

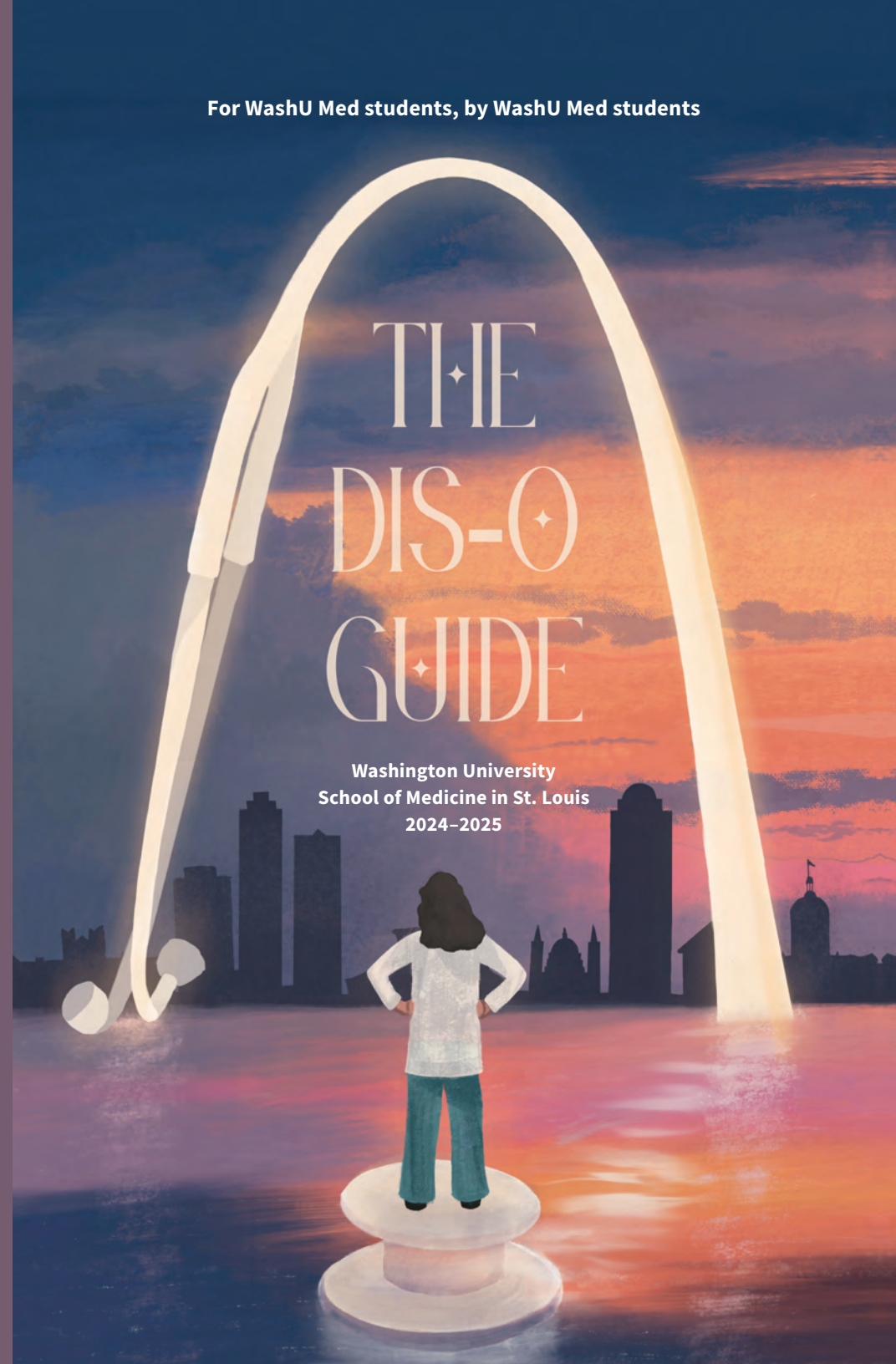
For WashU Med students, by WashU Med students

THE DIS-O GUIDE

Washington University
School of Medicine in St. Louis
2024-2025

Dis-Orientation Guide • 2024-2025

Find Dis-O online: diso.wustl.edu



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.

