, game room). If you're like I was, looking for a cheap and spacious place without any frills, West Pine Terrace is fine. Overall, I think you get what you pay for (you will likely have to deal with some issues if you live here), but it has all the essentials I've needed, and management has been good about communication, which alleviates most potential worries I might have.

Sam C., M1

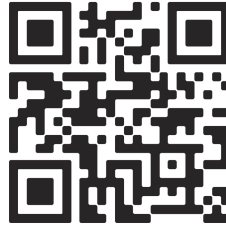
Aventura at Forest Park

I live in a one-bedroom in Aventura, and it has been great so far! It is technically in The Grove neighborhood, so you get a better bang for your buck, but it's still just a 10-minute walk away from class. The apartments are nice and modern, with fantastic AC/heating, in-unit laundry, a balcony and free gated parking. Maintenance has been great, responding to all of my requests in <24 hours. I also have no complaints with the management. The gym is pretty sparse, akin to a hotel gym, but I am <10 minutes from The Core gym so I just go there. It also has an outdoor pool, which is excellent in the warmer months! While it is super close to class, you are a bit farther from where most people live in the Central West End and a bit farther from the hospital section of the Medical Campus. None of this has been an issue for me, but if you don't have a car or really want to be as close as possible to everything, the Central West End may be a better fit. Overall, I have been very happy with my experience in Aventura!

Cormac N., M1

Virtual tours

Go online to watch our videos and get a feel for what rooms and floor plans may look like for you.



diso.washu.edu/apartment-tours

Rental prices

Current as of December 2025.

100 Above the Park

- Studio \$1900-2500
- 1 bed \$2400-4000
- 2 bed \$3000-5000

Aventura at Forest Park

- No studios
- 1 bed \$1600-1700
- 2 bed \$1800-2200

Citizen Park

- No studios
- 1 bed \$1700-2800
- 2 bed \$2600-4900

Del Coronado Apartments

- Studio \$800-1300
- 1 bed \$1300-1525
- 2 bed \$1600-2225

Marlowe

- Studio \$1800
- 1 bed \$1800-2400
- 2 bed \$3000-3600

Metropolitan Flats

- No studios
- 1 bed \$1700-2000
- 2 bed \$2300-2600

Montclair on the Park

- Studio \$1200
- 1 bed \$1300-1700
- 2 bed \$1650-2800

Parc Frontenac

- Studio \$1100-1300
- 1 bed \$1200-1400
- 2 bed \$2000-2600

President and Park Royal Apartments

- Studio \$1200-1350
- 1 bed \$1400-1600
- 2 bed \$2000-2800

Residences at Forest Park

- No studio
- 1 bed \$1600-2400
- 2 bed \$2250-2600

The Core

- Studio \$900-1300
- 1 bed \$1000-1400
- 2 bed \$1500-1900

The Euclid

- Studio
- 1 bed \$2000-2600
- 2 bed \$3000-3300

The Orion

- No studio
- 1 bed \$2000-2500
- 2 bed \$2500-3200

The View at Forest Park

- Studio \$1200-1600
- 1 bed \$1200-2000
- 2 bed \$1800-2400

Explore St. Louis County

There are many vibrant neighborhoods in St. Louis! One thing that might be confusing for people new to the area is that we have St. Louis City (where WashU Medicine, BJC and Forest Park are), and we have St. Louis County (where the undergraduate, business and law schools of WashU are). Forest Park and Skinker Blvd basically divide the city and the county.

I am here to tell you about neighborhoods in the county — places you might be less automatically familiar with as getting to these places usually requires a car ride.

University City (U City) is a community where lots of undergraduates live. The section of Delmar Blvd in U City, affectionately called the Delmar Loop, features amazing restaurants, global cuisines and United Provisions, an international grocery store. Folks' favorites include Tous Les Jours (a Korean bakery), Corner 17 (Chinese eatery) and Salt + Smoke (St. Louis barbecue). U City typically features low-rise apartments and houses that rent at cheaper rates than places in the Central West End. It takes about 10 minutes to get from U City to WashU Medicine.

Demun, Wydown and Forsyth are communities to the immediate south of WashU's Danforth (undergraduate) campus and are about a 15-minute car

ride away from WashU Medicine. These places feature quieter residences and low-rise apartment buildings. Demun is known for boutique stores, wine bars, classic American and Italian eateries, ice cream shops and more. I recommend Protzel's Delicatessen if you ever find yourself craving pastrami sandwiches.

Clayton, where I live, is the county seat for St. Louis County and is typically considered as a business district. Clayton (and surrounding Ladue/Richmond Heights) hosts many company headquarters and features high-rise apartment complexes. Shaw Park is an excellent hangout spot in Clayton and features exquisite fountains, a whimsical playground and pickleball and tennis courts. Sushi Ai (sushi, duh), Cafe Napoli (Italian), The Crossing (French haute cuisine) and Pastaria (gourmet pasta) are great restaurants to try. Clayton is about 15 minutes away from WashU Medicine.

Lastly — but certainly not least — how can I not mention Brentwood, where you can find Target, PetSmart, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, ULTA, Total Wine and much more all within literal minutes of one another? Brentwood also hosts The St. Louis Galleria, a large shopping mall with all the household brands (Nike, Apple Store, Crate & Barrel, etc.). Brentwood is about 20 minutes from WashU Medicine.

Anonymous

I live in the University City (U City) neighborhood, which is west of the med campus and directly north of the Danforth campus. This neighborhood is home to a portion of the Loop which is a shopping and restaurant area that is popular with undergrad students. Additionally, the neighborhood has a diverse array of housing types and vibes. We chose this neighborhood because it allowed us to get a slightly larger house with a little yard for my kids to run around in. We have loved living in an area with walkable residential streets and easy access to Forest Park, the Medical Campus and Costco (crucial).

Connor G., M1

Living arrangements

Getting housing with a dog

When I was looking for an apartment complex, I was focused on finding housing with amenities and a location that would help me take the best possible care of my dog, Apollo. Since I knew I would have limited time to let out Apollo during the day, I wanted to be close to the WashU Medicine campus. Furthermore, since Apollo needs exercise throughout the day, I wanted an apartment complex that had its own dog park. Metropolitan Flats, located just across the street from the WashU Medicine campus, fit all of these criteria and more. The leasing office was extremely welcoming

to both Apollo and me, and the spacious dog park, which is located in a dedicated courtyard, is perfect for exercising Apollo throughout the day. Metropolitan Flats is also conveniently located just minutes away from Forest Park, which is ideal for taking Apollo on walks. Ultimately, I think that Metropolitan Flats is a great place to live, and its amenities are unmatched if you are considering having a dog during medical school.

Taylor P., M1

Private landlord

Look beyond your traditional, large-building, student-housing adjacent living complexes in St. Louis and the Central West End! Zillow, apartments.com and reaching out to realtors or current students at WashU Medicine will help you greatly in finding other living arrangements, like renting from a private landlord in a single unit or a small building that they own or renting from other WashU Medicine students or faculty. You typically get more bang for your buck (size, renovated-ness and location-wise) and still get the most (or even more) important amenities that apartment complexes or larger houses offer, like AC, in-unit laundry, a parking spot, etc. Also, landlords oftentimes will cover some of the extra charges related to renting, like your water or trash bill! For me, I found a lovely apartment in the Central West End that I can officially say, a semester into school, feels like a real home. I know my neighbors, feel like I'm part of a neighborhood, and frequent the businesses that surround my apartment building —and in turn, love that they know I'm from right across the street! Take the chance to look at your next four to eight years in St. Louis as not just the time you spent at medical school but an opportunity to create and build a new home for yourself and/or your family! You will love it here.

