

Dis-Orientation Guide

Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis

2023-24



*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 our first-year medical students.

Table of Contents

WELCOME **1**

WHY WASHU **10**

THE GATEWAY EXPERIENCE **14**

STUDENT GROUPS **38**

PERSPECTIVES **57**

HOUSING **84**

LIFE IN ST. LOUIS **97**

ADVICE **129**

WELLNESS **141**



Welcome

Welcome to the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis Dis-Orientation Guide! The official student-produced guide to our school, city, and life in medical school.

The Dis-Orientation (Dis-O) Guide is here for you as you enter medical school. Dis-O serves to introduce you to the ins and outs of life as a medical student at WashU. Each Dis-O Guide is a snapshot in time crafted by the M1 class. If you are curious about perspectives from classes that came before, the Dis-O digital archives contain Dis-O Guides going back nine years.

Before you enter the 2023-2024 guide, our dean of the medical school, associate dean for student affairs, associate dean for admissions, and associate dean for diversity warmly welcome you to Washington University School of Medicine. All of us (from M1s to M4s, lecturers to thread leads, and all of our staff and deans) want to help you succeed and achieve your goals. We want your time in medical school to be as delightful as it is transformative.

Dear Members of the Entering Class of 2023,

Welcome to Washington University School of 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 school's mission — 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 the School of 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 have chosen Washington University, as well, 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 the 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 the school 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 the School of 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 Endowed Dean, School of Medicine



David H. Perlmutter, MD

Welcome to Washington University School of Medicine and the Dis-O Guide. The Dis-O Guide is written by our students for you and provides a very up-to-date look at our school — its people, its spaces, and its strengths. In our medical school, there are traditions, but much of what we do is consistently evolving, such as the implementation of the Gateway Curriculum. This year's guide also provides information on how our students thrived in St. Louis given the constraints and challenges of the pandemic. As you read this guide, you may be an applicant contemplating a big decision about where to attend medical school, or a matriculated student moving into the Core, getting accustomed to the Central West End neighborhood, and eager to meet new classmates. Since 1987, the Dis-O Guide has been produced to show you an inside look into what WashU School of Medicine, our medical students and the St. Louis region have to offer. Hopefully, while reading, you will smile and recognize a part of yourself in the descriptions.



Valerie S. Ratts, MD

The WashU School of Medicine mission statement calls for the training of the next leaders in biomedicine in a culture that supports diversity, inclusion, critical thinking, and creativity. Attracting students who will align with the mission and vision is key. Next, we must provide the knowledge, experience, resources, and mentorship to support our students in the journey to an amazing medical career. For those still making a decision, this guide will show you some of the possibilities available here. For those who have made their decision, I like the suggestion that the Dis-O Guide will provide “insider advice” to a great medical school and education.

What advice can I give you? 1) Get to know your classmates. Like you, they are amazing. Many will become lifelong friends and colleagues. 2) Do not lose your enthusiasm. You are starting down a pathway that will require diligence, sacrifice, and hard work, but will also bring tremendous reward. Doctors play truly special roles in the lives of people. It is an honor and privilege to practice this profession. 3) Rely upon the skills and characteristics that have brought you to this point. Attitude makes a huge difference. I love this quote from an anonymous source for inspiration to keep the right attitude: “Look for something positive in every day, even if some days you have to look a little harder.”

Remember, you were chosen because you have unique, elite attributes that will allow you to contribute to meeting the challenges of health care and biomedical research in the future. There are so many people at WashU who wish to mentor, support, and develop you as an outstanding physician.

Valerie S. Ratts, MD

Associate Dean for Admissions and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

On behalf of the team of people who are here to support medical students — Hello! We can't wait to meet you! The Dis-O Guide is chock full of up-to-date, “high yield” information, written and edited by our amazing students! Our education team is so grateful for the joy of interacting and partnering with our students and getting to know them by name and story — we hope WashU will become a life-changing chapter in yours.

There will be many joys and challenges on this journey. As you contemplate or begin medical school, it is vitally important to develop a community of support — to celebrate your joys and to team up with you in your challenges. By all means, attend to the important business of maintaining relationships with your peeps, and be sure to invest in growing relationships here as well. One thing the past few years have taught me is the importance of being connected and creating a space for belonging.

What you have heard is true: Medical school is demanding. There will be stretches of time when balance will be difficult. However, with a little attention and assistance, if requested, our students learn important tools and techniques to regain and maintain a healthy balance. Here are a few bits of advice that you may find useful:

- Build and maintain warm-hearted relationships. Quality over quantity. Remember that lifetime friends, colleagues, mentors, and advisors surround you. Let them in — the sooner the better.
- Remember what brings you joy and intentionally carve out time for it.
- Do what you love.
- Respect others in your actions and words.
- Assume positive intent in your colleagues.
- Stay connected to your people.
- Play. Outside.
- Laugh as often as possible. Choose companions who multiply laughter.
- Notice something beautiful today.
- Be grateful for a moment every day.

We are here to see that our students thrive at WashU and in the surrounding St. Louis area. We will provide support. You may not know exactly what it is you need or what we can give, so be quick to ask and we'll figure it out together.

Lisa Moscoso, MD, PhD

Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Associate Professor of Pediatrics

Division Co-Chief, Pediatric Hospitalist Medicine



Lisa Moscoso, MD, PhD

Welcome to Washington University School of 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 reconcile 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 pull; 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' world, 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 Washington University School of 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 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 Washington University, in St. Louis. We want you, we need you.

Will R. Ross, MD, MPH

Associate Dean for Diversity

Alumni Endowed Professor of Medicine,

Division of Nephrology

Meet the Editors

Jenna Bennett

Life in St. Louis

Hi, my name is Jenna, and I am from Cincinnati, Ohio! I graduated from the University of Alabama in 2022 with a bachelor's in Psychology. I really love trying out new food and drink places around St. Louis, watching horror movies, playing board games and video games with friends, and hanging out with my corgi, Monty, in Forest Park. In the few months I have lived here in St. Louis, I have fallen in love with the city, and I hope you will too! The people, especially the students and faculty at Wash U, are amazing, and there are so many things to do here!



Jessica Bigley

Perspectives

Hello and welcome to WashU! My name is Jessica and I am originally from Ohio. I graduated from WashU with degrees in Chemistry and Neuroscience in 2022. My hobbies include doing jigsaw puzzles, playing piano, running, and spending time with my cat, Siena. I loved reading through the Dis-O Guide while making my medical school decision and I hope it serves the same purpose for you!



Joey Krambs

Life in St. Louis, Visual/Media, Website Editor

Congratulations and welcome to Washington University! I am one of the Joeys in the M1 class. I moved around a lot when I was little, but I've been in St. Louis for almost eight years, so it really feels like my home. I graduated from Middle Tennessee State University in 2015 with a degree in Biology: Genetics & Biotechnology. Three weeks later, I started my PhD training here at WashU in the Molecular Genetics & Genomics program before transferring into the Medical Scientist Training Program this past August. My wife and I met here at WashU. We absolutely love the campus and how supportive everyone is. Melanie and I have a four-year-old dog named Eleanor. We love discovering all St. Louis has to offer. It's been nearly eight years, and we're still finding unexplored spaces. We love the state parks, Forest Park, board games, and hosting parties.

We cannot wait to welcome you to St. Louis and WashU!



Neetij Krishnan

Housing, Life in St. Louis

Hello there! Congratulations and welcome to WashU. My name is Neetij, and I'm from Eden Prairie, Minnesota. I graduated in 2020 from St. Olaf College (also in Minnesota) with a bachelor's in Biology, and I worked at the National Institutes of Health and the Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Oncológicas before coming to WashU. Having grown up in the Midwest, I can safely say that St. Louis embodies the best the Midwest has to offer, and it's a great place to live. WashU is home to a truly remarkable community of ambitious, hardworking, and kind people. If you (like me) are concerned about the toxically competitive atmosphere of medical school, you won't find it here.

Outside of school, I love to play the piano, do puzzles, play chess and ping-pong, and hang out with my tuxedo cat, Lady Godiva. The Dis-O Guide from last year made my transition to WashU a lot easier, and I hope our work this year can do the same for you.

Don't hesitate to drop me a line if I can help with your journey, either before or after you come here. Best of luck!

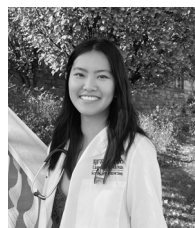


WELCOME

Amy Liao

Life in St. Louis, Graphic Design

Welcome to WashU! My name is Amy and I am from Virginia Beach, Virginia. I graduated from UVA in 2022, so I've spent most of my life on the East Coast. Like some of you, I was pretty hesitant about moving to the Midwest, but now I truly cannot imagine myself anywhere else. There is so much to do and see in the city, and the best part is, you get to explore all of it with the coolest classmates ever. My favorite thing about St. Louis is Forest Park — it is truly one of a kind, and we are so lucky to be only a few steps away. Happy reading!



Sarah Madira

Housing

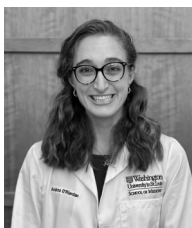
Congratulations and welcome to WashU! My name is Sarah and I am from Los Angeles, California. I graduated from Cal State Los Angeles in 2020 with a bachelor's in Biochemistry. I then took two gap years conducting research at Stanford University and Genentech before coming to WashU. Coming from a coastal city, I was really apprehensive about moving to the Midwest and St. Louis in particular. I am beyond happy with my decision to come to WashU for my medical education. I don't have to convince you that WashU is a leading institution where you will be mentored by pioneers in medicine and drowned in limitless opportunities but I hope that after reading this Dis-O Guide, you realize that a supportive culture and wonderful city awaits you here! Not only am I surrounded by some of the nicest, smartest, and most welcoming classmates and faculty, I have also really enjoyed getting to experience all the awesome cafes, eateries, and free city events that St. Louis has to offer. I love the idea of spending four years here, and I am sure you will too!



Andrea O'Riordan

Life in St. Louis

Hello! My name is Andrea and I'm originally from Palo Alto, California. I went to UCLA and studied Neuroscience for undergrad and worked in clinical research at Stanford for a year before coming to WashU. Outside of school, climbing is the biggest part of my life. I was on the competitive team in college and love climbing outside more than almost anything else. Except for my classmates! I have found such a supportive and welcoming environment at WashU, and am so unbelievably happy I ended up here. I hope this guide helps give you a sense of the genuine, kind, and just plain awesome place WashU is. I hope you come rock out with us in St. Louis!



Quinn Payton

*Welcome, The Gateway Experience,
Touring WUSM, Visual/Media*

Congratulations on your acceptance to WashU! I'm Quinn. I was born and raised in Los Angeles, California, and graduated from UCLA in 2018 with a degree in Biochemistry. I had a whopping four years between undergrad and medical school. In that time, I volunteered at a hospital working the surgical floors, worked as a phlebotomist, patented a medical device, earned a certificate in Patient Advocacy from UCLA, took some post-bacc classes and had two kids. My husband is from Hawaii, and as an LA native myself, we were both a little apprehensive about moving to the Midwest. But life in St. Louis is far more enjoyable than I could have imagined — autumn is undeniably beautiful, it is probably the most affordable place to live as a med student, has an abundance of free things to do, great food, and most notably, it is home to the best medical school in the country! I was excited to help put this Dis-O Guide together, because I found the previous year's guide incredibly helpful. I hope it serves the same value to you! Each day I am more grateful to call WashU my home and we are delighted to welcome you to our WashU family! Trust me, you'll love it here.



Arielle Soldatenko

The Gateway Experience, Wellness, Advice

Congratulations and welcome to WashU! I'm Arielle. Originally from the suburbs of New York City, I stayed on the East Coast for college and graduated from Yale with a degree in Molecular, Cellular, and Developmental Biology in 2021. I stayed for a post-grad research year while applying to medical school. After coming to Second Look, I knew that WashU and St. Louis had to be my home for the next four years. I hope the Dis-O Guide helps you see what drew me here: the faculty support, innovative curriculum, caring classmates, and quality of life. I can't imagine being anywhere else. When I'm not studying, you can find me at a spin class, reading, exploring new coffeeshops, and finding ways to add some whimsy to my classmates' lives (also known as collaborating on wellness programming with the Office of Medical Student Affairs). Please feel free to shoot me an email (a.soldatenko@wustl.edu) or come say hi anytime; I'd love to meet you!

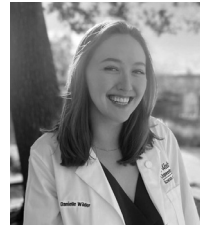


WELCOME

Dani Wilder

Why WashU, Student Groups

Welcome to St. Louis! My name is Dani and I was born and raised in Arizona. I found my way out to WashU for undergrad where I majored in Biochemistry and received minors in both Global Health and Psychology. I took a gap year to work with a tech-ed startup and to focus on some of my biotech innovations. Outside of classes, my hobbies include making charcuterie boards, exploring Forest Park with my rescue dog, practicing yoga, and eating my way through the city. I hope that this Dis-O Guide answers all your questions and shows you all the incredible things that WUSM and St. Louis have to offer!





Why WashU

Every year, about 125 students choose Washington University School of Medicine. See why we chose WashU.

SECTION EDITOR: DANI WILDER

Welcome to WashU!

When my wife, Andrea, and I were medical students, we used to laugh at our lecturers who described themselves as “WUMS 24” (this means a 24th-year WashU medical student). Now, we are those people.

Some things were different 20 years ago. First-year lectures were in Moore Auditorium, and second-year lectures were in Erlanger. There were a LOT of lectures, usually three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, unless we had lab or small group. Erlanger didn’t have enough seats, so some of us would sit in the aisles. 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 wanted students with superlative academic metrics. 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 a medical school class is a much more multi-dimensional process. WashU 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, 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 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
Assistant Dean for Admissions

Networking and Training

I went to undergrad at WashU and making the decision to stay in St. Louis once I was accepted to WUSM was not too difficult. I networked with tons of amazing people while in undergrad and formed strong relationships, ranging from research mentors, campus ministers at the Catholic Student Center, physicians at Barnes Jewish, and excellent friends and local families. I knew that staying at

WUSM for the next phase of my life would allow me to further strengthen these relationships and network with even more amazing people here.

Even though I already had a sense of the welcoming and supportive community at WashU, coming to Second Look confirmed that even further. Every current medical student that I asked said the people at WUSM were their favorite thing about the medical school. In addition, I had an extremely sweet tour guide during Second Look who was very helpful in answering my laundry list of questions. Finally, the Gateway Curriculum at WUSM really drew me to attending medical school here. This curriculum exposes you to the clinical setting early on in medical school in small blocks called Immersions. I have not started Immersions yet, but many second- and third-year students tell me these clinical experiences allowed them to apply what they were learning in the classroom and practice the “non-science” part of medicine. Overall, I have felt extremely supported in the first four months at WUSM by both the faculty and my classmates.

Jessica B., M1

Inspiring, Compassionate, and Welcoming Group

One influential factor in my decision to matriculate at WUSM was the exceptionally supportive environment created by the students and faculty here. Based on my observations throughout the application cycle and at WUSM’s Second Look, it was clear that the relationships students shared with each other were genuine — they really seemed to know and care for one another. I felt confident that my fellow classmates and faculty mentors at WashU would provide the second family that I was looking for, and I was excited to embark on this medical school journey with like-minded people. I can happily say that any expectations I had were far exceeded upon starting Phase 1 in September. I have never met a more inspiring, compassionate, and welcoming group of people, and I feel lucky that I get to spend time with and learn alongside these people for the next 4+ years. This authentic, close-knit community is something that I can’t imagine I would experience to this same magnitude anywhere else.

No one is kidding when they say that WUSM provides numerous opportunities for students to explore passions and get involved. The faculty here are extremely approachable and excited to serve as mentors to students in any capacity. As someone who is eager to get involved in research on campus, I received helpful guidance and support when starting my search for a lab that would fit with my goals and interests. Within one week of my search, I was able to set up meetings with multiple faculty members, who were all excited to talk about opportunities for me to get involved in projects within their labs.

WUSM cares a great deal about its students. There are many outlets for students to provide feedback or suggestions for improvement. Our administration and faculty leads are extremely receptive to feedback and take quick action to make changes that are intended to improve the experience of all students here.

WUSM ensures that students are heard by involving us in most decisions made for the program.

For these reasons — and many more — I am so grateful to call WUSM my home. I truly have nothing but good things to say.

Rachel A., M1

WashU Undergrad and Medical School

I was at both WashU undergrad and med school. There are a couple of reasons WashU is pretty great:

1. Forest Park is free. I go there to practice soccer dribbling at Emerson field, which is a really awesome field. There are other facilities for exercising that are really nice — the gym at the med school is pretty sufficient, and the undergrad gym is amazing. You can play pick up basketball at any time, as well as take cycling or yoga classes.
2. The food is very inexpensive compared to my home town, so you can go out and have fun without having to worry too much about pricing and cost of living.
3. The research here at the medical school is pretty amazing. You can get involved in some excellent research and you'll be hot stuff here as a med student. It's very cool.
4. It's very easy to shadow physicians — they're generally extremely responsive and they want to help you as a med student.
5. You get a lot of opportunities to learn clinical skills hands-on within the curriculum, from learning from a fourth-year to having clinical skills classes to getting to do clinical immersions.

Naman B., M1

The Welcome and Support

Falling for WashU was easy; getting in was tougher. On paper, WashU had all of my non-negotiables: excellent academic reputation, superb clinical opportunities, and a city in which I could have a high quality of life. The things that set it apart were revealed when I got a chance to speak with current students. In short, I could see myself gelling with the students, who were as welcoming as they were driven, and that the faculty and administration are unbelievably supportive.

Owen D., M1



The Gateway Experience

Before you start medical school, you will likely have thousands of questions about what it is like to be a medical student. We have answers written by people who know best — actual medical students.

SECTION EDITORS: QUINN PAYTON AND ARIELLE SOLDATENKO

The Gateway Curriculum

EXPLORE Overview

The EXPLORE program in the Gateway Curriculum is a formalized approach to career development that helps WashU MD 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 opportunity 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., M1

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 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, 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 am hoping to have 3+ publications related to making these resources freely available and implementing curriculum changes as a first-year medical student.

Joshua P.C., M2

EXPLORE Global Health and Advocacy

If you are at all interested in a career in global/public health work, public policy, or health equity, I would highly encourage you to pursue the EXPLORE pathway in Global Health/Advocacy! The faculty involved in the pathway display such passion in the subjects they teach. There are very informal opportunities during EXPLORE to network and get to know these leaders better — many students who have gone through the pathway have met physicians to shadow or even research PIs through these sessions!

During the pathway-specific sessions, you get the opportunity to learn about topics you would not get to hear about anywhere else in your medical school curriculum, such as HIV advocacy, climate change, and neo-colonialism in global health. You also get to apply your knowledge in hands-on experiences such as participating in a World Health Organization simulation and writing policy briefs and op-eds. If you are particularly passionate about these subjects, the faculty are happy to work with you to get some of this work published on a greater scale as well! It's a fantastic opportunity to explore (pun intended) and develop your interest in these fields alongside phenomenal, supportive faculty.

Priscilla C., M2

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., M2

EXPLORE Research

With WashU 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, and even developing a research proposal and poster presentation for the end-of-the-year EXPLORE symposium.

Isabella G., M2

Clinical Immersions Overview

The Clinical Immersions are one of many especially unique aspects of WashU's medical curriculum. It is an opportunity to gain real experience doing pre-rounds, oral presentations of cases, taking histories, doing physical exams, and more. It provides the time to familiarize yourself with Epic software (electronic health record), and experience the varying workflows in each of these clinical environments. This provides a unique opportunity to build foundational clinical skills prior to Phase 2 clerkships, where your performance is evaluated. It also contextualizes the content you are learning during Phase 1, which helps solidify your knowledge and understanding.

Quinn P., M1

Clinical Immersions – Ambulatory/ED

For the ambulatory part of this immersion, I rotated with Endocrinology and saw patients in an outpatient clinic. I got ample practice doing the History of Present Illness (HPI) portions of the history and physical exam (H&P), presenting patients to attendings, and writing student notes. I also had the opportunity to practice clinical reasoning and come up with an assessment and plan for patients, using the knowledge I had learned in Phase 1 (preclinical). For the emergency department (ED) part of the immersion, I did shifts in the Trauma/Critical Care Unit (TCC) and ED pods 1-3, but also spent time with the social work office and bedside nurses. It was a great way to see what different members of the care team did and how they all came together to help the ED run smoothly.

Fiona P., M2

Clinical Immersions – Inpatient

For the inpatient immersion, I was placed at my top choice — nephrology consults. This was a wonderful opportunity to understand the day-to-day activities of a consult team, the flow of patients in the hospital, and the general layout of Barnes-Jewish Hospital. The typical schedule for nephrology was 7:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., although schedules varied by service. This was my first chance to be a part of the health care team with real patients, and I was even able to perform actual procedures like inserting a foley catheter. As a person who is 100% interested in inpatient medicine, I'm so grateful to have had this immersion before clerkships. I feel more prepared to perform history and physical exams (H&Ps), check up on patients longitudinally, and interact with consultants. Furthermore, I connected with a mentor in the nephrology department and came up with a research project to carry forward over the next year. You definitely get out of immersions what you put in!

Emily H., M2

Clinical Immersions – Procedural

I spent three weeks with the Department of Orthopedic Surgery for my procedural immersion and absolutely loved it. I rotated with the Shoulder & Elbow, Trauma, and Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) services and saw a variety of procedures including reverse shoulder arthroplasties, intramedullary nailing, and ultrasound-guided steroid injections. I learned to scrub in, do simple running and interrupted sutures, and perform physical exams for musculoskeletal injuries. The attendings and residents were all very happy to teach and I loved seeing how happy they were, doing what they loved doing.

Fiona P., M2

Adjusting to Medical School

How well we acclimate to being a medical student makes a lasting impact on our academic experience and I think that the way WashU facilitates this transition is *chef's kiss* perfection. Becoming a medical student requires significant adjustment. Many students are living in an unfamiliar town with no friends or family nearby, navigating a new school system, figuring out finances, making new friends, realizing go-to study methods may not work as well as they used to, choosing from an overwhelming abundance of clubs and extracurricular activities, having first experiences with unique pedagogies like team-based learning (TBL) and standardized patients, and the list goes on. I was intimidated to face all of these changes at once, especially considering all of the well-intentioned warnings I had received about how difficult medical school will be. So, I was pleasantly surprised by how manageable it all felt. Sure, it was a faster pace and unfamiliar, but I did not feel the sense of panic that my friends at other schools were experiencing in their first few months.

The Gateway Curriculum was intentionally structured to make the adjustment to medical school not only manageable but enjoyable. The more challenging aspects of medical education are layered in over time, so it doesn't hit you like a ton of bricks while you are still making it through the many personal adjustments mentioned above. Standardized patient interactions are introduced early on and while we are given feedback for improvement, they are not graded. This gives us time to build our clinical skills well before our first Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) rolls around in the late spring. New learning environments like TBLs are introduced in a low-stakes manner and gently increase in difficulty as we progress through the curriculum. Anatomy lab is also held off until the third module. All of this allows us time in the early months of our education to focus on finding our groove and building foundational skills, so we are set up for success when things ramp up in subsequent modules. We have time to make friends, explore academic interests, and get comfortable in our new environment before bearing the full weight of medical school. Having a smooth transition into the life of a medical student is one of the many underrated privileges of being a student here. Stay excited, enjoy the ride, and welcome to the WashU family!

Quinn P., M1

Competency-Based Framework

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

What’s the same is that there is a “threshold” students have to meet to attain competency, just like getting a 70% to “pass”. What’s different is that you cannot “fail out” due to a single test or module. If you don’t meet an overall threshold of 70% at the end of a module or exam, you will not be asked to retake that module. Instead, WashU measures our points attained longitudinally across multiple courses and various types of assessment, and we receive our designation of competency/no-competency at the end of each phase before passing on to the next.

It is probably best explained using an example. Let’s say over four modules we will have taken eight exams and had several other assignments that contribute to competency. All of these assess our knowledge in different areas (i.e. biochemistry, equity, health systems sciences, anatomy, genetics, etc.). WashU keeps track of our progress in each of those areas over time. If a student is lagging in any given area, we discuss those areas for improvement with our coach or the Student Success Team well in advance of the competency determination. That way, we can improve before we would reach the point of earning a “no-competency” designation. It makes preparing for exams feel less like a make-or-break situation and keeps you in the focus of aiming to be the best learner you can be.

Students that are completing their core clerkships in Phase 2 are able to gain “competency with distinction” in foundational knowledge, clinical reasoning, and interpersonal communication. This is similar to “honors” but it is not competitive in nature. 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 clinical performance and is also based on how we have done over the entire phase.

The final phase, Gateway to Specialization, also measures our performance across multiple courses using many types of assessments. Students in this phase are able to 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).

In terms of competition, WashU does not keep internal rankings of students and does not participate in Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA). Exam grade distributions are not available to the class and that helps facilitate a collaborative learning environment. 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.

Quinn P., M1

Health, Equity, and Justice (HEJ)

The Health, Equity, and Justice (HEJ) thread is undoubtedly one of the most meaningful, unique, and constantly improving components of the Gateway Curriculum. This thread highlights the social and structural components of health, not only from a theoretical standpoint, but also from the testimonies of patients, providers, and community workers who live in St. Louis. HEJ weaves social determinants of health into each module to give a zoomed-out perspective on the patient model. Often times there is not a concrete solution to many of the complex issues discussed, but HEJ provides a useful framework to approach these issues and provides exposure to conversations surrounding the urgent medical issues physicians face today. Beyond giving much needed context to health and disease, HEJ seeks to prepare us to think critically about these complex issues to improve outcomes and prevent harming vulnerable communities. I am proud to be at an institution that is prioritizing the human condition and one that is receptive to feedback in an effort to continuously improve the HEJ curriculum.

Luke C., M1

MSTP – The WashU Lasagna

If I were to boil down my “Why WashU” into a single word, it would be community. That is especially the case in the Medical Scientist Training (MSTP) program. Our cohort has been incredibly supportive to each other in our transition into medical school, and I’ve become super close friends with my MSTP classmates. Beyond this community feel of the MSTP, I chose WashU because of the amount of institutional experience and support here when it comes to MD/PhD training. It’s really nice knowing that there’s almost nothing that could come up in the course of my training that the MSTP administration hasn’t dealt with before.

Since training is kind of variable from school to school, here’s the breakdown of our MSTP timeline: The MSTP at WashU is constructed like a lasagna, where the PhD is the noodle and the MD is the sauce. We started with a four-week lab rotation (noodle) which is literally just to vibe check the lab. That first month was super fun because it was before medical school starts, and it let our MSTP group bond as a cohort during a relatively stress-free time. After that, we transitioned into M1 of med school (sauce layer) where we don’t have much MSTP responsibilities other than Wednesday lunch seminar. Those seminars are actually one of my favorite parts of the MSTP here, we get lunch from local restaurants catered and a physician-scientist gives a talk about their field of research/medicine which coincides with what we’re learning in our med school classes. For example, we’re currently learning about cancer in our med classes, and just had a lecture from a surgeon/scientist about the history of head and neck cancer treatment and his research into how HPV infection can affect the outcomes of cancer patients. These sessions aren’t tested or anything, they’re solely for enrichment of our med school learning and for connecting us with possible mentors.

Our next lab rotation (noodle layer) will be during the Explore month while our MD counterparts do their Explore stuff. Following that, we'll finish out our preclinical courses and take Step 1 (back to sauce). After Step 1, we move into our PhD (noodle) and do an optional 3rd rotation or if one of the first two labs were a good match, just start on PhD research. After finishing the PhD, we come back to MD training to do clerkships and clinical electives (sauce layer).

What's really nice about this timeline is that there's no time that we really need to juggle lab work and medical school. When you're in lab you're completely focused on research, and when you're in classes, you're completely focused on being a medical student.

Joey N., M1

Phase 1 Modules/Threads

Phase 1 of the curriculum is WashU's preclinical 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 Molecules to Society. The subsequent six modules are typically organ-system-based such as "Circulation and Breathing" (Cardiovascular, Pulmonary), "Ins and Outs" (GI), and more! Each day, we can expect the morning to be dedicated to sessions 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 clinical mentoring with a fourth-year student or 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 Global Health/Advocacy, 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., M1

White Coat Ceremony

If you're reading this, I am fairly confident you've been looking forward to the day you will receive your very first white coat. The White Coat Ceremony marks a huge milestone on your road to becoming a physician. It is the culmination of all your hard work and success. Your family will be there, more proud of you than ever. Your friends will be cheering you on from afar. It is the moment you can feel your dreams are coming true. I was looking forward to it for years and years, so when I learned that WashU not only begins the academic year later than most schools, but also holds the ceremony off until after completion of the first module, I was a little bummed. Many of my friends had their ceremony in July or early August, but here we were in anticipation of this milestone until late October.

As time went on, I had a newfound appreciation for how this scheduling of the ceremony would make the experience even more special. Not only will your family be in the audience, but the classmates you've spent the past two months forming tight bonds with will be in the audience, too. Not only will you have successfully made it into medical school, but you will also have successfully completed the first module of medical school. I truly believe we had a unique experience at our White Coat Ceremony, because we had a sense of belonging, a genuine sense of community. I was teary-eyed and overjoyed watching my classmates receive their coats. So, thank you WashU, for knowing what I wanted better than I did. I hope this helps you find a little more patience than I had for this unforgettable, extraordinary experience.

Quinn P., M1

Clinical Skills

Clinical Mentoring

The Clinical Mentoring program starts during your first module. You are paired with an M4 who brings you into the hospital to observe and practice your clinical skills. There are four required sessions, but you can work with your mentor to do as many as you want — it's what you make it! You will be in the hospital, working with patients, practicing your history taking and physical exam skills, and getting feedback in a low-stakes, non-graded environment. Also, your M4 is an amazing resource, they have been where you've been and can give you advice for all aspects of your medical school journey.

Sabrina M., M1

Clinical Mentoring, M4 Perspective

One of the first courses I signed up for as an M4 was Clinical Mentoring. It is a really unique opportunity to help students through their first clinical scenarios in the hospital and is fun for me, the patients, and my two M1s (I hope!). It has also been an amazing chance for me to reflect on how much I have learned since starting three years ago and take pride in my own progress while supporting others on their journey!