Find Dis-O online: diso.wustl.edu

Table of Contents

WELCOME **1**

WHY WASHU **14**

THE GATEWAY EXPERIENCE **17**

STUDENT GROUPS **40**

PERSPECTIVES **62**

HOUSING **82**

LIFE IN ST. LOUIS **92**

ADVICE **115**

WELLNESS **132**



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 Med. 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 10 years. Before you enter the 2024-2025 guide, our dean of the medical school, associate dean for admissions, assistant dean for admissions, associate dean for student affairs, and associate dean for diversity warmly welcome you to the Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.

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 also want your time in medical school to be one of delight as much as it is transformative.

Dear Members of the Entering Class of 2024,

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.

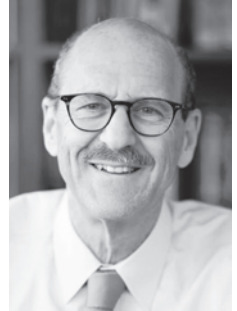
Like the school itself, the city of St. Louis is rich in culture and history, and it serves as an ideal location for you to gain an understanding of the challenges of modern medicine. Step outside familiar learning spaces and immerse yourself in the city's diverse communities, many affected by disparities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



David H. Perlmutter, MD

Welcome to WashU Med 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. 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 your new home, 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 WashU Med, our medical students, and the St. Louis region. Hopefully, while reading, you will smile and recognize a part of yourself in the descriptions. The WashU Med vision 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 to our strategic plans. We are committed to providing the knowledge, experiences, resources, and mentorship needed to support our students in the journey to an amazing medical career.



Valerie S. Ratts, MD

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

For those who have made their decision to attend WashU Med, I like the suggestion that the Dis-O Guide will provide “insider advice” to a great medical school and education.

Finally, what advice can I give future medical students? 1) Rely upon the skills and characteristics that have brought you to this point. 2) A positive attitude makes a huge difference. 3) Get to know your classmates. Like you, they are amazing. Many will become lifelong friends and colleagues. 4) Keep your enthusiasm for medicine. You are starting down a pathway that will require diligence, sacrifice, and hard work, but will also bring tremendous reward. Doctors play truly special roles in the lives of people. It is an honor and privilege to practice this profession.

Valerie S. Ratts, MD

Associate Dean for Admissions

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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

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

Back when I was an applicant, I heard that WashU wanted students with high grades and scores. This never quite made sense, since it seemed like high scores would help an applicant gain acceptance at any number of schools, among which they could then choose. The reality is that assembling our medical school class is a holistic process. WashU 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

Ian S. Hagemann, MD, PhD

Assistant Dean for Admissions

Associate Professor of Pathology and Immunology

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

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

Medical school isn’t exactly easy, which is why the biggest source of support is from each other. This will usually feel like peers in your medical school class but also includes your faculty and your administrative staff who are here to support you, teach you, and mentor you. We can’t do this adventure alone, but we can do it with support from the community around you. We’re here to help be your surrounding community.

We have deliberately crafted a wellness program designed to address eight key dimensions that any student may need to engage in a healthy journey through medical school. Activities and functions that exist through our Academic Societies, Medical Student Government, and student-led organizations, in addition to our departmental and faculty resources, are all interwoven into these wellness domains. We have a lot of resources we hope you will explore online on our website.

- Intellectual
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Physical
- Social
- Occupational/Vocational
- Environmental
- Financial

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

Our Office of Student Affairs includes:

- Dr. Wallace — Assistant Dean of Student Affairs
- Dr. Diemer — Assistant Dean of Career Counseling
- Brady Griffith — Senior Manager, Student Life



Tammy L. Sonn, MD

- Angie MacBryde — Career Counseling Program Coordinator
- Miranda Paulos — Student Life Coordinator
- Kayla Young — Project Coordinator
- Jaye Maggiolo — Executive Secretary

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

We look forward to having the vibrant world of WashU Med student life include you!

Tammy L. Sonn, MD

Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Vice Chair for Education

Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

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.



Will R. Ross, MD, MPH

You will be a Phase One 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.

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

Angie Anaeme

Perspectives

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Angie, and I am from Gilbert, Ariz. I graduated from Duke University in 2022 with a major in evolutionary anthropology and a minor in global health. After graduating, I worked as a medical assistant in a wound care clinic, then spent two months living with a host family in Spain and interning at a sports medicine clinic. Now, I love spending my time exploring my new home in St. Louis and getting to know my amazing classmates here at WashU Med! The community at WashU Med and in the surrounding area has been nothing short of incredible, and I have been blown away by how much the city has to offer. From the fun, free events hosted throughout the city, to the countless coffee shops and restaurants I still have on my bucket list, there's no shortage of things to do here. I hope that this Dis-O Guide offers you a glimpse into the warm, vibrant, and supportive community that awaits you here!