Uswa K., M1

Living in a triplex

After a thorough housing search prior to moving to St. Louis, my girlfriend and I ultimately decided on a triplex-unit just outside of the Central West End. To clear up what I mean by triplex: looks like a single-family home on the outside, but is divided into three independent units on the inside. This was perfect for our situation, as we were looking to stay away from large apartment complexes and property managers but did not want to rent/buy an entire home for ourselves. Living in a triplex gives us the feel as if we have our own small home with a yard and a driveway, but we have neighbors just below and also a responsive landlord who is always there to assist with issues/repairs. We also found we were able to get a bit more space for our dollar by going with a triplex as opposed to an apartment unit of the same size.

Sonny S., M1

Renting a single family home

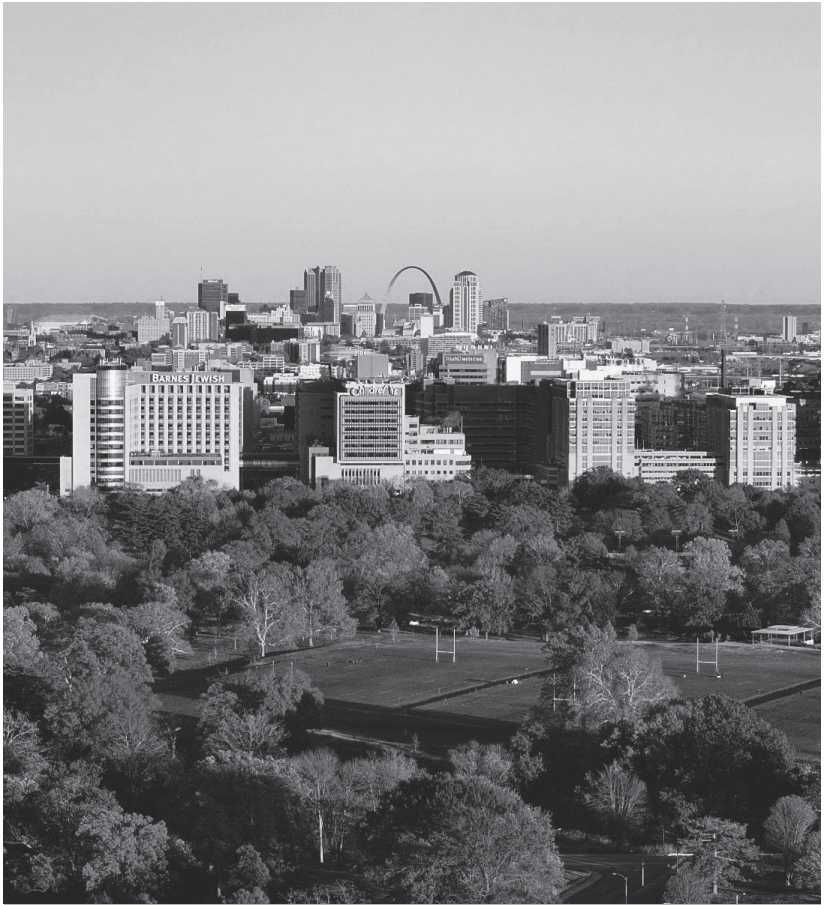
As someone who was moving to St. Louis with a wife and two young children, it was clear early on that we would not be living in the Central West End with most of my classmates. Our situation required a little more space for a lot less money. And honestly, my kids are so loud we were trying to avoid sharing walls with neighbors. We looked at a lot of wonderful neighborhoods in South City (Tower Grove, Shaw, North Hampton, Bevo Mill, ect.) but ultimately found the best fit for us in University City. If anyone is in a similar position or is just interested in getting a little further away from campus, St. Louis City and County have so many unique and affordable neighborhoods with diverse housing styles.

Connor G., M1

Owning a home

I know this isn't going to be the most applicable information for most of you joining us, but I lived in St. Louis going on 10 years when I got my acceptance to WashU Medicine. Being older, married and having a prior (albeit short) other career in research, as well as my wife starting a new job meant we found ourselves in a position where we could entertain the idea of buying a house instead of renting like we had been doing. St. Louis is one of the more affordable cities to buy a home in the U.S. and there are several great neighborhoods that are a short drive to the Medical Campus (I live further out and my commute is about a half an hour door-to-door during rush hour) or accessible by the MetroLink light rail. It's not a walk in Forest Park (the process and paperwork is enormous), but ultimately if you're in a similar spot that I was and you see yourself living in St. Louis for the foreseeable future (at least four years plus potentially residency if you decide to stay), then I would recommend at least looking into buying a home or apartment as mortgage payments typically cost less than monthly rent and allows you to build equity.

Guhan I., M1



Life in STL

Welcome to St. Louis! There is so much to explore, from amazing food, ways to stay active and everything in between. Whether you prefer a quiet visit to an art museum or dancing the night away at a concert, St. Louis has something for you!

Section editors: Aneesa Bhakta, Ashrit Challa and Taylor Parker

Attractions

Eckert's Farm

Eckert's Farm is a popular fall week-end spot just outside St. Louis, about 35 minutes from campus. After one of our tests, around 20 of us made the drive over. It was a relaxing way to decompress after an exam — there were vendor stands, live music and a brewery with cider flights. They also have fresh apple cider and donuts during the season. There's another farm less than five minutes away that we checked out afterward, where we took a tractor ride to a pumpkin patch, pet some kittens and ate more donuts.

Becky S., M1



The Missouri Botanical Garden is a wonderful place to rest and unwind.

Family-friendly activities

As a parent, one of my favorite things about STL is all the incredible (free) things to do with kids! Forest Park, which is right next to the Medical Campus, is an incredible resource for fun activities, nature and educational entertainment. Some of our regular spots are the Saint Louis Zoo, Saint Louis Science Center and the Nature Playscape. All free. All in the park. Outside of Forest Park, there are great playgrounds and green spaces sprinkled throughout the city that we like to visit.

Connor G., M1

Forest Park

Forest Park, located just across Kingshighway from the Medical Campus and Central West End, is one of the very best parts of living in St. Louis. Bigger than Central Park, Forest Park is filled with many free attractions including the Saint Louis Zoo (with new cheetah cubs), Saint Louis Art Museum (surrounded by the beautiful Art Hill, a great place to picnic/hammock and watch the sunset), Saint Louis Science Center, Missouri History Museum, tennis and pickleball courts, World's Fair Pavilion and more! There are tons of trails and bike paths throughout the park that are perfect for anyone looking to get some outdoors time and feel transported out of the city (or for the many who may pick up long distance running in M1...). It is so big that you'll feel like you're constantly discovering new corners of the park

and things to do in it, and it is the perfect place to see the seasons change in STL with the changing leaves, sledding down Art Hill, blooming flowers and more.