Lucy S., M4

Clinical Skills

I think most WashU students would agree that the Clinical Skills thread is one of the most engaging parts of the Phase 1 curriculum. It can be easy to get bogged down in the basic sciences that we have to learn and forget about the interpersonal side of medicine. Clinical Skills gives us a chance to learn how to be a

physician, through discussions on everything from the different components of a routine History & Physical Exam (H&P) to the complex task of delivering bad news to a patient. These lessons are reinforced during our standardized patient (SP) encounters, which are low-stress, ungraded opportunities to practice what we learn during our Clinical Skills lectures with professional patient actors. Clinical Mentoring is another opportunity to develop our doctoring skills and involves pairing up with an M4 who works with you as you practice taking a full H&P with a real patient at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Finally, Dr. Yau and Dr. Mullin, the leads of Clinical Skills, are exactly the kind of people you want teaching this thread, as they make learning these important skills fun and introduce new concepts in parallel with our science-based curriculum.

Michael Y., M1

Grand Rounds

At WashU, many of the various clinical departments invite students to join them at their weekly Grand Rounds or Clinicopathological Conferences (CPC), both in-person and over Zoom. These sessions can be a wonderful opportunity to see how physicians work through real cases and to continue developing your own clinical reasoning skills. Additionally, many of the Grand Rounds are on topics broader than just clinical cases, including global health, health equity, and systems-based practice. Many of these events also have free breakfast/refreshments — bonus!

Priscilla C., M2

Shadowing

Shadowing is a great, low-stakes way to explore a specialty, establish relationships with potential mentors, and help you reflect on what you want your future career to look like. Thankfully, many of the faculty at WashU are eager to have medical students join them, especially since they get to sell their specialty to you. Whether it's via specialty interest groups, lecturers, research PIs, coaches, or just cold-emailing faculty, most opportunities are just an email away. They can get you fairly involved too; when I shadowed cardiothoracic surgery, I got to feel a patient's heart while the physician was placing them onto cardiopulmonary bypass!

Tim H., M2

Simulation/Procedural Events

The one thing WashU is amazing at is giving students so many opportunities to get involved in hands-on events super early on. I am only one semester into medical school and I have already participated in over six different procedure events in many different specialties, which has been invaluable as someone who is still unsure about what they want to go into. During the annual OB/GYN procedure night I had the chance to learn and practice a variety of hands-on skills with residents and faculty, including IUD placement, deliveries, cauterization, ultrasound,

laparoscopic practice, endometrial biopsy, D&Cs, and more. With the Association of Women Surgeons I got to participate in their Sawbones event where I got hands-on experience with power tools and learned more about the experiences of current orthopedic surgery residents. With the Emergency Medicine group's SimWars events I got the chance to practice clinical decision-making in a fast-paced, low-stakes environment with emergency medicine physicians. Through the cardiovascular group I got to attend an endovascular surgery simulation session (think wires, catheters, balloons, stents, and aortic repair) and another anastomosis lab where I got to practice stitching two simulated vascular tubes together. And this is just to name a few of my experiences!

Dani W., M1

Support and Resources

Becker Library Support/Resources

Not only is Becker Library a great place to study with various quiet and private study areas, but there are a lot of resources offered through the library for medical students. The Office of Medical Student Education and Office of Student Financial Planning are located on the third floor of Becker. There are many people available to answer any questions you have regarding the curriculum and finding ways to fund your medical education. We are also given free access to many online resources through the Becker online library, including PubMed, various eJournals, online textbooks, ClinicalKey, UpToDate, and more. Finally, the Becker librarians are very knowledgeable and always around to help you navigate all of these resources and find what you are looking for.

Liam C., M1

Class Resource Development Group (CRDG)

At the start of the school year, we were handed access to a shared Google drive that has a large compilation of notes, Anki decks, and other resources tailored to the Gateway Curriculum. It has been immensely useful to help guide us through the curriculum and let us hit the ground running straight from the start. We are working on assembling this year's Class Resource Development Group (CRDG) which is a group of students who go through the associated resources from the year to keep the shared resource content matching the curriculum as the Gateway Curriculum evolves!

Yazan R., M1

Clinical Research

The opportunity to do research at WashU is uniquely amazing; there are not a lot of institutions as prolific as WashU! In my time doing clinical research, I've helped submit a center grant application, crafted letters to the Biden administration and to the USPSTF, and worked on multi-million dollar projects with leaders in the field from across the nation and world. There are so many grants and resources at WashU that it's kind of ridiculous. Many of my PIs and teammates also consult for industry giants, like Google Health.

Melissa V., M1

Coaching

During the first week of medical school at WashU, each student is assigned to a small coaching group led by a faculty member. We meet weekly or biweekly to discuss professional identity formation, medical ethics, and our own struggles and accomplishments as medical students. My experience with my own coaching group and coach has been fantastic. We have formed a tight knit group with an open environment where everyone feels comfortable to share the good, the bad, and the ugly of our lives inside and outside of medical school. My coach has been an amazing resource for all sorts of advice and truly cares about each of us as individuals. It is amazing to feel deeply cared about by a faculty member/mentor throughout all four years of medical school.

Katie B., M1

Dean Chung and the Science of Finding a Research Mentor

When I first came to WashU, I knew that I wanted to get involved in the robust and nationally renowned research, but I had no idea where to begin. A month into medical school, Dean Chung gave a talk about her role as the Dean for Medical Student Research. I, along with dozens of my classmates, scheduled a call with her, where I described my interests and goals for research. Within one week, she sent me a list of 25-30 potential mentors, who she had personally worked with and whose research aligned with my interests. After that, I emailed some of them and within a month I had projects that I was excited to work on. Dean Chung is an incredible person, mentor, and resource for research here at WashU.

Joseph R., M1

Dis-Orientation (Dis-O) Guide

This is what you are reading right now! If you enjoyed doing any kind of school newspaper activity, I think you'll like working on the Dis-Orientation Guide too. Our team of editors handles all of the organizational and logistical behind-the-scenes work, from recruiting writers to proofreading their submissions. We also work closely with Dean Ratts, the admissions staff, and the graphic design team to create

this lovely publication for you all. There are so many reasons to love WashU and St. Louis, and by gathering perspectives from all of our classmates and faculty, I think we have perfectly showcased everything our school has to offer!

Amy L., M1

Faculty Support

Similarly to many students, I was not sure how the transition to the rigor of medical school would go, especially in a new environment and at an elite medical school. Fortunately for me and my classmates, WashU has a million different ways it supports its students, which has made the transition much easier. All faculty, from our professors to our deans, are approachable and friendly, and they genuinely want to help with whatever you may need. There are sessions throughout Orientation and Module 1 that showcase the unparalleled resources available to students for all aspects of student life and health. Furthermore, my M2 Big Sib has been invaluable to me through this transition, as he has helped show me the ropes of medical school. I am glad a Big Sib/Little Sib program exists as another layer support. The most significant source of faculty support that I have had so far has been through my coaching group with the wonderful Dr. Yau and my seven group mates. They have all been a wonderful source of support throughout the transition into medical school, as we navigate how to best study and live as medical students.

Andrew B., M1

Master's Programs

Some of you applying to medical school may have aspirations adjacent to clinical medicine. Perhaps they involve concepts that may seem antithetical to the practice of medicine, like financial management or starting a health-care business. That's okay. You're like me and like the other few students each year who choose to pursue a five-year MD/MBA at WashU.

Whether you want to design a new medical electronic records system, learn how to improve robotic surgery program operations, research health-care cost reduction initiatives, or set yourself up for a future that involves medical consulting to life sciences industries, there is a place for you at the Olin School of Business as well as the School of Medicine. The program accepts applicants from any year of medical school, offers tuition-free scholarships, and gives you a broad network of friendly colleagues looking to expand their impact through practical, creative business solutions to everyday problems. Plus, your summer before the program is spent gaining international business acumen while having a 90% paid trip to diverse locations such as Barcelona, Paris, and Santiago (Global Immersion Program, Summer 2022). Feel free to reach out with any questions about logistics or the MD/MBA career path!

Kwasi E., M4

Peer Advocates

Trained to know on-campus and off-campus resources, Peer Advocates serve as accessible, confidential listeners for all medical students with the goal of helping students understand and use mistreatment reporting systems, mental health professional support, and other student resources. Peer Advocates are nominated and elected by their classmates, and they strive to represent and support our diverse student body at WUSM.

Haley S., M4

Residency Applications – Working with Dean Diemer

The residency application process can be stressful, time-consuming, humbling, and exciting all at the same time. So much work has gone into building this application and now you're seeing the culmination of your work! It's your time to shine! Luckily for us, we have Dean Diemer and Angie MacBryde in the Office of Career Counseling to help guide us through the process. We start meeting as third-year students (later in Phase 2 for the new curriculum) to help define our interests, shape our schedules, and find the right mentors in our fields. Meetings become more frequent as applications get submitted and interviews begin. They are both reliable resources for us to answer questions, review materials, and help connect us with other faculty (in and out of WashU) to help us land where we fit best. You're going to love working with them both as you navigate the residency application process.

Karim S., M4

Support for Each Other, As a Class

It's hard for me to think of a more supportive community than my fellow classmates here at WashU. When it comes to school, we're incredibly collaborative — there is a collective understanding that working together, and not competing with each other, is the key to our success. You can always find someone to study with, especially when the content gets tougher, and people eagerly share their notes, Anki decks, and other resources with each other. Classmates not just from your year but years above will go out of their way to connect you with faculty and opportunities and get you involved in anything else you want to do at WashU, and the support extends beyond medical school. We support each other through the small and large struggles of everyday life and look out for each other socially, mentally, and emotionally. We're all bonded by our shared experience at WashU, and it truly feels like you can turn to anyone for help, even if you don't always see them. We're a big family!

Akshay B., M1

The Big Sib Program

Before arriving on campus, all incoming M1s are paired up with at least one M2 to be their "Big Sib" and show them the ropes of transitioning to medical school and St. Louis. While everyone's relationship with their Big(s) looks a little different, it's a really great way to start making new friends. I could not be more grateful for my Bigs! They have brought so much joy to my WashU experience. They are my go-to people for advice, encouragement, or a good laugh. It always brightens my day to see them around campus, and I've gotten to meet so many upperclassmen through them. Medical school is tough, so having someone you can turn to who understands exactly what you're going through is what makes the Big Sibs program so meaningful.

Jesse P., M1

UWorld/Amboss/Other Resources

WashU provides us with a free subscription to UWorld for nearly three years, which is quite unique compared to other schools. Additionally, we have Amboss ambassadors in nearly every class who work with Amboss, another great Q bank and resource with excellent Anki integration, to get free trial periods, class discounts (up to 30-40% off), etc. Finally, the Class Resources Development Group has a collection of resources, including notes from previous years, Anki decks from previous years, textbooks, and various other Step 1 and Step 2 resources. Safe to say, you can choose to study from a large variety of free or greatly discounted resources provided by WashU.

Read S., M2

Feedback Integration

Always Improving – Overview from the M1 Medical Education Representative

WUSM takes improving the Gateway Curriculum and student feedback very seriously. As medical education representative (MER), I am in and out of many meetings with administration and faculty leaders discussing ways that we can improve. Some of these meetings are solely focused on student feedback. This feedback comes from the whole class, and is presented by myself as well as the various module and thread liaisons. Each module is changed every year based on prior feedback, so you can be sure that the Gateway Curriculum is always improving.

Brian D., M1

End-of-Module Feedback

At the end of each module, a select number of students are randomly sent a survey. In this survey, students give confidential feedback about the entire module. We rate classes, professors, required preparation, learning formats, and much more. We also have the opportunity to write out what we liked about the module and what we think should be improved.

Michelle L., M1

Session Feedback

The session feedback surveys are a testament to how much WashU values student opinions. This is reflected by improvements to the curriculum year after year, which ultimately sets students up for success. The opportunity for feedback represents the broader theme of collaboration between faculty and students fostered at WashU!

Blake K., M1

Module Liaisons

Being a module liaison in the Gateway Curriculum was one the best ways to get involved in leadership early on and make connections with peers, faculty, and the education team. I loved getting the chance to represent our class, hear feedback from students, and have the ability to make actionable changes to our curriculum in real time. The most surprising thing to me was how approachable professors were and how willing they were to adapt their curriculum to make sure that students had a deep understanding of the material and more intentional learning experiences. The commitment for this role was relatively low and short term, but the impact you can have is very high — so I highly recommend keeping it in mind!

Dani W., M1

Real-Time Feedback on Exam Questions

I really appreciate the ability to submit real-time feedback on exam questions. Being able to elaborate your thoughts on a question or report a possible mistake saves me a ton of stress when taking exams. I definitely feel like WashU takes us medical students seriously, values our feedback and opinions, and uses them to constantly improve their curriculum. This is just one example (of many) of what that feedback looks like!

Ameer H., M1

Thread Liaisons

The Gateway Curriculum is composed of 18 different threads, from pharmacology to health systems science, that are “woven” together to form our full preclinical experience. Each thread comes up as it is relevant and ties into the module we are in. Three of the threads — anatomy, clinical skills, and health, equity, and justice (HEJ) — have specific student liaisons. These liaisons work closely with their re-

spective faculty to collect student feedback and continue to improve the curriculum. WashU takes this feedback very seriously and we have already seen changes from thread liaison feedback used for improvements during our first year here.

Ben A., M1

Study Styles

Anki

Anki is love, Anki is life. Anki is a flashcard software with an internal algorithm that determines how often you see a certain flashcard over time, depending on how easy or difficult the card is for the user. You can download pre-made decks, or you can make your own flashcards to fill in any relevant knowledge gaps. For our pre-clinical curriculum, I've found it to be my main resource for studying and memory recall. A bit after school started, I downloaded the AnKing deck, a massive, well-organized, and publicly available deck, and I've been unsuspending cards by tags that correspond to the content from the day's lecture. I often modify my cards with in-class lecture diagrams and slides, and I supplement my Anki studying with relevant third-party-resource videos, like those from Boards and Beyond or Pathoma. Anki is my main studying tool and helps me review material for a few hours a day in a consistent, long-term manner. And, for me, there's no better way to end a hard day of pounding my spacebar 500 times than reading the pop-up notification, "Congratulations! You have finished this deck for now."

John H., M1

Going to Class

I prefer to go to class because I focus better in class than I do listening to lectures at 2x speed after the fact. Do not get me wrong, I will still re-listen to lectures at 2x, but I will focus on the parts that confused me during class. Going to class allows you to ask and answer questions in real time. I also think it gives you a better idea of what was emphasized by the professor. For me, it was a good habit to get into that ensures that I see all class material at least once, and it helped me develop a consistent routine. However, I will say, even if you do go to class, you do not always have to pass on other opportunities for the sake of always being in class. Keystone does a good job of delineating what lectures involve more class participation in our schedules. If I see a class that is strictly lecture and is not required that is interfering with a volunteer opportunity that I am passionate about, I am much more comfortable skipping a class than I was in undergrad.

Elizabeth S., M1

Skipping Class

Going to class???? Excuse me????????? Could not be me, bro. Real talk, not going to class is a viable option at WashU but requires more discipline than you might think. Skipping class in the morning means I need to motivate myself to study the lectures on my own later. While it does take some will power to do work without the structure of a class environment, skipping class means you can study how you want (watch lectures at warp speed, read the slides, supplement with third-party resources, etc.) and at a time that is most convenient for you. This is especially helpful for someone who is not a morning person and who typically does not retain information during early morning classes. I've also found that as time goes on, more people discover what works for them which often involves not going to class. Basically, figure out how you want to study and go for it!

Michael Y., M1

Traditional Methods

I feel attacked by the title of this section so I'm going to call these old school study methods. While I do tend to attend around 90% of lectures in person and on Zoom, I find that I don't retain information through passive learning — just listening or watching video. So, I download the lecture slides and take notes on the PDF files while the lecturer is speaking. But of course, that only works enough for me to say, "this seems vaguely familiar." In order to fully understand and retain the information that I've learned, I must write detailed and tedious notes (pages upon pages) based on the lecture slides and/or assigned readings. I comfort myself with the thought that at least I'm hip enough to use an iPad and a bootleg Apple pen — I'm no caveman. I'm not sure if I can endorse specific products here so I'll just say SingleNote is a pretty good free option and while you have to pay for an expanded version of FineNotes, it's a decent investment. If this sounds like a time-consuming, arthritis-inducing, leaves-you-on-the-verge-of-tears kind of process — well ... it is. Bet you thought there'd be a reversal there. I wouldn't call this a sustainable study method, but it works for me and the results speak for themselves — I'm still here ... or am I?

Adeola A., M1

Study Locations

Becker Library

Lots of people have negative feelings towards Becker Library as a study space and I get it, I do. If you choose to haunt the basement level, you may lose track of the days amid the rows on rows of stacks, taunted by the broken coffee machine, and reevaluating your life choices. Perhaps you'll choose to study on the first floor — you masochist. I've stared into the depths of the soulless eyes of a first-floor

dweller who has spent 10+ hours at the same table, in the same chair, watching people come and go but unable to do the same. Those poor things. Alternatively, you can venture up to the second floor where you'll likely feel too exposed at the group study tables or the third floor where the silence of the quiet study space will oppress you. I shudder at the thought. If you've read this far, good for you. I'll let you in on the secret of the best study spot in Becker (and dare I say, all of campus). It's the Center for the History of Medicine. If you can make it past the terror of those other places, you'll find yourself in an oasis of warm tones, wood panels, and historic medical devices which provide great distractions from studying. There are group study tables and individual study spaces if you want to be antisocial. And the best part is that not many people use this space so you can blast music, take a dance break, ruminate on the meaning of life with no one watching. Darn, I may have just blown up my own spot.

Adeola A., M1

Carrels (On Campus)

If you are an enthusiastic on-campus studier like me, you will love the carrels at WashU School of Medicine! I prefer to separate my living and study spaces, and the carrels are the perfect study environment away from home. There are spaces for every need — individual workstations, small conference rooms, larger classrooms (with standing desks!), and multiple common spaces with abundant natural light and stunning views of campus. Many of these areas contain whiteboards and projectors/screens to accommodate all learning styles and facilitate collaboration. One of the highlights of my school week includes watching Zoom lectures with friends (masked and socially distanced) in the larger classrooms. It's amazing that we have access to spaces that enable us to safely simulate an in-person lecture during weeks when we have few in-person sessions scheduled.

The carrels address wellness needs too; on the third and fourth floors, there are student lounges with a nap pod, massage chair, cozy couches, and a kitchenette equipped with a Keurig, refrigerator, and microwave. Occasionally, there will be leftover food from events or homemade treats from classmates, which are lovely pick-me-ups. Whether you are looking for a quiet, individual study grind or a venue to study with friends, the carrels have it all. I would absolutely recommend exploring them as you acclimate to medical school!

Jessica G., M2

Coffee Shops (Off Campus)

Do you feel sick of Zoom classes and late-night study sessions at home? Going to campus can be super motivating and fun, but exam week is around the corner, and the vibes on campus are just not immaculate. This is when I tend to escape the med school bubble and go to cute local coffee shops and libraries. My go-to coffee shops are Northwest Coffee and Rise. (If you could see these places, you would never leave!) I also took a suggestion from one of our Health, Equity and

Justice leads (thanks, Audrey!) and checked out the gorgeous Central Library in downtown St. Louis! Think Dark Academia YouTube playlist except it has come to life, and you get to study there — for free.

Lyra M., M2

Coffee Shops (On Campus)

I've gotten pretty into studying in coffee shops, and luckily there are some good options around campus. There's a Kaldi's Coffee on the ground level of the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) that has really good coffee and food. It's a great spot to hang out or work. There is also a Starbucks nearby, and while we all like to pretend we don't like it, we admit they have good coffee. There are also other Kaldi's locations in the Mid Campus Center building and just 8–10 minutes from campus.

Stockton T., M2

FLTC/Lounge

Becker Library!? But I haven't even met her! For real — I don't go there. I literally moved a whole study table into the heart of the student lounge where the TV and the couches are because it has the best vibes; floor to ceiling windows, lots of natural light, and a beautiful view of St. Louis. Am I at school or on vacation? I don't know.

Melissa V., M1

Studying at Home

Since coming to medical school, I have been most productive while studying at home. I am able to grab snacks and coffee more easily while in my apartment. In addition, I have my cat to keep me company while I catch up on lectures. Studying at home also allows me to take quick study breaks or the occasional much-needed nap. As an aside, the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) where our classes are held and Becker Library can get cold, so I often have to put on a coat if I study there for too long.

Jessica B., M1

Social Events

American Heart Association Red Dress Affair

As part of our continued effort to raise awareness about women's health issues, American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) holds an annual Red Dress Fundraiser for the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women movement. The event is the largest student-run fundraiser at the school. The night is super fun and includes a silent auction, a photo booth, speeches, and dance competitions. It is a great excuse to dress up in fancy clothing, and all proceeds go towards a meaningful cause!

Sofia C., M2

MedBall

A convivial carousing that some have described as “the most fun I’ve had since neuroanatomy lab” and “the most compelling reason to attend WashU”, WashU’s annual MedBall channels classiness and buffoonery in all the best ways — think Hogwarts’ Yule Ball with a sprinkle of high school prom. A completely student-planned event, MedBall offers student and faculty a break to enjoy a delectable multi-course dinner, flavorful libations, a live swing band, and a dance-able DJ for a night full of dining, drinking (responsibly, of course), and dancing the night away. If you’ve ever wanted to see a dean do the Dougie or show off your Stanky Legg to your surgical attending, this is your chance!

This wonderful tradition goes back decades and has long been promoting interactions between faculty and medical students. It is a great opportunity for students to get involved in school programming and to provide lifelong memories for you, your classmates, and your professors.

Adam S., M2

Society Social Events

Societies are one of many incredible things that make WashU so beautiful and unique. Each society has its own budget that is used to plan events that encourage social interactions between its members. I’ve been to St. Louis Blues games, ice skating, picnics, field days, and many more, all of which were sponsored by WashU. These events give students the unique opportunity to mingle and talk with members of other classes and faculty, all of whom are in a society. Once or twice a year we will do a cross society event where members of all three societies are invited, and it is a huge picnic filled with delicious food, drinks, and, most importantly, laughs.

Joseph R., M1

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 coat.
- 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 our wellness model, which highlights six categories: Academic, Physical, Social, Spiritual, Financial, and Mental. 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



From left, Morgan P., Amisha P., John Steven L.E., Jennifer B., and Joel O. celebrate their pediatric residency placements on Match Day.



First-year medical students gather for a group photo in the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center.



The entering class of 2022's MSTP cohort.



Students engage in clinical and classroom activities on the Medical Campus, shown in spring from the border of Forest Park.



Student Groups

There are more than 60 student-run organizations focused on our diverse interests and hobbies. There are so many opportunities to explore your interests and serve in leadership.

SECTION EDITOR: DANI WILDER

Advocacy and Community Outreach

American Medical Association

WUSM's chapter of the American Medical Association (AMA) seeks to involve WUSM students in local, state, and federal policymaking pertaining to health care. We work with the St. Louis Metropolitan Medical Society, Missouri State Medical Association, and the AMA Medical Student Section to write resolutions related to physician practice, public health, research, and other areas of medicine. We also fund students to attend the AMA Medical Student Section Annual and Interim meetings and help our members get involved on national AMA standing committees.

Gino D., M2

American Medical Women's Association

If you are interested in gender equity in medicine, mentorship, professional development, or community engagement, American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) is the group for you! As one of the longest-standing and largest student organizations at WUSM, AMWA provides programming year-round in all of these areas and more. We host events in collaboration with other student groups to support mutual goals, and we have multiple long-standing relationships with community organizations educating young women in the St. Louis area. Our AMWA chapter is only one of many in the organization's national network; we encourage you to connect with us when you come to St. Louis!

Rachel K., M2

Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association

The Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) is an affinity group that brings together medical students who support the Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIIDA) experience. We host holiday celebrations (Diwali, Lunar New Year) and social gatherings with food, drinks, and performances. They are a great way to connect with your peers while celebrating diversity at WashU. There are also regional and national conferences that feature speakers and poster board presentation opportunities! These events are a great way to travel and meet professionals who can provide great insight from their experiences navigating medicine. Locally, APAMSA offers great service opportunities like translation services for a Chinese language free clinic.

Tim B., M1

CHOICES for Youth in Detention

CHOICES (Choosing Healthy Options In our Community, Environment, and Schools) for Youth in Detention is an innovative outreach effort dedicated to improving the health and wellbeing of incarcerated teens. The program visits the St. Louis Juvenile Detention Center weekly to present health-related topics to the teens there. These sessions are unique because they are structured as conversations surrounding cases or scenarios, rather than formal lectures. I like volunteering through CHOICES because it is incredibly humbling to have the kids open up about their experiences to you. We currently have presentations on safe sex, mental health, toxic stress, healthy relationships, and addiction. Overall, CHOICES gives WUSM students the unique opportunity of working with this marginalized population and provides them with a powerful introduction to disparities in health literacy, obstacles in health education, and issues in correctional medicine.

Nadia A., M1

Global Health & Medicine

WUSM Global Health & Medicine (GH&M) is devoted to providing students with global health education and opportunities to work abroad conducting research or participating in clinical rotations. We organize mentorship talks with WashU faculty, topic-specific lecture series (e.g., lectures on antimicrobial resistance in spring 2022), annual symposia (e.g., human rights symposium), and share other global health opportunities hosted virtually or on-campus here at WashU. Our expanding network of international faculty, an array of different programs, and funding for student projects enables WUSM students to broaden their perspectives as future physicians by participating in research and health care in other parts of the U.S. and around the world.

Jingjing Z., M2

Health Career Collaborative

The mission of the Health Career Collaborative (HCC) is to provide mentorship, engaging health curriculum, and exposure to health careers to URIM high school students in the St. Louis community. Our current primary partner is Innovation School at Cool Valley in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. We follow a cohort of students over the course of at least one year (ideally from 10th grade until graduation). Topics covered in our curriculum this last semester include sexual health, cardiovascular disease, the renal system, and general college prep. Our goal is to provide hands-on, experiential learning, and expose students to health care options they may not know about.

Kourtney B., M2

Institute for Healthcare Improvement

The Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) is focused on quality improvement and patient safety in medicine. We hold lunch talks, brewery tours (focusing on system science), activities, and workshops to identify how errors in patient care occur and what can be done to minimize them. We also focus on improving the quality of patient care through symposia on how to care for the whole patient, listening to patient stories, and interprofessional collaboration.

Kourtney B., M2

Latino Medical Student Association

The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), here at WUSM and nationwide, aims to support medical students that are working towards providing equitable care to the Latin population. This organization is open to all from any background; we have had the opportunity to connect with our local Latin community and across LMSA chapters at other nearby medical schools. This has personally helped me find mentorship and learn ways to continue staying connected with my culture after moving to a new city. We plan social events to provide a sense of community with each other and provide service opportunities in our local St. Louis community. LMSA also coordinates Medical Spanish, a popular elective course that allows medical students to learn Spanish in a clinical setting and eventually become certified as interpreters. We look forward to meeting and welcoming you soon!

Amanda M.H., M1

LGBTQmed

As someone from Texas, it does say something that I was worried about moving to the Midwest and being part of the LGBTQ+ community. It makes me happy to say how wrong I was for thinking I'd be more isolated. LGBTQmed is an organization here that not only creates a tight-knit community but also has been around for a long time and has strong ties with the administration and OUTmed. Every year they host small parties with faculty to foster mentorship but also simply visibility. The community is not invisible here and this year alone has nearly doubled in size. From a professional standpoint, there are networking events, lunch talks, and teams of physicians dedicated to serving specific groups within the community from those who serve the gender-diverse population to those who just serve the community in general. St. Louis as a city has a present community located in the Grove (south of campus) and a robust community of people ranging in gender, sexual orientation, and expression. The group fosters that close supportive community within WashU in order to launch into the greater STL community with the comfort of knowing you already have one supporting you.

Luke C., M1

LouHealth

LouHealth was created as a policy and public health advocacy response to COVID-19. We partner with local organizations that work in three main areas: health access and equity, criminal justice reform, and intimate partner violence survivor advocacy. In addition to partnering with local organizations to create volunteer opportunities, we work on structural policy change and organize trainings (like trauma-informed care when treating survivors of intimate partner violence or Narcan administration). Additionally, LouHealth includes students across graduate programs (MD, PT, OT, PharmD, etc.) and across different schools, including St. Louis University and University of Health Sciences and Pharmacy, so it is a great way to connect and collaborate with peers outside of the MD program. Feel free to visit our website (louhealthstl.org) or social media platforms (@louhealthstl) to see some of our current work.

Jon I., M2

Medical Students for Choice

Medical Students for Choice (MSFC) is an international organization dedicated to ensuring medical students are educated about abortion and reproductive health care at large. The MSFC chapter at WashU is involved in advocacy, community organizing, and outreach for reproductive justice here in St. Louis and on a national level. We coordinate lunch talks and panels with abortion providers and reproductive justice activists, canvass for pro-choice candidates, attend local protests and fundraisers, and advocate for abortion rights protections in state and federal legislation. MSFC also hosts an annual Conference on Family Planning, which includes workshops on IUD insertion and manual vacuum aspiration.

Caroline C., M1

Pediatric Life Savers

Pediatric Life Savers (PLS) is a great opportunity to make an impact on families receiving care at St. Louis Children's Hospital! Parents of children in the neonatal intensive care unit often report that having basic infant CPR training would make them feel more comfortable going home with their babies. Volunteering with PLS, you have the opportunity to teach infant CPR classes to parents, improve peoples' experiences in the hospital, and potentially save lives. Volunteers usually teach about one class per month and it can be a great way to change gears from studying. If you are interested in pediatrics or education, PLS is an excellent way to get involved and make a difference!

John B., M1

Science and Health Care Abilities Coalition

Science and Health Care Abilities Coalition (SHAC) has two main goals: it provides a supportive space for disabled/chronically ill/neurodivergent/Deaf students to share advice and experiences and works towards making science/health care and WUSM more accessible and inclusive for patients and providers. Some of our projects so far include updating the technical standards to be more inclusive, pushing for disability to be part of diversity efforts, and integrating more disability content into the MD curriculum. We are also affiliated with national organizations, such as Medical Students with Disability and Chronic Illness.