Cynthia Chen

Student Groups

Hello! Congratulations, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Cynthia, and I am originally from Edison, N.J. I graduated from WashU in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in biology/neuroscience. I took two gap years in Boston before coming to WashU; I worked as a medical assistant my first year and conducted research at Brigham and Women's Hospital my second year. Having attended WashU for undergrad, I already knew of the amazing opportunities that WashU Med had to offer; what really sold WashU Med for me were the smart, talented, down-to-earth, and supportive students and faculty. I'm so grateful to call this place home and to grow alongside such fantastic peers, and I hope that you feel the same too!



Daniel Du

Editor-In-Chief

Hello, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Daniel, and I'm originally from central New Jersey. I graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 2023, so I had spent my entire life on the East Coast until coming to St. Louis for medical school. While I was initially hesitant about moving out here, I've truly loved my experience at WashU Med thus far and especially all of my wonderful classmates and faculty. I hope that this year's Dis-O Guide helps you as much as it helped me when I was researching WashU Med and deciding where to attend medical school! Outside of class, I can be found pondering about faith and life, playing various racket sports, hanging out with friends, or obsessing over pineapples. Feel free to reach out to me anytime about anything; I'd love to meet you!



Nancy Jiang*Wellness*

Hello! My name is Nancy. I graduated from Yale with a degree in history and had a winding journey to medical school. In my free time, I enjoy meeting up with friends, playing tennis, and running in Forest Park. I hope you will come to love this city as much as I have. Welcome to WashU Med!

**Kamal Kolluri***Housing*

Hello. Congrats and welcome to WashU!! My name is Kamal and I'm from California. I graduated from UCLA in 2022 and did some research there during my gap year. My experience at WashU has been amazing. The students, faculty, and overall environment are super supportive and everyone wants everyone to succeed. On top of that, the school has limitless opportunities that you will have a chance to read about in the Dis-O Guide. As for the move to St. Louis, I was definitely apprehensive about the move to the Midwest from the West Coast, but my experience has been awesome. St. Louis has so much to offer and it just comes down to how much you're willing to explore and try out new things. This guide will give you a deep look into all things WashU and St. Louis. Happy reading!

**Darby Le***Life in STL*

Hi, everyone. Congratulations, and welcome to WashU! My name is Darby, and I'm from New Orleans, La. I graduated from Cornell University in 2022, majoring in psychology with minors in anthropology and biological sciences. I then worked in clinical research during my gap year before having the incredible opportunity to attend WashU Med. Outside of class, I love to hang out with my friends, read, and watch movies. I truly am so grateful to go to school here at WashU, and I hope the Dis-O Guide aids you in making an informed decision for yourself. Hope to see you very soon!

**Joanna Li***Why WashU*

Congratulations on your achievements thus far, and welcome to WashU! I'm Joanna, and I call both Columbus, Ohio, and St. Louis my homes — having now lived here for over four years while I completed my WashU undergraduate degrees in anthropology and Spanish in 2023. As I considered numerous medical school factors and different opportunities, I found that I would always come back to comparing every other option to WashU. From the unparalleled education that is housed on this campus to the driven, compassionate medical mentors to the inspiring WashU Med community and my caring, collaborative peers, I am so fortunate and so proud to be able to learn and grow into



a future physician here at WashU Med and in St. Louis. And so, I hope that this Dis-O Guide will help you find a similar light and see a bit of what drew me here. I would not choose to be anywhere else. When I'm not studying, you can find me reading, buying too much coffee, drawing, playing violin, and visiting parks or museums. Please feel free to contact me by email (joanna.li@wustl.edu) or introduce yourself to me on campus. I would love to meet and get to know you!

Katherine Long

Editor-In-Chief

Hi, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Katie, and I'm originally from Indiana. I graduated from Columbia University in the city of New York in 2021 with a degree in biology and completed two years of research before starting medical school. Being at WashU Med has been a wonderful experience, and I've really loved my time here thus far. In my free time, I enjoy trying new recipes, crafting, eating ice cream, and running (late). The environment here at WashU Med has been so supportive and welcoming, and I hope our Dis-O Guide will help you get a glimpse of the beautiful community that awaits you here! Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions!