Ashton B., M1

**Forest Park
Running Tour**

We think the best way to experience Forest Park is on foot, with friends! Check out our running tour of our favorite stops in this amazing park.



diso.washu.edu/running-tour

The Missouri Botanical Garden

The Missouri Botanical Garden is a 10-minute drive from the Central West End (and a one-minute walk from my front porch) and one of the coolest gardens in the country. Its 79 acres have been around since 1859. It is a dreamy spread of gorgeous landscaping, peaceful ponds, rare plant species in multiple climate-controlled greenhouses and more. I don't want to take away all the surprises. The garden constantly hosts community events including live music, light displays and educational sessions. It is my go-to for when I have an out-of-town guest or a free day.

Kate M., M1

The Municipal Theater (Muny)

The Municipal Theatre (lovingly called the Muny) is a great summertime attraction for students on a budget. The upper balcony is completely free to attend. Other than big concerts, there are almost always seats available. To make things even better, they let you bring your own food and drinks, so you don't have to pay through the nose for concessions. Having a picnic while

waiting in line is a St. Louis tradition. Check out what's going on in 2026: muny.org

Jackson B., M1

The Saint Louis Art Museum

One of my favorite things about living in St. Louis is the plethora of free activities that are available, especially in Forest Park. My personal favorite is the Saint Louis Art Museum. With a huge array of collections, it truly has something for everyone (including a cafe in the basement if you really aren't into art). I love stopping in when I need a break after a test or just randomly while on a walk/run through the park. Art Hill might also be one of the best places to picnic in St. Louis, so I highly recommend.

Caroline C., M1



Class day trivia through the Saint Louis Zoo was memorable (the kangaroos were an MSTP favorite).

The Saint Louis Zoo

When I began telling people that I was moving to St. Louis, one thing that almost always came up was the zoo. I know you might be thinking to yourself, how is a zoo one of St. Louis's greatest attractions? I was definitely thinking that too. However, as someone who has proudly been to the zoo several times in the last few months, it is truly great! The zoo is free and can be accessed by car (free street parking around the zoo or paid lot parking) or on foot (if you are feeling like a 2-ish mile walk). Whether you spend two hours here visiting all of the exhibits or only a few minutes to say hello to

your favorite animal, the zoo is an amazing, fun and unique way to take a study break, get some time outside or hang out with some friends.

Liesbeth V., M1

The Saint Louis Zoo is a great place to go for fun year-round. It's ranked as one of the best zoos in the country and it's completely free to visit! There are so many zones with different animals to see including gorillas, penguins and elephants. There are also really cute baby animals like baby elephants, tigers and cheetahs. It is a beautiful zoo and I highly recommend visiting!

Samantha C., M1

The zoo is, and I'm not exaggerating, my absolute FAVORITE place in St. Louis. It's absolutely free to enter and they have a huge variety of exhibits, and they treat the animals like royalty while engaging in important conservation work. I go multiple times a year even though I've been in St. Louis forever at this point, and it never gets old. Keep an eye out for special events hosted at the zoo as well like Boo at the Zoo and Wild Lights. If you love animals or just want a change of scenery while you scroll through Anki cards on your phone, the zoo is the place to be.

Guhan I., M1

Drinks and nightlife

Cafes

Protagonist Cafe: a small cozy cafe offering classic coffees as well as unique specials that is a great place to study or relax off campus. Their pastries are also good and they serve wine by the glass! I have spent many an afternoon/evening using their wifi and homey, comfortable seating. The space is small so make sure to claim your spot! Also check out their sister cafe Antagonist for a change in vibe!



Joe's Café is an art gallery, sculpture garden and intimate live music venue all in one.

Tom G., M1

Oh boy where I do start. There are honestly so many cafes in St. Louis that it's hard to name a few. In fact, there's a decently strong-enough coffee culture here that the city organizes a cafe passport for the year, which is probably the best \$25 you can ever spend. At least for 2026, it offers you the chance to get BOGO drinks at ~30 different cafes around the city. Some of my favorite participating cafes are Goshen Coffee Roasters (which

has won a lot of awards for their superb coffees) and Coma Coffee (which has really unique seasonal flavors, like their winter special brown butter rosemary latte)! Some cafes also take it a step beyond by being more than just a cafe, like Maypop, which is also a greenhouse/nursery and a great place to get some plants for a new apartment!

Ashrit C., M1

Crawls, crawls, crawls

The CWE Cocktail Crawl is a ticketed afternoon event in Central West End where participants purchase a passport to walk between numerous venues, sampling 10+ specialty cocktails curated by local establishments.

The STL Halloween Bar Crawl is a multi-venue pub crawl, usually in the Soulard or Downtown areas, where people wear costumes and get drink specials, no-cover access and free drinks at multiple participating bars.

Kyler S., M1

Cocktails and wine bars

A student's budget is what it is. But, should the mood strike for libations sans "Long Island" in its namesake, St. Louis has a few amenable options for stirring tipples and intrepid tinctures.

In order of proximity from campus, Lazy Tiger in the Central West End is dangerously close, modern neo-tiki inflected, with photogenic drinks and a menu of small bites that shares a kitchen with their sister restaurant next door. The drinks are fun and playful and perfect for cozying up or spoiling yourself.

Good Company in The Grove, though, is the heavy hitter. Run by an alum of one of NYC's most storied cocktail bars, they make their own custom ice in-house, full kitchen, and a cocktail menu comprised of equal parts stalwart classics, modern marvels and custom creations. Nearby to a dozen other bars and bits of nightlife, with specialty events and the like, they're on a short list of places doing it right (rumor has it they're opening a new spot in the Central West End).

Lastly, Planter's House in Lafayette Square is the hometown hero. The destination bar that put St. Louis cocktails on the map and run by a longtime native who's been slinging proper potables for 20+ years long before it was cool. A mix of cocktail den and neighborhood bar, the rare beast in which you can't find a bad drink.

If you find yourself charmed by a speakeasy moment, honorable mention goes to Prohibition and None of the Above.

Brian H., M1

St. Louis is full of well-stocked and vibey wine bars! You won't miss your old haunt moving to this city. Some of our class favorites include BLK MTN, which sources oysters on the first of the month, delivers a religious-

like experience during their Pasta Tuesdays and offers free wine-tastings every Monday! They also have a back patio that is perfect in the evenings and toasty in the winter, warmed by their own firepit. Another favorite is Scarlett's! They have amazing pizza (many different styles) and a beautiful indoor space that feels like you're in a different country. Lastly, Sasha's Wine Bar has locations in both Shaw and in Clayton and has reminded me of restaurants in Atlanta, San Francisco and New York. All of these spots offer amazing drinks and food offerings for non-alcoholic drinkers as well and some are family-friendly in the evenings too!

Anonymous

St. Louis offers a vibrant nightlife and brewery scene with something for everyone. The Central West End offers several popular cocktail and wine bars, including Scarlett's and Pagan Wine Bar. About a 15-minute walk from campus, The Grove is home to a variety of bars and breweries, such as Urban Chestnut Brewing Company, Platypus and Handlebar. Those who love craft beer and late-night sandwiches will find few spots better than the Gramophone, while those who want to dance can head to Rehab for affordable drinks and an electric dance floor.

For the more adventurous, the famous bar district Souldard is just a short drive from the Central West End. Popular stops include Molly's and McGurk's, and during the summer, Broadway Oyster Bar offers live music and Cajun cuisine for a fun and lively experience.

Anonymous



The Balloon Glow is a tradition at Forest Park where dozens of hot air balloons light up the night. Naturally, WashU had to represent!