Peppar C., M2

Sun Protection Outreach Teaching by Students

Sun Protection Outreach Teaching by Students (SPOTS) educates children and teens about early detection and prevention of skin cancer. SPOTS was founded here in St. Louis as a collaboration between WashU and SLU, and it has expanded to many medical schools across the country. Over the years, students have put together a fun and engaging presentation that debunks common myths about skin cancer, summarizes key details and statistics, and highlights how sun protection can decrease the risk of developing skin cancer. We work with schools around St. Louis to schedule many of these presentations throughout the year. It is such a fun way to make a meaningful impact in the community.

Quinn P., M1

Sustainability Club

In 2015, the WHO named climate change the greatest threat to global health. U.S. health care contributes substantially to environmental perturbation, and, if considered a country, it would rank 13th in total carbon emissions. The goal of WUSM Sustainability Club is to educate students about the health impacts of climate change, climate change mitigation (e.g. reducing waste), and adaptation (e.g. resilience to weather-related disasters) in medicine. Currently our efforts include the development of climate change content for the medical curriculum, climate change and health lunch talks, and connecting students with sustainability-related volunteering and advocacy opportunities.

Joshua P.C., M2

The Perinatal Project

The Perinatal Project matches first-year medical students with pregnant patients in the Antepartum Unit. The goal of the program is to foster relationships where medical students can learn about the experience of pregnancy and expectant mothers can build longitudinal relationships with students, gaining an advocate throughout their pregnancy and delivery. We host lunch talks for students to learn more about prenatal care and women's health. The Perinatal Project is a great opportunity for

students who are interested in obstetrics/gynecology or women's health, as well as for students interested in getting experience building relationships with patients and becoming a patient advocate.

Nicolette P., M2

The Saturday Scholars Program

The Saturday Scholars Program provides an annual forum for high school students, particularly from the St. Louis Public Schools and a number of county schools, to learn about human anatomy both in a lecture and lab environment, while interacting with WashU medical students. As a medical student, I help run lectures, instruct anatomy lab, or teach clinical skills on Saturdays with these high school students. One of my all-time favorite goals was to "aspire to inspire" and with this program I really get a firsthand opportunity to inspire, mentor, and foster interests in health care within our community.

Dani W., M1

Faith-Based

Catholic Student Center

I have been an active member of the Catholic Student Center (CSC) for over five years since starting undergrad at WashU. During undergrad, I received endless support and companionship from other students there, the campus ministers, and Father Gary, the priest who gives the majority of the Masses at the CSC. In addition to the two Sunday Masses (11:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.), there are weekday events almost every night, some of which include: Mass and Soup on Tuesdays and Fridays, Adoration on Wednesdays, and Weekly Rosary on Fridays. The CSC is also very accommodating in that there are multiple Mass times and locations on the Holy Days of Obligation; this makes it very doable to attend Mass on these days, despite a busy school/work schedule.

Even though the CSC is located on the Danforth Campus, the campus ministers and Fr. Gary are very good at making their presence on the Medical Campus; setting up a time to have a 1-on-1 could not be easier. There is also a Graduate Student and Young Adult (GSYA) group at the CSC, which meets regularly for events like movie nights, Happy Hours, and talks on how to incorporate your faith into your professional life. Being a part of GSYA allows you to meet other medical students as well as graduate students, PT and OT students, and young adults who share your faith.

The CSC has been and continues to be a source of never ending support for me. If you were involved in a close-knit faith community at your undergrad and are concerned about finding the same thing if/when you attend medical school at WUSM, I encourage you to pay a visit to the CSC. Many of my classmates who came from other undergrads to attend WashU said the CSC staff welcomed

them extremely nicely as new medical students and they were surprised at how much programming the CSC put on, both for undergrads and graduate students. If you are interested in getting involved and have any questions, you can reach out to Fr. Gary at jones@washucsc.org or Jen Quinn, the Medical Campus Minister at jenniferquinn@washucsc.org.

Jessica B., M1

Christian Medical Association

Christian Medical Association (CMA) is a very welcoming place where I've gotten to interact with a wide variety of people as we build community. Every week I look forward to taking a break from studying in order to grab food with friends and talk about faith, school, family, etc. I also get to listen to practicing health professionals discuss various aspects of faith and how it interconnects with their professional lives. Whether you're a Christian or questioning, this a great community to be a part of.

Yande M., M1

Jewish Medical Student Association

Jewish Medical Student Association (JMSA) is the go-to group for Jewish life on the WashU Medical Campus. Need help figuring out where to go for services? We've got you. Want to play Jewish geography? We're your people. Miss your bubbe's cooking? We'll (try to) make matzo ball soup that would make her proud. Whether you're secular, reform, conservative, orthodox, "just Jewish", or any other movement, you're welcome here. We can't wait to meet you.

Arielle S., M1

Medical Muslim Student Association

I co-founded the Medical Muslim Students Association because I saw a need for structured support of Muslim students on campus. Since its formation last year, we have held multiple bonding events including ice cream socials and big dinners for Ramadan and Eid. We have also worked to connect Muslim students to resident mentors as well as starting a pre-medical pipeline program with the Danforth Campus Muslim Student Association. We are excited to continue building and cementing a strong Muslim community on the Medical Campus!

Ahmed H., M2

Interdisciplinary

Graduate Professional Council

The Graduate Professional Council (GPC) is made up of 1-2 representatives from each professional school at Wash U (medicine, law, business, etc). We meet once a month on the Danforth Campus to discuss solutions to issues facing our professional student population (such as childcare and transportation) and also organize large events to foster relationships between the schools! It's a great way to get involved and see how you fit into the larger Wash U bubble!

Caroline K., M1

Health Economics and Policy Interest Group

The mission of Health Economics and Policy Interest Group/Students for a National Health Program (HEPIG/SNaHP) is to bring educational opportunities, awareness, and robust discussion on topics that drive the field of medicine and health care, but that our classmates may not get time to learn or interface with otherwise during their medical educations. We have a refreshing amount of flexibility on the different topics we can cover, so feel free to hit that submit button for our leadership board! Past events include a health economics primer, comparing health delivery systems (U.S. vs. other countries), a social worker panel discussing financial barriers, advocating for implementing Medicare expansion, and debating dialysis policy. Future events include dual-degree panels, intro talks, and more!

Tim H., M2

Hippocrene

Hippocrene is WUSM's premier literary and arts journal. We accept submissions from all students within graduate programs at WUSM and publish once annually. In addition to circulating throughout the Medical Campus, our print issues are distributed to all prospective medical students during their interviews.

Jackson B., M2

Medical French

Did you ever take a French class? Are you interested in French culture, or simply international health as a whole? Medical French (MedFrench) would love to have you! No matter your French language level, you are welcome to join us for sessions that span such wide topics as French health care, nutrition, and film festivals! It's a great opportunity for anyone interested in the culture to learn more, as well as for those who do speak the language to keep practicing with speakers of all proficiencies.

Priscilla C., M2

Medical Spanish

MedSpan is a student-lead, Spanish learning program that encourages students to improve their communication skills with Spanish-speaking patients. WashU offers resources that students have access to as they're preparing for their certification test, and covers the cost. This also serves as a great way to learn from and about other members of the WashU community while making you better equipped to serve underrepresented individuals in the community.

Jonathan M., M1

Public Health, Philosophy, Policy, and Education Research

While most med students pursue clinical, basic, or translational research at Washington University School of Medicine, there are definitely opportunities for research beyond these fields, like in public health/health equity, bioethics, policy, and education. The research itself is loads of fun! I myself do bioethics/philosophy research with Dr. Jay Malone, which involves lots of reading and writing (and publishing!) about topics like loneliness, patient-physician relationships, and moral obligations over wine. In the EXPLORE segment of the Gateway Curriculum, there are pathways — i.e., faculty mentors, resources, and training — in these areas, and Dean Chung is wonderful at providing information about current research projects and faculty in those areas. It might be a bit more difficult to access a non-clinical/basic science research project perfectly aligned with your interests, so you may have to look around and proactively reach out to faculty with a similar project. But, you'll most likely receive a super positive response and find your research niche here at WashU.

John H., M1

Sling Health

Sling Health is WashU's biotech/health-tech startup accelerator that offers students up to \$5000 in funding to start a venture while in medical school. Sling gives students the opportunity to work with students across all of WashU's schools and to get feedback on their venture from physicians, professors, and successful entrepreneurs in the St. Louis startup and venture community. Sling allows students to work on their venture longitudinally throughout the entirety of their med school career, as a Sling project can be brought into Explore through the Innovation (or Research!) pathway. Sling has also allowed me and other team leads to travel to conferences in Honolulu, Austin, and Ann Arbor to network with other students interested in technology and entrepreneurship. As well, Sling has given me the opportunity to liaison with organizations such as the American Medical Association and with venture capitalists across the country to expand the network of physician-innovators. Regardless of whether or not you have any finance/business

experience coming into medical school, Sling is an incredible way to learn the basics and work on a cool project in your free time (I can promise that building something is more fun than just grinding Anki day in and day out) and think about what you want your career as a physician to look like to best suit your unique interests and skills.

Victoria M., M2

The Hippocratic Forum

The Hippocratic Forum (HF) is a group of doctors and medical trainees committed to rediscovering ideals in medicine and working at their best. It was started by a group of trainees from institutions around the country interested in exploring ways of cultivating a deeper sense of meaning and flourishing in the medical profession (i.e., how to be both happy AND a doctor). The approach combines insights from cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), neuroscience, and classical philosophy/virtue theory. In summer 2022 we started a chapter of HF here at WashU, which hosts seminars and monthly lunch discussions on topics related to ideals in medicine, including wisdom, cognitive reframing, mindfulness/interior recollection, work-life harmony, justice, courage, and more.

Justin S., M2

Interest Groups

Aerospace Medicine

Wash U's Aerospace Medicine interest group is a chapter of the national Aerospace Medicine Student and Resident Organization (AMSRO), which educates and advocates for aerospace medicine and human performance among students/residents around the world. If you are interested in space, aviation, diving, and medicine in extreme environments, AMSRO is the organization for you to learn more about opportunities in research, education, and career pathways. We host in-person and virtual seminars, collaborate with AMSRO chapters around the country, and watch films/documentaries about space medicine. Our faculty mentor, Dr. Sheyna Gifford, has spent over a year on a Hawaiian volcano simulating a Mars mission and given several TED talks about space medicine. She is a great resource, fascinating person, and well connected in the aerospace medicine community.

James B., M2

Association of Women Surgeons

The Association of Women Surgeons (AWS) at Washington University School of Medicine is an incredible organization that focuses on functional interventions to improve access to surgical exposure, education, and mentorship for female medical students considering pursuing surgery. AWS connects students with

women surgical residents and faculty through small group discussions, panels, skills workshops, and specialty interest “families.” AWS also provides tangible resources — rentable skills kits, ring lights, funding, a “bulletin” of surgery-related opportunities through the @washu_AWS instagram, and more — to lessen financial and accessibility limitations to students’ academic and professional growth in medical school.

AWS member

Cardiovascular Interest Group

The Cardiovascular Interest Group (CVIG) works with cardiothoracic surgeons in the department to host events for students interested in Cardiothoracic Surgery or Surgery in general. Some of our past events have included dinner with faculty, a pig heart dissection lab, a simulated vascular anastomosis activity, and more! If you are interested in the enthralling field of Cardiothoracic Surgery, or if you are just exploring career options, the CVIG event has lots of fun programming for you to gain mentoring, experiential learning, and opportunities to bond with faculty and peers! We also have the best catering of all the student interest groups.

Sarah M., M1

Dermatology Interest Group

The Dermatology Interest Group (DIG) is a club that aims to expand education and involvement within the field of Dermatology. Group members participate in roundtable discussions with faculty, lectures from expert guest speakers, and research and volunteer opportunities across the many disciplines of dermatology.

Timothy F., M2

Emergency Medicine Interest Group

Interest groups in general are a great, low-stakes way to explore different specialties (or just learn fun new things, regardless of whether you expect to use them). I came in with an interest in emergency medicine, so I decided to check out Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG), and it’s been a great experience so far. There are more serious, career-development oriented events, like shadowing opportunities and an introductory panel with faculty. However, there are also plenty of events that are more fun than anything. Standouts include a toxicology tour at the St. Louis Zoo’s Herpetarium and a talk lightly poking fun at depictions of emergency medicine in movies and TV. There are also some events that are a mix of both, like emergency/trauma case simulations. Whether you’re seriously considering emergency medicine as a specialty (Lots of variety! No one calls you when you’re off shift! Fun people!) or just want to have fun and meet people, I’d highly recommend checking out EMIG.

Olivia S., M1

Obstetrics & Gynecology Interest Group

The Obstetrics & Gynecology Interest Group (OGIG) coordinates lunch talks, panel discussions, and other events related to all things OB/GYN. One of our most popular events is the annual OGIG Procedure Night, where students practice a variety of OB/GYN skills, including inserting IUDs and arm implants, delivering babies, doing ultrasounds and pap smears, and more. OGIG also organizes labor & delivery shadowing and networking opportunities with the OB/GYN residents and faculty.

Caroline C., M1

Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group

The Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group (OSIG) is one of many interest groups at Wash U that encourages exploration and learning into a specific specialty. At OSIG, we provide splinting and casting workshops, bone saw labs, research panels, every day trauma orthopedic surgery shadowing, and many more events throughout the year. Our goal is to encourage students to explore the wonderful field of bones, while having fun and making longstanding relationships with faculty and research advisors.

Joseph R., M1

Wilderness Medicine Interest Group

The Wilderness Medicine Interest Group (WMIG) is your place for all things wilderness! We host educational lectures on various wilderness medicine topics, organize hiking and backpacking trips, as well as oversee an impressive inventory of items that can be rented by anyone at the school to use for camping or backpacking trips. The most exciting thing we do is organize, train, and send teams to MedWAR — a regional wilderness medicine race in Tennessee or Michigan consisting of a day-long orienteering race with associated medically-related challenge stations along the way!

Stockton T., M2

This list is not exhaustive. We have many other medical interest groups including:

ENT/Otolaryngology Interest Group (ENTIG)

Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)

GI Interest Group (GIIG)

Infectious Disease Interest Group (IDIG)

Internal Medicine Interest Group

Medical Genetics Interest Group (MGIG)

Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation (KTGF) Child Psychiatry Interest Group

Oncology Interest Group (OIG)

Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG)

Pediatrics Interest Group (PIG)

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMRIG)

Plastic Surgery Interest Group (PSIG)
 Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (PsychSIGN)
 Radiology Interest Group (RIG)
 Student Interest Group in Neurology (SIGN)

Medical Student Government

At-Large Members of the Medical Student Government

As an at-large member of Medical Student Government (MSG), you have an opportunity to get involved with shaping student life at Washington University School of Medicine. In the position, you attend meetings with other M1 MSG representatives and contribute to discussions about class activities. Also, you attend meetings related to your at-large member position. You can either be the At-Large Member for the Committee on the Oversight of Medical Student Education and Phase 1 Operations (attends meetings with administration about academic feedback) or the At-Large Member for the Health Equity and Anti-Racism Committee (attends meetings with administration about managing policies and actions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion at the school). Both positions provide a great opportunity to get involved and positively contribute to the medical school community.

Onyi O. and Leah T., M1s

Community Engagement Representative

Hey guys! My name is Caroline and I'm the M1 Community Engagement Representative (CER)! MSG is a great way to get more involved with the medical school, form great connections with your deans, and organize fun events for your classmates. As CER, I represent WUSM at Graduate Professional Council meetings, learn about issues affecting the WUSM and greater St. Louis community, and discuss solutions to problems affecting the whole graduate and professional student population. The most fun part about my position is planning social community engagement events, like Winter Frost, that helps foster communication between the various programs within the School of Medicine! We always have food, hot chocolate, and it's a great way to form inter-professional connections with your future colleagues.

As CER, I also serve on the Professional and Graduate Students Coordinating Committee (ProGrads) and the Health Professional Student Leadership Council (HPSLC). So if you are interested, CER is a great way to get to know people outside of your class. Even if you have never been on student government before (I had not before medical school), it is a great group of people and you can have a direct impact on your education!

Caroline K., M1

IT Liaison

As the IT liaison in the Medical Student Government (MSG), I help communicate between the class and the administration, such as the Educational Technology and Innovation Unit (ETIU) and the Office of Education (OE), about progress, updates, and issues with our current educational technology. It is a pretty neat role since it gives me the opportunity to be a spokesperson for our class in a unique setting and can directly offer suggestions and ideas to make our educational technology resources even better. It is definitely a role that you should keep your eye out for if you want to help contribute to improving the Gateway Curriculum and your class's learning experience as more and more aspects of our learning are weaved into technology!

Yazan R., M1

Medical Education Representative

The Medical Education Representative (MER) is a great role for students who are interested in improving the Gateway Curriculum and the experience of WashU students. As the MER, you are a voice for the questions and concerns of your class. The MER also attends a handful of monthly meetings and leads the other student liaisons who collect feedback from students. It's a good amount of work, but it is a rewarding position as the faculty and administrators really care about your feedback.

Brian D., M1

Officer of Student Representation

The Officer of Student Representation (OSR) is, without a doubt, the most fun role in MSG. In addition to being WUSM's representative to the AAMC's Organization of Student Representatives (hence the title OSR), the OSR is also the class wellness and professionalism representative. I like to think of the role as "instigator of appropriate whimsy". Whether it's convincing professors to wear costumes to class on Halloween, planning a gingerbread house decorating event, hosting the annual professionalism luncheon, or organizing a WashU Med Friendsgiving, the role of OSR is what you make of it. More than anything else, I view it as an opportunity to advocate for my classmates' needs, concerns, and wellness at the national and institutional level.

Arielle S., M1

Phase 1 President

Hi everyone, I'm Joey Krambs! I'm the Phase 1 Class President. If you're passionate about making your medical school experience, and that of your classmates, the best it can be, then I highly recommend running for this position! As class president you will sit on many committees aimed at improving the curriculum across phases. You will help coordinate interprofessional opportunities for classmates, and you will serve as a liaison between your class and the deans' offices.

From orientation to commencement, you can help connect people and make the time here memorable!

I will echo what our class Community Engagement Representative, Caroline K., said: Medical student government is a great group of people, directly impacting our medical education and experience. We are so excited to meet you all! We are here to support you, and we are happy to answer any questions you have. My email is jrkramps@wustl.edu.

Joey K., M1

Social Chairs

As a group of four social chairs, we work with the Student Affairs office and the rest of Medical Student Government (MSG) to plan fun events for our classmates. These range from anything small like gratitude notes to something bigger like a holiday party. We take suggestions and ideas for events that our classmate share with us to determine what we would like to plan. The role is really great to work on communicating with WashU administration, facilitate bonding with and among our classmates, and it is a relatively low-maintenance role. Students love to take any opportunity to hang out with each other in organized events (especially if there is food), so it is really rewarding to know that we contribute to the sense of community.

Alice J., M1

Wellness, Performance, and Social

ClimbRx

ClimbRx is WashU's graduate climbing club. It offers a discounted membership for students at a local climbing gym, Climb So iLL, with two locations 10 and 30 minutes away from the Central West End. Students often go together in groups, and the climbing community is very welcoming and supportive of climbers of all levels. Climbing is pretty popular among medical students for a reason — it's a full-body workout, great for making friends, and tons of fun all in one. ClimbRx also does a free climbing night about once a semester for those interested in trying it out, or for experienced climbers to show their friends the ropes. Pun intended.

Andrea O., M1

Dance

Whether you love to dance or just want a new way to relax, St. Louis and WashU have plenty of spaces and opportunities to dance. You can take classes at Consuming Kinetic Dance Company or explore the social dance scene at Club Viva and salsa the night away. Washington University School of Medicine Dance Club also organizes workshops with a variety of dance styles for students to take. If you have the time, you can also explore the multiple dance groups on the Danforth Campus. I personally joined the WashU Hip Hop Union (WUHHU) and did a K-pop

dance cover with PL4Y Dance Group. There's also weekly freestyling sessions with WU Cypher and opportunities to join the performing arts department through WU Dance Theatre or Dance Collective. Finally, there are plenty of cultural dance teams: Chinese dance through LNYF, Bhangra, WU Sauce, and the list goes on!

Ruth L., M1

Histones A Cappella

If you're the type of person who is always singing in their car, in their kitchen, or even just in the shower, we invite you to come join the Histones! We are a fully interdisciplinary a cappella group on the Medical Campus, and it's a great place to hang out, meet new people, and keep those vocal cords in use. Singing can be such a nice way to relieve the stress of medical school, with the added bonus of meeting people from all different programs and making new friends. You'll even get to use that hobby to brighten people's day, as we often get the opportunity to perform for patients and families in the hospital. No auditions necessary — as long as you love to sing, pop into one of our rehearsals sometime and check us out!

Priscilla C., M2

Kendo

Though the exercise and proximity to the Medical Campus are a bonus, I've received things much more valuable from Kendo, a Japanese martial art. I started in undergrad, and have loved the emphasis on values beyond strength, like discipline, mindfulness, respect, speed, and skill. As we tell ourselves, "With only strength, even a monkey could kill you with a sword." The club community has also been incredibly supportive and fun. The way of the sword is seldom walked alone, after all.

Lilly G., M1

Krebs Cyclers

Coming to St. Louis from Montana was a little daunting for me because most of my leisure activities revolve around outdoor activities and I just wasn't super sure what kind of outdoors things I could get up to in a midwestern city. After moving here in July, I quickly figured out that biking in Forest Park was going to be my go-to activity for getting outdoor time in. Forest Park is an incredible resource to have in our backyard. If you haven't heard yet, it's the largest urban park in the U.S., and is about 1.5 times the size of Central Park. Along the perimeter of this park is a gorgeous ~6-mile loop of paved bike trail, and there's plenty of bike trails and roads going throughout the park that you can easily go for a 20-mile ride just by doing a few meandering loops. There's a pretty active biking group of med students called the Krebs Cyclers (which is just ... **chef's kiss**) and I've mainly been biking with a couple of my M1 classmates which was a great way to get to know my classmates and it was the perfect way to familiarize myself with the Central West End, Forest Park, and out around the Clayton/DeMun areas when I first moved here.

Joey N., M1

Med School Musical

I did musical theatre in high school and college, and was so excited to find a medical school where I could continue this passion. The Med School Musical is actually a collaboration between all the health professional schools here — it's been so amazing having the opportunity to get to know people in other programs and build a community together. The rehearsal schedule is also very relaxed in a way that makes participating no-stress and all fun.

Bianca R., M1

Music in Medicine

The WUSM Music in Medicine Initiative is an organization composed of medical students who perform music as a form of community service and community-building. We perform regularly for patients at Barnes-Jewish Hospital, organize coffeehouses for student performances, and subsidize student tickets to music concerts and shows around the St. Louis area!

Allison K., M2

Narrative Medicine

I've been very pleased with the opportunity I've had to write and collaborate with a community of writers here at WashU. As leader of the Narrative Medicine Interest Group, I've led writing workshops with a group of passionate medical students, and encouraged students to submit writing to WUSM's very own Hippocrene Art and Literature Magazine. I've also gotten the chance to make connections with incredible medical humanities professors from the Danforth Campus, like Dr. Cislo and Dr. Arch, who have been generous enough to share and discuss complex humanities topics with medical students.

Judson E., M2

Playing an Instrument

I have been a musician for my whole life, and continuing to play in ensembles was something I was hoping to be able to continue upon coming to medical school. I was incredibly excited when I found out that medical students are more than welcome in any of the ensembles over on the Danforth Campus — both the Wind Ensemble and the Orchestra, as well as the smaller ensembles. Myself and another first-year medical student are both in the Wind Ensemble, and it is a great time every week to destress and make music with others! Rehearsals for Wind Ensemble are on Thursdays from 7–9:30 p.m., so it is a lower time commitment and easy to fit into our schedules. Additionally, those that want to participate in the Medical School Musical can join the pit orchestra! Logistically, the auditions for the Danforth ensembles usually occur the week before the Medical School Orientation, so just make sure you factor that into your arrival date or reach out to the ensemble manager to work something out!

Dante N., M2

WUSM Gaming Club (WUSM-GO)

We live in a society where medical students are constantly hustling. When I started medical school, I left my video games at home with the intent to be a real gunner (and also my Mom wouldn't let me bring them). Coming to WashU, I realized that the biggest hustle of them all is the hustle for happiness. With my mom none the wiser, I discovered WUSM-GO, WashU's gaming club. WUSM-GO brings together students and faculty of all years who enjoy playing all sorts of video and board games. Whether you want to relax after an exam or flex on your peers in a tournament bracket, WUSM-GO has got something for you. We host board game sessions, Smash Bros tournaments, and video game watch parties. Gaming is a great way to connect with your classmates through titles like Smash Bros, Mario Kart, Chess, and Trivial Pursuit, regardless of whether you are a seasoned eSports athlete or new to games in general. At the end of the day, the real WUSM-GO wins are the friends you made along the way.

Tim B., M1

WUMS Plus One

When I moved to St. Louis from Boston with my partner, we were both a little worried about how he would make friends and find social support in a new city where neither of us knew anyone. A year and a half later, we are both settled in and really happy with our friends and social support here in St. Louis. Part of that has come from WUMS Plus One, which is a student-led group focused on fostering community for medical students, their partners, and families. We host social events including picnics and dinner with the deans, where we can all come together to connect, and we also host partners-only social events as well. Medical school has its challenges, and our goal is to foster holistic wellness for both students and their loved ones.

Rosie R., M2

WUSM Wine Society

The WUSM Wine Society seeks to foster an appreciation for and knowledge of the art of wine-making and wine-tasting. Through various educational lessons, the Wine Society aims to increase medical students' wellness and to bring students together to learn about various types of wine, how to taste and identify tasting notes, and develop their wine palates.

Yuxiao X., M2

Yoga Club

Yoga Club is a great way to de-stress! A couple of times per month, there is a free yoga class offered to students. The teachers rotate every month, so you can try out a variety of yoga styles. When the weather is nice, the classes are outside in a park on campus. Yoga Club has been a fun and easy way to add physical activity to my week and hang out with my classmates!

Clara H., M2



Perspectives

Delve into the unique perspectives of our diverse student body — including our cultural backgrounds, relationships, and religion — and see how they impact the study of medicine.

SECTION EDITOR: JESSICA BIGLEY

Identities

Being a Disabled Student

As someone living with multiple chronic illnesses/disabilities, it was really important for me to go to a medical school/graduate school that had good health care coverage and the flexibility to work with students needing accommodations. The medical coverage here is phenomenal — everyone at Student Health is super friendly, there is essentially no wait time for appointments (you can get in and out within minutes!), Dr. Winters is always available after hours via email if any urgent matters arise, anything done at Student Health (blood work, tests, etc.) is fully covered, and most specialists within the WashU network are covered with only a \$20 copay. Dr. Winters is wonderful at coordinating care with all my providers, and helped me establish a medical team to manage my multiple chronic medical conditions (diagnosed both prior to and during my time at WashU). Dean Moscose is a true advocate for students needing accommodations — she arranged for me to get testing accommodations for a medical condition I had before medical school, advocated for me to be tested for a learning disability (which resulted in a learning disability diagnosis) after some academic difficulties during the first semester of medical school, helped me get a second set of accommodations for the learning disability, and also guided me through the enormous task of applying for accommodations for Step 1. Finally, there is a student group (Science and Health Care Abilities Coalition — SHAC) that supports chronically ill/disabled students in all programs at the School of Medicine and allies and works to improve health care for disabled people. Becoming doctors unfortunately does not make us immune to chronic conditions or disabilities, but I can confidently say that WashU is able to handle any and every situation that might come your way!

Peppar C., M2

Being Black

St. Louis is a city with a loaded history of racism, disparities based on race, and unequal access to opportunity for people of color (POC). WashU is an institution that is cognizant of their contribution to these harsh realities, and is invested in addressing these issues in the WashU community, as well as in the Missouri communities surrounding us. As a Black student, I feel immensely supported by Student National Medical Association (SNMA), the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and community organizations for POC, and know that my hopes for the betterment of POC in medicine and society are also a priority of theirs. Additionally, being in St. Louis, which has a vibrant POC community, has allowed me to interact with more POC organizations, communities, and individuals than I've ever had the opportunity to anywhere else I've lived. I feel empowered here, and I know that the fight for equality for POC is also being fought by my peers, educators, and mentors.

Ian M., M4

Being Hispanic/Latine

As a Latina raised on the East Coast, I came to St. Louis with a pretty hesitant attitude about how my cultural habits and attitudes would fit in with my new environment. I've never been happier to be proven wrong. There is a wonderful wealth of Latin-American heritage and culture in the city if you know where to look, from the delicious food (10/10 would recommend Fritanga STL, shout out to my motherland) to the markets and festivals that happen throughout the city. It's been incredible to explore and support all the Latin businesses in the area during my time here. I've also even been able to sustain my own traditions in my own home, as there are several international markets within the area where I can grab all the ingredients I need for home cooking!

Within the institution of WashU, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) and the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) have been amazing towards making me feel loved and welcomed as a minority student. The support and encouragement they have towards ensuring that students are able to represent their identities proudly is unparalleled. These organizations also afford us the opportunity to get involved with similar patient populations in the city where we can, ensuring that we can feel like a part of the local Latin community and create new cultural connections in our new home.

Priscilla C., M2

Being LGBTQIA+

As an openly gay man who has lived in the Midwest my entire life, I can attest that I have felt the most supported and included here in St. Louis and at WashU. Coming from Iowa, I never felt like I had a solid LGBTQ+ community for support, networking, or simply having fun. However, during the application process I instantly felt a level of love and acceptance I didn't feel other places. WashU was the only school I felt comfortable wearing black nail polish or keeping my piercings on during the interviews, which I think speaks volumes to the norms and values our faculty uphold. Now as an M1 I have been heavily involved in the LGBTQ+ community here, ranging from attending OutMed networking events at the home of one of our deans and fostering connections with my amazing queer classmates to volunteering and representing Wash U LGBTQMed at the Pride Festival. No matter if you want to go out to bars and see some drag shows, want networking or mentoring opportunities, or want to get involved in curriculum change and conversation with faculty regarding LGBTQ+ health care, I promise you will have ample opportunities to get involved. While St. Louis isn't perfect (nowhere is), there is a community of students, physicians, and community members here to support you!