Joshua Lynch

Editor-In-Chief

First and foremost, congratulations on starting your journey into medicine. It is an exciting and privileged opportunity to be entering into medical school, so soak up these moments throughout this long process. My name is Joshua, and I am from Franklin, Tenn. (30 minutes south of Nashville). I graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2023 with a bachelor's degree in medicine, health, and society and human and organizational development (basically pre-med and business!). I took no time off, so I entered WashU Med a few months after graduation. From Why WashU Wednesdays to the second-to-none support and collaboration of the entire WashU Med community, I knew that WashU Med was going to be home for me. While still figuring out what specialty is calling my name, I am interested in anesthesiology, as well as pursuing my MBA at the Olin Business School. I am thrilled that you have taken time to read this year's edition of the Dis-O Guide, and I hope that this incredible resource helps you make the decision that is right for you (with the hope that it is WashU Med of course!).



Ella McComis

The Gateway Experience

Congratulations and welcome to WashU! My name is Ella and I am from Munster, Ind. I graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 2023, where I majored in science-business. WashU is not only a fantastic research institution but it also has such an incredible and supportive community. As students, you will find that opportunities are endless. Additionally, you will be challenged academically and



grow as individuals, all while being surrounded by the best classmates. I hope this Dis-O Guide provides you with good advice and some helpful glimpses into what life is like as a WashU Med student. Best of luck as you start your medical school journey!

Karan Mirpuri

Life in STL

Congratulations and welcome to WashU! My name is Karan (he/him) and I was born and raised in Miami, Fla. (although I now live in Vail, Colo.). I graduated from Vanderbilt University in 2023 with majors in scientific communication and child development. As someone who applied straight through, I prioritized finding a medical school where I could feel supported not just in my academic pursuits, but also in my health and wellbeing. Each day at WashU has reaffirmed my choice to come here, as I have felt challenged, supported, and loved by the community of students, faculty, and staff here. As you'll learn in the Dis-O, St. Louis is a really great city with many things to enjoy, and I'm so excited to explore the city and connect with community members throughout these next four years. While I'm confident you will succeed at whatever school you choose, WashU is truly a special place that will surround you with loving people, prepare you to embrace challenges, and nurture your potential as a future physician and human being.



Hannah Neiditz

Gateway Experience

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU Med! My name is Hannah, and I'm from Atlanta, Ga. I graduated from Amherst College in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in neuroscience. I then took two gap years conducting HIV/AIDS research at Emory University and working as a tutor, caregiver, and physical therapy aide before coming to WashU. I chose WashU because of the incredible people, mentorship, research, and education, and have not been disappointed! St. Louis has also been a fun place to live, and I've enjoyed exploring Forest Park, going to Blues and Cardinals games, and wandering through the many museums the city has to offer. Outside of school, I enjoy running, pickleball, reading, hiking, and trying new recipes. The Dis-O Guide was so helpful when making my decision to come to WashU, and I hope this year's edition will do the same for you!



Melody Nguyen

Student Groups

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU! My name is Melody, and I'm from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. I graduated from Johns Hopkins University with a bachelor's degree in cellular and molecular biology and worked at Massachusetts General Hospital as a research technician before entering medical school. Since I'd spent most of my time in the U.S. on the East Coast, I was a little apprehensive about moving to the Midwest for the next eight-plus years for my Medical Scientist Training



Program training. I am beyond happy with my decision to come to WashU! I have found some of the most intelligent and generous classmates and faculty I've ever met here. I am also enjoying all the fantastic cafes, hole-in-the-wall restaurants, free city events, and the CrossFit community in St. Louis. I hope this Dis-O Guide helps give you a sense of the genuine, supportive, and amazing environment at WashU and the wider St. Louis city. Happy reading!

Christina Ping

Advice

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU! My name is Christina, and I'm originally from Fort Lee, N.J. (If you know the Bridgetate scandal with Chris Christie, that's my town.) I majored in biology at Stanford (class of 2020) and then took three gap years: one in health care consulting and two more doing strategy at a women's telehealth start-up (very Bay Area, I know), splitting my time between NYC and SF, before coming to med school. Having only lived on the coasts, I was definitely apprehensive at first about moving to the Midwest. However, St. Louis has actually been very pleasantly surprising, and I've really enjoyed going on runs around Forest Park and exploring the surrounding area; St. Louis is a great place to be a student. Outside of class, I'm a huge foodie, and love to both cook/bake new recipes and try new restaurants. I'm also currently training for the St. Louis half marathon in the spring! Feel free to reach out if you want to chat!