Festivals and events

Mardi Gras

St. Louis hosts the second-largest Mardi Gras celebration in the nation, centering on a massive, weekend-long street festival in the historic Soulard neighborhood. The highlight is the Grand Parade, where the area transforms into a giant open-air party filled with beads, costumes and crowds moving between street tents and local bars. I went last year and actually attended a John Summit concert hosted in a tent right along the parade route, which was a highlight of the spring. It is definitely a full-day excursion that starts early, so be prepared for high energy and a long, memorable Saturday.

Kyler S., M1

Balloon Glow

The Balloon Glow/Great Forest Park Balloon Race is one of the neatest events I've been to since moving to St. Louis! The Great Forest Park Balloon Race is a competition in which one hot air balloon takes off from one location in Forest Park, lands in another location in Forest Park, and places a target down where they land. Then the other hot air balloons take off in waves and attempt to get to the target and drop their birdseed/bean bag as close to the target as possible! Several of the taller buildings in the area host watch parties from their roofs! Balloon Glow is even cooler (at least in my opinion). The night before the race, all the balloons set up across a big field in Forest Park. They inflate, and since it's night, they all glow! It's beautiful! After the balloons are all set up, they let the general public walk out amongst all the hot air balloons and take pictures. A lot of prominent St. Louis businesses have balloons that you can visit, including the St. Louis Aquarium, St. Louis Children's Hospital, and even WashU!

Aneesa B., M1

Garden Glow

Garden Glow is a fantastic event hosted for the holiday season by the Missouri Botanical Garden, featuring massive displays of festive lights, decorations as well as seasonal snacks and beverages. The entire botanical garden is transformed into a winter wonderland! Our social chairs coordinated a class-wide outing to Garden Glow this year, and even with the cold temperatures, I could not have imagined a more heartwarming holiday event!

Taylor P., M1

The St. Louis Shakespeare Festival

The St. Louis Shakespeare Festival is a free summer tradition that takes place in the open-air setting of the Shakespeare Glen in Forest Park. For several weeks in late spring and early summer, the professional festival stages a full-scale, rotating production of a Shakespeare play, drawing large crowds who bring blankets, lawn chairs and elaborate picnics to enjoy high-quality theatre.

Kyler S., M1

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra on Art Hill

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra on Art Hill is a spectacular free concert held annually in the late summer or early fall, where the full symphony performs their season-opening program on a stage at the base of Art Hill in Forest Park, facing the Saint Louis Art Museum. People gather on the lawn to hear world-class classical and popular music, often including a patriotic salute and excerpts from major works, which culminates in a fireworks display over the Grand Basin.

Kyler S., M1

... And more!

One of my favorite things about St. Louis is that it's a smaller city but never feels boring. The city and its neighborhoods are always coming up with new ways to turn a random day into a new or exciting experience! From wintertime cookie crawls in the Delmar Loop to apple butter festivals just a short drive south, St. Louis City and County are committed to supplementing the larger festivals and events they're known for with more casual opportunities to chance upon a cool activity or new hobby.

Ashrit C., M1

Fitness and outdoor activities

The Core (818) Gym

The Core gym is your standard apartment gym. It's free and right on campus, which allows for easy access and less excuses to skip the gym. It has the basic equipment you would need for a good workout — squat/bench racks, dumbbells, the standard cardio machines (elliptical, treadmill, bike) and some lifting machines. In addition to the Core gym, you also get access to the undergraduate gym, which is larger and has more equipment. Overall, the Core gym will give you an adequate workout and a ton of convenience.

Amanda Z., M1

Climbing

The climbing scene is alive and well in St. Louis, with a number of great climbing gyms all within a 30-minute radius. The two major gyms are Climb So iLL and Upper Limits, each with two locations in the immediate area (four gyms total). WashU Medicine students can join the ClimbRx student group for a discounted membership to Climb So iLL, giving you access to a large bouldering area, 50-foot walls for top rope and lead climbing, a gym with hangboards, free weights and moonboard/tension board. Student memberships come with free gear rental, guest passes and also include free yoga and skills classes. Memberships are also not required to climb, with other options including punch passes and daily climbing passes. WashU Medicine students can get a discount when they show their ID, so bring your friends and come see what climbing has to offer!

Richard F., M1



Johnson's Shut-Ins is the perfect spot to connect with nature. Come hike — or take a swim with us next time!

Hiking, biking and jogging

Growing up in the Rocky Mountains, I was nervous about not having things to do outside when I came to St. Louis. There have been a surprising number of ways to get out and enjoy the sunshine. When I'm short on time, I can go for a quick jog around Forest Park. On weekends, I enjoy biking on the Katy Trail (it goes all the way across Missouri, but I only do a small part). There

are also a few hikes west of St. Louis if that's what you like to do. If you're looking for more adventure on a long weekend, you can go backpacking along the Ozark Trail or mountain biking at Castlewood Park. There's plenty to do here in St. Louis!

Jackson B., M1

Hiking

I've lived in several states across the country, and I've learned that Missouri's access to wilderness and real hiking might look a little different than what you're used to, but it still has a lot to offer. What I've come to really appreciate is the low population density in the southern half of the state near the Mark Twain National Forest and the Ozarks. Both areas offer beautiful rolling hills, exposed granite outcrops, lovely pine woods and, in general, the Ozark Plateau is just a gorgeous region. If you're looking for good hiking and outdoor time, take advantage of those nearby spaces, such as southern Illinois' Garden of the Gods, and learn to appreciate the gentle, lovely woods we have access to, even if it's not the dramatic wilderness you might try to prioritize (like me). These places aren't as busy, you typically don't need permits and the Ozark Trail itself is great for long-distance backpacking. Plus, with our midwestern location, you're sometimes just a quick, cheap flight away from places like Denver (often under \$100 round trip if you plan ahead), which opens up access to really great hiking for a weekend. But truly, Missouri has its own charm with lovely forests, rolling hills and incredible waterways that are worth exploring if you're into canoe camping.

Madison D., M1

Pilates

PLNK is a group fitness studio in the Central West End neighborhood that offers Lagree Method workouts — strength training on a reformer machine. I did my first class right before orientation and immediately loved it! It is now part of my daily routine and what started as just a workout quickly turned into an amazing community. From getting to know the instructors, taking classes with friends, and even organizing a private class for the M1s, PLNK has become a huge part of my life in St. Louis. The city has something for everyone and if you love fitness classes, strength training or finding a welcoming community, you'll love PLNK too. The studio is only a 10-minute walk from campus, making it easy to get a workout in after class, and they offer a great student discount on their memberships as well.

Isra S., M1

Dance classes

St. Louis Dance Theater offers classes in a variety of dance styles which can be a fun way to continue a past interest in dance or to try something new! I enjoy their Saturday ballet classes which they offer in beginner or advanced levels. Even better, they have great student discounts, so each class is less than \$10. After class, I recommend stopping by High Low, my favorite coffee shop that is located right next door. There are also other dance studios in the area that I have heard good things about, so you will not have any trouble finding a way to be involved in the St. Louis dance community!