Mitch O., M1

Being South Asian

Having both grown up and gone to college in St. Louis, I can tell you there are an abundance of opportunities to celebrate your South Asian heritage within the area. First, there are cultural events put on by both St. Louis University and WashU's Danforth Campus, which are open to all students. These include celebrations for Holi, Diwali, Navaratri, Onam, and many more. There are also cultural showcases put on by both universities where cultural dance (Garba/Bhangra/Raas/South), garb, and food is shared with the community.

In terms of restaurants, there are plenty of opportunities to sample South Asian cuisine in the area. The closest restaurant would probably be Rasoi. It is in the Central West End, so one could argue it is within walking distance. There is also an abundance of international grocery stores nearby, such as Seema, Ambica Foods, and Bombay Bazaar, if you are looking for ingredients or snacks.

Finally, the biggest thing we love to do is share our culture with other classmates. I'm glad to have classmates with whom I can dance, discuss Bollywood movies, and even enjoy South Asian cuisine!

Aravinda G., M4

Being Trans

I'm a first-year student here at WashU, so I can only really speak about the first two modules, and I can say I have felt very welcomed and supported so far. When I moved, I started medical care here by scheduling an appointment with Student Health Services (SHS), which went really smoothly, and I immediately got a referral to the WashU Transgender Center. My endocrinologist at the Transgender Center, Dr. Baranski, is amazing. I haven't encountered any gatekeeping at all, and he has let me be really active in directing my care, something I totally didn't expect moving to a very red state. In school, all of the faculty and classmates I've interacted with have been very affirming and I've only had a few issues with people using the wrong name or pronouns. When that happened, people took accountability for their mistakes — I've never felt like they were made out of malice. I started school in the middle of my legal name change, so my deadname was still in the school's systems for the first couple of months and it was printed on one session's group assignment sheet that was distributed to the whole class and taped to the walls. I got immediate apologies from the instructors of that session and from the module leads when I brought it up; the error was quickly corrected and acknowledged to the whole class in the following session. Dean Moscoso also scheduled an unprompted one-on-one meeting with me to talk about ways I could be further supported, and helped me move an exam that conflicted with my first voice therapy appointment. Things are definitely not perfect though. I have had a harder time finding trans community here than in California or Maryland. Overall though, I can confidently say that my experience of being trans at WashU so far has been very positive.

Nora M., M1

Our Furry Friends

Having a Cat

Funny enough, I never had a cat until last year, but I like to believe this cat chose to take up a permanent residence in my life. I had grown up with only dogs, but I have loved every experience of welcoming my furry child, Pumpkin, into my home. Pumpkin was a rescue from the previous city I lived in. I did not go through a traditional adoption process with her, but I easily established care for her in St. Louis. I tremendously alleviate stress by playing with her every day when I get home from school. Along with screaming at me for food, she has also become quite the social butterfly when meeting classmates/friends. I know many classmates who have adopted cats to be their companions, so we have a very loving cat community within the WUSM class.

Amanda M.H., M1

Having a Dog

I adopted my dog about a month before starting medical school and I could not be more happy with my decision. She provides me with so much joy and comfort at home, especially since this is my first time living alone. St. Louis is a really dog-friendly city — Forest Park offers a large space for your dog to get exercise and apartment living is not as cramped as other larger cities. Balancing having a dog with med school has not been difficult. My pup is very low maintenance and I get to spend time with her when we have Zoom classes. :) Overall, having a dog has improved my well-being in med school.

Kelly S., M1

I rescued a dog right at the start of the pandemic and was always a bit nervous about what was to come when I started medical school. However, I can now tell you that it was the best decision I ever made and have no regrets. The curriculum is flexible enough where I have never been worried about leaving him for too long and the Central West End is incredibly dog friendly — many patios to eat at with your pup, local stores which hand out dog treats, dog waste bag stations everywhere, and many groomers/trainers/daycares/dog walkers. My apartment even has a dog park!

Walking my dog through the beautiful Forest Park (rated the No. 1 city park in the U.S. with over 1,400 acres of land) has been incredibly rewarding for my mental health — there are tons of cool trails, ponds he can swim in, beautiful places to explore, and animals to see, such as deer, foxes, coyotes, and even minks. My dog has also been an easy way to socialize with my peers as many classmates regularly join us for walks, and friends will come over all the time just to cuddle with him! Additionally, having a dog has given me a better sense of routine by reminding me to eat, get out, and recharge. Coming home to a wagging tail, smiley face, and unconditional love will always be a highlight of my day.

Dani W., M1

Having a Fish

Red (my pet betta fish) has been the single greatest part of my time at WashU. With an ever changing schedule and new responsibilities, I rely on his daily pep talk to keep myself motivated and focused. When my eyes get too tired, he reads my Anki cards out loud so I can still study. He even cooks my favorite meals (except for salmon) before exams as a pick me up. I would be lost without him.

Brian D., M1

Having an Exotic Pet

Having a rabbit in medical school is fantastic (as is every other aspect of owning a rabbit). Bad day? Rabbit. Great day? Rabbit. Any day? Rabbit. Many do not know that rabbits can be litter box trained, love having space to free-roam, and can be very affectionate. I have two bun babies running around my apartment: Ohana and Gobi. If you ever need some bunny therapy, feel free to reach out to me or your nearest medical student bun parent. We are always happy to show off our perfect pets.

Savannah S., M3

Relationships

Being a Non-Med Student Partner of a WashU Med Student

To my fellow Non-Med Student Partners of Med Students:

Let's be completely honest with each other, it's incredibly easy being partners with a med student. For one, you get plenty of alone time to explore your own interests. Also, if you do your best to socialize with their class, you'll end up with a lifelong networks of doctors across specialties who can assist with all your life-long ailments. But the best part? If the drug from Limitless is ever created, you'll have enough deep-memory second-hand knowledge of medicine to basically be a functional doctor.

Just keep your head held high through the tough times, ignore the fact that things will almost certainly get worse during residency, and always remind yourself that a six-figure household income is just around the corner. You've got this.

Matthew B.G.

Being Married

Choosing a medical school that is right for you and your spouse is very challenging. Considerations such as living cost, job market, lifestyle, and community have to perfectly align for both of you. Even after endless pros versus cons lists, at the end of the day it is a leap of faith. WashU and St. Louis have exceeded every expectation for my wife and me. The medical school has a diverse set of students; many of them are also married or have long-term partners. We have made great friendships with other couples! The Gateway Curriculum allows me to manage my schedule in a way that I can still find time every day to spend with my wife, even with our different responsibilities.

WashU is also very aware of spouses and partners. My wife has always been welcomed and invited to many social activities from the university and the student body. WUMS Plus One is also a great social network to meet other couples and learn about the best ways to navigate medical school while being married.

St. Louis has a vibrant personality at an affordable price. There are plenty of places to visit and foods to try. We are happy to be here at WashU and hope you come join us and make St. Louis your new home.

Santiago B., M1

Being Partnered

My girlfriend is also here in St. Louis, and I'm fortunate that we don't have to do long-distance. That being said, it has been super feasible to maintain our relationship even with my med school schedule. Since we don't live together, seeing each other takes extra time in our days, but my workload is manageable enough that I'm able to see her most evenings and every weekend. My daily schedule aligns nicely with her 9-to-5 job in that I'm usually done with classes and extracurriculars by the time she gets off of work. During weeknights, I'll often study at her place so that I can still spend time around her while doing my scholarly duties. The weekends are when we spend prime quality time together, and there are tons of cool, affordable, and not-crowded spots we often visit in the city. Overall, I think that St. Louis is an amazing city to be partnered in, especially as a med student, because it's so easy to be flexible with our time together in ways that respect both our individual schedules. A lot of it has to do with the city being small — we're always a short drive away from each other, and it's really easy to make and execute plans quickly! You can go from chilling on the couch to trying a new restaurant in Soulard, seeing live jazz music on Grand, or ice skating in Forest Park in 20 minutes.

Akshay B., M1

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 friends' 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. + friends, M1

Dating Someone Outside of Med School

My partner moved to St. Louis soon after the school year started, and I LOVE having him here. He works in a WashU lab, but he does not have any interest in medicine which is fantastic. He understands that medical school is a lot of work, and he is great about giving me space when I need to focus. He also helps me to have a life outside of medical school. He has made friends with my friends and their significant others and has become a part of our medical school community. As with any relationship, setting boundaries is important, but so is carving out time for each other. For us, that means taking the time to have dinner together at least three times a week and watching Survivor every week. My partner cannot tell you the difference between a T-cell and a Dendritic cell; however, he can listen to me rage about Anki for 20 minutes and say “that sucks” because he knows that is the exact thing I need to hear. Having him here helps me to get out of my head and enjoy my time in medical school.

Elizabeth S., M1

When I first moved to St. Louis, I decided to get back on some dating apps, which is where I met my girlfriend. She has been the most supportive person I've had throughout everything occurring in my life since starting school — she helps me stay accountable with studying, motivates me to do more cooking than eating out, helps me keep my room clean, reminds me to take my meds, etc. We've had plenty of time to spend together so far in Phase 1: we hang out after she's done with work and I'm done with school, play video games and watch stuff together, and play with her puppy, who is the absolute cutest boy in the world. She's also gone with me to every med school-related event she can and has met lots of my classmates and faculty, so she's slowly becoming a part of our med school family. Since she's a local, it has also been really nice to have her as a sort of guide to St. Louis and Midwest living in general, especially since I've only lived on the coasts up until now. She has shown me tons of cool places like the St. Charles Historic District (definitely check it out!), introduced me to her friends here, and even invited me to family dinners, which was especially nice when I wasn't able to fly home for Thanksgiving. She's also one of the few other trans women I've been able to find community with here, which has been super affirming in my own transition and has helped me find queer community outside of WashU. The fact that she doesn't have the same stressors as I do is honestly very refreshing, because it means we can support each other through things with fresh perspectives. I really can't express how glad I am that I re-downloaded those apps back in August. :)

Nora M., M1

Dating Within the Class

While I may have no authority on this topic as I have been seeing a classmate for about a week, I can tell you that dating within the class is an exciting and chaotic experience. At the start of med school there is so much adjustment, new experiences, places to explore, and friendships to make! Finding a ~partner~ was not my focus. I just got incredibly lucky to have found something in one of my best friends I made here. There is no need to stress about dating, but if you are lucky enough to feel a spark with someone you already are friends with, a lot of the initial concerns that happen at the start of a relationship have been taken care of. Like I already know we get along great, he has already seen me at my worst, and I don't have to come up with a subtle way to find out who he voted for in 2020. On the one hand it is so nice being with somebody who gets it and is on the same schedule. I can't lie; about 50% of us getting to know each other happened unintentionally in Becker Medical Library. On the other hand, the fact that we have the same schedules and stressors can get tricky. If the thought of things going south and then seeing each other at 8:00 a.m. in Connor Auditorium also activates your sympathetic nervous system, I highly recommend getting to know your class crush as a friend first as well. My advice is to be super communicative and open with each other, and to make sure you choose somebody that can be a stress reliever rather than another stress added!

Alisha D., M1

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 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 Student Affairs Office at WashU 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's 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, 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-ten-minute drive to campus. There are tons of free family-friendly things to do in this city. WashU has to be one of the best, if not the best medical school for students with children.

Quinn P., M1

Living with a Non-Medical Student

I moved to St. Louis with my partner of three years and we live together in an apartment that's about a 20-minute walk from campus. It's been great to live with someone outside the medical student class to take a clear break from studying and school-related topics when I get home. I end up studying from home later in the evening but it's good for my schedule and not burning out to have some separation from the immediate events and stressors of the school day. We have different days or weeks that are particularly busy at work/school so that's really helpful to share responsibilities and balance chores that still have to get done every day like cooking. It's also nice to hear different perspectives and questions

about medicine from someone in a different field — my partner makes me think about what we learn and do in class differently and he always questions aspects of medicine or medical school that I've accepted but maybe should question or push back on more. It's definitely different than living with another medical student and I feel less connected to some of my classmates who live together or in a building with many other students, but some of that also stems from being slightly more introverted and less confident in social situations. Overall I'm really grateful to live with someone outside the medical school class and would recommend having some separation from school and other parts of your life!

Sarah C., M1

Long-Distance Relationships

First and foremost, every relationship is different and highly personal. My partner is a theoretical physicist who currently lives in Europe, so our day-to-day lives are very different. It can be challenging during busy weeks to even call, given the time difference and our class schedules. However, we have been long-distance for the entirety of our relationship, so we are more accustomed to being apart than a lot of couples. For us, it's most important that we are both open communicators and give each other grace when life gets busy. Additionally, given that every relationship is different, I try to not compare mine to others as much as possible or give too much weight to people who have strong opinions on long-distance relationships always failing. Everyone has different things they are looking for. There are some pros to being in a long-distance relationship: I am basically forced to be a good communicator and to not take my partner for granted. I also think long-distance relationships allow both people the opportunity to strike the balance they want between their relationship and everything else in their life.

Cerise S., M1

One thing that surprised me coming to WashU was how many people were in long-distance relationships. Most of my friends in undergrad ended their relationships after graduation, so I expected to be one of the few med students in a long-distance relationship. Of course, some aspects of long-distance are hard, but overall it has been much more manageable than I expected! It is great to have the support of so many classmates who are in a similar situation. I am lucky that my partner can work virtually part-time, so he's able to visit for about a week at a time while most people's partners only visit for long weekends. My partner and I visit each other every 4-6 weeks. He usually comes to St. Louis, but I will be visiting him in Seattle over Spring Break in March. We try to FaceTime every day to check in, even if it is just for a couple of minutes on busy days. Don't be intimidated by long-distance, just take it one day at a time!

Gabi M., M1

Religion and Spirituality

Being Buddhist

Though I was raised Buddhist by my parents, my own exploration of Buddhist thought and philosophy coincided with my interest in pursuing a career in medicine, both of which blossomed during my sophomore year of undergrad. Compared to other religions, Buddhism can have somewhat less of a community aspect, but the monastery just outside of my hometown was essential to my practice, knowledge, and development. As with most cities in the United States, there is a small but active Buddhist community in St. Louis; Wat Phrasiratanaram is the main Theravada center, and there are more Mahayana options available if those are of interest to you. The humanism and compassion intrinsic to the teachings of Buddhism lend themselves very well to a career in medicine and were undoubtedly influential in my choice to make medicine and research my career; the tenets of medicine align very well with the Eightfold Path, and there are few other careers that are so inseparable from science while being simultaneously based on generosity, virtue, and compassion. I'm not very vocal about my upbringing or practice due to the fear of being exoticized or categorized as "new-agey," but if any of you reading this are curious about Buddhism or just want to talk, feel free to reach out to me, as I really enjoy talking about it!

Colin M., M4

Being Catholic

I was pleasantly surprised by the Catholic community and churches at WashU. The stunning Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis is within walking distance from the medical campus, but I prefer to attend Mass on the other side of Forest Park at the Catholic Student Center (CSC) located on the Danforth Campus. Many students from all of WashU's schools and divisions attend Mass at the CSC, so it is easy to find and become a part of the WashU Catholic community. The CSC puts on both religious and social events every week and has food catered from delicious restaurants after the 4:30 p.m. Mass every Sunday. Father Gary and the CSC campus ministers go out of their way to try to get to know you, and the former makes himself available on the medical campus every Wednesday at lunch in the interfaith chapel. In short, WashU is a great place to be a Catholic medical student.

Tucker H., M1

Being Christian

Since coming to WashU, I have found great opportunities for Christian community both within and outside of the medical school. At WashU, there is a group called the Christian Medical Association (CMA) that meets weekly and learns from physicians and other health care professionals about how their faith relates to

medicine. One of the things I love most about CMA is that it is an interdisciplinary group, with students from the OT and PT programs attending as well. Because of this, CMA has been a great way to meet classmates as well as new friends of like-minded faith from other programs. In the broader St. Louis community, there are also a variety of churches to get involved with of many different denominations. Finding a church community has been a great way for me to meet community members from outside the medical school, too!

Brooke R., M1

Being Hindu

St. Louis has a pretty large Hindu community for a smaller-size city. The biggest Hindu temple is a traditional South Indian temple in Town and Country, which is about a 20-minute drive from campus. It is a great place to worship. They have many events there throughout the year, and if you get on their mailing list you will be informed of most Hindu things going on in the area. If you go there around lunchtime on the weekends, they usually have a meal for prasadam as well. There is also a Chinmaya Mission Sunday School in Kirkwood on Sunday mornings, close to the temple. Their community is quite tight-knit, but it is mostly for children.

There is also an ISKCON temple near Saint Louis University, about a 30-minute walk down Lindell or 20 minutes if you use the MetroLink and get off at the Cortex. This is a wonderful community that is very welcoming. At their Sunday Feast program held on Sunday evenings, they have a full hour of kirtan, a full hour of lecture from various scriptures, and dinner prasadam. Many devotees here are heavily involved, so if you're looking for a serious weekly congregation, this is the place you'll find it. The ISKCON community also does a lot of home programs in families' homes in the suburbs as well, which are wonderful and can really provide you with a family here. A Swamiji visits fairly often (I think four times a year) as well, and gives lectures in the temple and in people's homes. I come here regularly, so I would love to introduce any newcomers to the community. There are many people in the community that are willing to give you a ride to/from the temple or any of the home programs if you need it.

Kushi M., M4

Being Jain

Since Jainism is a pretty small religion that most people haven't even heard of, I've gotten pretty used to having very minimal community almost anywhere I go. However, in St. Louis, there is a small derasar located inside the Hindu temple on Weidman Road. The derasar is also the location of the Jain Center of St. Louis. Though COVID has caused some disruptions, typically, they celebrate major Jain holidays like Mahavir Jayanti, Diwali, etc. The Hindu temple also has poojas and other celebrations for Hindu festivals. Since it's hard to have a Jain community within my class or even the school in general, the derasar and these events are a great place to meet people and connect. The hardest part about being Jain in

St. Louis for me has been paryushana. It's almost impossible to find food that meets every dietary restriction unless you cook it yourself, and I find fasting to be really hard when I'm in school. For me, this means that I just shift when I practice paryushana a week or two around so it coincides with a break when I'm visiting home. There I can observe the whole week with my family around me rather than by myself in school. Overall, although there are definitely challenges, St. Louis isn't a difficult city to be Jain in. It has a great variety of vegan/vegetarian food options, a small derasar, and a community if you look for it.

As a side note, there is also an ISKCON temple in St. Louis which hosts weekly Sunday Feasts with vegetarian meals, Kirtan, and other activities. They also host weekly yoga classes and Bhagavad Gita classes. There are many serious devotees that attend these programs, so it might be easier to find a religious or even an ethnic community here, even if it's not strictly Jain.

Sanji B., M2

Being Jewish

Coming from the Northeast, which has a really large Jewish population, I was apprehensive about what sort of Jewish life there would be in St. Louis and WashU. I definitely did not expect there to be nearly as many events as there have been! Having only been in St. Louis for three months, I've already been to a ton of Jewish events and it's been incredibly easy to connect with other Jewish students in the medical school and in the St. Louis area. Chabad Central West End hosts dinners for the high holidays and has events every week such as babka making classes, barbecues, and rooftop networking sessions. Rabbi Yossi and Goldie who run Chabad CWE are incredibly kind and welcoming and have really made my transition to being Jewish in St. Louis much easier by inviting me out to coffee and inviting new Jewish students to events at their home. Also, WUSM itself has the Jewish Medical Student Association (JMSA), which has hosted a bunch of events such as Shabbat dinners and yoga sessions. Ultimately, you will not find a more welcoming and better place to be a Jewish medical student than in St. Louis at WashU.

Ethan B., M1

Being Lutheran

Since this was my first time moving away from Minnesota, where I grew up in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I didn't know what exactly I would find for the religious community here in St. Louis and at WashU. I have been delighted to find that more of my classmates are religious than I would have expected, and I have gotten to have many insightful conversations with classmates where we have learned about each other's traditions. I have also made time to find a new church home here, where I make the effort to attend on a weekly basis. This has been a much-needed reset from school each week, and the support from a community outside of school is invaluable.

One of the people who helped me find this new church home was the Rev. Callista Isabelle, who serves as WashU's Director for Religious, Spiritual, and Ethi-

cal Life. She talked to me about various congregations in the area and helped me think through what I might want in a new church. She is happy to talk to anyone who is seeking a religious, spiritual, or ethical community in St. Louis or who just wants to talk with someone about spiritual topics. She can be reached at callista.isabelle@wustl.edu.

Matthew B., M2

Being Muslim

Growing up in the Atlanta suburbs, I've had a spectrum of experiences as a Muslim and hijabi, but was still just a little bit worried that St. Louis, being in the Midwest, would be a harder place to find community and resources as a Muslim. After moving here though, I've been pleasantly surprised. The few mosques I've been to so far (including the Islamic Foundation of Greater St. Louis, which is a 25-minute drive out, and Masjid Bilal on Saint Louis University's campus just a couple miles from the Medical Campus) serve a large and incredibly diverse community. You'll find more than enough opportunities to get involved if you're looking for it! The Muslim community is also very involved in serving the general St. Louis community with various charities and free clinics that are supported by the mosques. Also, if you eat halal, it's fairly easy to find food and groceries suitable to your needs in St. Louis, and there are great restaurants to try too! On campus, you will easily find space to pray in the Danforth Chapel, and there's also a chapel in the hospital where Jummah prayers are held. Also, WashU School of Medicine now has a brand-new, official Medical Muslim Student Association (MMSA) thanks to our amazing classmates, Ranya G. and Ahmed H., and we all look forward to welcoming you!

Aseeyah I., M3

The Path to Medical School

Coming Straight from Undergrad

Looking back, I'm glad I decided to come straight from undergrad. I spent the summer before coming to WashU School of Medicine just relaxing and spending time with friends and family, which helped me recharge before starting medical school. Even though I did need to develop some new study habits once school started, it was easy for me to jump back into classes because I didn't have too long of a break. Coming in, I was nervous that I would be one of the few people who didn't take any gap years, but I've found that there are a good number of people in my class who also decided to come straight through. Not to mention, once you are here, no one really pays attention to whether you have taken a gap year or not. In addition, WashU School of Medicine has several dual-degree programs and opportunities to do a funded research year, so if you are like me and maybe think you might want a bit more time to explore, there are definitely plenty of options!

Alyssa R., M3

Being a Career-Changer

Being a medical student after another career outside of health care is awesome! I was worried about feeling out of place in class and clinic, but the reality couldn't have been further from the truth. Having navigated life as an independent adult has provided me with a unique perspective on the types of considerations our patients may have to weigh out and I can share those with my classmates. The experience of being in medical school feels special, even in the more mundane aspects, precisely because it is what I was willing to sacrifice the security of a prior career for.

Owen D., M1

Coming from a Non-Ivy League School

I wanted to acknowledge and normalize the feelings of imposter syndrome that some students might feel coming from a “non-Ivy League” or institution that is not as highly ranked as many of my peers. I remember coming to WashU's Second look weekend and feeling incredibly intimidated by the resumes, experiences, and schools that many others came from. I couldn't help but think that I didn't belong at a school like this, and wondered how I would be successful amongst my peers. I want to emphasize that those feelings are totally valid, but also that you 100% belong at a school like WashU. There is a reason you belong here. The biggest reason I chose WashU was the supportive and collaborative environment the students and faculty create; I believe this is a major part of how I have begun to overcome these feelings.

Mitch O., M1

Taking Gap Years

I took two gap years at the NIH before coming to Wash U. I was initially worried coming into school that I would not remember how to study and would not have the stamina for medical school studying. My worries disappeared quickly for a few reasons. Firstly, Module 1 is designed to be a ramp up into the curriculum, so it gives you time to figure out how to study. Also, studying for medical school is different than studying for undergrad classes. Everything you learn is on the same test and that ranges from knowing about everything from G-coupled protein receptors to health systems. You need to learn new ways to keep everything in your brain, and everyone is in the same boat in that regard. Lastly, taking time off between college and medical school helped me establish a better work-life balance that I have brought with me to medical school. I tend to retain more information because I know when to stop studying. I feel like I am on the same playing field as friends that came straight from college or took more gap years than I did.

Elizabeth S., M1

Coming from a Large State School

My large, West Coast university was an exceptional undergraduate institution — we were great at sports, academics, research, and far superior to that other institution across town. That said, there were a few notable exceptions to our overall greatness. It was such a large school with an overburdened administration that it took three weeks for me to get in-class and testing accommodations after getting a severe concussion. We also didn't have any premedical advising, which made med school apps even more stressful than they already were. Coming from that environment, the support I've found at WashU is incredible. If I ever need anything, there are at least eight people I could reach out to who would immediately have my back and support me through anything going on in my life. Your coach will check in with you on a regular basis to see how you're doing, there are robust academic support networks in place, and Dean Moscoso deserves an award for the time and energy she puts into helping every student who comes to her. In addition to the support, it's been really nice to be able to get to know my entire class. We're surprisingly tight-knit for a group of 124 people. WashU does a fantastic job picking the nicest, most genuine people to be your classmates, and I'm so glad I ended up here.

Andrea O., M1

Being a WUSTL Undergrad Alum

As a WashU alumni who went straight to WashU Med after graduation, I was worried about missing out on the experience of a new city, university environment, and class made up of entirely new people. However, in my time so far at WashU Med I have not felt that I missed out on anything. Despite being only 10 minutes away from the Danforth Campus on the other side of Forest Park, the medical school feels very much distinct from the Danforth campus. I have been able to discover new places to study, socialize, and get coffee with my classmates. Furthermore, while there are many students who came from Wash U undergrad to WUSM, many different WashU undergrad classes are represented and so I had not met a majority of the other WashU undergrad alumni in my class before. I have found many new friends in my class.

Additionally, while I am still in St. Louis, I have now moved to the Central West End (CWE); whereas, I lived in the Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood as an undergrad. This has allowed me to explore the many restaurants and bars in the CWE as I rarely went to this part of St. Louis as an undergrad. It has been a good blend of old and new for me; I get to explore new parts of St. Louis and experience living/working in a new area of the city while still having some familiarity with the surrounding area and thus not having to start completely anew learning my way around.

Finally, as a medical student, I have also felt like I have a closer relationship with university leadership than I did as an undergraduate. While I was always able to schedule meetings with Arts and Sciences deans as a WashU undergrad, I still did not feel personally known by the administration. I feel much more directly

supported by the leadership at the medical school and have found that most of the deans know each of our names by heart. They are always open for questions or to set up meetings via email and respond quickly to medical students. This personalized attention is no doubt in part due to the smaller class size at the medical school, but nonetheless is something I see as a big positive to the medical school environment that I did not experience as an undergraduate.

Sam F., M1

Moving to St. Louis

As someone who originally lived a 14-hour drive away from Wash U, I found the move to St. Louis tricky and time-consuming, but ultimately doable with the right amount of planning (and financial resources). I loaded up my car with as much of my most important possessions as I could pack, downloaded some audiobooks for the journey, and drove straight to my new apartment. Once there, I made sure to inspect the apartment and alert my landlord for obvious problems like leaks, insects, and mold. Through IKEA and Facebook Marketplace, I bought whatever furniture, appliances, tools, and decorations I needed and couldn't bring along — even renting a pickup truck from U-Haul to carry a sofa. I also spent a day at Target and other grocery stores buying toiletries, food, cleaning supplies, and crucial but easy to forget items like a medical kit and spare lightbulbs. Moving and furnishing my apartment was overall pretty hectic but doable with enough time and patience — except for building IKEA chairs. :(

John H., M1

Being an Older Student

At WashU School of Medicine, you are not alone if you are an older, non-traditional student with several gap years. After undergrad, I completed my PhD in Cell Biology and worked as a postdoctoral fellow before deciding to pursue a career in medicine. It was honestly a nerve-wracking experience thinking about going back to school after finishing up graduate-level (long) education whilst having a wife and one-year-old child; however, WashU's staff and faculty and their excellent curriculum and programs have helped and supported me tremendously since the interview day. Many faculty members understand what it is like to have a child during their training, and they provided many helpful tips on how to survive medical school and beyond while maintaining work-life balance. The mentorship provided by every single faculty member so far has been exceptional. Faculty and mentors here at WashU truly want students to succeed, and I have been impressed with the quality and the quantity of mentorship I have access to as a medical student.

The Gateway Curriculum, especially Module 1, has helped me catch up on some of the topics that I might have forgotten or never learned before. It laid a firm groundwork and gave me confidence on how to move forward. In conclusion, try not to be too worried about every little detail, as everyone needs to readjust and recalibrate not only to the curricular materials but to a new life as a medical

student. Because WashU selects a diverse group of students, I never felt out of place and have always felt welcomed. In my experience, minute details will work themselves out and WashU's faculty and staff and curriculum will help you get to where you need to be as a medical student.

Danny B., M1

Coming from a Small School

I attended St. Olaf College, a small liberal arts college (SLAC) of ~3000 undergraduate students in Northfield, a town of 10,000 in southern Minnesota. For a small school, St. Olaf had an excellent science program and substantive pre-health advising, as well as plentiful opportunities for research. What influenced my time there the most, however, was the care and attention of the faculty and staff. I always felt that I could seek out the support I needed throughout college, and that played a huge part in my journey toward medicine. So far, WUSM shares its best characteristics with St. Olaf in this regard. The faculty and program leads are genuinely invested in us, our success, and our well-being, and I feel the same sense of close community I experienced in college. To my fellow SLAC students, I say this: WUSM might seem like an intimidating place, especially when you're surrounded by graduates of elite universities around the country. The truth is that it doesn't matter — whether you went to a state school, a SLAC, or one of those Boston schools we hear so much about, you're here, you belong here, and you're ready.

Neetij K., M1

Being a Hopeful “MD-Only” Physician-Scientist

I was originally an MD/PhD applicant, and though I unfortunately didn't get accepted to any MD/PhD programs, I couldn't have picked a better place to be admitted to an MD program. The EXPLORE program offers a chance to pursue a longer-term research project, and I'm planning on turning my EXPLORE project into a research gap year during my time here. To my fellow aspiring MD-only physician-scientists, I say this: The number of on-ramps to a career in academic medicine go far beyond MD/PhD programs. Research projects are plentiful in medical school, and researchers are often thrilled to train MD students in the ways of science. WashU has a Division of Physician-Scientists focused on this very career pathway. As a first-year student, I'm still exploring all of my options, but I'm confident that WashU will give me the opportunity to prove myself and jump back into the research world.

Neetij K., M1

Being a Low-Income Student

If you are reading this as a disadvantaged student, I commend you for overcoming all the hurdles unique to you. Being a medical trainee from an impoverished background comes with particular anxieties about acclimating to the hidden curriculum of medical school, as you are likely also among the first to pursue medical training in your family.