Nikita Sajeev

Why WashU

Hello, and welcome to WashU! My name is Nikita and I'm from Portland, Ore. I graduated from Temple University in 2022 with a bachelor's degree in neuroscience, as well as a Spanish minor. I spent my gap year in sunny San Diego, doing a post-baccalaureate stem cell research fellowship at the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute. I am so excited to be at WashU Med and hopefully be a friendly face for y'all. I remember being hesitant about moving to the Midwest since I had been a bicoastal girl through and through before coming to WashU. But, now that I'm here, I know I made the right choice. The appeal of WashU Med, in many ways, speaks for itself. Personally, the breadth of neuroscience research, unique curriculum, and, most importantly, supportive and down-to-earth community is what drew me in. The Dis-O Guide was really helpful to me as I was making my decision to attend WashU Med and I hope it can similarly give you a glimpse into our lives here in St. Louis. Good luck with your decision-making and reach out (n.sajeev@wustl.edu) if I can ever be of any help!



Aditya Santoki*Perspectives*

Congratulations, and welcome to WashU! My name is Aditya, and I am from Atlanta, Ga. I graduated from Duke University in 2021 with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. I then took two gap years conducting research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) followed by a Fulbright research project in India before coming to WashU. WashU is such a phenomenal institution where you will be surrounded by brilliant colleagues and great friends! The best part about this school is its supportive culture in really pursuing any interests you might have. I hope this Dis-O Guide can give you a great start to learn more about what being a medical student is like here! Good luck with medical school applications, and get excited about WashU!

**Brian Sun***Advice*

Hello, and congratulations on getting accepted to WashU for medical school! My name is Brian, and I'm an MSTP student from Sunnyvale, Calif. Outside of class, I play table tennis competitively against other universities as part of WashU Table Tennis and (slowly) run long distances in Forest Park. You likely already know about WashU's reputation as a great place to learn and conduct research in medicine, and I hope the Dis-O guide gives you a ground-zero perspective on how WashU medical students live life both on- and off-campus.

**Felicia Wang***Editor-In-Chief*

Welcome to WashU Med's Dis-O Guide. My name is Felicia, and I am one of the Editors-in-Chief of this year's guide. I'm from California and did my undergrad at UCLA. My favorite thing so far after moving to St. Louis is that I've been able to see it snow! I've been so privileged and happy to be able to work with a wonderful team of editors, students, and faculty to bring this edition to fruition. I hope you are able to learn a lot about WashU Med from these articles and best of luck to you as you embark on your path to medicine!

**Anna Yang***Housing*

Hi, my name is Anna. Congratulations, and welcome to WashU! I graduated from Johns Hopkins University, where I studied molecular and cellular biology and public health studies. Coming from a coastal city, I was a little anxious about moving to the Midwest. However, settling in here has been a great experience, and I'm genuinely happy with my decision. The dynamic and collaborative environment here is truly inspiring. I found the Dis-O Guide incredibly helpful while making school decisions and exploring housing options in St. Louis. I hope you find it useful and fun to read as well. If you have any questions or need guidance, please don't hesitate to get in touch!





Why WashU

We love Washington University School of Medicine, and we want you to know, too!

SECTION EDITORS: JOANNA LI AND NIKITA SAJEEV

Finding Your Voice

From Why WashU Wednesdays to Second Look Weekend, WashU Med students and faculty are among the most welcoming people I've ever met. The Gateway Curriculum even further supports student collaboration through its use of clinical spaces and classrooms. Just as important, the administration thoroughly integrates student input, from curriculum feedback to the oath for the White Coat Ceremony. I am honored to spend every day alongside these outstanding and wonderful people. While the people make WashU Med "WashU Med," there is also an abundance of opportunities to get involved and make a difference: research, innovation, medical education, community engagement, health equity, student hobby groups — the list goes on.

These are just some of the things that makes WashU Med a great place to find your voice in medical school, in the medical profession, and in your own life. Everyone at WashU Med is here for unique and compelling reasons; I wish you the best of luck in constructing yours.