Nicole J., M1

Badminton

If you're into badminton (or want to get into it), St. Louis has some solid options! There's Olin gym right on the Medical Campus where you can play, but I personally prefer the Gary M. Summers Recreation Center on the undergrad campus because it has a much more active badminton community. As WashU Medicine students, we get free access to Summers (you just need to bring your own shuttles and you're good to go). It's honestly a great way to decompress and meet people outside the med school bubble. If you're looking for something more competitive or structured, there are also paid clubs around like the Missouri Badminton Club where I play (it's in Chesterfield, about a 20-minute drive). Either way, there's definitely a spot for you to play here!

Javraj S., M1

Art and music

Being a DJ

I had the chance to DJ for a couple of informal parties with the class which has been really fun. I was excited to see how many people in our class were down to host (respectful) parties and just hang out and have fun. I'm still gonna try to get more people on the EDM train, I need more fellow bassheads to headbang with. For anyone reading this that wants to get litty, me and my DJ controller are alwaaaaays ready to go.

Sam C., M1



The Saint Louis Art Museum is free to enter and offers a peaceful escape to engage with creativity right in the city.

Craft Alliance

Craft Alliance is super close to campus. I take a ceramics class there every week but they also have fiber arts, wood shop, metal, glass and paper arts. It's not exactly cheap, but it's the cheapest private studio I've seen by far. Especially if you become a member, after you've taken two classes, you can get studio time for super cheap. If you're not into making stuff, they also have student sales and you can buy really cheap handmade crafts!

Iris L., M1

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra is a must-see! Located at the newly refurbished Powell Hall, it sits in the heart of the St. Louis arts district. This season, they've invited incredible soloists like Emmanuel Ax and Hilary Hahn, and they even do an annual performance on Art Hill in Forest Park! They're definitely worth the visit.

Vivia L., M1



Classmates grabbing a much needed bite to eat in the Central West End. Save me a plate next time, guys!

Food

The Hill

Go to the Hill. Any restaurant. Any bakery. Incredible Italian food. It is just a 10-minute drive from the Medical Campus, and I have only had amazing experiences dining in this neighborhood. I have also only heard fantastic things. I went to Dominic's on the Hill with my family when I moved in, and

the service, portions and experience were incredible. I had some of the best pasta of my life, and it was reasonably priced for the portion. What more could a girl want? If you want delivery, Mama's on the Hill via Uber Eats is my most recent obsession, and it is also pasta perfection. In short, if you want great food at a great price, I think the Hill is a must-try hub of culinary gems.

Taylor P., M1

Toasted ravioli

As a St. Louis native, I'd like to introduce you to toasted ravioli which will become your new favorite food and are found only in this city. A one-bite square, these delicacies are best enjoyed when dipped in marinara sauce. It's a fried ravioli outside filled with ground beef. Dietary restrictions? Worry not. Cheese ravioli is also commonly available. A dusting of parmesan on top, and you'd be surprised how many you can eat. It's a perfect app to share with friends or to go with a larger meal. It's also a cultural experience: any restaurant in town has their variation of it, so always keep an eye out on the menu. Beware that some places are better than others. I can recommend Syberg's, McGurk's or your local Schnuck's grocery store, and when you're ordering, just ask for the "T-ravs" to sound like a local.

Sam H., M1

BBQ and Persian

There are so many great restaurants in St. Louis, but I have come to especially love Pappy's Smokehouse. The food is incredibly tasty and the price is relatively affordable. The ribs at Pappy's is one of the best foods I have ever tasted and their wide selection of sauces elevates the food. My friends and I love it so much that we have made it a tradition to go there after every exam. Another favourite spot of mine is Ehsani's Kabob. Their food reminds me of home, and many of my friends who had not tried Persian food before loved it as well.

Farbod K., M1

Chinese

Having spent most of my life in big cities with large Chinese populations, I was initially wary about the fact that St. Louis doesn't have a Chinatown. However, I was pleasantly surprised by the many tasty Chinese food spots near University City (a short 15-min drive from the medical school campus). Cate Zone (Northern Chinese cuisine) and Movoc (dry hot pot) are my personal favorite places on the Loop and the boba from Cube Tea always reminds me of home. Corner 17 is a favorite among our class as well. From soup dumplings to spicy Szechuan dishes, you will not be disappointed by the Chinese food scene in St. Louis.

Evon W., M1

If you're like me and crave Chinese food constantly, Delmar Boulevard has an amazing Asian food scene. My absolute favorite spot is Movoc. It's a quick hotpot/stir-fry place that I honestly can't get enough of. The prices are super reasonable, and it's perfect whether you're going solo or grabbing dinner with friends. I'm not exaggerating when I say I go there at least twice a week. If you love Asian food in general, you'll find plenty of great options on Delmar, but Movoc is definitely my go-to.

Javraj S., M1

Shopping

International grocery stores

Unfortunately (because I must keep it real with you guys) St. Louis (the city) is not the prime location of international grocery stores. But fear not!! We have the lovely suburbs of St. Louis County that have everything you need! I love to cook Indian food (as is my heritage) so normally once a month I trek out to Manchester to get my Indian groceries! My favorite Indian grocery store is Tirupati Farmers Market in Manchester, and while I'm there, I always swing by Pan Asia Market which is the holy grail of all international food stores but especially Asian groceries! Manchester (containing the crown jewels of STL international food stores in my opinion) is 30 minutes away, and there's a Costco right by these stores too!! When I'm not willing to trek that far out, I head over to Jay International Food Co, a fun 15-minutes away in the cute area of Tower Grove South! If you are needing things quickly, United Provisions by the undergrad campus is an option too (just a tiny bit pricey)! I am your point person for Desi food stuff here but St. Louis has no shortage of international goods that are a short drive away!

Sprihaa K., M1

City Greens Market

Food on a med student budget and schedule can be difficult, but there are resources to help. City Greens Market is a nonprofit food co-op based in The Grove neighborhood just one mile away from campus. Shopping at CGM gets you fresher ingredients, helps save money, supports local businesses/ food system resilience and reduces environmental waste. Memberships at CGM allow shoppers to purchase food at-cost, and soon WashU Medicine will be partnering to offer 100 subsidized memberships for students who have need and interest. Memberships are also sliding scale — as low as \$25 a year, based on household income. Recognizing the transportation barriers many in the community face, they are also piloting a three-mile radius delivery service for members. If any of this interests you, or you just want to explore St. Louis, I highly recommend visiting the store — especially for their

weekly Free Soup Fridays! More information, including what you can buy at the store, can be found at stlcitygreens.org.

Andrew L. M2

Farmers' markets

I love my Saturday morning outings to the Tower Grove Farmers' Market. There are local farms that come and sell all types of fresh produce and meats. They also have vendors that serve different cuisines. It is a great way to start the weekend in the community, support local businesses and fuel up for the week with fresh food.

Olivia L., M1

Shopping malls

St. Louis is home to multiple shopping malls, with different stores and price points to ensure you will find what you need. The Saint Louis Galleria likely matches what you imagine when I say shopping mall, with staple stores like Macy's and Dillard's. If you are looking for a great sale or a new outfit, there is probably something at Galleria for you. On the other hand, if you are looking for items for your birthday wish list, Plaza Frontenac may strike your fancy. With stores like Tecovas, Neiman Marcus, Saks Fifth Avenue, Williams-Sonoma and Pottery Barn, it is a great place to go looking for gifts, whether for yourself or someone else. No matter what you are looking for, the shopping malls in St. Louis will likely fit the bill, and while you shop, make sure to try Bissinger's chocolates, which are available at both malls!