Speaking pragmatically, when I was in your shoes, I wanted not only a school with excellent academic outcomes but also a place where I could thrive as an individual embarking on the next phase of my life. Therefore, how far I could stretch my budget was essential to me. So far, I have found St. Louis and the neighborhoods around the school to be incredibly affordable and the Central West End to be imminently walkable. Also, St. Louis is a city with a disproportionate number of free attractions and public events (many of the events in and around Forest Park).

Our Office of Student Financial Planning has also been an excellent resource. It's a cliché around the country that students are told to stop buying coffee during financial aid seminars. I can confidently report that our financial aid office is one of the most responsive and thoughtful in the country. They are always happy to meet to discuss the gritty details of loans and budgeting. They will also serve as your advocate and regularly bring in guest speakers about financial literacy.

Additionally, moving to St. Louis has meant engaging as an earnest beginner in the traumas and history of the city. As a disadvantaged student, there are many opportunities to grow and have a positive impact here, so I hope you join us. If you do, reach out to our burgeoning First Generation/Low-Income student group!

Mohamed J., M1

Being a Young Student

Although the trend is that first-year medical students are matriculating at an older age, it is not uncommon to find students on the younger side in medical school. Having started college at an early age, I found myself in that position as the youngest student in our class. I was curious to imagine the social dynamics of interacting with older students and if I would have a sense of belonging. My experience at Wash U so far has been nothing short of incredible, and much of that is attributed to how welcoming my classmates have been. Some things can be limiting, such as not being able to go to bars/clubs as an under 21 year old student, but that will be a problem encountered in any medical school. My advice to younger incoming students is simply to view yourself as a peer and realize what a cool thing it is to be experiencing such an incredible professional journey so early! If you got this far, you definitely have the maturity and skillset to succeed in medical school, be a valuable addition to your class, and work towards becoming an incredible physician. Wash U has a large class and you will definitely find people to form lifelong relationships with!

Sarah M., M1

Where We've Been

Being a Veteran

One month before moving to St. Louis, I reached out to WashU's Office of Military & Veteran Services. Through e-mail and Zoom, Nancy and her team ensured that my family got settled into St. Louis and that we had everything we needed. She also got me connected with some veteran community service opportunities and has been a good one-stop-shop for veteran/military resources. If you have GI Bill questions or are attending the School of Medicine on military scholarship, Bridget O'Neal and her team in the Office of Student Financial Planning are very helpful and responsive. I also highly recommend going to the Veterans Day Banquet put on by the Office of Military & Veteran Services. It was a lot of fun, thoughtfully put together, and a great way to meet other veterans and the military-connected community in all WashU schools.

James B., M2

Being an International Student from Kenya

I came to the U.S. from Kenya to attend college in South Carolina. In South Carolina, there was not much racial diversity. Nonetheless, I was very lucky to find Kenyan family-friends and a huge African international student group from nearby universities. As such, when I chose to matriculate to WashU, I was concerned that I would not be able to make the same connections I had in South Carolina. To my pleasant surprise, I have found kinship in my Black classmates and other Black students within the Student National Medical Association (SNMA). In my pursuit of clubs that play Afrobeats, I have met Kenyans and other East Africans outside of WashU. Although I am yet to find a Kenyan restaurant, in the meantime I have enjoyed the few Somali and Ethiopian restaurants whose menu is relatively close to Kenyan cuisine.

Diana O., M1

Being from a Small Town

I grew up in a town of approximately 1,100 people in a rural area of Ohio. My family frequently got slowed down behind horse and buggies when we were driving places, and most of the gas stations in town had parking spots for tractors. I traveled a lot growing up, so I had a sense of what a big city looked like and how it operated; however, I was unsure what living in one would be like. I first moved to St. Louis to attend WashU for undergrad. At first, it was a bit of an adjustment. For example, it was initially hard to sleep at night due to the loudness of the traffic and learning to drive in heavy traffic was stressful. As time went on, I really enjoyed living in St. Louis! There are so many more options for restaurants and entertainment and you do not have to drive 25 minutes to the closest grocery store. St. Louis also has nice parks and is in close proximity to many hiking trails, which gives you the ability to connect with nature even while living in a busy city.

Jessica B., M1

Being from St. Louis

To be upfront, I've always been the St. Louisan that loved talking about St. Louis when I left for undergrad. Moving back and living in St. Louis as an adult has been even better than I expected. I get to enjoy all my favorite restaurants and coffee shops, sports games, and parks that I loved growing up, and now I have the time to find new places. I feel very comfortable getting around St. Louis and I think this has eased my transition into school because I feel like I don't have to spend extra time getting used to the area.

I will say the BEST thing about being from St. Louis as a WashU student is sharing your niche St. Louis knowledge with all ~125 new classmates. Introducing non-St. Louisans to their first toasted ravioli or a Saturday night Cardinals game is so much fun and a great way to get to know new people!

Friends and family in St. Louis are a key part of my support system and having them nearby has been comforting as medical school classes get more intense. Knowing that I can drive home and see my family's dog after a tough week of school just puts a smile on my face.

If you're worried you'll feel stuck living here for another four years after being here most of your life, I can tell you St. Louis is always bigger than you think and choosing to live here for medical school is one of the best decisions I've ever made.

Libby F., M1

I grew up in West County and first left St. Louis to attend college in Boston, which was followed by a gap year in New York City. I really enjoyed all the exploring, food, and nightlife in these larger cities and feared that by moving back to St. Louis I would be bored. I found this was not the case. There is so much more to St. Louis that I was never exposed to both living in West County and being a minor. There have been so many restaurants I had never heard of, bars I never had the opportunity to try out, and areas I had never explored.

Living on the East Coast for five years I also got used to being away from family, so I never realized how nice it is to have them a short drive away. There really is no better way to destress from school than a home cooked meal and a movie in your childhood home. Just being able to see my siblings, parents, grandma, nieces, and pets on a semi-frequent basis does wonders for my mental health. Medical school is hard and having the support of my family close by and being able to step away from the medical school world is something I never expected to enjoy so much and something I cannot imagine going without.

Chris H., M1

Being from the East Coast

I grew up in Miami, where seasons don't exist and where I was constantly enveloped by warmth and humidity. Even during undergrad, I stayed on the East Coast by moving to Baltimore, Maryland, and I still got that humidity from nearby water. The winters there were honestly not that bad. I swore to my family and friends

that I could never imagine living somewhere not on the East Coast. Yet, there I was ... accepting admission to a school in the Midwest. Moving to St. Louis, I came in completely blind — I knew there was an Arch and the famous Forest Park just down the street from our school. However, I was pleasantly surprised to have quickly acclimated to the city and have since felt at home away from home. Everyone was super friendly (and I mean ... EXTREMELY friendly) — it became a blessing when I realized I wouldn't get honked/yelled at by an impatient driver!! Also, there are so many cities nearby that we can get to by train or car, such as Chicago and Nashville. I have been very happy since moving to St. Louis, and I'm so glad to have given it the opportunity to become my new home.

Amanda M.H., M1

Being from the Midwest (Outside of Missouri)

I grew up in Eden Prairie, Minnesota (a suburb of Minneapolis), and I attended St. Olaf College, a small school in southern Minnesota. Since graduating, I have also lived in Bethesda, Maryland, and Madrid, Spain. My time in other locales has given me a greater appreciation for what the Midwest has to offer, and St. Louis has the best of these characteristics. As someone who isn't the biggest fan of bustling metropolitan areas like New York City, I've found St. Louis to be a particularly welcoming city — there are a lot of activities, a great food scene, and plenty of green space, much like Minneapolis. St. Louis is centrally located, making road trips to other major cities like Chicago quite doable. Also, we get to experience the diverse beauty of the changing seasons — Fall being my favorite — without having to suffer through the Arctic conditions of my home state. Lastly, I've found that the Midwestern culture I've grown accustomed to is a big part of the appeal here — a genuine sense of community, diversity, and unity among the people here.

Neetij K., M1

Being from the Mountain West

As I prepared to move to St. Louis, I began to mourn the loss of the activities and hobbies that come with living in or near the mountains. Now I won't lie and say that St. Louis has completely surprised me and fulfilled all of my outdoor activity dreams; however, that being said, St. Louis does have many opportunities to get outside and enjoy the outdoors, especially if you make an effort to explore the surrounding areas. The most accessible option is Forest Park which is right next to the Medical Campus and Central West End (where many med students live). Forest Park is amazing for walks, runs, bike rides, etc. and has definitely been a highlight of St. Louis so far. If you have a car and can get a little outside of the city, there are state parks and more forested areas within 20-40 minutes that have plenty of trails for hiking or mountain biking. Personally, I haven't done a ton of climbing, but there is a group of students that frequent the climbing gym nearby and have even gone on day trips and weekend trips to explore the surrounding areas with outdoor climbing. While St. Louis may not have all of the same activities

that the mountains provide, there are definitely opportunities to get outside and keep up with the hobbies you love. Plus, I have found many students with similar interests and there is student group dedicated to getting outdoors together.

Brad M., M1

Being from the South

I was born and raised in Morganton, North Carolina, a rural town in the foothills of the Appalachian mountains. After high school, I attended an in-state private university, making this year the first time that I have ever lived away from the Southeast. I had visited many parts of the country before, however the Midwest was completely unfamiliar to me, leaving me with only preconceived notions to go off of. Over the past couple of months, I can say with confidence that the cultures of these regions are not all that different, and I have felt at home in St. Louis. Without generalizing, I have found the idea of "southern hospitality" to ring true in the Midwest as well (with its own twist, of course). When it comes to the WashU community specifically, the amount of students from the South is larger than I had expected, allowing for a group with shared cultural experiences. The one thing that I truly hadn't given thought to until recently was the weather — not too bad for most of the year, but the winter is certainly harsher. Expect some winds and bring a decent coat!

Jack R., M1

Being from the West Coast

I lived in West Los Angeles for practically my entire life, including during undergrad, before moving to St. Louis. People told me the adjustment to the Midwest would be difficult, but I have found the opposite to be true. Just like any city, St. Louis has its pros and cons. Midwesterners are true to the stereotype of simply being nicer and more welcoming than any other group of people. It has also been a great change of pace from Los Angeles because the Central West End is incredibly walkable and it has a beautiful park right across the street. If you're like me and worried about the change of weather, it's completely understandable; however, St. Louis also experiences all four seasons. Forest Park in the fall is a sight you just can't get anywhere else (first time in my life I've seen so many yellow and red leaves). As someone who was also worried about the nightlife and food scene, I was completely surprised. The best bars and restaurants here could go toe-to-toe with some of the best bars and restaurants in L.A. any day of the week. I think the majority of skepticism regarding St. Louis comes from people who have never been to the Midwest and tried for themselves a \$10 pitcher from OB Clark's, the Mala Tofu from Cate Zone, or the Hamachi from Indo. Do I miss the beach and the late night street tacos? Of course. But, I haven't been stuck in traffic for hours, complete strangers ask me about my day, and my rent is half of what my friends are paying and for twice the space.

Eli A., M1

Coming from a Big City

I came to WashU after living in New York City for six years — four years for undergrad and two years for work. My family and many of my friends also live in or near the NYC area, so I anticipated that moving to St. Louis would be a big change for me. I actually didn't even get my driver's license until two months before moving here! While it has been a transition in some ways, the community and friends I've found here has made the move here incredibly easy. Compared to where I lived in NYC, the Central West End is much quieter and cheaper, and has a lot of great restaurants, bars, and public parks to visit with family and friends. A big plus is that most of the class lives in the neighborhood or close by, which helps a lot to build community soon into starting school. There are definitely things I miss about NYC — St. Louis is less walkable than NYC and there are times when I miss the chaotic energy that NYC has. Still, I can say with confidence that St. Louis is a great place to go to medical school — there is plenty to do when you want (St. Louis has some great jazz venues by the way!), but there is also a calmness that allows you to focus and get work done when you need to.

Joe B., M1

Coming from a Rural Area

Having grown up in a smaller rural area, I was initially quite nervous about living in a city. However, it only took a few days after moving to realize that St. Louis isn't the concrete jungle I imagine when I think of a city. Forest Park offers lots of grassy areas where you can slow down and relax. St. Louis neighborhoods also often have a strong sense of identity and smaller pockets of community among the larger St. Louis community. There are also so many fun places to explore, such as local coffee shops and bakeries, that have deep connections to people and communities that make the city feel smaller and more approachable.

Kristen L., M1



From left, MD student Pramodh G., MD student Nirmala S., and MSTP student Abraham O. dance in Shell Cafe to celebrate Diwali.



WashU Med students spend time on the Danforth Campus.



Medical students and faculty celebrate Commencement.



WashU Med students enjoy many on- and off-campus activities during their free time.



Housing

Moving can be scary. Here we have valuable information that can help make your transition a little bit easier.

SECTION EDITORS: NEETIJ KRISHNAN AND SARAH MADIRA

Apartment Complexes

Aventura

Address: 4431 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110

Price range: 1-bedroom for \$1350+, 2-bedroom for \$1,800+, utilities not included.

Amenities: Full in-unit laundry, private balcony with outdoor storage, dog park, swimming pool, fitness center, fire pits, nice outdoor common areas with grills.

Pet policy: Pets allowed for extra \$20/month rent, plus \$150 fee and pet deposit, weight limit on dogs. Very pet friendly; there's a dog park right next to the complex!

Parking: Free gated parking for residents, carports available for \$50/month extra. Very small guest parking area but guests can street park outside the complex.

Commute to class: ~8-minute walk to campus.

About: Aventura is adult living. The apartments are very nice; the management team is great; the amenities are nice, and you get a lot for the price, especially compared with living in the Central West End (CWE)! It's located just a few blocks north of the Grove, which has a great strip of shops and restaurants/bars. There are great outdoor common areas to hang out with people too — they have grills and other spaces like that too! They also have a gym, which is nice little option if you don't feel like going to the Core. The balconies and in-unit laundry are wonderful features that are hard to find in St. Louis, and the apartments are very well-renovated and new. The maintenance is also very quick, and they are usually there within a day when I submit a service request. I think a lot of residents and M2-4s live here, so it's more quiet compared to living at Parc Frontenac (for example). Also most M1s end up living in the CWE, so there's a little distance there, but it's not bad at all! I love entertaining and having people over — we have a great space for it, since it's open concept and has a balcony.

Carolyn C., M1

Condos at 4515 Maryland Avenue

Address: 4515 Maryland Ave., Suite 101, St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$400-600 for 1-bedroom/1-bathroom

Parking: Extra charge

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), bike storage (free), wood flooring, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, breed and/or weight restrictions (one time charge)
Commute to Campus: 5-10 minutes biking

About: The communal coin-operated laundry is the biggest drawback, but otherwise I really like the apartment. This building is older with fewer amenities, but rent is less than typical in the CWE for a spacious oe-bedroom. All units are on the corners of the building, so the light is great too!

Del Coronado

Address: 4949 W. Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$1000-1200 for 1-bedroom/1-bathroom unit

Parking: Parking (extra charge)

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), bike storage (free), wood flooring, air-conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling, gym, coffee, concierges/front desk, security/keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, communal space, conference room, study rooms

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, breed and/or weight restrictions (one-time charge)

Commute to campus: 5-10 minutes walking

Emden

Address: 4942 W. Pine Blvd.

Price range: 1,400 sq. ft. 2-bedroom/2-bath for ~\$1,400.

Amenities: In-unit washer/dryer. Gas stoves. Skylights and master jacuzzi bath if on top (third) floor. Front and back door (leads to fire escape and parking area).

A two-minute walk away from Forest Park and from Euclid Avenue (Whole Foods, Shake Shack, Kaldi's etc.). Water included, but not gas, electric, or Wi-Fi.

Pets: Pet friendly, \$250 pet deposit

Parking: Gated, outdoor parking for \$100 a month. First spot is included for free with the unit.

Commute to class: ~10-minute walk

About: Instead of moving to popular student housing choices like Del Coronado (DelCo) or the Core, I ended up choosing a two-bed/two-bath apartment in Emden. First, the place was spacious for the price, with 1,400 square feet for \$1,400 a month. This was huge for me as someone who used to share a two-bedroom/two-bath in LA for triple that price. The building also comes with tons of natural light, exposed brick, in-unit laundry, and has been the perfect place to host, whether it be a small dinner of six or a birthday bash of 20+ people. Emden is also pet-friendly (great for cats!). The location is great, as Emden is super close to campus, Forest Park, and other popular student apartment buildings! However, the building is somewhat old, bare-bones, and lacks many amenities that other buildings like DelCo and Montclair have. I think the choice is up to the individual, but I've been fairly content with mine.

Mimi G., M2

Marlowe

Address: 4545 Laclede Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$2200-2400 for 1-bedroom/1-bathroom with balcony

Parking: Free

Amenities: In-unit laundry, bike storage (free), wood flooring, ensuite bathroom, air-conditioning, smart thermostats, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven,

microwave), dishwasher, internet, trash, recycling, gym, vending machines, coffee, security/keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, communal events, communal space, conference room, study rooms, dog park, dog wash station, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, pool, fireplace, elevators, handicap accessible

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, breed and/or weight restrictions (free)

Commute to campus: 5-10 minutes walking

About: It's a bit on the pricier side and is likely out of the budget for most medical students.

Metropolitan Flats

Address: 4545 Forest Park Ave.

Price range: 1-bedroom for \$1700-1800, 2-bedroom for \$2100-\$2400

Utility package: \$50/person (water, sewer, trash)

Electricity & Wi-Fi: \$75-\$100/person

Amenities: Dog park, in-unit laundry, gym, courtyard with grill, snack station, package delivery lockers

Parking: Underground for \$125/month

Pets: Pet-friendly; \$300 fee and pet rent of \$25/month

Distance to campus: ~5 minutes walking

About: I live in a 2-bed/2-bath apartment with a fellow M1. The apartment complex is as close to campus as one could ask for, comfortable, and has nice amenities. Management and maintenance are available and responsive during the workweek and on Saturdays. Although higher in the price range of apartments in the area, the excellent location makes it worth the money.

Jonathan M., M1

Montclair on the Park

Address: 18 S. Kingshighway Blvd.

Rent: \$1,195+ for a studio/1-bedroom, \$1,400+ for a 2-bedroom (2-bed/1-bath averages ~\$1,600, 2-bed/2-bath ~\$1,900), ~\$170 for utilities

Amenities: Key fob to enter building and get up elevators, someone at the front desk 8 a.m.-midnight, mail room, parking (above ground and underground), fitness room, meeting rooms, window AC units, laundry in basement (~\$2.50/load), bike storage, rooftop deck, free coffee machine in lobby

Pet policy: \$35 monthly fee or \$350 one-time fee

Commute: 10-15 minutes walking

About: Montclair is a really nice spot, especially if you're looking to have an easy walk to campus! The location on Forest Park is also amazing — loads of space to walk, run, bike, and just generally get outside, right across the street from your building. If you get a unit with a view of the park, that's even better. Watching the sunset every night has practically made my experience. In my opinion, the location is a lot of what you're paying for, although the units themselves are also

nice! The building was recently renovated and you can expect a modern kitchen and bathrooms. It's worth noting, though, that some aspects of the renovations are better than others. For example, my kitchen is really nice, but the paint job could've been done with more love — especially in the bathrooms, which don't have vents, so the humidity can mess with the paint. I'd say all the most important aspects have been good, especially if you're okay with the fact that it's an old building with the associated quirks. Overall, I've had a really good experience!

Olivia S., M1

One Hundred Above the Park

Address: 100 Kingshighway Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$2800-3000 for 1-bedroom

Parking: Parking (extra charge)

Amenities: In-unit laundry, bike storage (free), storage unit (extra charge), ensuite bathroom, air-conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling, gym, vending machines, concierges/front desk, security/keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, communal events, communal space, conference room, study rooms, dog park, dog wash station, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, pool, elevators, handicap accessible, dry cleaning

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, breed and/or weight restrictions (monthly pet rent)

Commute to campus: 5-10 minutes walking

Parc Frontenac

Address: 40 Kingshighway Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$1200-1400 for 1-bedroom

Parking: Parking (extra charge)

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), bike storage (free), bike storage (extra charge), wood flooring, air conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling, gym, vending machines, coffee, concierges/front-desk, security/ keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, communal events, communal space, dog wash station, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, elevators

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, no restrictions (monthly pet rent)

Commute to campus: 5-10 minutes walking

I live with another med student in a two-bedroom/two-bathroom apartment at Parc Frontenac. The amenities are plentiful: good-quality free coffee in the lobby, a small gym, and a one-of-a-kind rooftop lounge with fantastic views of the city. Our place is surprisingly large for the price (~\$2000 rent for ~1300 square feet), and it's become the default hangout spot for our friend group's game nights, movie nights, and other gatherings. The hardwood floor is also an important asset I hadn't appreciated until I moved in. On top of that, my cat loves the view. A

couple things to know: the apartments have central heating but window AC units that are a little loud and sometimes let street noise in (and the occasional ambulance); we have go downstairs to do our laundry, but there are a ton of machines and the communal laundry room is always very clean. I've enjoyed living here a lot, and I would definitely recommend PF for its value, its proximity to campus and Whole Foods, and its overall "niceness" — it's not on the cheaper end, but it's not overpriced either.

Neetij K., M1

Park 44 Apartments

Address: 4444 W. Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$1200-1400 for studio with kitchen

Parking: Extra charge

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), bike storage (free), wood flooring, air conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, internet, trash, recycling, vending machines, coffee, concierges/front-desk, security / keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, elevators

Commute to campus: 10-20 minutes walking

Parkway Apartments

Address: 4961 Laclede Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$1000-1200 for studio with kitchen

Parking: Extra charge

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), air conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, maintenance, mail room, elevators

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, no restrictions (monthly pet rent)

Commute to campus: 10-20 minutes walking

About: Bathrooms are old, heating is old and not centralized, sound travels in hallways a lot. I would recommend the Parkway Apartments for anyone looking for a decently priced studio/one-bedroom apartment. There are minimal building amenities — very old-fashioned elevators, basement laundry, no common spaces, but the management does a pretty good job. They respond to maintenance requests in a really timely manner and trash pick-up is really convenient. My favorite thing about the building is that you just use lock codes for the main building entrance as well as for individual apartments, so I don't need to remember to bring keys. My only complaints are old air conditioning/heating, no laundry in-unit, and no garage/covered parking.

Alice J., M1

Residences at Forest Park

Address: 4910 W. Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$1,575-\$2,545 for a 1-bedroom/2-bedroom

The Residences is a great building to look at if you're looking for in-unit unit washer/dryer, dishwashers, central air conditioning, and large units. I pay a very similar rent to my peers who live in other one-bedroom units that are significantly smaller or do not have the same in-unit amenities. Management can be a bit slow, which made the move-in process more annoying than it needed to be. Additionally, the parking for the building is in an outdoor lot, but it is locked. The only negative to the building is that it does not have a trash or recycling chute so you need to take your trash/recyclables to the dumpster across the street.

Rohini V., M1

Sherwood Court

Address: 4503 McPherson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$800-1000 for studio w/kitchen

Amenities: In-unit laundry, wood flooring, air-conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling, security/keyfob or keycard access, maintenance

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, no restrictions (free)

Commute to campus: 10-20 minutes biking, 20-30 minutes walking

About: No bike storage

The Core Apartment Residences

Address: 718 & 818 S. Euclid Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110

Rent: \$750-\$1,700, with a mix of studio, 1-bedroom, and 2-bedroom apartments (utilities included)

Amenities: Fully furnished (with in-unit washer and dryer and Smart TV), 24-hour gym, utilities, cable, internet, game room, rooftop, group study library, barbecue/picnic areas, and secure package receiving.

Pet policy: One pet (25 lb. limit) per unit in 718 building; \$200 deposit and \$100 fee.

Parking: \$79-\$85 fee depending on lot.

Commute to class: Two-to-three-minute walk.

The Core Apartment Residences, our on-campus housing option, is all about convenience. Being right across the street from the school, you can be in class in a couple of minutes and can easily run home for lunch or to quickly grab anything you may have forgotten. The in-unit washer/dryer, included utilities, and furnishing all adds to the ease of living at the Core!

The Core absolutely cannot be beat for convenience! Just a few minutes' walk from campus, you can sleep in before your 8 a.m. classes and come home during the day for lunch or an outfit change. The units also come fully furnished with a bed, desk, and in-unit washer-dryer and have utilities included, so you

don't need to worry about extraneous costs adding up. The size and layout of the units vary, and while some are on the smaller side, I've found that my unit is plenty of space for one person. The Core also has great amenities, including a gym which all our classmates enjoy using, as well as a terrace that is great for hosting larger events. The staff is super helpful and responsive. I've enjoyed living here so much that I've already decided that I'll be staying here next year!

Leah T., M1, and Sarah B., M1

The Orion

Address: 4567 W. Pine Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Rent: \$2000-2200 for 2-bedroom/2-bathroom with balcony

Parking: Extra charge

Amenities: In-unit laundry, bike storage (extra charge), ensuite bathroom, air-conditioning, smart thermostats, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, recycling, gym, coffee, concierges/front-desk, security/key fob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, communal space, dog park, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, pool, fireplace, elevators, handicap accessible, dry cleaning

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly, don't know restrictions or charge

Commute to campus: 5-10 minutes walking

About: Multiple maintenance problems (if you're really unlucky, you'll have water intrusion when it rains). Common room is not free to reserve. There are a maximum of two guests for the pool. The courtyard view does not get a lot of natural light. This place is beautiful when your apartment is not leaking. The andromeda floor plan is absolutely fantastic. The seventh floor has extra high ceilings.

Living Arrangements

Buying a Condo

My fiancée and I moved here from Berkeley, California, and we were excited about the possibility of being able to afford to buy a place here. Before we moved, we interviewed a few real estate agents who had been recommended to us, and we got pre-approved for a mortgage. We found a short-term rental for a couple months on Furnished Finder while we toured places here. Initially, we planned on buying a house and even had made an offer on one (we were outbid), but I liked the idea of walking/biking to class and we liked the Central West End (CWE). Unless you're already making attending-level money from your side-hustle, your most likely option in the CWE is a condo. We found a great place on a beautiful street that had everything we wanted (especially a backyard for a future dog)! In retrospect, we probably liked the place a bit too much and likely overpaid right before the market took a downturn. But oh well ... hopefully you'll time your purchase better than us.

My biggest recommendation for buying a condo is to talk to some of the neighbors beforehand to get a sense of what it's like to live there and to find out about any potential issues. The nice thing about a condo is that the maintenance outside of your walls is not your responsibility, so it's a gentle intro to homeownership. The downside, of course, is your HOA fees, which can be substantial. But we've had a good experience so far and have loved living in the CWE!

Braeden B., M1

I bought a condo with the help of my family in November 2022 in an attempt to save money in the long term. My goal is to sell or rent the house after school to make the money back on the downpayment and mortgage payments. If your downpayment is anywhere from 15-20%, your mortgage can be the same price as rent on a month-to-month basis. Unfortunately, I was in a lease, and it has been a pain to try to find a subletter. My biggest recommendations to any student looking to buy a home are: Look for a realtor right away — Lance Merrick is amazing. Buy and close on the house BEFORE school starts. Budget for furniture. Grab a 2- or 3-bedroom and rent out the other rooms!

Aaron K., M1

Buying a House

Buying a house in medical school can be very rewarding, but also a lot of work. When my wife and I moved from Portland, Oregon, to St. Louis, we saw the housing prices and knew we could not pass up the opportunity to invest in a house. Housing is generally much more affordable here. There are also a lot of older homes that need a bit of work but are still in nice areas. Some of the most important things to consider are: 1. Finding the right realtor. This is really important because you have to trust them a lot in the process, and they have to know exactly what you are looking for. For example, the neighborhoods/location you choose to live in. If you are not familiar with the area, you need to trust your realtor to guide you. 2. Do you want to put in the time/work? Owning a home, and even fixing it up, can be a lot of work. The first year of medical school is overall lighter on the workload, but the transition can be a lot to deal with. There are things to consider like mowing the lawn, the commute to school, painting the entire inside and outside of your home, etc. Overall positive experience for me — I love having a backyard for my dogs and a place away from medical school!

Connor V., M2

Finding a Roommate

When I moved to St. Louis for school, I knew that I wanted to live with a roommate for the first year, both to keep housing more affordable and to make a friend who I could explore the city with! I didn't know any other incoming students, so at first I wasn't sure how to go about finding a roommate. Thankfully, the upper classes put together a helpful spreadsheet for incoming M1s that includes information on the different neighborhoods and apartment complexes in St. Louis, as well as

a section where incoming students can share contact information and housing preferences. About 40-50 people in our class shared their information on the spreadsheet, so I was able to talk with a few people in the spring/summer via Zoom. My roommate and I met each other through the spreadsheet and did research on the different apartment complexes online, and then I was able to meet them in person when I visited St. Louis over the summer. We ended up choosing a 2-bedroom/2-bathroom apartment in Parc Frontenac (in the Central West End) and have loved living there together!

Maddie T., M1

Finding Affordable Housing

Many people choose to live in the big apartment buildings that have concierges and parking. However, if you are okay living in a smaller building with around two to six apartments, you can pay quite literally half as much in rent for a much bigger space. The best way to find these good deals is to actually walk down the street in Central West End (CWE) and look for “for rent” signs and call the phone numbers; you won’t often see these apartments listed online. I live on Laclede Ave in the CWE, just an eight-minute walk from the medical school, and I pay the same price for an entire three-bedroom apartment as many of my classmates pay for a studio. It just takes a little bit more work to find these apartments, but there are lots of them! I highly recommend doing this if you can.

Lisa G., M2

Living Ridiculously Far Away

I live a 22-minute drive, without traffic, from school. My wife and I decided to live farther out because we liked the suburban feel of our neighborhood. We have a big yard for our dogs, and I feel like I'm truly away from school when I'm not there. Living far away is definitely possible, mostly because traffic here is really not bad compared to other big cities. If I have to leave my house or leave school at rush hour, it takes about 30 minutes, which is only eight extra minutes. If you are thinking about living in a house/condo away from school, this is your sign to check out some farther out areas!