Justin C., M1

Inspiring, Collaborative, and Supportive Group

At first, I decided to apply to WashU Med because of its well-structured curriculum, research opportunities, and student funding. I was also drawn to the unique One Health Program, an interdisciplinary effort studying how human, animal, and environmental health interact with one another. Finally, I enjoyed the emphasis on the intersection of health, equity, and justice in medicine, which I believe is paramount to being an equitable physician. While I have found all these aspects to be true, I was especially surprised by the collaboration, support, and inspiration exuded by my fellow classmates, administration, and faculty. WashU Med truly wants its students to thrive and be the best physicians they can be. This is apparent within every class I attend and through the plethora of mentorship opportunities. Likewise, Barnes-Jewish Hospital also serves as the primary medical center for patients throughout the St. Louis community and surrounding area, which allows me to work closely with top-notch physicians and make a local impact — all while being a medical student.

Furthermore, I was initially nervous about moving from large cities to St. Louis. I spent most of my life in New York City and Ft. Lauderdale, so I was worried that I would miss the coast and the amenities of urban living. However, I have found that there are many local events, markets, restaurants, and hidden gems scattered around the city. There is also access to beautiful parks and open spaces around the school, which is relaxing after a long day of learning. Ultimately, I have come to see St. Louis as its own unique and charming city. I am happy to have become a part of this great community and to work with patients from the surrounding area.

Natalia A., M1

From WashU Undergrad to WashU Med

As cheesy as it sounds, I fell in love with WashU during my time as an undergraduate student on the Danforth Campus. What drew me to the general WashU community was the celebration of identity. It felt like WashU cared about my expression of identity as much as I did. This is something that I paid particular attention to as I was making my medical school list, and sure enough, WashU Med ended up at the top. I've been so impressed with WashU Med since beginning my time here as a student. The expectations I had when applying here have been met and far exceeded.

I wanted to make sure the medical school I attended had a particular focus on community and support. I have found those values in fellow WashU Med students as well as many members of the faculty/administration. There have been many times where I have emailed faculty, administrators, or attendings, and I have received inviting responses from all the people I have emailed. This, to me, is a good example of the care and effort that members of the WashU Med community take for your personal and professional development.

Among students, I have found that our class encompasses people with a host of diverse life experiences and backgrounds. Although it has only been about three months at the time that I am writing this, I feel that I have already learned so much from my peers. This is one of the main reasons why I am so proud to call myself a WashU Med student. It makes me happy that I can represent such a beautiful group of peers, and I hope you recognize that you will undoubtedly also be among some really amazing people (you, of course, are included!). Relatedly, students at WashU Med are very passionate people. This gives way to a variety of student groups and opportunities to get involved in professional, personal, and community-oriented projects. There is a lot of flexibility for starting your organizations as well so be assured that you will be able to pursue all that you are passionate about.

Shubhanjali M., M1

An Incomparable Curriculum

The Gateway Curriculum is unique to WashU Med and drew me to this program. We are evaluated on our progress towards meeting competency requirements throughout each of the three phases, meaning that our grading is longitudinal and holistic. There is no internal ranking or tiered grading system, which fosters a sense of community and collaboration (as opposed to competition) among the class. Also, there is dedicated time to navigate clinical settings before clerkships in Phase Two through our clinical immersions: three unique three-week sessions throughout Phase One when we have the chance to leave the classroom and join a dedicated medical team in the hospital. I love that the structure of the curriculum focuses on learning, while also giving us time to explore different specialties, solidify our interests, and grow as professionals.

Mansi G., M1



The Gateway Experience

Navigating all of the components of the Gateway Curriculum can seem daunting at first, and you likely have hundreds of questions about what being in medical school is truly like. Hear from our students about their day-to-day experiences and the components of the curriculum that are unique to WashU Med.

SECTION EDITORS: ELLA MCCOMIS AND HANNAH NEIDITZ

The Gateway Curriculum

EXPLORE Program

EXPLORE Overview

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

EXPLORE is a longitudinal, immersive experience that begins during Phase One 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 One, 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., M2

EXPLORE: Education

I chose the Education pathway not only for my interest in MedEd but also because every Education pathway student in the year above me rated it 5/5 in the Course Evaluation (as did everyone in my year). Of course, you'll learn how to properly design Course Evaluation, in addition to the sciences of curricular design, assessment (yes, it's different from evaluation), presenting skills (yes, you have much more to learn, I didn't think I did), and qualitative and quantitative analyses. Part of the reason I chose WashU Med was to be part of a brand new curriculum with passionate educators, and as part of the formal MedEd training in this pathway, I was taught each pillar of medical education from the faculty member that brought that specific expertise to the design of the Gateway Curriculum. I came in passionate about climate change, and with the Education pathway mentorship and training, I designed a Lecture+ (you'll learn about this too) on the health impacts of climate change that is now an integrated and required part of the curriculum, 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 at least three 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/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., M3

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., M3

EXPLORE: Research

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

Isabella G., M3

Clinical Immersions

Immersions Overview

The Clinical Immersions are one of many especially unique aspects of WashU Med'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 Two clerkships, where your performance is evaluated. It also contextualizes the content you are learning during Phase One, which helps solidify your knowledge and understanding.