Taylor P., M1



St. Louis Metro Transit helps us get to campus and around the city with ease.

Transportation

Having a car

I have personally found it really helpful to have a car in St. Louis. I'm definitely someone who doesn't love having to rely on other people for transportation/rides, so if you are also like that, having a car is a big help for simple things like grocery shopping and other errands. That said, I have several classmates who are getting along perfectly fine without a car, but if you value the independence of having your own transportation, St. Louis is definitely easier to get around with a car compared to other methods.

Verina G., M1

Transportation options

STL is definitely a car city, but transportation to and from the Medical Campus is actually really easy if you live in some of the adjacent neighborhoods. The MetroLink has frequent trains that stop right in the heart of the med school, about a two-minute walk from where most lectures are held, so if you live near a Metro stop definitely take advantage of it (it's free for medical students!). If you're like me and live farther out though, don't fret. St. Louis is super drivable. Traffic here is pretty much non-existent, especially if you're coming from a big city, and it'll only take a couple days to weeks for you to figure out what morning routine and route to campus works best for you.

Guhan I., M1

Biking

I find biking to be a great way to get around St. Louis. I bike to school which shortens my commute to about three minutes, and many neighborhoods (Clayton, U City, Dogtown, Skinker-Debaliviere, Central West End, The Grove and Shaw) are all within a bikeable radius from campus. It's worth avoiding the larger roads for safety, and crossing through Forest Park is a great way to be on pedestrian/biker-only pathways. For more pure recreation, we have the Katy Trail, a 200-mile gravel path and Babler State Park just 30 minutes away.

Leah G., M1

Commuting/parking on campus

If you plan on commuting, there are several parking options on and around campus. The easiest option is to park at the Clayton Garage, which is a short walk from Farrell Learning and Teaching Center and the Bernard Becker Medical Library. It costs \$90 per month to park at the garage, but for medical students they will charge the yearly amount to your student account. The Clayton Garage does allow you to park there for free after 2 p.m. on weekdays and all day on weekends. Some free parking options include street parking in unmetered areas of the Central West End and surrounding areas, which would typically require a 10- to 15-minute walk to campus. While commuting is definitely feasible, it can be inconvenient and eat up a lot of time, which is a precious resource for medical students. I'm living at home to save money, so for me commuting is the most cost-effective option, but it depends on your individual situation.

Hannah M., M1

Road tripping

I know it's not the same, but seeing as I'm from the Midwest, I often drive to and from home for longer breaks/for the weekend when I'm missing home or my family. From a very logistical standpoint, the highways that connect St. Louis to a lot of other cities are very straightforward and easy to navigate. From an enjoyment perspective, there are also a lot of lovely small towns to stop by or eat a meal in on the way to your final destination, and there are a fair number of larger cities that are easily road-trippable if you put your mind to it. Not only do we have Chicago just north of us, we also have Nashville, Kansas City, Indianapolis and Louisville. Definitely not the largest cities out there, but also large enough to have a lot of culture and fun things to do!

Ashrit C., M1

Flying in and out of St. Louis

St. Louis is served by St. Louis Lambert International Airport, which is about a 25-minute drive northwest of the WashU Med campus, and also directly accessible via the MetroLink light rail stop on campus. The airport hosts flights from most major airlines with the largest carrier being Southwest. It is not nearly as large as places like JFK, O'Hare, DFW, etc., but I have never had issues finding good options for travelling back and forth to the East Coast. I have actually had only good experiences so far with relatively short lines and no major delays.

Connor G., M1

St. Louis mythbusting

Inside St. Louis

St. Louis often gets reduced to headlines, but that's not what daily life here feels like. What stands out are the people. St. Louisans are proud, funny and genuinely welcoming, with a scrappy and spunky spirit that shows up in neighborhood events, local nonprofits and how quickly strangers become friends. It's a city with real challenges and real heart, and you'll find a lot to love like incredible food, free world-class museums, big parks, great music and communities that show up for each other. It is truly remarkable how quickly it will feel like home.

Madison D., M1

St. Louis can seem less appealing to those coming from big urban cities with vibrant nightlife and food scenes, and these students tend to have a harder time adjusting to the city. I think an open perspective is vital to enjoying living in STL: if you come in expecting to hate it, you will never seek out new places, events or opportunities and confirm your dislike of the city. There are so many fun and community-based activities to be found, and the school and med student government does a great job of sharing monthly city-wide activities with the class. And this is a great place to be a med student! Parking and housing are cheaper, good cocktails and food aren't too pricey, you can get literally anywhere in STL in about a 20-minute drive maximum. I think it is important going into med school to figure out what places in a city bring you the most joy and relief from school stress and seek them out early on to find those treasured third places. There is a lot to love about St. Louis if you have an open mind!

Laura D., M1

When I was applying to medical school, living in the Northeast, I wanted to move to the city — New York City. I'm sure many of you know the feeling. But then I committed to WashU Medicine. The school delivered on my top

priorities — namely academics and community. Still, to be frank, at the time I was unshakably apathetic about moving to St. Louis. Now, three months in, here's my update for those chasing the New Yorks, LAs and Miamis of the world while considering WashU Medicine: don't count out St. Louis. The city might surprise you. It certainly did for me.

For starters, each of St. Louis's neighborhoods has its own flavor. The Central West End, where WashU Medicine is located, is calm and residential, with a handful of reliably good upscale bars. Not far away is The Hill — St. Louis's "Little Italy" — where the food does not disappoint. On the east side of town, Soulard is a quaint neighborhood that's great for weekend walks and home to a solid weekly farmers' market and one of the largest Mardi Gras celebrations in the country. Then there's the Arts District, with Jazz St. Louis, the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, and the Fox Theatre all packed into a few blocks. Driving through the city, I'm also consistently surprised by the number of architectural gems scattered throughout.

Nightlife, too, has exceeded expectations. You've got your standard pop-leaning clubs, but for someone like me — into house and techno — there's a surprisingly consistent stream of sets if you know where to look (I'd start with Tschüss). It isn't New York's endlessness, but the nights feel local, intentional and — ultimately — energizing. That's my two cents. Ultimately, if you want to know whether St. Louis is a good fit for you, come by and explore. Personally, I feel right at home.

Sahil M., M1



Advice

Medical school can be overwhelming. Here, our wonderful peers and WashU Medicine faculty share some words of wisdom on how to ease the adjustment to medical school, how to make the most of your time and how to always keep the bigger picture in mind.

Section editors: Cynthia Dong and Richard Fang

Advice

From Brian Edelson, MD, PhD

*Associate Professor, Pathology & Immunology,
Phase 1 Module 2 Co-Leader “Defense and
Response to Injury”*



Brian Edelson, MD, PhD

Medical school is an exciting time and can be all-encompassing. But you need a break. I suggest finding something else that really takes your mind away from it. It should be something you can do regularly without too much planning. Ideally the “something else” gives you real pleasure. When you are doing the “something else” you need to let yourself be fully present to enjoy the activity. This can be harder than it sounds. For me, the things that work are swimming and ice skating. I’m not too skilled at either one, but every time I swim or skate, I always take a moment to reflect on how happy I feel getting to do something I love. I never regret the time I have spent on these activities when I get back to work.