Connor V., M2

Living With a Medical Student

I really enjoy having a roommate who is also a medical student! Coming into med school, I knew I wanted a roommate, and to have one who's also a med student is great for being on the same page with someone. Because we have the same schedules, we have the same busier weeks or weeks with more free time, which means we can maximize both our studying and being social (plus, it makes the walk to class a lot more fun). Having a roommate who's a med student has given me a go-to friend since day one, and someone I can pester with annoying questions about lectures. Both my roommate and I are new to the area, so it's been super fun having someone to explore St. Louis with, as well as to take advantage of all of the awesome program-

ming WashU has. It's nice to have someone who is also acclimating to medical school to go to for advice and support, and I would definitely recommend it!

Madison B., M1

Renting for the First Time

For undergrad, I went to a school where living on campus for all four years was pretty normal, so I came to medical school with absolutely zero experience on renting and what the process should look like. Thankfully, I found the Dis-O Guide and read everything current WashU med students had to say about where to live and how to find a place. If you have any anxiety about how to even begin the process, don't worry at all. I live in the Central West End (CWE) so while I can only speak to this area, I called several places to ask tons of basic questions and everyone was incredibly helpful. I literally started from square one, so don't be afraid to call a few apartment complexes that interest you and get your questions answered. I've had an absolute blast living here and, all things considered, my first time renting has been a breeze.

Georgi S., M1

Neighborhoods

Central West End (CWE)

I live at Parc Frontenac in the Central West End (CWE), which means I'm practically a stone's throw from the Medical Campus. One thing you might hear (and see yourself) is that the CWE is expensive, and that isn't inaccurate. Living here, the location does place a premium on housing, but it's not exorbitant, especially if you're careful with where you choose to live and what kind of apartment you select (hint: find a roommate). There are many affordable options, and the ease of access to school is unparalleled. There's also a Whole Foods nearby, Forest Park right across the street, and little cafes and restaurants scattered around. One caveat is the sound level: It's not a dealbreaker for me (even as someone with sensitive hearing), but living near the hospital as well as a main road means that you occasionally have to deal with the sounds of traffic and ambulances. Nonetheless, I would highly recommend CWE for (at least) your first year.

Neetij K., M1

Downtown

In my opinion, downtown St. Louis is one of the most underrated neighborhoods in the city. It is not a popular destination for most WashU med students due to its distance from the medical center, but hopefully I can convince you to consider it by the end of this write-up. Downtown St. Louis is not like the downtown areas in most cities, which tend to be the focal point of nightlife, business, and other

leisure activities. Due to the unique development of St. Louis city and county, several neighborhoods have an equal share of all three. This ultimately means that downtown, in many ways, is like any other major neighborhood in St. Louis and is consequently much more affordable than you would expect. If you are anything like me and enjoy having a bit of space from school/work when you go home, downtown is an excellent choice. It only takes only ~10-13 minutes driving to get to the medical center, and there are also numerous MetroLink stations that go directly to CWE.

Although downtown St. Louis is not quite as busy as the downtown areas in other major cities, there is no shortage of things to do. If you are interested in sports, you can catch a Blues hockey game, Cardinals baseball game, and as of 2023, a CITY soccer game. If you have a yearning to see animals, I highly recommend the St. Louis Aquarium at the historic Union Station. If you want to let your inner child out, you can always have fun at the one-of-a-kind City Museum or check out some quirky sculptures at the City Garden. True to St. Louis, my favorite downtown attraction is the Gateway Arch National Park, where you can walk through a free museum and take a tram ride up the iconic Gateway Arch. There are tons of other fun things to do, as well as countless delicious restaurants. I hope I have convinced you to consider downtown St. Louis as a place to live during your time here!

Derek P., M2

Skinker/DeBaliviere

Do you want to pay a second rent for parking? The answer is no! Then don't go to Central West End (CWE) — come to DeBaliviere! With a four-minute MetroLink ride to the middle of the med school and location directly next to Forest Park, it has all the CWE perks and conveniences for a better value. Plus, we'll be neighbors.

Melissa V., M1

The Grove

The Grove is an absolutely vibrant, beautiful neighborhood on the southern border of the Medical Campus. A lot of medical students, postdocs, DBBS students, etc. call the Grove home. It rightfully earns its moniker of entertainment and cultural hotspot. In addition to the historic buildings (and inexpensive rent), the Grove is home to over 50 businesses as rich and diverse as its history. There are Nepali, Lebanese-fusion, Korean, upscale Mediterranean, and Southern comfort restaurants (just to name a few). The Grove has many many many clubs and bars to tickle any fancy. The neighborhood hosts bike rides (midnight and naked) and road races, and it is absolutely walkable. The LGBTQIA+ community invested in the neighborhood back in the 1980s and made it the diverse, vibrant neighborhood it is today. If that doesn't entice you, how about being 10 minutes from campus (at most) and 10 minutes from Forest Park?

Joey K., M1

University City

University City is a quaint suburb about five miles northwest of the WashU Medical Campus. Coming from Los Angeles, I could not believe that these large, beautiful brick homes were more affordable than our tiny two-bedroom apartment. After living here for about half a year, I can confidently say if I could go back, I would choose U-City again — no question. I moved here with my husband and two kids, and it is such a sweet, family-friendly neighborhood.

U-City's Olive Boulevard has some awesome authentic Chinese restaurants (like Cate Zone) and two large Asian supermarkets. The Saint Louis Zoo is just a couple of miles away, located in Forest Park. It is such a fun place to spend the day with the family and most importantly, it's free! U-City is walking distance to Clayton, where there are tons of great restaurants, coffee shops and parks (our favorite is Shaw Park). Brentwood is a short five-minute drive away where you will find all of your shopping needs, from Target and Trader Joe's to the Saint Louis Galleria. The Delmar Loop is a lively strip just down the road, filled with tons of restaurants, bars, karaoke, bowling, rooftop lounges, and more. My husband and I often have date night in the Loop, and we always find something new to do.

I drive to campus, and it takes me about ten minutes to get there, but during Phase 1 of the curriculum, students do not need to have a car, and many opt to take the MetroLink light rail system. The MetroLink conveniently runs right through U-City and has a stop on the Medical Campus, so it drops you off right at school. The cherry on top is that WashU provides students with a MetroLink pass, so taking the Metro is free! Is it obvious that I appreciate free things yet? Anyway, U-City is the best. If you want to live in an affordable, beautiful suburb that has it all, look no further.

Quinn P., M1



Life in St. Louis

Your one-stop shop for the hottest spots, trendiest restaurants, and best nightlife and activities around town. Here's a taste of what WashU and St. Louis have to offer.

**SECTION EDITORS: JENNA BENNETT, JOEY KRAMBS, NEETIJ KRISHNAN, AMY LIAO,
AND ANDREA O'RIORDAN**

Attractions

Chess Hall of Fame

The Chess Hall of Fame is not just a venue to learn about chess! They are currently displaying two floors worth of Keith Haring pieces in an exhibit that will be open until June. It's an intimate three-floor gallery in a neat historic building, and it's rarely very busy. So, you basically get a private showing of some awesome art. Not to mention, the Chess Hall of Fame is free, and it's located in the heart of the CWE! Fun fact: They have the largest chess piece in the world!

Rowan G., M3

City Museum

The City Museum is a cross between an art installation and a giant playground, all housed in a former shoe factory and warehouse. It's an utterly unique experience, and definitely worth a visit to explore the repurposed architectural and industrial objects. You might stumble across a giant praying mantis perched on a rooftop, or clamber through the inside of an airplane, suspended in a mesh of metal vines. There's also a small aquarium section, slides between different floors, and a circus. If you're planning a trip here, wear clothes you can easily move around in!

Annie F., M1

Dancing

Dancing is one of my main hobbies and has been part of my life since I was about three years old. So, when I moved to a new city, I had to find somewhere to continue Latin dancing. In the Central West End there is a nightclub called Viva, where they have Latin dance nights on Thursday and Saturday and along with Reggae Wednesday nights and African Friday nights. There are also the occasional Latin dance night pop-ups in other bars and locales around the city!

Amanda M.H., M1

Eckert's Farm

Eckert's Farm is a great time, especially during the autumn months. There are three locations that are driving distance from the medical school: St. Louis Farm Market, Eckert's Millstadt Farm, and Eckert's Belleville Farm. My favorite activities at Eckert's are apple picking, walking in the pumpkin patch, and watching the pig races at the Millstadt location. There is also the opportunity to buy a wide variety of seasonal desserts (apple cider donuts!) and eat delicious comfort food. Apple picking goes until the middle of November, but you can find fun stuff to do at Eckert's no matter the time of year.

Jessica B., M1

Forest Park

You will be hearing and seeing a lot about Forest Park. It's one of the most notable attractions in St. Louis, and rightly so. At 1,300 acres (almost twice as big as Central Park!), you could very easily spend full days exploring and still not see everything. Aside from the park itself and its many walking/running/biking paths, there are about a hundred different things to do in the park. There are athletic fields, the Saint Louis Art Museum, the Missouri History Museum, the Muny (theater), the Saint Louis Science Center, the Saint Louis Zoo, two golf courses, a boathouse with paddle boat rentals, and the ever-lovely Art Hill (home to a lot of casual get-togethers). Enjoy!

Olivia S., M1

Fox Theater

I'm a big musical theater fan, so it's probably no surprise that the Fox is one of my favorite "special-occasion" attractions in St. Louis. A ton of great productions come through the Fox — I recently saw *Hadestown* and it was amazing — and the venue also hosts concerts pretty regularly, if you prefer music to plays. The theater itself is a historical attraction; it was built in true over-the-top 1920s grandeur, and over the past 30 years or so it's undergone massive restorations to bring it back to its original state. Plus, it's less than a 10-minute drive from the Medical Campus, so it never feels like too much of a trek. I highly recommend catching a show there at least once!

Isabel R., M1

Jazz St. Louis

Jazz lovers will be excited to find that St. Louis is a city with a rich jazz history, being the home of many jazz festivals, clubs, and musicians. Among these icons includes Jazz St. Louis, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting jazz in St. Louis through education, community engagement, and performance. As part of its mission, it hosts a jazz performance space whereby local and touring artists play concerts. With students having the opportunity to get discounted tickets, it's the perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in all things jazz!

Onyi O., M1

Mauhaus Cat Cafe

One of the many cat cafes here in St. Louis is called Mauhaus, and it brings together the perfect combination of good vibes with great coffee and the sweetest (and adoptable!) kittens/cats. The ticketing price to enter the cafe (\$11) comes with a beverage of choice and one hour to be inside the cafe with the furry friends. This cafe provided an excellent serotonin boost — perfect for a mid-day study break!

Amanda M.H., M1

Missouri Botanical Garden

The Botanical Garden is about 10 minutes south of the WashU Medical Campus located in Shaw. During the summer and early fall, there is a beautiful rose garden, a sensory garden, and a greenhouse that grows many tropical plants. The Garden Glow is a major attraction at the Botanical Garden during the holiday season. It consists of over one million multi-colored lights, plenty of excellent photo ops, and upbeat holiday music. No matter the time of year, the Botanical Garden is a great place to take a group of friends, a date, or your family when they come to visit.

Jessica B., M1

Saint Louis Art Museum

The Saint Louis Art Museum is a local treasure! This free museum hosts a variety of beautiful, frequently rotating exhibits. You can join free guided tours every Saturday at 1 p.m., and enjoy free community events like the Art Hill Film series (a summer outdoor movie festival) and SLAM Underground (a night of music, drinks and art). Annual museum membership is only \$65 for students and gives you access to engaging, carefully curated special exhibits!

Haley S., M4

Saint Louis Science Center

The Science Center has a wide variety of exhibits that change regularly, as well as static exhibits on agriculture, meteorology, astronomy, and a theater. If you're driving past, you may have seen its bridge spanning the highway, as well as the air quality monitoring. Go to engage your inner dinosaur nerd, stare at the cute axolotls, and experience what an earthquake feels like. Like many other St. Louis attractions, admission is free!

Annie F., M1

Saint Louis Zoo

If you're looking for something fun and free to do in STL, go to the zoo! The zoo is the perfect option for enjoying the summer sun, taking someone on a less-expensive first date, or showing off the city to your visiting family. I highly recommend signing up for a discounted Zoo Young Professionals Membership, which gives you free parking, vouchers for paid attractions, tickets to special events, and more! My favorite zoo excursion this summer was Jammin' at the Zoo, which included wine tasting, free admission to the stingray petting zoo, and an open-air concert. It was truly a blast, and I hope to see you there next year!

Lexis H., M1

St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station

The St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station is a newer addition to the city and is a great place to visit, especially on a rainy or cold day! The aquarium is absolutely gorgeous and has a lot of unique features that I have never seen at any other

aquarium such as the ornate clock aquarium tank at the entrance and a virtual train ride featuring John Goodman that “drives” you to the aquarium when you enter. My favorite exhibit is the archerfish that shoot water out of the tank at a target held by an employee! I also really love that the aquarium features local freshwater fish and focuses on teaching guests about conservation efforts. The aquarium also has seasonal events, camps for kids, and temporary exhibits so be sure to follow the aquarium on social media to stay up to date on the latest happenings! There’s also restaurants and the Ferris wheel nearby so you can make a whole day of the visit. The aquarium is pretty small and pricey for its size, but I definitely think it should still be on your St. Louis bucket list as it is really fun!

Jenna B., M1

St. Louis Architecture (Gateway Arch)

If you are an architecture nerd like my dad, this is a great landmark to check out! For those of us who love the ground and prefer not to be wobbling 630 feet in the air, this is still a great landmark to check out! It's basically the symbol of St. Louis and has quite a few fun activities to do while there (such as going on a riverboat cruise, helicopter tour, and more). My favorite part is that it looks especially beautiful at night when you're out and about or stuck studying (allegedly) in the student lounge.

Nnediri U., M1

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO)

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (SLSO) is one of the finest symphony orchestras in the country, and I've been fortunate to attend a few of their performances over the past few months, with some of my fellow students. Though some of the less traditional concerts (e.g., Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2 in Concert) don't have student discounts, all concerts featuring classical works offer \$10 student tickets for anyone with a student ID — it's an incredible price for some high-quality entertainment. The most recent concert I went to was a rendition of G.F. Handel's Messiah back in December, and it was absolutely sublime.

Neetij K., M1

Steinberg Skating Rink

Steinberg is a seasonal, skating rink in Forest Park that is an absolute St. Louis must-do! It is the only outdoor rink in the area, and the prices are pretty reasonable for admission and skate rentals. They also have fire pits, snacks, and beverages. Although it can get crowded, it is a fun place to visit with friends and family. Plus, it helps that it is super close by!

Ariel B., M1

The Muny

Forest Park has many amazing things to offer, and the Muny is one of them! Throughout the summer, this giant outdoor amphitheater offers incredible shows, such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *West Side Story*, and *Rent*. If you are a musical theater buff or someone who enjoys live entertainment of any kind, this is the place to be! Being up close and personal with the actors is always nice, but being in the back is free!!! The Muny offers freebie seats on a first come, first served basis, so bring a cooler and a picnic blanket while you wait in line. Also, if you go for free, bring some binoculars because you might need them!

Lexis H., M1

Drinks

Abstaining from Alcohol

Whether it's for religious reasons, trying to avoid a hangover at all costs, wanting to save money on drinks, or if it's just a personal preference, you might come into medical school scared about feeling out of place during social events. Since many of your classmates will be in their early 20s to 30s, it's only natural that going out is a part of the social scene here. Nonetheless, choosing to spend the night with my water bottle in my hand has never lessened the experience of classmate bonding. I've never felt pressured by any classmates to drink, and I can almost guarantee that it'll be the same way for you as long as you're respectful of other people's own decisions about drinking. There are a bunch of fun activities like karaoke, dancing, and board games/arcade games at the bars here, and it's fun to even just chat with classmates and decompress after an exam or a hard week. Don't be afraid to seek out the mocktail menu if you still want to participate in the fancy drink aesthetic! Keep an open mind, and you'll still have a good time.

Olivia M., M1

Beer, Beer, Beer

Beer is the best, St. Louis is the best, so beer = St. Louis. I am an avid craft beer fan and have been thoroughly impressed by the number of craft breweries in the area, especially walkable ones from campus in the Grove! Some larger-scale breweries that are STL staples I recommend include Urban Chestnut, Schlafly, and 4 Hands Brewing Co. (Anheuser-Busch does NOT count). However, I love smaller breweries that specialize in small-batch brews and experimental beers, and I highly recommend 2nd Shift, Side Project, and Perennial. No matter if you go to a brewery or any bar/grill in the area, I can guarantee you will not be disappointed in the St. Louis beer selection!

Mitch O., M1

Cafés and Coffee Shops

Coma Coffee Roasters is a relatively large, two-floor upscale café in Clayton and is a 12-minute drive from the Central West End (CWE). Coma Coffee gets crowded with businesspeople and undergrads at peak hours, but it's a great location to study while enjoying an iced espresso drink, egg sandwich with home fries, or even a happy-hour cocktail. The open-air, modernist vibes are also pleasant on the eyes. Open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.

Sump Coffee is an award-winning café located in the heart of Soulard (~15 minutes from CWE). Sump features a rotating selection of single-origin pour-over coffees that taste out-of-this-world luxurious and vibrant. The decor is slick and features lots of lacquered wood furniture, and you get a nifty rubber coaster with your drink so as not to damage it. Open 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. daily.

Pipers Tea and Coffee is an upscale café in Tower Grove South (15 minutes from CWE) that purveys a wide variety of loose-leaf teas, matcha drinks, and, of course, espressos too. I'm a sucker for their Earl Grey but enjoy the cold brew every once in a while. Seating (especially adjacent to outlets) is sometimes limited, but when I'm by myself or with a small group, I can usually find a granite-white table or bar seating for us. Open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.

Shaw's Coffee is a unique roastery and coffee shop in the Hill, a historically Italian-American neighborhood, whose vibe takes me back to the 1940s. It's located in what used to be an old bank, so you can even enjoy your macchiato and biscotti while sitting inside a vault room! There aren't too many outlets available, however. Open 7 a.m.-4 p.m. daily.

Blueprint Coffee is a roastery and café on the Delmar Loop near the Danforth Campus (10-15 min from CWE) and features lots of specialty brews and espresso drinks. Parking and seating is rather limited, but it's worth trying out some of the single-origin roasts. Open 8 a.m.-4 p.m. daily.

Northwest Coffee Roasting Company is an open-air coffee shop and roastery close to CWE (five-minute drive or 10-minute walk), and it's got loads of outdoor seating, which isn't always the most comfortable but is gorgeous on a late summer evening. The café itself is located in a small, repurposed industrial building and has a factory workshop-esque vibe. Open 7 a.m.-6 p.m. daily.

Protagonist Café is a lovely bookstore-themed café that also sells wines and used books. Though the coffee isn't the strongest, it's easy to sink into a leather chair and slap that spacebar for Anki for hours here. Open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.

Starbucks is ... well, as a former or current undergrad student, you probably know what it's like. Just remember to boycott Starbucks (and instead visit an indie coffee shop) when the workers are on strike! There are two locations in CWE: a large store on Maryland Avenue next to the World Chess Hall of Fame with a greenhouse-like study area, and another smaller location shared with Chick-Fil-A (a dangerous combo) right behind the Eric P. Newman Education Center on campus. You can't redeem Starbucks Rewards stars at the latter store.

John H., M1

There are a lot of great cafés to choose from around St. Louis. Here are some of my favorite local spots:

Coma Coffee Roasters: Coma Coffee Roasters has a huge amount of seating and also offers great cocktails and beer in addition to the coffee. Coma is open all day, every day as well. I really like the more substantial food options, such as burgers, available in addition to breakfast and sweet snacks for those long study sessions. The outlets are pretty far away from the seating in some spots, so many people bring extension cords.

Comet Coffee: Comet Coffee has truly amazing coffee (the best in the city, in my opinion) and excellent pastries, but the shop is very small. I suggest getting there early or taking your coffee to go!

Fiddlehead Fern Café: This café has the best pastries in the city and fantastic coffee! The unique and tasty beverages are made with local dairy or homemade milk alternatives. I also love the different breakfast toasts, especially the roasted goat cheese and tomato toast! You can really tell everything is super fresh! This café is bright, minimalist, and overall very beautiful but quite small, so get there early!

Protagonist Café: This coffee shop is charming and quirky! The walls are lined with books you can check out, cute cards and other crafts to buy, plenty of outlets, and comfortable seating. The coffee is great, and the cinnamon rolls are the best I have ever had (and vegan)! Protagonist also sells wine and beer, along with great breakfast burritos only available on the weekends! This place is also a great study spot because it is open from 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily.

Jenna B., M1

Chill Bars

There are lots of fun places in St. Louis where you can get your game on! Blueberry Hill in The Loop is the best place to play darts. If you are looking for corn hole, Paddy O's by Busch Stadium is the place in the summer. Pieces is the bar for you if board games are more your speed, and I recommend Up-Down in the Central West End for anyone who likes an adult arcade. The Armory just opened and has a variety of lawn games and is not far from the new Top Golf that will be opening in Midtown in late 2023.

Chris H., M1

Cocktail and Wine Bar

If you're looking to unwind with friends by appreciating some fine mixology (and drinking responsibly), St. Louis has several choice bars for the cocktail aficionado! Some of my favorites include Pagan Wine Bar, where a patron allegedly offered \$5k for their Manhattan recipe (it's gloriously good) and was subsequently rebuffed, Lazy Tiger (creative thematic rum drinks), and Brennan's (negroni + cigar = living like a med school dean). BrassBar (located in Brasserie by Niche and amply supplied with great French wines) and Scarlet Wine Bar (good outdoor seating) are great choices for wine too. If you're looking for a fun vibe, I also recommend Platypus (whose owner-operator, Meredith Barry, competed on Drink Masters on Netflix!) and Narwhal's Crafted (perfect summertime frozen cocktails). Just remember: You have to treat yourself so that you can treat your patients. :)

John H., M1

Dive Bars

Venice Cafe is a classic, cash-only dive bar near the Anheuser-Busch factory. Each night of the week, there will either be live music or stand-up comedy. Besides the cool, eclectic design, there is also a nice outdoor area, which is really nice in the summer!

Carolyn C., M1

Game Bars

For fellow sports fans, you need to look no further than OB Clark's for American sports. It is a bit of a drive being in Brentwood, but this place is a St. Louis classic and the best place for cheap beer and TVs. A close runner-up is Seamus McDaniel's in Dogtown (also home to the best spicy chicken sandwich in the city). If you have a big group, I definitely recommend Urban Chestnut. If a cocktail lounge is more your speed, I would direct you to Brennan's in Central West End. If you are looking to shake things up and like pets, you should try Bar K, which is a bar for people and dogs alike.

Chris H., M1

Karaoke

One of the best places for karaoke in St. Louis is the W Karaoke Lounge. This fun spot is on the Delmar Loop and allows you to rent out a room for anywhere from six to 40 people. It is reasonably priced, especially when split across the group, and is a blast. You can queue up any song you can think of, order drinks to your room, and sing the night away with your friends.

Liam C., M1

Margs

As someone who worked at a Mexican restaurant throughout high school that touted having “the Best Margs on the West Coast,” I feel very qualified to make this assessment. The closest good margs in walking distance to the Medical Campus are at El Burro Loco (4.3 stars with 2.7K reviews online). El Burro Loco has a long list of super fun flavors and many size options. The frozen style is my favorite — but be careful because they are stronger than you think! Other fantastic and popular options include Chive’s Mexican Restaurant, Rosalita’s Cantina, Mi Ranchito, El Maguey Mexican Restaurant, and Mission Taco Joint.

Dani W., M1

Places to Watch the Game

Depending on the sport, St. Louis has loads of spots to watch “the game.” If you’re trying to stay local, BBQ Saloon usually has the biggest football and basketball games on any given night. An order of jalapeño poppers and an old fashioned, and you’re set for a good time. Kingside Diner has a bit more of a pub vibe if you’re going for that while still only being a walk away.

If you’ve got a designated driver and a car, there’s another tier of sports bars. Amsterdam is a sick place for watching soccer with a range of beers and an outdoor patio area. Some of us went at 7:00 a.m. to watch the USA lose to the Netherlands, and it was slightly less sad than it should’ve been because of the atmosphere (Amsterdam is a pub, we did not fly to Amsterdam to watch us lose). OB Clark’s is a multi-sport bar that can cover you for hockey, football, basketball, and even the more niche sports like corn hole. The bar’s got some great wings and a great crowd, but it’ll put you back 15 minutes.

Akshay M., M1

Pub Trivia

Whether you have a ton of useless knowledge stuck in your brain or you just want to go vibe with your friends on a weeknight, weekly pub trivia is a fun way to take a break from school and switch it up. BBQ Saloon, which is a bar within walking distance from the med campus, is a favorite trivia destination among med students and BJC employees alike. There are so many other great trivia sites throughout the city as well, including HandleBar down in the Grove, Mike Duffy’s Pub & Grill on Clayton, and iTap in the Loop. Round up a team of your friends and head to one of these bars sometime — you might surprise yourself with how well you do!

Priscilla C., M2

Festivals and Events

Balloon Glow

The Balloon Glow is a beautiful and free event in Forest Park every year in late summer/early fall. The Balloon Glow features over 50 hot air balloons lighting up in the night, a DJ, and tons of local vendors. At the end of the night this year, the United States Army Golden Knights parachute team jumped from planes with beautiful sparklers, followed by a huge firework finale. The event was super crowded, so make sure to get there early! Food and drinks are sold at the Balloon Glow, but you can also bring your own (which I suggest due to the very long lines). The next day, the Great Forest Park Balloon Race takes place in which the hot air balloons from the previous night race across the city.

Jenna B., M1

CWE Halloween Block Party

Each year, held next to the World Chess Hall of Fame, the Central West End (CWE) hosts a Halloween block party. Free and open to everyone, the event starts off with family-friendly attractions, such as the kids' costume parade, trick-or-treating at the local businesses, and (perhaps best of all) a canine costume parade. In the afternoon, the party shifts to adults-only with drink vendors setting up shop, followed by the main event, the adult costume contest. The event is a ton of fun and a great opportunity to see St. Louis at its liveliest!

Brock B., M1

Farmers' Markets

For those of you who love doing your shopping locally, Soulard and Tower Grove have some incredible farmers' markets! Soulard is allegedly the oldest market west of the Mississippi, and is the perfect place to go on a Saturday morning if you want to hear some street music, get fresh tamales and donuts, and pick up some fresh fruit and vegetables from local farms. The same goes for Tower Grove. If you're like me, and sometimes don't have the time to go to farmers market every weekend, check out Find Your Farmer — it's a delivery service that can deliver you fresh veggies from local farms every few weeks, as well as other locally made goods like farm fresh eggs and bread! It's a more sustainable grocery delivery service and it supports local businesses, so it's a win-win service!

Carolyn C., M1

Garden Glow

Every year the Missouri Botanical Garden fully embraces the holiday spirit and decorates the garden with almost two million Christmas lights, a bunch of holiday exhibits, and food stands with everything from spiked hot cocoa to s'mores. Grab a few friends or your special someone and go wander around the magical tree-

lined lanes or snap a photo of your group inside a giant inflatable snow globe. It's a great way to get in the holiday spirit and would probably make a ridiculously romantic first date. Just saying.

Andrea O., M1

Oktoberfest

Oktoberfest in St. Louis is absolutely amazing. This year I went to three different Oktoberfests: 1) Urban Chestnut Oktoberfest in the Grove; 2) The Biggest Oktoberfest in Missouri in Hermann; 3) St. Louis Oktoberfest in Soulard. If you enjoy beer, I highly recommend that you buy a stein at an event and carry it around to every other Oktoberfest. The energy at all three events is very upbeat and exciting. It's a great way to see new parts of life in St. Louis, people watch, and make new friends with random people! I even learned how to polka in the beer garden.

Aaron K., M1

Places to Take a First Date

If you're looking for the best St. Louis date ideas, the love doctor will see you now.

What brings you in? Abdominal pain? Shortness of breath? Increased weakness with slurred speech? Don't worry! We've got you covered. I mean we did just finish our first clinical reasoning session how hard could this be? ... Okay, we might not be ready to help with those symptoms, but we can provide supportive care.

Here are 10 of the love doc's favorite St. Louis first date spots:

1. Picnics or sledding at Art Hill, depending on the time of year.
2. Go for chocolate and wine at Kakao.
3. Hike and kayak at Creve Coeur Lake
4. Try all of the handcrafted "Sexiest Ice Cream Alive" (according to Oprah magazine) at Clementine's Naughty & Nice Ice Cream.
5. Grab a few drinks at the underground Thaxton Speakeasy.
6. Travel a short distance to Missouri's wine country along the Katy Trail – Blumenhof, Balducci, and Noboleis wineries are a must!
7. Wanna drink beer in a cave? Check out Earthbound Beer on Cherokee Street.
8. Go paddleboating in Forest Park at the Boathouse.
9. Ain't afraid of no ghosts? Check out the Mystery dinners at The Lemp Mansion and tour the haunted mansion of beer barons using the provided infrared cameras to document your journey.

10. Check out a telescope at the St. Louis Public Library then head over to Broemelsiek Park Astronomy Site for an evening picnic and stargazing.

Anonymous, M1

Shakespeare in the Park

Shakespeare in the Park is a really fantastic and free event put on in Forest Park every summer. Professional actors come from all around the country to put on a live performance of a Shakespeare play almost every night for four weeks straight. The seating is anywhere you can find in the grass, so make sure to bring a picnic blanket or a couple of folding chairs and get there early! Great local businesses sell food and drinks, but you are more than welcome to bring your own. Pets are welcome too! The 2022 performance was “Much Ado About Nothing” and went throughout the month of June. We were so impressed and couldn’t believe the show was entirely free!

Jenna B., M1

Tower Grove Pride

Tower Grove Pride is a large community gathering by and for the St. Louis LGBTQ+ community and is hosted annually in late September at Tower Grove Park. It features an abundance of food, drinks, artists, crafters, booksellers, thrifters, non-profit and small business booths, and performances — think of a queer county fair! WUSM students also work a booth and provide information on queer health.