Quinn P., M2

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 portions of the history and physical exam, 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 One (preclinical). For the emergency department part of the immersion, I did shifts in the Trauma/Critical Care Unit 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., M3

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, 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

Immersion: Procedural

I spent three weeks with the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery for my procedural immersion and absolutely loved it. I rotated with the shoulder and elbow, trauma, and physical medicine and rehabilitation 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., M3

Adjusting to Medical School

Congratulations on your acceptance to medical school, and welcome to the start of this lifelong journey in medicine! This next chapter will bring both new and incredibly fulfilling opportunities — which I hope you approach with the following mindset: Embrace the new, embrace the unexpected. Be prepared (but also adaptive) for the change in style and pace of learning. There will be a tremendous influx of material lectured to you at a rapid pace. As you enter medical school, keep with you the learning approaches that worked well in the past, while also remaining open to new study practices that may support your personal learning better within the MD educational environment. One of the biggest differences in your transition to medical school from prior educational settings is that you and your classmates now all share the same schedule, take the same tests, and are working towards the same goal of being a physician. In college, you likely had friends who majored in different disciplines; in medical school, you and your class friends are walking this journey together. Embrace the support and growth that comes from each other as you navigate the challenges of being medical students. This adjustment is one to be shared, cherished, and enjoyed.

Therefore, I find it imperative to approach the start of medical school with this mindset centered on openness. Be willing to try new techniques, explore specialties or topics you have never heard of, and gain insight from your peers and mentors. Above all, applaud yourself for every step that you take, especially the adversities. You have earned your place in medicine; it is essential that you love and care for yourself. From the start, try to create an adaptable system that schedules all routine habits that are important to you and will support you as a whole being. While studying is a high priority, also identify the most important activities and relationships to you. Then, you can focus your time on balancing these engagements in conjunction with being a medical student. I think that by incorporating depth (rather than breadth) into each academic, social, emotional, and community activity, you'll gain far more from all endeavors you pursue. Again, congratulations on beginning your medical journey, and I hope that your transition will give you the space to delve into everything you wish to explore!

Joanna L., M1

Anatomy Lab

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

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

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

Amy L. Bauernfeind, PhD

Associate Professor of Anatomy in Neuroscience

Vice Chair of Education

Kari L. Allen, PhD

Assistant Professor of Anatomy in Neuroscience

Competency-Based Framework

The grading system at WashU Med is probably the most confusing topic for prospective (and current!) students. WashU Med 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 Med 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 (there are three phases: pre-clerkship, core clerkships, and specialization).

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, health equity, health systems sciences, anatomy, genetics, etc.). WashU Med 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 Two 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, the specialization one, 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.

Amanda R. Emke, MD, MHPE

*Assistant Dean for Student Assessment
Associate Fellowship Program Director, Critical Care Management
St. Louis Children's Hospital*

Health, Equity, and Justice Thread

The Health, Equity, and Justice (HEJ) thread within the Gateway Curriculum was created to help us, as future health care providers, incorporate an understanding of factors outside of direct patient care that greatly influence the health of our patients. HEJ sessions are led by Kaitlyn Reedy-Rogier, who previously worked as a social worker and instructor in the St. Louis community, and Dr. Radhika Jain, an internal medicine physician who has worked in community health centers and currently also works with Family Care Health Center. While their backgrounds are far more involved than this brief summary, both of our HEJ leads have extensive experiences serving the greater St. Louis community. These experiences shape how they approach the HEJ curriculum and challenge us to think beyond the four walls of the hospital.