From Colleen Wallace, MD

*Professor of Pediatrics, Assistant Dean for Student
Affairs, Thread Leader for Professional Identity
Formation, Co-Director of Phase 1 Module 1*



Colleen Wallace, MD

Being a physician is an incredible and humbling experience. You will be invited into the most intimate moments of life with people you may have never met, but whom you will never forget, and who will certainly never forget you. You will become an integral part of their life stories, forever entwined in their most life-changing moments. It’s quite a privilege, and it comes with responsibility that can seem overwhelming at times. With that in mind, my two biggest pieces of advice as you embark on this journey are to invest in relationships and to take care of yourself.

Relationships are essential to the practice of medicine. The relationships you develop with patients, peers, faculty and other colleagues will impact the care you are able to provide. These relationships — along with those in your personal life — will also help keep you balanced and bring meaning to your work. In every interaction, pause to think about what biases you may have and how you can mitigate their impact, what barriers to care may exist and how you can help overcome them, and above all — remember the person inside each patient, caretaker and colleague. When we’re tired or stressed, it’s easy to forget that they all have their own stories, but one of

the most important things we can do as a physician is to ensure that people feel heard and cared for. Remember the wise words of St. Louisan Maya Angelou: “People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

In addition to investing in relationships, take care of yourself in other ways — physically, emotionally and spiritually. There’s a reason they tell you on airplanes to put your own oxygen mask on before helping others; if you aren’t taking care of yourself, you won’t be able to take care of anyone else. So be yourself and make time for what matters to you, whatever that may be. Give yourself grace when things are hard, and ask for help when you need it. There are so many people at WashU Medicine who truly care about you as a person and want to support you however we can. Remember what motivated you to attend medical school, and keep your eye on your long-term goals. As you experience different specialties and career paths, reflect on what brings you joy, what energizes you, what it is that makes you excited to get out of bed in the morning — because a career becomes a calling if it’s your heart’s work.

Finally, remember that nobody knows everything; being a physician means committing to lifelong learning. So never stop learning — about science, medicine, cutting edge technologies ... about life, death, joy, grief, hope ... about what it means to be human and to share the human experience with others. I look forward to accompanying you on this exhilarating journey.

From Erika Crouch, MD, PhD

Professor of Pathology and Immunology, Vice Chair for Education, Phase 1 Module 2 Course Leader, Pathology Thread Leader

Welcome, class!

It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to connect with you. I hope you are as excited about getting started as we are to begin another year.

Other contributors to this section have shared many valuable insights and lessons learned. I agree with it all but want to share a few things that have shaped my own path and academic priorities. I was a Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) student and have always been excited by science, and particularly biology. For me, medical school was transformative. I had the opportunity to take deep, and often independent, dives into human biology, the mechanisms of disease and investigation. I loved it, and it was these experiences that led me first to pathology and independent research, eventually to laboratory management, and increasingly to medical education.

Regardless of your current goals, it is important to find and follow



Erika Crouch, MD, PhD

your passions, and when special opportunities present themselves, to also explore new ones and evolve. Nearly every physician will confide that medical school provided the best opportunities to do that exploration. It is an unfortunate reality that you will probably never find a better time. Demands of work and life will inevitably pull you in many directions. The broader the foundation you build today and the more learning skills you master, the easier it will be to succeed in your career, whether as a physician, scientist, educator and/or advocate.

As faculty, we spend more time than you can imagine trying to create a curriculum that will prepare you for your future careers in medicine. Although it is important to achieve the stated educational objectives, it is just the beginning. There is just too much out there and so many new and important things to learn. Plan to take full advantage of the unique opportunities that Gateway Curriculum will bring to you.

If you would like some assistance, just seek us out. We are always here for you.

Happy learning, happy exploring.

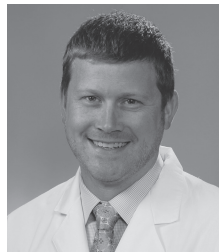
From Jonathan Mullin, MD

Course Director, Clinical Skills

The “reminiscence bump” is a psychological phenomenon where older adults preferentially remember autobiographical information from adolescence and early adulthood. Researchers think this is because these memories contribute most to one’s sense of self. You are now (most likely) at an age that you’ll remember for the rest of your life. Most physicians (this one included) would tell you that their profession is a part of their identity. And your process of becoming a physician starts now. Like it or not, these are the times of your life you’ll look back on often.

That said, my advice is that medical school probably matters less than you think it does. “Being a doctor” will only be a part of your identity. Don’t let yourself believe that your success is solely based on what and how you do in school for the next four-plus years. Don’t forget to focus on life outside of the classrooms, hospitals, clinics and studying, so that you can have experiences that you’ll want to remember.

Think for a minute about all it took for you to be here starting medical school at WashU Medicine: where you came from, the people supporting you, your hard work and commitment to others, sweating the MCAT, capitalizing on what makes you you, crying in organic chemistry lab because you discarded the solution and not the precipitate (don’t pretend that was just me). Each of your classmates had an equally as interesting journey to medical school. The same is true of all your instructors. Even more so, your



Jonathan Mullin, MD

patients all live interesting lives and are a part of amazing communities. One awesome privilege you'll have as a medical student is meeting and developing relationships with people that you wouldn't have otherwise. Learn from them all. Let them pull you outside of your comfort zone. Be curious. Share yourself with others. The work of medicine will cause you to grow as a person. Let your experiences outside of medicine do the same. Those two things aren't mutually exclusive. Have fun. The future of your memories depends on it.

From Timothy T. Yau, MD

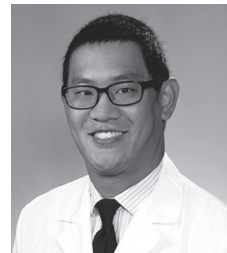
Course Director, Clinical Skills

Welcome to WashU Med! My name is Tim Yau, and I am one of your clinical skills directors for the Gateway Curriculum. Our team is here to teach you all the “non-science” stuff that is necessary to becoming a great physician.

The qualities that will make each of you outstanding doctors is so much more than test scores, which all of you already are capable of. We'll teach you all the things you expect — how to talk with and examine patients, how to formulate diagnoses, how to interpret labs and tests. But you will also learn how to see your patients as individuals, how to involve them in patient-centered decisions, and how to navigate the complicated societal and structural barriers to their health. The amount of information you will learn in the next four years is both staggering and intimidating. Your learning will not end with medical school, and we hope to light a fire for you to never stop learning!

During medical school you will have opportunities over the next four years to do things that you may never again do in your lifetime. I am a kidney specialist, but I still delivered plenty of babies as a third-year medical student! Learn for the sake of learning (rather than just to pass the test) and you will find the pursuit of knowledge more worthwhile, more meaningful and longer lasting. Your individual path to fulfill your potential to be a great doctor will be decided by you. Faculty like myself are your mentors, role models, guides and colleagues in this journey.

Lastly, we hope you are eager to learn, but also want you to ENJOY your medical school experience. Some of the strongest bonds are forged here, and you will need support from family, old friends and the new friends you will make. Get outside, eat some good food and have a drink to relax. Take time to enjoy things that make you happy, whatever they are! This advice sounds generic, but I live by my own words: playing music kept me happy during medical school, and even now at the age of 40+ I enjoy competitive video gaming. In 2018, we even started the official WashU Medicine Gaming



Timothy T. Yau, MD

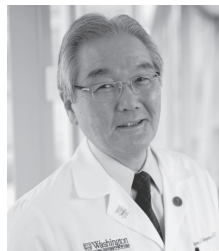
Club! I have instruments and consoles in my office, and you're welcome to stop by for a game or to play a tune!

From Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD

Director, Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

It's exciting to be a first-year medical student! You will learn how the human body works in detail, from head to toe, from gross anatomy to subatomic structures. However, some of the current concepts and "facts" you will learn will prove to be wrong. That's right (actually still wrong!). It's not that you're being deliberately taught misinformation. It's just that we don't know our own ignorance (yet). Keep in mind, what you're learning is how we understand things, circa 2025. But we don't know what we don't know.

While it is certainly much easier to learn the materials if you just try to absorb it verbatim, my advice is to spend some time thinking about what you're learning. I can now reflect on the lectures I heard as a medical student touting that the cause of peptic ulcer disease was too much acid. In retrospect, that couldn't be right because acid is always there! I didn't think about it then, but I should have, because now we know (I think pretty conclusively) that ulcers are often caused by a bacterial infection! Keep track of things that don't make sense to you along with those that are incompletely understood (there are lots of them!). For aspiring scientists, they will be great projects on which to work in the future. For future clinicians, they will be the ones that you will reflect on and cause you to go back over your old medical school texts and notes — if not when you're practicing, certainly a great retirement project!



Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD

Foundations

Transitioning to medical school

Medical school is a big adjustment for most people, whether you come straight from undergrad, from working in a hospital or from another life path entirely. Many of my classmates, myself included, worry about the academic transition: learning to study again, doing well on exams, finding research mentors and choosing a specialty. Just as intimidating is the prospect of moving somewhere completely new and building a community from the group up.

One piece of advice I would strongly emphasize is to find ways to cultivate moments of happiness and prioritize self-care. Medical school can be overwhelming, and it's important to give yourself grace during this

time. That being said, WashU Medicine truly does a great job providing us with support during the transition. Our first few months had lighter content academically, allowing us to adjust to studying again and to have time to make friends. Every faculty member I've encountered here has been so kind and supportive, and I know I could go to them with any issue I am having. The coaching program is another valuable source of support. Overall, there's no shortage of support systems here, and it makes the transition a lot easier.

Cynthia D., M1

The Big Sib Program

The Big-Little Sib Program pairs every incoming M1 with an M2, creating a built-in support system from day one. I've found so much value from these friendships, not just from my direct "big," but also from my "g-bigs" in the years above. Whether I need emotional support while stressing about exams or career decisions, practical guidance on studying for STEP or planning my clerkship calendar, or even just a buddy willing to try new restaurants with me, I know I can always count on the people in my lineage. They've become some of my closest friends, and I'm grateful that this program connected me with students outside my immediate class and helped me feel grounded within the larger WashU Medicine community.

My advice for incoming M1s is to be honest and specific when you fill out your matching form, and put genuine effort into your responses. The more intentional you are, the more likely you are to end up with a match that grows into a meaningful and lasting relationship throughout your time in medical school.

Christina P., M3

Transitioning from multiple gap years

I took five gap years, three in research and two working in business operations at a startup, before starting medical school at WashU Medicine. Overall, the transition has been smooth thanks to the resources and community here: there are late nights, but I've felt prepared and supported by abundant resources like practice exams, premade WashU Medicine-specific Anki decks and free tutoring available to all students. WashU Medicine has an incredibly supportive culture, with faculty, upperclass mentors and classmates who are genuinely invested in your success and well-being. If you are someone with a non-traditional background and would like to talk, I would love to chat!

Becky S., M1

Phase 2: Clinical

Finding balance during clerkships

Clerkship year can feel all-consuming, but it does not have to take over your whole life. Certain clerkships are undeniably demanding, with early mornings and late nights, but others leave a bit more room. With experience, you'll learn how to adapt your routines to each block. One thing that helped me was being intentional about finding balance. Whether this was studying alongside friends at a cafe, going on short runs together on free weekends, or just finding something that kept me grounded. Staying connected definitely made the long weeks feel much more manageable.

Still though, it's also important to be realistic about your bandwidth. You likely cannot operate at maximum capacity every single day, and taking time off when you're sick or overwhelmed is not a failure. In clerkships, clear communication goes a long way. If you have important life events or family obligations, let your team know early. In my experience, people are far more understanding than you might expect.

Each rotation builds confidence, even when it doesn't feel like it in the moment. And remember one of the most practical lessons of clerkships: if your attending lets you go home, take the win and head out.

Will C., M3

Learning how to learn again on the wards

Learning on the wards feels a lot different than learning in the classroom. As such, it requires a shift in how you think about studying and success. Preclinical learning often feels more controlled and predictable, whereas clinical learning is neither. You'll rarely "feel prepared" on any given day, and that's okay. You won't be expected to know everything, nor will you be able to, so focus on knowing what you can. Read about the conditions your patients have, understand why certain tests are ordered and ask questions when things don't make sense. For many people, learning in context is much more memorable than endless Anki cards.

Feedback during clerkships can also feel inconsistent or vague. I would suggest not reading too much into any single comment. What matters more is identifying small, actionable improvements where you can get better day by day.

Andrew L., M3

Phase 3: Specialization

Designing your own fourth year

One of the best parts of Phase 3 is the flexibility. Unlike the first few years, your schedule can reflect your priorities, whether that's preparing for boards, strengthening your residency application or pursuing other interests. Be thoughtful when you build your year. It's helpful to frontload rotations that are important for letters of recommendation, and place "easier" or asynchronous electives during peak interview months.

Also, unscheduled time is not wasted time. Many students underestimate how restorative these breaks can be. Plan your schedule so you're not exhausted by the time interviews arrive.

Amir K., M4

What I wish I'd known as an M1

You know what I wish I knew as an M1? How everyone you've ever known will now turn to YOU for medical advice. Better get ready to look at a whole bunch of moles, rashes, and ingrown toenails. You might think to yourself, "There's no way I'd ever know any of the stuff they're asking me." And the answer is yes, you will — for the brief moment before you take Step 1 and Step 2.

That voice in your head that says "you don't belong"? — it's lying. You've worked hard to be here, and you deserve to be here. At the same time, the undeniable truth is that medical school is hard. It's like drinking water from a fire hydrant — except there are four fire hydrants and you've only got a paper straw. But I guarantee you, you will figure it out and you will get real good at it. Whether it's with Anki, study groups, whispering mnemonics into your pillow at night, anything — do what works for you, even if it's a little weird.

Outside of medical school, it might feel impossible to balance studying, lectures, clinical duties, research, and pretending to have a social life — because it is impossible. But prioritizing what's important to you is key — schedule time to hang out with your new friends, keep in touch with your old friends, and in between it all, squeeze in a couple of Anki cards.

At the end of the day, medical school is hard, there's no denying it. But the one thing I wish I knew as an M1 would be to enjoy it all while it lasts. Stop stressing about those extra few points you could've gotten on your exam, what you'll say to your first standardized patient, or what specialty you should apply into. Live in the moment, laugh over the mistakes you've made (and will continue to make), spend four hours in the library with your friends only to realize you've accomplished nothing. Enjoy the four years of medical school, as best as you can, because it's over in the blink of an eye.

Welcome to medical school — I promise, it'll be a great time.

Nathan K., Graduating Class of 2025