John H., M1

Fitness and Outdoor Activities

Basketball on Campus

The basketball court in Olin Hall basement is a great place to play with fellow students. Our class quickly took to them by creating a group chat and playing each Friday. Further, the court was just recently renovated with new floors, and many students from outside of the medical program come to play as well. Unfortunately, many of my fellow classmates really provide no competition. Their defense completely collapses when I begin to space the floor with my superb three-point shooting and drive to the hoop with my ridiculous handles. However, one student, we will call him AB, is the worst of them all. AB frequently attempts to test my handles out on Olin’s newly refurbished court in one-on-one matchups. What he doesn’t have in skills, he makes up in determination as he haphazardly moves on the floor in what he claims is defense. Thankful he hasn’t had to test our great insurance plan out yet as he brings good shoes to the court where he ultimately gets his ankles broken by yours truly. Overall, the Olin Hall court provides a very fun and convenient space to play with friends, just don’t expect much competition.*

*Editorial comment: The writer of this article is clearly afflicted by grandiose delusions, and we are making every effort to get SM help on and off the basketball court.

S.M., M1

Boxing

Whether it be a supplement to your fitness routine or a cathartic way to release your stress after an exam, boxing is a great opportunity to break a sweat and get in shape. Boxing gyms available include The Boxing Gym, Saint Louis Boxing Club, and Summers Rec Center on the Danforth Campus, all of which offer structured boxing and kickboxing classes. For those looking to branch out into other styles, Wise Warriors MMA and River-City Warriors MMA offers boxing as well as Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, Muay Thai, etc. for the casual enthusiast to the aspiring amateur fighter. Since so many options are available, don't hesitate to get your gloves on and hit the bag!

Onyi O., M1

Climbing

If you've never climbed before but are a little scared about trying it out, there are two important things to know:

The best climber isn't the strongest, but the one having the most fun. No, you don't need to have upper body strength, like, at all, to start climbing. I started climbing in college, and coming from California I was totally spoiled by access to some of the best climbing in the world, from Joshua Tree to Yosemite. So I wasn't exactly stoked on climbing in the notoriously flat Midwest. I couldn't be happier to have completely changed my mind. The local climbing community in St. Louis is awesome; everyone is so ridiculously supportive, and I've met almost as many new friends at the gym as I have at WashU (and students get a discounted membership at Climb So iLL through the ClimbRx club!). For outdoor climbing, there's a bunch of options depending on your schedule. A great area for newer climbers is Rockwood Reserve, only 25 minutes from the Central West End. Robinson Bluff is a great, recently developed area for rope climbing, about 1.5 hours south. The Holy Boulders in Southern Illinois have some of the best bouldering in the U.S., only two hours east. And the Red River Gorge in Kentucky is farther at six hours away, but well worth the trip. If you stay at Miguel's, you'll meet climbers from all over the world who have travelled to what is arguably the Mecca of sport climbing in the U.S. Best of all, there are lots of people excited to check out all these places with you! Whether you've been climbing for years or have never been more than two feet off the ground in your life, I hope you come rock out with us in St. Louis. :)

Andrea O., M1

eSports

As you might suspect, medical school students tend to be on the athletic, sporty side. As aspiring eSports athletes, I guess we're also guilty of perpetuating this stereotype! Just like football and basketball, eSports are real sports too. One of our most formative childhood dreams was to become sweaty athletes in eSports, whether in League of Legends, Smash, Call of Duty, or Mario Party. Sometimes, medical school makes training (our real priority) tough, but we always try to make dedicated time to refine our techniques, join a tournament or two, and dunk on undergrad gamers. So, if you have time after studying, grab your gaming mouse, a bag of Doritos, and join us!

John H., Mohamed J., Tim B., Joey G., M1s

Float Trip

Floating — a quintessential Missouri activity. Float trips are a summer tradition where you take a raft and simply float down the river. Highlights include spending time with friends and classmates, unwinding in the beautiful and peaceful outdoors, and enjoying your favorite beverage. There are many companies that provide float trips on the several rivers within about an hour's drive of St. Louis. So get ready to have a new favorite summertime activity!

Christina K., M1

Golf

Playing golf in Forest Park is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon in St. Louis! Personally, I've spent a lot of time at the Highlands, a 9-hole golf course located about a half-mile from the Medical Campus. My classmates and I love to hit the driving range after class. A bucket of balls only costs \$4-7, and the greens fees range from \$15-22 (depending on the day of the week). But don't be fooled by the low prices: The Highlands is perhaps one of the most nicely-maintained public courses I have ever played! The tee box of hole #7 has an especially beautiful view of Barnes-Jewish Hospital and St. Louis Children's Hospital that you don't want to miss.

Abby H., M2

Hiking

Living in St. Louis comes with access to a surprising number of hiking trails! Many trails are 20-30 minutes from St. Louis (my favorite is Castlewood State Park). However, there are also many hiking trails within a two-hour drive of St. Louis, like Taum Sauk Mountain State Park (the highest point in Missouri) or Elephant Rocks State Park; getting a group together for a road trip and hike is a great way to de-stress! If you want some inspiration from other hikers in Missouri, you can join the Missouri Hiking and Backpacking group on Facebook, where fellow hikers post pictures of their favorite spots in Missouri and make recommendations for places to go.

Caroline J., M1

Intramural Sports

Do you think you peaked athletically in high school? I definitely thought I did. As it turns out, I was right. But that still does not have to stop you from doing what you love and hanging out with some friends while playing a game of volleyball, soccer, or basketball. WashU uses IMLeagues as its central platform to organize all its recreational sports leagues. The leagues are for any WashU-affiliated person, including undergraduate students or graduate/professional students. Whether you are trying to relive your glory days or want to hang out with friends, playing an intramural sport is an incredibly fun time and serves as a great study break. I have played on a couple of teams with my friends and made memories I will never forget. They have a wide range of sports for you to play, that change depending upon the time of the year, and it does not cost anything.

Kyle M., M1

Kendo

Though the exercise and proximity to the Medical Campus are a bonus, I've received things much more valuable from Kendo, a Japanese martial art. I started in undergrad, and have loved the emphasis on values beyond strength, like discipline, mindfulness, respect, speed, and skill. As we tell ourselves, "With only strength, even a monkey could kill you with a sword." The club community has also been incredibly supportive and fun. The way of the sword is seldom walked alone, after all.

Lilly G., M1

Pickleball

If you enjoy playing pickleball, Tower Grove Park has great courts and is only about a five-minute drive from campus. They have free open court times on weekends and it is a perfect place to go with friends for exercise and fun when the weather is nice. My Big likes to play pickleball, so we first met at Tower Grove Park and have been playing ever since.

John B., M1

Running

I will never understand why St. Louis uses the Gateway Arch as its biggest sell when Forest Park is postcard-perfect. It's even bigger than Central Park and right on the border of the Medical Campus. There are multiple asphalt, gravel, and mulch trails that you can run on, and you can even run through the zoo (it's free admission). If you're into trail running, there are multiple state parks within driving distance with well-maintained trails — it's super fun to grab a couple classmates and make a day trip out of it. There are also plenty of road races happening year-round. The Missouri

Cowbell (5k, 10k, half-marathon and marathon) happens in the beginning of September (so you still have time to consistently train) and is in St. Charles (~30-minute drive from campus). The course is super flat and fast! St. Charles itself has super cute small town vibes, so you also have the opportunity to explore around afterwards. If you don't have a car, there's also a lot of races that happen in Forest Park, which can help you branch off from your usual Forest Park route. Running has been a huge social activity for a lot of classmates, and we even have a Strava club to give each other encouragement. If you want to use running as your branch-out activity, there are also some community running clubs, such as Dogtown Running Club, that meet ~three times a week and have both short (~two mile), medium (~four mile), and long (~ten mile) routes. It's a great opportunity to explore St. Louis and meet people outside of the medical school!

Olivia M., M1

Soccer

There are tons of opportunities to play soccer in St. Louis as a medical student! The Danforth Campus offers outdoor and indoor intramural soccer leagues depending on the season. There is almost always a medical student team, and it is free to join! Another opportunity to play outside of WUSM is through Vetta Sports, which has multiple indoor soccer domes in St. Louis and those leagues are pay-to-play.

Lucy S., M4

Sumers Recreation Center

As medical students at WashU, we have access to the recreational facilities on the Danforth Campus as well. Sumers Recreation Center, the main gym on the Danforth Campus, is just a 10-minute drive from the Central West End or Skinker/DeBaliviere where most med students end up living. Not only is their collection of fitness machines massive, but they also offer the structure of free classes such as Zumba, cycle, kickboxing, and barre if you need a little help with your routine. Open swim hours and basketball/volleyball courts round out the wealth of resources they provide if you want a little change of pace for your workout.

Priscilla C., M2

Swimming

Swimming has always been my preferred way to work out. I have been able to continue that so far in med school at the Sumers Athletic Center at the Danforth Campus, which has an eight-lane pool and diving well. Open swim hours are available everyday. A good swim is a great way to disconnect after a long day of class and studying. As medical students, we're able to join the club swim and water polo teams. I joined the club water polo team, along with three M2s. It has been really fun to play the sport again and have team camaraderie while getting a great workout!

Christina K., M1

Tennis

There are so many tennis players of all levels here at WashU! I would even say tennis is one of the most popular sports here. There are courts near the hospital within walking distance from most of us, and people also enjoy playing at Tower Grove and in Forest Park. Dr. Yau, one of our clinical skills mentors, is an avid tennis player, so he will join us with his kids sometimes. There is also a tennis league for anyone associated with WUSM that hosts clinics, tournaments, and casual hitting sessions. Whether you're just getting into tennis or a seasoned professional, I guarantee that you will find a hitting partner here!

Amy L., M1

Ultimate Frisbee

Getting involved with the ultimate Frisbee scene in St. Louis has been a highlight and I recommend it to all! There is a welcoming and established Frisbee community in St. Louis with a variety of intensity and levels. The St. Louis league has year round women's, mixed, and open divisions and is easy to join. In the summer there are a couple competitive club teams you can try out for, and finally there is the Washington University team associated with the undergraduate program. Continuing to play here has given me a sense of familiarity in a new city and an active outlet. My big sib (M2 mentor), her big sib (M3) and I all played in the St. Louis league this fall together which was a lot of fun. In the spring, the competitive season for the WashU team will begin and I look forward to playing!

Elisa K., M1

Food

Barbecue

The best place for barbecue is Salt & Smoke, located in the Delmar Loop. Highly recommend the mac and cheese and rib tips with the in-house barbecue sauces.

Miriam N., M1

Brunch

St. Louis might honestly be the best city for brunch in the entire country. And while that might sound like a bold claim, I can promise you it's the truth. There are so, so, SO many good, or, quite honestly, great brunch spots it's almost overwhelming. There's The Mud House, Kingside Diner, Juniper, First Watch, and so many more. And that isn't even counting my personal favorite brunch spot, which is Songbird in the Grove. Honestly, it's not just my favorite brunch spot; it's my favorite restaurant, period. Since arriving in St. Louis in August, I've already gone more times than I can count and have the restaurant on speed dial. Long story

short, St. Louis will not disappoint in the slightest when it comes to brunch. Not in the slightest.

Ethan B., M1

Burgers

Burgers are probably the food I have eaten the most since arriving in St. Louis, and I have not yet been disappointed by a single restaurant (although my arteries might have some complaints)! My absolute favorite burger place so far has been Hi-Pointe Drive-In, and numerous locations are nearby. They have incredibly creative burgers and daily specials, along with great fries, shakes, and local beers. They also have Impossible burgers. If you live in CWE, Shake Shack is super close by and a delicious option. If you are looking for something fancier, I love the cheeseburger from Yellowbelly, which comes on a homemade Hawaiian roll with aged cheddar, miso onions, and sauce. This is perfectly paired with their fantastic beef fat fries and a cocktail (or mocktail)! I also have had great burgers from John D. McGurk's Irish Pub & Garden, Urban Chestnut, and Coma Coffee Roasters. Lastly, although I haven't gotten around to trying it yet, I have heard great things about the burgers from Mac's Local Eats.

Jenna B., M1

Cheap Places to Eat

Looking for a high-yield list of yummy places to eat? Your wallet is suffering because of your poor spending habits? Don't wanna cook for the 30th time this week? Look no further. Here's the scoop:

- Sauce on the Side has gigantic calzones for tiny prices.
- Sushi Ai has all-you-can-eat sushi during lunch for \$15, decent quality.
- Wonton King has high-quality Chinese food and dim sum for less than \$15 during lunch.

Other reliable places:

- Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers is always a solid option for a quick burger and fries.
- Raising Cane's has tasty chicken tenders when you are in a pinch.
- Pharaoh's Donuts in the Central West End has artisanal donuts for under \$3.

A few recommendations for my fellow med students: West End Wok, High-Pointe Drive-In, and many more!

Santiago B., M1

Chinese Food and Dim Sum

My favorites are Wei Hong, Vegas Wok, Tai Ke Shabu Shabu, and Cate Zone Chinese Cafe, in that order. They are all very authentic:

- Wei Hong has great dim sum and Cantonese-style roast duck but doesn't deliver to the Medical Campus. A sweet little Asian bakery is attached to the main restaurant. (Check if they've re-opened dine-in seating before you visit.)
- Vegas Wok is \$9-11 a dish. It's a very small place but quick and easy for great-tasting food. My favorites are probably the Singapore noodles and anything with beef tripe. The beef rice noodles are also great but spicy.
- Tai Ke Shabu Shabu is authentic Taiwanese food and, in my opinion, has a good vegetarian menu (including blood cubes!). I'm a fan of the fried oysters and, again, anything with duck.
- Cate Zone has a lot of spicy food. They even have spiced and skewered lamb. (I know they have substitute meats but forgot what they are.) They can be empty or absolutely packed, so I suggest making a reservation either way.

P.S. I will acknowledge Corner 17 as a popular place with good food, but it is often quite busy! The staff is always really attentive and kind, though. I know Lu Lu Seafood & Dim Sum is popular, but I've heard it's on the priciest end. Personally haven't been, so not sure.

Lilly G., M1

Desserts

I live by the belief that you should always leave room for dessert. I have a huge sweet tooth, which all the dessert places in St. Louis have been able to easily satisfy. Some controversy exists as to what dessert places are best here. Here is my breakdown:

Ice Cream:

Clementine's Naughty and Nice Creamery vs. Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream

- I prefer Clementine's. There are more vegan flavors, the ice cream is richer, and there are naughty flavors (ice cream with alcohol).

Frozen Custard:

Ted Drewes Frozen Custard vs. Andy's Frozen Custard

- Against popular opinion, I prefer Andy's. The Mint Chip Concrete is to die for. There are also more choices for toppings.

Other dessert places that are unarguably yummy are Insomnia Cookies (open until midnight), Vincent Van Doughnut in Tower Grove, and froYo on the Delmar Loop.

Jessica B., M1

Eating Vegan

Whether you're a day, a year, or a whole decade into your vegan lifestyle, or you're just trying to adopt a more whole food plant-based diet, St. Louis can satisfy your taste buds (and your wallet) to help you stay on track. The most popular vegan restaurants near campus include Lulu's Local Eatery, PuraVegan Café, Frida's, and Seedz Café. Also, although not exclusively vegan, almost all CWE favorites, including Pi Pizzeria, Medina Grill, Mission Taco, Rasoi, and Retreat Gastropub have vegan-friendly options, which has made it more than convenient to tag-along on foodie adventures with my omnivore classmates. For local produce, the Soulard Farmers Market is open year-round, and there are more than a dozen other markets in the city that are active between early spring and late fall. Conveniently, Trader Joe's is just a 10-minute drive west from campus, and if you ever find yourself missing an essential ingredient last minute, or you'd simply like to bring cookies for your coaching group, you can easily find it at our campus-adjacent Whole Foods!

Nora A., M3

Food Around Campus When You're Feeling Lazy

There are a lot of great food options around campus! The Kaldi's in the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) is a good place to snag a light lunch; just be aware that they close around 2:00 p.m. generally. Chick-fil-A is another good option that's about a 5-to-7-minute walk from the FLTC, and you can order online beforehand to skip the line! Another great option for quick and cheap food is the St. Louis Children's Hospital cafeteria. The best part is that they are open at almost all times, so you can grab a bite whenever!

Karan J., M1

Food for When Your Parents Are Visiting

There are so many great places to take your parents in St. Louis! If you are celebrating a big occasion, Yellowbelly and Brasserie by Niche are my personal favorites in the CWE. If you want a fancy dinner and are willing to travel out of the CWE, LOUIE in Clayton is my favorite restaurant in the entire city. LOUIE features amazing Italian food in a trendy yet approachable atmosphere and has incredible service. For more casual occasions, Salt + Smoke (barbeque) and Mission Taco Joint (West Coast-style Mexican cuisine) are really popular and tasty options with multiple locations across the city. My family really enjoyed the huge and beautiful outdoor patio seating available in the summer at John D. McGurk's Irish Pub & Garden, but the restaurant also has a cozy and warm indoor atmosphere that is great during the cold winter months. The vast beer options, baked spinach and artichoke dip, and Guinness stew make

this place another personal favorite. The many Italian restaurants in the Hill are all amazing and also popular with families, but Anthonino's Taverna is my family's top choice. Lastly, one of my favorite experiences while living in St. Louis so far has been going to the Food Hall in the City Foundry STL. The Food Hall features food stalls with plenty of different options, such as tacos, beer, cheesecake, poke bowls, and much more, so there is sure to be something for everyone. I suggest everyone get one or two items from different stalls and share to try a little bit of everything!

Jenna B., M1

French

If you're looking for a nice sit-down restaurant to bring family or visitors, Brasserie by Niche is a great place to try out. The restaurant makes a delicious crème brûlée and also serves brunch on Sundays. For more casual places to check out, City Coffee & Crêperie in Clayton is well known for its crepes, and La Bonne Bouchée on Olive Blvd. has a great selection of pastries.

Melissa Y., M1

Gluten-Free Eats

Coming from UCLA, located in the gluten-free capital of the United States, my expectations for gluten-free food in St. Louis were pretty low. I was diagnosed with celiac disease in 2008, so I've experienced the full spectrum of having literally no options to eating meals that shouldn't legally have been considered food. But since I moved here, I've been pleasantly surprised! Most pizza restaurants have a gluten-free crust option (cauliflower, brown rice, et cetera), many Italian restaurants have gluten-free pasta, and almost every restaurant I've been to so far has a) known what gluten is and b) known which items on the menu did not have it. Special shout-outs include Lona's Lil Eats (everything is gluten-free except the dumplings and flour tortillas), Salt + Smoke (delicious BBQ with gluten-free sandwich bread), and Brasserie by Niche (great when the parents are in town). For drinks, Urban Chestnut and Brick River Cider both brew their own fantastic cider, and most bars around town have cider or wine options (except Rockwell, where your only option is a \$14 cocktail). The administration is also pretty good about providing gluten-free options for lunch talks. Whether you're gluten intolerant, have celiac disease, or are just against gluten on principle, you won't go hungry in St. Louis.

Andrea O., M1

Grocery Delivery Services

When you need groceries, Whole Foods is a nearby option in a pinch, but the prices can be a bit prohibitive to go there on a regular basis. There are many other grocery stores (ALDI, Schnucks) within driving distance, but it's often hard to find time to go there and select your own groceries. I use Instacart, which allows me to select my groceries in the app, communicate with the shopper buying my items,

and pick them up from my apartment lobby once they're ready. It's worth the small fee, and you can get discounts for referring others!

Neetij K., M1

Korean BBQ

St. Louis has several KBBQ places available to get your fill, from fast casual to all-you-can-eat (AYCE). Among the fast casual options, there is BOBQ, K-Bop STL, and U-City Grill, which offer various plates and bowls for a quick lunch or dinner. In terms of AYCE, Joo Joo Restaurant & Karaoke, Wudon BBQ Korean Restaurant, and Seoul Garden are among the three most popular options for cooking with family and friends. I encourage you to go around and find the one that suits your fancy!

Onyi O., M1

Latin

St. Louis has a significant Central American community! Within the CWE, Cocina Latina (Peruvian) is the closest option. Outside of the CWE, I recommend driving to Cherokee Street; here, you will find authentic Latin food that you'll definitely enjoy. Places on Cherokee Street to try are Diana's Bakery, Taqueria Hectorito, and Sueño Latino Restaurant.

Jonathan M., M1

Pasta

The Hill neighborhood is the place to go if you are craving pasta or other authentic Italian dishes. I highly recommend Zia's On The Hill and Gian-Tony's Ristorante. If you are looking for a fancier place or somewhere to have a great birthday party, Maggiano's Little Italy is the place to go. You will even get a second portion of pasta to go!

Jessica B., M1

Phở

Phở (pronounced "fuh" and not "foe") is a Vietnamese bone broth soup consisting of rice noodles, beef/protein, and various toppings like herbs, bean sprouts, chili peppers, and lime. This flavor-packed dish has so many variations and customizations that'll keep you on your toes every time you order it! As a Vietnamese student, phở holds a special place in my heart, and some of the restaurants in St. Louis can give my Grandma a run for her money. Saigon Cafe is an excellent option for busy medical students as it is located on Euclid Ave., just a few minutes' walk from campus, while Mai Lee in Brentwood makes for a great stop located close to shops, cafes, and grocery stores. There are even more Vietnamese restaurants along Grand Blvd., Olive St., and Delmar Blvd. to try as you explore St. Louis. With all of these options, you're sure to find a restaurant you won't "phở" get!

Tim B., M1

Pizza

Imo's is the classic St. Louis-style pizza chain. A lot of people will rip on St. Louis-style pizza, but I urge you to try the pizza at OB Clark's in Brentwood before you write it off for good. There are lots of other good pizza places here, too, for the many of you who hate on St. Louis style. Dewey's is a favorite and more of a New York style. There is also Pi Pizzeria for folks from Chicago, and Pointer's pizza for anyone who wants an eating challenge.

Chris H., M1

Places to Have a Birthday Dinner

If you're looking for something close by in the Central West End, Yellowbelly is a great Island-American fusion restaurant. The vibe is fun, the cocktails are strong, and the Brussels sprouts are covered in this cauliflower kimchi, which is divine. A different vibe, but also in the Central West End, is Juniper. It's a bit more casual with a Southern feel. The restaurant has a variety of whiskeys and serves the best fried chicken in the city. A bit more of a drive away, but well worth it, is Indo. Better for smaller groups and a bit pricier, it is without a doubt the best restaurant in St. Louis. Indo has amazingly fresh fish, crispy tofu dishes, sushi hand rolls, and everything in between. As someone from a big city that prides itself in its food scene, Indo is a hidden gem and perfect for any occasion (especially birthdays)!

Eli A., M1

Puerto Rican/Caribbean Food

Various Caribbean food options are available throughout the general St. Louis region. Some of those include Mayo Ketchup, Havana Cuisine, and Boogaloo. Unfortunately, these options are outside of the CWE, thus requiring a car to arrive there.

Jonathan M., M1

Ramen

Picture this. It's a cold, rainy day in St. Louis, and there's nothing you want more than to slurp down a hot bowl of noodles. Nudo House in the Loop has some solid options to satisfy your cravings, along with a number of Pan-Asian dishes if you change your mind. If you're looking for adventure and variety, the possibilities at Nami Ramen are endless — so many different broths and toppings to try. Are you a ramen purist? A dinner at Menya Rui will transport you to a humble ramen shop in Japan, but you have to secure one of the lucky 15 seats first!

Jesse P., M1

St. Louis Greatest Hits List

Italian

- **Charlie Gitto's On the Hill:** This is a staple Italian restaurant on the Hill that's been around for over 40 years. Although a bit more expensive, the food will put you in a cheese and pasta coma, and it's also a charming place.
- **Zia's On the Hill:** A more affordable option and has great deals for cocktails and drinks too. They are known for the classic St. Louis toasted ravioli!

Barbecue

- **Pappy's Smokehouse:** The ribs were named the best in America by Food Network a few years back ... and they truly are. Although they serve Memphis-style barbecue, please set your St. Louis pride aside and enjoy!
- **Grace Meat + Three:** Voted to have the best fried chicken in Missouri, the fried chicken is seasoned to perfection! If you're from the South, this spot will scratch every Southern cookin' itch you might ever have. Collard greens, mac and cheese, deviled eggs, etc. It is also relatively affordable for all the food you get. Enjoy!

Diners (or Similar)

- **Hi-Pointe Drive-in:** This classic diner will bring you back to the 1980s. Enjoy a cute atmosphere along with some delicious burgers and shakes!
- **The Fountain on Locust:** Yet another old-time diner experience... but this one has ice cream martinis and champagne floats! This spot was built out of an upscale car manufacturing garage and has lots of fun character.
- **Crown Candy Kitchen:** Classic corner shake and fries store. Although it's located further downtown, it won't disappoint. It's been a famous STL spot since 1913!
- **Ted Drewes:** Founded by Ted Drewes over 80 years ago, this is the custard spot in St. Louis. They have special seasonal sundaes and any take on custard you could possibly fathom.

Other Great Spots

- **Tap Room:** A fun little microbrewery with the best sticky toffee pudding in town! Seriously, you can't stop eating it.
- **Peacemaker Lobster & Crab:** If you're missing some good seafood, this is the place to go! Known for the lobster rolls, it's so worth a trip.

- SqWires Restaurant & Market: A cool spot that I would describe as an upscale Cracker Barrel. Located in an old factory and has great brunch and dinner.
- Polite Society Restaurant and Bar: A small, quiet, intimate bar and restaurant with great brunch and cocktail options.
- Frazier's Restaurant & Lounge: A cool spot with great American food that's known for cocktails.
- Nixta: This place has great upscale Mexican cuisine, not to be confused with Tex-Mex. Nixta has a wonderful selection of cocktails with some of the best margaritas you will ever have.
- Sultan Mediterranean: Great classic Mediterranean food.
- Union Loafers Café and Bread Bakery: A local sandwich shop with the best bread in town. During lunch hours, they serve sandwiches. At night, they become a pizzeria. If you're trying to stay healthy, the Little Gem Salad is arguably my favorite salad ever.
- Cyrano's Cafe: Great brunch and a good stop for dessert!

Further Outside of St. Louis ... But Classic Visits

- The Loading Dock: This spot is really nice in the summer and clear days in the fall. It features a big outdoor dock with bar food, cheap (but good) drinks, and occasionally has live music along with other fun events!
- The Hawthorne Inn: A cute old-fashioned inn and a beautiful drive out in West County, St. Louis. This spot has a lot of character and great burgers.
- Good News Brewing Company (Defiance, MO): This is a great spot for pizza and beer! This brewery is located right along a nice path for running or biking. It's also a beautiful drive out that way.

Carolyn C. & Family, M1

Sushi and Poke

John and John enjoy getting sushi on the weekend to relax and catch up with friends after a busy week! One of our favorite places is Sushi Ai downtown by the Gateway Arch. The people there are very nice, and the restaurant has an all-you-can-eat menu, which — depending on your appetite — can make for a pretty affordable sushi experience. A “life hack” would be to get a workout in on the morning of your sushi feast to bring your appetite to the next level. For sushi closer to school, Kampai Sushi Bar is a good option (five blocks away), which also has nice

drinks if rice and fish aren't your thing. PokeDoke is also located in the Central West End, about three blocks from the Medical Campus, and is a great option.

John B. and John H., M1s

Tacos

As someone from Arizona, I really can be picky about Mexican food, but I have been genuinely surprised by the amazing options in St. Louis. For a really authentic experience, head to Cherokee Street (the Hispanic district in St. Louis) and check out the mom-and-pop restaurants, such as Taqueria El Bronco and Taqueria Hectorito. St. Louis also has tons of amazing Mexican fusion places that are extremely popular, such as Seoul Taco (Korean/Mex) and Taco Buddha (globally inspired). If you are looking for something within walking distance, check out Mission Taco Joint (West Coast style) and El Burro Loco (traditional style).

Dani W., M1

Thai

There is no shortage of Thai restaurants in St. Louis! When it comes to choosing a favorite, Thai 202 is a reliable CWE staple perfect for a quick meal between classes or a late-night Uber Eats delivery to the library. Thai Bowl is for when you're missing home and want to feel like you're sitting at your mom's kitchen table. If you're looking for a cozy lunch spot to catch up with friends, Fork & Stix is your place. Feeling a little boujee? Sip on a specialty cocktail at Chao Baan, and treat yourself to a feast of Northern and Southern Thai cuisine.

Jesse P., M1

Trendy, Reasonably Priced Restaurants

Songbird is my all-time favorite brunch place: the breakfast sandwiches are to die for, the coffee is delicious, and, if you're lucky, the staff will give you a couple of free appetizers. For lunch and dinner, Taco Buddha has the cutest outdoor patio with even cuter tacos, and Ramen Tei has arguably the best ramen in STL. For dessert, head to Spoonful for some bingsu!

Lisa G., M1

Vegetarians and Vegans

I've been a vegetarian (but not a vegan) for about 17 years, and I can safely say that St. Louis is a great place for vegetarians. There are plenty of restaurants in the area that cater to people who don't eat meat (even a sushi place!) and I've never had a problem finding something to eat when I'm out with my omnivorous friends.

Neetij K., M1

Shopping and Style

Grocery Stores

Living in the Central West End near campus, I've found that I have lots of options for grocery shopping. I do my regular shopping at Schnucks, which is just a few minutes' drive from campus, and I always find everything I need there! Another staple grocery store in St. Louis is ALDI, but keep in mind that you need to bring a quarter for the cart and your own bags. There is a Trader Joe's a bit farther from campus (about a 12-minute drive) for any Trader Joe's lovers. There is also a Whole Foods within walking distance from campus.

Leah T., M1

International Groceries

As an Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) dude, whenever I'm running low on staples like kimchi, dried seaweed, soju, or MSG, I often make a sneaky carpool trip with some classmates to Olive Supermarket, a large Asian grocery store that's 15 minutes away from the CWE. One of my favorite "activities" there is to get decision paralysis over the myriad of sauces to buy — laoganma, fish sauces, soy sauces, plum sauce, sambal oelek, gochujang, doenjang/miso paste, and much more.

John H., M1

Left Bank Books

Left Bank Books is a gem of a bookstore that sits on the corner of Euclid and McPherson in the Central West End. It's the oldest independent bookstore in St. Louis and always feels cozy and welcoming when you step in the door. In addition to all their new books, the entire lower floor (down the stairs when you walk in) is a really cool and strange collection of used books. Some of them are "blind dates with a book" — the book is wrapped in paper with a brief summary on it, so you have very little idea what you're getting yourself into when you buy it. It's a great way to dive into something you might not otherwise read. They also have their own monthly book club, events with authors, and community outreach programs to support their mission of "literacy and justice for all". Perhaps best of all, Left Bank Books is right next to Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams ... do with that information what you will.

Andrea O., M1

Shopping Malls and Boutiques

The shopping scene in St. Louis POPS OFF. There is a great mall (Galleria) and other large stores like Nordstrom Rack just a 10-minute drive or a MetroLink ride away from campus. There are a ton of good thrift shopping options, like multiple Goodwills and Savers, as well as a Salvation Army close to campus. The Salvation Army and Goodwill Outlet are both within a 20-minute walk from campus. Lastly,

there are frequently great pop-up markets that have good selections of vintage or small business clothings and other great finds.

Alice J., M1

Transportation

Biking

I live in DeBaliviere Place, so I get to have a beautiful bike ride through the majestic Forest Park to and from school when the weather permits (most of the year!). WUSM is great, but the bike ride is certainly one of the highlights of my day. There is not much better than fresh air, Mother Nature, and getting your blood pumping around your brain before class. On my way home, I'll often go out of my way to time my ride to enjoy the beautiful St. Louis sunset. When its too cold or snowing, the Metro is super convenient, although obviously not quite as enjoyable!

Melissa V., M1

Life without a Car

Living in St. Louis without a car is possible, at least when you are not assigned to a rotation or immersion somewhere inaccessible by transit, but it can be inconvenient. If you are not comfortable taking public transportation, I think it would be nearly impossible to get around. I use the MetroLink and the bus with relative frequency. Further, I think it would be critical to live close to a grocery store if you do not have a car. I live steps away from Whole Foods which can be expensive for some items, but this means that I have access to quality groceries all the time. For larger trips or for day trip options, there is a car share program through WashU that is only \$5/hour including gas and some insurance covered. This can be handy if, for example, you wanted to pick up small furniture items or do a huge grocery haul. It is not feasible to use this service for immersions or clerkships, unfortunately. In general, I would say it is easy to live somewhere like the CWE or De-Baliviere neighborhood without a car for certainly the first six months of medical school, so long as you are willing to take public transport. This is plenty of time to settle in, so you don't feel rushed to purchase a car before starting school.

Cerise S., M1

Parking on Campus

Most students who park on campus park in the Clayton Garage. Although the parking website only provides a monthly rate, the cost is billed annually to your student account up front. On a yearly basis, you can expect to pay about \$850. To sign up for the year, you have to go in-person to the Facilities Integrated Service Center (FISC) desk in the Mid Campus Center (MCC) once you receive your student ID during ori-

entation, and they will provide a very quick form to fill out. Within the next 24 hours, you will be able to access the garage with your ID. It is very convenient to park in Clayton since it is only a 5-10-minute walk from FLTC. There is also plenty of parking, but you may need to park in the upper levels as it gets later into the morning.

Ariel B., M1

St. Louis with a Car

Having a car is great because it is easier to go to a wider variety of places. Parking is also more convenient than a lot of big cities. You do not pay after 7 p.m. or on Sundays for most public parking, and you can park for free on most side streets. On the downside, St. Louis roads are not the greatest, and drivers tend to play it fast and loose when it comes to speed limits and using turn signals. Overall, it took a little time to get used to driving in St. Louis, but I like having a car because it gives me more options for groceries, going out with friends, and exploring the city. (Sidenote: If you have a Kia or Hyundai, make sure you invest in a steering wheel lock because those can get stolen if you park on the street).

Elizabeth S., M1



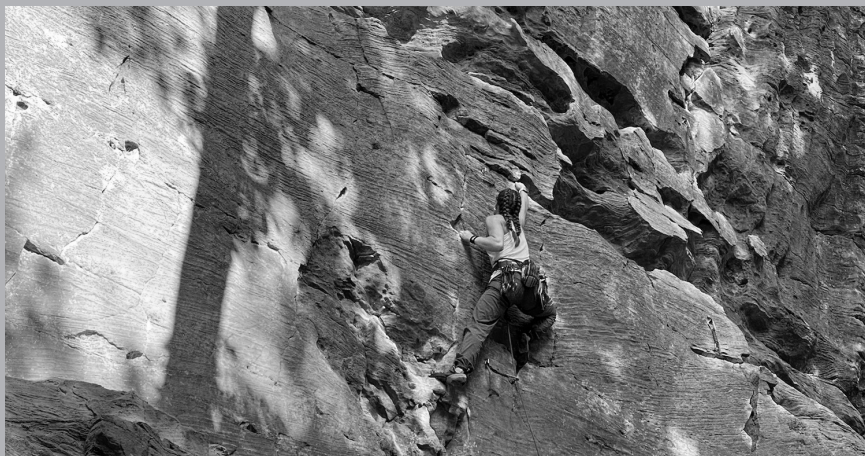
Rohini V., Andrea O., and Alice J. look picture-perfect at Garden Glow 2022.



Tucker H., Joe B., Olivia M., and Paula G.W. at the St. Louis Half-Marathon.



M1s rocking out at the Steel Shop climbing gym in Saint Charles!



M1 Andrea O. finds her footing on a cliff face in Red River Gorge, Kentucky.



Definitely not skipping class for a morning hike at Bluff View Park!



Balloon Glow — where even pigs can fly!



Celebrating the holidays from the top of downtown St. Louis before break.



M1s gather for a photo on the Danforth Campus. Pictured, top row from left to right: Rachel A., Quinn P., Amy L., Katie B., Jocelyn R. Bottom row: Leah T., Olivia M., Amanda M., Kelly S., Sabrina M., Bianca R.



Advice

Adjusting to medical school can be difficult. Here, our peers and some of our wonderful WashU Med faculty share words of wisdom on how to make the most out of your time in St. Louis.

SECTION EDITOR: ARIELLE SOLDATENKO

Advice from Phase 1 Students

Make Time for Yourself

You did it!! You got into medical school!! Maybe you've already celebrated, maybe you're a little nervous because you've heard that the real work begins now. There's some truth to that — medical school is really busy and can be overwhelming at times. But honestly, you've already done the hardest part. Now that you're in, you have access to a truly ridiculous number of resources. There is so much support available, in academics, for mental health, for getting into research, for building a community, and so much more. There are also safety nets in place to catch you if or when things are too much to handle on your own.

As you get settled into medical school, it can be easy to get caught up in how much everyone else is studying, what resources they're using, if you should be doing research yet, if you've signed up for enough shadowing across every specialty that exists, etc. But I would encourage you, as much as possible, to pull back from all that. You are about to be at one of the best medical schools in the nation, and you deserve to be here. WashU is going to get you to the finish line. This is not to say you don't have to do any work, of course. But you don't need to get a 95% on every exam — or any of them, for that matter. You don't need to buy subscriptions to AMBOSS, spend hours in the library every day, or even know what Anki is in order to do well in medical school and end up where you want to go. You are building a foundation for everything from specific study habits to a work-life balance that could last you the rest of your medical career, so try your absolute best not to make anxiety-based decisions or decisions based solely on what your classmates are doing. You are where you need to be, doing what you need to do — and if you're not, someone will tell you. Make time for yourself, listen to your body, eat a vegetable every once in a while. Make sure that whatever you do works best for you because you are the only person it needs to work for. Slow down, breathe deeply, and remember that it's all going to be just fine.

Andrea O., M1

People Around You are Invested in Your Success

Medical school means a lot of different things to different people. It's challenging, fulfilling, draining, edifying, exciting, dramatic, frustrating, and one of the coolest things you could ever do — all at once. When you come to WashU, you will be entering a community of remarkable people, all with different backgrounds, personalities, worldviews, and ambitions. The one thing they will have in common is a sense of camaraderie and fellowship. When you get to campus, you might find yourself getting caught up in comparison — are you studying enough, studying in the best way, pursuing enough extracurriculars, shadowing enough, or socializing enough? It's easy to get overwhelmed at first. But take a breath and remember that you're here. You've earned your place here. And you don't need to do everything everyone else is doing, all at once, all the time. You're at a place where you

can do anything you set your mind to — the people around you are invested in your success and your well-being, and you have what you need to flourish and excel. Rely on your peers, mentors and friends to course-correct you when you need it — and if you're like most of us, you will need it at some point, and that's okay.

The transition to medical school can be quite weird. You have to adjust to a new city, new weather (sometimes), new culture, and a different caliber of time management. As someone who often has trouble adapting to change, I've found it most useful to embrace the weirdness rather than question it. You're going to have to work hard, possibly harder than you've ever worked. You will be good at some things and really quite bad at others. You will make mistakes, have bad days, embarrass yourself in front of a patient, and question why you're even here. I've only been here a few months, and I've done most of those things already — the key is to step back, remember your purpose, and dedicate yourself to getting better each day. Remember that even the most accomplished, most empathetic, and most respected physicians out there were once wide-eyed students like us, and they stumbled and fell during their training too. The most important lesson you'll learn here is how to get back up and forge ahead. I'm still learning, and I know you will too.

Neetij K., M1

Advice from Phase 2 Students

Enjoy the Journey

A LOT is going to be thrown at you over the upcoming year, that's for sure. The biggest piece of advice I have is to keep an open mind, be flexible, and relax. You might not find your ideal study strategy from the get-go, you might not get the score you wanted on the first exam, you might not get an answer from that doctor you wanted to do research with, and that's all completely OK. Use M1 as a way to better understand what YOU want, both from yourself and from your career, and don't focus so much on getting every question right on the exam or memorizing every factoid in First Aid. Also, time is going to fly even faster with a 1.5-year pre-clinical phase, so really spend time with your friends, travel if you can, go out and have fun! You'll have less time for that once you start clerkships until you're done with residency interviews, and that's quite a long time!

Theo M., M2

Navigating Medical School

Before medical school, I used to scoff at all the different cliches people used to describe medical school — “it's like drinking from a fire hydrant”, “med school is a marathon, not a sprint”, “lifelong learner”, etc. After completing the preclinical phase of the Gateway Curriculum, I admittedly still scoff at most cliches, but there's wisdom hidden behind them. There's so much stuff in medical school. Not

just content, but also friendships, research projects, family, student organizations, Netflix shows, rooftop parties, volunteering, etc. With so many opportunities squeezed into a few years, it can be difficult to find any semblance of balance. I've found it helpful to stay attuned to myself and trust my body to tell me what it needs. Feeling tired? Take a nap. Isolated? Go get bubble tea with friends. Bored? Explore a new specialty. Stressed? Rearrange the to-do list. It's been so much more sustainable to work with how I'm feeling instead of against it.

Navigating through medical school can also be challenging because there is a lot of learning, forgetting, relearning, forgetting, relearning again, etc. It's humbling to search for the name of the right-sided heart valve for the fifth time (it's the tricuspid) or miss an entire portion of the history during an SP encounter (don't forget the social history!). Don't let those blips make you think you don't deserve to be in medical school or that you won't be a great doctor; it just shows that medicine is hard and takes time. Thankfully, there's a long way between now and practicing medicine; hopefully, by then I'll remember to take a full history.

Tim H., M2

Advice from Phase 3 Students

Choosing a Residency

First, congratulations on your acceptance to Washington University School of Medicine. We are so happy to welcome you to our community as our colleagues and future outstanding physicians! Choosing a residency is a distant decision for your class. However, it may be something that is on your mind as you decide where to attend medical school. As a fourth-year medical student applying into pediatrics and couples matching with my fiancé, who is matching into dermatology, I hope to share my experience and explain how WUSM has phenomenally supported us both in choosing and applying to our residencies.

From our first year, the WUSM faculty have been incredibly supportive as we both explored specialties. It is not uncommon for lecturers to offer shadowing and research opportunities at the end of class or for a cold-turkey email to blossom into a thriving mentor-mentee relationship. This extends to clinical spaces, where faculty have been eager to mentor us and write us strong letters of recommendation. Now as fourth-year medical students, Dean Diemer and the Career Counseling Office have been out-of-this-world cheerleaders, counselors, and advocates. We would not be in the position we are now, in terms of number of interviews and finding our residency program fit, without this incredible support team. I hope I can assure you that wherever you want to go after medical school, WUSM will help you get there.

Haley S., M4

What Medical School Can Teach You

Things I learned in medical school:

Lists are an effective and efficient method of communication.

1. Being in the hospital on clerkships can be hard, especially during the first couple of months. It is most analogous to starting a new job every 2-4 weeks, in a completely different role, with completely different people, and in a completely different place.
2. Be kind to yourself, and know that sometimes the best thing to do when you don't know what to do is to just show up.
3. Don't sweat the small stuff. Everyone has been a medical student once and done something embarrassing.
4. Try to limit comparing yourself to others; whether that be in how you study, student groups, research, or on rotations. Remember that everyone has their own strengths and will grow into their own identity. There are many roads to the same destination, and it is not a race.
5. These four (or eight!) years will go by in a blink of an eye, and at the end you won't be sure how you got there, but you'll know that you've grown with a wonderful group of people you are lucky enough to call classmates and friends. When you can, spend as much time as possible around the people you love.

Emma W., M4

Advice from Our Mentors

From Eva Agaard, MD

Senior Associate Dean for Education, Vice Chancellor for Medical Education



Eva Agaard, MD

Welcome! I hope each of you takes a moment to take pride in your accomplishment and to thank those who have helped you to achieve it. You have earned your place in this class, you absolutely deserve to be here, and we are so glad you are here. I have had the privilege of teaching, mentoring, advising, and supporting medical students and residents for over 20 years now — it has been one of the greatest gifts of my life. Here are a few things to consider as you progress through medical school and the rest of your career:

- Reflect on what you enjoy and what you don't enjoy. When you have a really great day, ask yourself what made it great? When you have a bad day ask the same. Look for patterns so that you can know what things really motivate you and will keep you happy and engaged in your career for the next 50 years — yes, it likely will be that long. Your coaches and coaching groups will be really helpful partners in talking through this.
- Learn about the different specialties and what the day-to-day work in those careers is like. Often, we come to medical school with fixed assumptions about what we want to be or what specific careers are all about. Try to push those biases aside and really experience it and what it would be like for you if you were doing that work. Talk to people about their jobs, what they love about them, what they like less. See how much those things align with your own self-realizations about your passions and interests.
- Take care of yourself. Each person has different things they need to be well — exercise, time with friends, reading for pleasure, cooking, etc. For me it's exercise and time with family that really ground me. Figure out what yours are and prioritize them. You will struggle to perform well if you are not doing well. You will benefit from these habits and patterns for the rest of your career.
- Get to know your patients. We can get wrapped up in only learning the medicine, but our patients have amazing personal stories and those stories help us understand who they are and what they really care about, so we can help tailor their care. Moreover, when patients feel seen and heard, they experience better care.
- Get to know each other and the other students on campus, the residents and fellows you work with, and the faculty. You are part of an amazing community of people who care deeply about your education and your interests, but also about you as a person.

- Ask for help when you need it. We have a variety of resources from peer advisors, to the medical student government, to Student Affairs and the Student Success Team, the ombuds office, Dr. Winters and Student Health Services, and, of course, your administration, faculty, and peers. We are all here to support you!

Finally, enjoy the ride. You will work hard — likely harder than you have ever worked in your life. You will see and experience things that are unfair and unjust. You will have the privilege to share some of the happiest and saddest moments of your patients' lives. You will learn more than you ever thought possible. And, you will serve others and feel the joy that only a career of service can bring. Ultimately, you will help to make the world a better place. What could be better than that?

From Brian Edelson, MD, PhD

Co-Leader, Module 2 “Defense and Response to Injury”

Med 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.



Brian Edelson, MD, PhD

From Colleen Wallace, MD

Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Thread Leader for Professional Identity Formation, Co-Director of Phase 1 Module 1

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.



Colleen Wallace, MD

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 School of 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 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.



Jonathan Mullin, MD

Think for a minute about all it took for you to be here starting medical school at WashU: 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 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 Koong-Nah Chung, PhD

Associate Dean, Medical Student Research

You will spend the next four-plus years at WashU School of Medicine with your peers, and they will be your lifelong friends and colleagues. Form strong bonds with your classmates, collaborate, and support each other. Get to know the faculty, administration, and staff. We are here to help you succeed. Find an advisor or mentor who takes an interest in you. Your mentor will help you navigate medical school, and if you're lucky, you may get a home-cooked meal out of it. Stay grounded by volunteering in the community. Have fun and stay sane by getting involved in school clubs and continuing with your hobbies. Get to know St. Louis; there is no shortage of entertainment, including the world-champion Cardinals and Blues, the world-famous Saint Louis Zoo, the Saint Louis Science Center, the Saint Louis Art Museum, and the Botanical Garden. In addition, there is a world-class symphony, many music venues, and plenty of nightlife. Pay attention to your academics. Take your basic science courses seriously. They will come in handy in later years, and your future patients will thank you. Don't worry about your residency match yet. Most importantly, get enough sleep, exercise, and have fun. Oh, and if you want to do research, just email me (chungk@wustl.edu).



Koong-Nah Chung, PhD

Visit Dr. Chung for guidance on research opportunities and to ask her about her favorite rapper. (Hint: He's slim, and he's shady.)

From Nichole Zehnder, MD

Associate Dean for Educational Strategy

It seems like only yesterday that our admissions team was telephoning you, congratulating you and telling you how our Committee on Admissions thought you would be an outstanding addition to this year's entering class. Some of you cried. Some of you screamed. Some of you were speechless. In that moment I was, and continue to be, so proud of each and every one of you. I'm unbelievably excited to get to walk alongside you as you start a new chapter in your life.



Nichole Zehnder, MD

As you begin the journey into the breathtaking, beautiful, and completely imperfect world of medicine, my advice is this — be courageous. In the small moments, with your peers, your patients, and yourself.

What does it look like to be courageous with your peers? Once, long ago when I was an early faculty member, I was feeling exhausted and worn out. I was feeling all the pulls of a new leadership role, a young family at home, and a heavy clinical load. A colleague and I went to dinner and I was brave enough to tell her my story. She told me hers. Her story wasn't perfect and really, it was just as messy as mine. Because of her courage, I didn't feel alone. Be courageous enough, in small moments, to care about your peers and colleagues as you go on this journey together. Courageous enough to really listen, to really care, and to be ready to hear the true answer to the question, "How are you feeling?"

It isn't just about colleagues. Be courageous, in the small moments, with your patients. Your role on the health care team as a medical student is right around the corner. Over your career, you will take care of hundreds, thousands, of patients and you will know, deep in your heart, when our health care system isn't providing them with the best care possible. Advocate that they have a seamless follow-up plan and the right resources. Push when you think your team isn't following a plan that's comprehensively holistic. Be willing to resist the urge to call it a day when you know, deep down, that what your patient needs most is for you to pull up a chair and hold their hand. Do this even when you've had a long day and you're juggling nine million things. I'm asking you to be courageous even when it's hard.

Finally, I want you to be courageous with yourself. As a person, as a unique and remarkably incredible individual. Our Committee on Admissions has spent countless hours reviewing your applications. You talked about the family members who inspired you to go into medicine, your identity as children who immigrated to the United States, and your pride for being the first in your family to go to college or medical school.

As you embark on your journey in medicine, be courageous enough to celebrate your own story. In a medical world that sometimes forces physicians into pathways and protocols, which is often good for patient care, never lose sight of the quiet beauty that comes with being you. Your culture, your passion, your values, and your individual identities make up the fabric of the true diversity we need in medicine.

Entering Class of 2023, congratulations again and I can't wait to get see you!

From Timothy T. Yau, MD

Course Director, Clinical Skills

Welcome to WashU School of Medicine! 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 become 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 Gaming Club! Even with all the craziness of the pandemic, we've been able to play plenty of Among Us. When things get back to normal, I have instruments and consoles in my office, and you'll be welcome to stop by for a game or to play a tune!



Timothy T. Yau, MD

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 2023. 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 med school texts and notes — if not when you're practicing, certainly a great retirement project!



Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD



Wellness

I will treat myself with the same respect I show my patients and colleagues, recognizing the value of my own wellness. – *an excerpt from the class oath written by the entering class of 2022*

SECTION EDITOR: ARIELLE SOLDATENKO

Finding Balance

For me, wellness has always been this vague word that I have struggled to define. It sounds generic and cliché, but I have always been the most "well" when I am the most balanced.

I was an internal medicine resident between 2005-2008. At the time, I had just gotten married, moved to a new city, and was working 30-hour shifts and 80-hour work weeks. Somehow, I was also able to have two kids, play music consistently, and learn to cook halfway decently. Sacrifices were also made for sure — I lived paycheck to paycheck paying rent in Chicago and I went to the gym less than five times over the course of four years.

During these years, I also watched "Avatar: The Last Airbender" for the first time. For those familiar with the show, my favorite characters are Toph, Iroh, and Sokka, in that order. The concept of balance is an ever-present theme in the show, and I had to create this balance in my personal life as well. During some of those 30-hour shifts, I felt just like Aang did when he tried to learn earth-bending — literally banging his hands painfully into rocks. And just like Aang having to find his balance, I had to make time for my family and for myself to bring my wellness back into balance. I guess my cheesy way of saying it is that "wellness" for me is like being in the Avatar state and is where I want to be if I choose!

Timothy T. Yau, MD, Co-Lead, Clinical Skills

Gratitude

First of all, congratulations on your acceptance! You have worked so incredibly hard to be here, so take a moment to celebrate. Not only are you in, but you got into a really, really good school. Medical school, like anything, will have its ups and downs, and it can be tempting to get caught up in your own head. It may sound cliché, but gratitude can often be the best medicine for discouragement.

You may see your friends outside of medicine enjoying the freedoms of having more time and money. You may feel homesick. You will inevitably feel overwhelmed at some point or another. This is completely understandable and very much a shared experience. But, speaking for myself, when I think about where I am and who I'm with, I wouldn't trade it for the world. All of the hurdles of being premed or a med applicant have been cleared away, and truly everyone here wants us to succeed.

I have found my classmates to be remarkably open and collaborative. The faculty are invested in our growth. It's so easy to explore any academic or extracurricular interests. This is what we all worked for, and I sometimes still can't believe it's real. Even the challenges are worth giving thanks for. Most people will never experience this path, and more than anything, I am so thankful for the people I'm sharing it with. You are joining a very special community, and I look forward to meeting you!

Jocelyn R., M1

Health & Resources (Danforth Gym)

As medical students at WashU, we have access to the recreational facilities on the Danforth Campus as well. The main gym on the Danforth Campus is just a 5-10-minute drive from the Central West End or Skinker/DeBaliviere, where most med students end up living. Not only is their collection of fitness machines massive, but they also offer the structure of free classes such as Zumba, cycle, kickboxing, and barre if you need a little help with your routine. Open swim hours and basketball/volleyball courts round out the wealth of resources they provide if you want a little change of pace for your workout.

Priscilla C., M2

Mental Health

Investing in your mental health in medical school can be difficult and is always a work in progress. I found that the most important resource was being able to see a therapist through my WashU School of Medicine benefit plan. If your provider is within the student benefit plan, you can see a therapist with only a \$10 copay, with no limit on visits. My best piece of advice would be to use this resource early during your transition period before the stress of medical school begins to ramp up. Taking advantage of these resources can only benefit you and I've found it incredibly helpful in navigating new friendships, living alone, and dealing with the more emotionally draining aspects of medical education.

Mackenzie C., M2

Peer Advocates

Trained to know on-campus and off-campus resources, Peer Advocates serve as accessible, confidential listeners for all medical students with the goal of helping students understand and use mistreatment reporting systems, mental health professional support, and other student resources. Peer Advocates are nominated and elected by their classmates, and they strive to represent and support our diverse student body at WUSM.

Haley S., M4

Self-Care and Balance

My advice regarding wellness is the cliché “self-care” and “balance” — this includes focus on healthy diet, adequate sleep, exercise, outdoors, socialize, stress reduction, etc. You will make lifelong friends in medical school, so take advantage of this opportunity.

Karen Winters, MD, Student Health Services

Student Health Services

I'm the guy that tore his ACL one day before starting med school. Fortunately, the student health plan here covered most of the expenses of my visits, surgery, physical therapy, and medication. I ended up paying a total of \$20. The Student Health Services (SHS) office is very accessible, and it is easy to make an appointment.

They do require seeing a primary care provider prior to any referrals. The office also provides mental health resources. Overall, I have been very grateful for student health services, especially for taking care of almost all of my medical expenses.

Micho G., M1

SHS provides students enrolled at WUSM efficient, accessible, high quality medical care in order to prevent and treat health concerns that may interfere with a student's education and professional goals while attending WUSM. SHS is a primary resource for medical and mental health services.

Karen Winters, MD, Student Health Services

The Core Gym (open to all medical students)

The Core Gym is amazing! It has everything you could possibly want in a workout space. There are squat racks, benches, machines, cross fit areas, and lots of cardio equipment (treadmills, StairMasters, stationary bikes, ellipticals, etc). I personally live at the Core, so I can walk downstairs and work out at a moment's notice. I really have no excuse. Other classmates often bring workout clothes to class and workout right after (and the morning people workout beforehand). The gym can be a great study break during a long day of studying. I've also seen some real hardcore folks do flashcards and listen to lectures as they workout. Couldn't be me. So if you were worried about commuting to LA Fitness or making the trek to the Danforth Campus to get fit, then worry no longer. The Core Gym is the place to be.

Joey G., M1

WashU Med Societies

The three Societies (Cori, Erlanger-Graham, and Lowry-Moore) host fun events, faculty dinners, and inter-society mixers throughout the year. We also compete against one another in the Society Cup, which is a friendly-ish competition held each year to see which society comes out on top! This year's Society Cup included a scavenger hunt at the zoo, sports tournaments, laser tag and go-karting, a T-shirt design contest, and a field day!

Wendy T., M2

What are you grateful for?

- My family! They're always there to cheer me on after a difficult day.
- Having supportive friends and a partner.
- Being financially, physically, and mentally able to spend four years studying medicine. The opportunities that got me here and that continue to come from being here.
- I am so beyond grateful for my peers ... With all of these amazing people, I feel safe sharing pieces of myself and seeking their support. It is a type of healing I didn't realize I'd learn so quickly, but because of this, they keep me grounded, make my emotions feel rational, help me jump over hurdles, and overall not be afraid of the hurdles that will come because I know I am not alone — that feeling is something I am beyond grateful for.
- I can't tell you how many times I have laughed until tears streamed down my face with these people and they fill my heart with so much joy. Even small things like hearing someone's infectious laugh when we are in Cori, or a peer handing me candy when they saw I was stressed studying, or the random texts of people reaching out, checking in, wanting to catch up — you guys make everything about med school easier. You would have never seen me at an 8 a.m. in undergrad, but because I know I get to see you guys, I am slightly more likely to go.
- The immense support I have received from all of my classmates, and the comedic gold that lies uniquely within each and every single person I run into. Y'all really bring smiles to my faces each and every day and I could not have asked for a more supportive environment to be stuck with for the next four years.
- I am grateful to have such kind, courteous, and brilliant classmates who inspire me daily. I was nervous to be joining such an accomplished group of students, but now I appreciate all that I can learn from each of you. I truly believe we have the best med school class ever.
- What a privilege it is to learn about the art of medicine with amazing people.
- My coaching group!
- Shared resources and a competency-based curriculum so I can actually enjoy my life.
- I'm so grateful to have met some of my bestest lifelong friends here. I can't wait to see how all of our friendships grow over the next four years!!
- IgM, IgG, and IgA antibodies.
- Dr. Crouch and her concept tables.
- Work/life balance.
- My immune system.
- Required face-to-face classes because it makes my heart so happy to have our whole class in the same room.
- The fact that I'm in med school!!! It was a long road and I am lucky to have finally gotten here.

Anonymous

What Wellness is to Me

To me, wellness is synonymous with balance. I love long nights in the library as much as the next guy, but at a certain point I need to call it quits and leave myself room to unwind. In the same vein, socializing is indispensable to my mental health, but it's a skill to know when to say no. When I'm not doing something academic or social, I like to work out, read, watch sports, and hang out with my cat. What I love about our class is that for every interest I have, there's a group of people who love it even more than me.

Dan S., M1

What Wellness is to Me

For me, wellness is a balance between the different parts of my life. My aim is to be the best student I can be, but in order to do that, I need to maintain my physical, mental, social, and spiritual health. That means making room for exercise, church, and time with my S/O or friends. Part of that is planning out my weekdays in a way that ensures I have my work done by Saturday, so I can have Sundays off for these other aspects of my life. It's difficult, but doable, and has helped me enjoy medical school.

Yande M., M1

What Wellness is to Me

The definition of wellness has changed for me throughout high school and my undergraduate education, and it is now adjusting to how I incorporate it through medical school. As a fairly extroverted and sociable person, I had to learn when I needed a moment to recharge and spend some time at home. Currently, wellness is finding that balance between wanting to be with my friends and classmates and having solo time to read or play the piano ... of course, while balancing the time to study! Each person has their own formula for positive mental health, and I would recommend solidifying that before school starts so that you have something to fall back on when things get stressful or overwhelming. Whether it's decompressing each night with a group of friends or curling up at home to watch an episode of a show, your definition of wellness is your own, and it is more than okay to have to change that regimen as you begin your medical school journey!

Amanda M.H., M1

Your Efforts will be Worth the Sacrifice

As an emergency physician who has spent the past twenty-one years at a large-volume, Level 1 trauma center, I am frequently asked by students why I don't seem burned out and why I seem to enjoy my work as much as I did when I started my training. They frequently ask if the pressure of stressful situations and the constant exposure to critically ill patients, trauma, and, sometimes, death ever wear me down. Well, honestly, sometimes it does. But that feeling soon passes. Ultimately, I end up asking myself the same question that I've asked many

of you when you applied to WashU. Why do you want to be a physician? Because as you move along in your career the answer to this question will be filled not by the things you hope to achieve but by things you HAVE achieved. So now, when I ask myself this question, I am flooded by memories of successful outcomes and of the lives I, and our incredible multidisciplinary team of caregivers, have had the privilege of touching. It's these memories that have kept me coming back for more and make me excited about each new day.

As first-year medical students, you know that you have many challenges ahead of you. At times along the way, you will be tired, burned out, and ready to get to the destination of someday being done with your training. But rest assured, the time and effort you're putting forth both now and in the future will be one of the most rewarding and memorable periods in your lives, and the purpose of all your hard work — making a real difference in the lives of others — will be worth the sacrifice. You too will have experiences that are going to reassure you that you've made the right decision, experiences that will keep you motivated and passionate about your life in medicine, experiences that will keep you coming back for more. So, get excited! The best part is coming!

**Gregory Polites, MD, Chair of the Central Subcommittee
on Medical Student Admissions**

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