HEJ was one of the main reasons why I was so excited about attending WashU Med. Although it makes sense for these topics to be discussed within a medical curriculum, this is not commonplace. I appreciated the fact that WashU

Med felt that this needed to be a critical part of the Gateway Curriculum. I like that HEJ provides more context about ongoing local issues in St. Louis, and I feel that the topics I have learned regarding the surrounding community will help me be a more reflective medical student and future physician. The HEJ leads are very passionate about what they do and are also very receptive to feedback. In my role as a HEJ liaison, I get to work on exciting projects with the HEJ leads that build on the existing structure of the HEJ curriculum.

Shubhanjali M., M1

Medical Scientist Training Program

As a Phase One student in the Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), you have the chance to both build community with your classmates and connect with research faculty. Your journey at WashU Med begins approximately one month prior to the traditional Gateway Curriculum, with your first lab rotation taking place during the summer before classes.

During your first week on campus, you'll begin your MSTP class that will thread throughout Phase One. In this thread, you'll alternate between receiving career and research talks from faculty members and running a journal club. This is a great way to strengthen your relationships with other MSTPs, while also having catered lunches!

Additionally, there's an MSTP weekly seminar, currently held on Thursday evenings. This is open to the entire MSTP (all cohorts) and includes another meal! At this seminar, you'll rotate between hearing research talks, presentations from students in the graduate phase of the program, and career talks. Moreover, exciting outside speakers are occasionally brought in. Most recently, Dr. Eric Green, a WashU Med MSTP alum and current director of the National Human Genome Research Institute, gave an excellent talk at one of our seminars.

Ritu D., M1

Phase One Modules

Phase One of the curriculum is WashU Med'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 lectures relating to this content, which are typically a mix of in-person and online, small group vs. lecture-based, as well as required or recorded for later viewing. Three afternoons per week also include Clinical Skills, Coaching, or Health, Equity, and Justice (HEJ). There are also plenty of early patient interactions built into the curriculum, such as 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 One 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., M2

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 Med 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 Med, 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., M2

Clinical Skills

Clinical Mentoring

The clinical mentoring program pairs two M1 students with an M4 student (or a resident in some cases) to provide non-evaluated, low-stakes opportunities to practice clinical skills with patients in the hospital. As a team, we meet with patients, take their history, and even perform a short physical exam. My M4 mentor has been an amazing resource for me throughout my first few months of medical school, and the sessions provide a great opportunity to connect with real patients and hear their stories. This program has been instrumental in building my confidence in my history and physical exam skills, and it is easily one of my favorite parts of the Gateway Curriculum!

Mary Kate F., M1

Clinical Skills

Clinical Skills sessions are probably the highlight of my week as far as classes go! Every Thursday, we have two hours of class time dedicated to developing our clinical skills in sessions led by Dr. Timothy Yau and Dr. Jonathan Mullin, who have the best buddy-buddy duo dynamic (frequently referred to as the “Tim & Jon Show”) and make this class very engaging. Sessions range from small group-based workshops to practice taking vital signs to conducting focused physical exams. We also have more lecture-heavy sessions where we are taught the components of history-taking or how to best communicate with patients. Finally, we conduct standardized patient sessions where we get to hone our physician skillset by performing histories and physical exams on real actors portraying patient cases. I love the clinical skills sessions because we have the opportunity to apply the foundational science knowledge we learn throughout the week in lectures, while also developing the interpersonal skills necessary to interact with patients.

Amy P., M1

Grand Rounds

Grand Rounds are morning meetings run by attendings and residents within a specific specialty. During these meetings, the attendings and residents may discuss research that is being conducted in the department or techniques on how to treat certain patient cases. Attending Grand Rounds is a great way to see if a certain specialty interests you while also meeting residents and attending physicians.

Arjun M., M1

Shadowing

Shadowing opportunities are relatively easy to find and set up in medical school, which was a nice change of pace from my experience scavenging for shadowing opportunities while I was an undergraduate. In the two months that I’ve been here, I’ve been able to shadow radiation oncology, pediatric neurology, adult neurology, pediatric infectious disease, and pediatric oncology. I set up these shadowing experiences by either cold-emailing professors or reaching out to speakers from interest group meetings. There’s no pressure to shadow either. You can shadow as much or as little as you want. I know friends who have shadowed very frequently since getting here, and I know friends who haven’t shadowed yet. I appreciate that WashU Med allows you the flexibility to go at your own pace and follow your interests in the way that suits you best.

Nikita S., M1

As an undergraduate student, finding shadowing opportunities was truly like pulling teeth. Medical school has opened the shadowing “lockbox.” Not only is there less bureaucratic red tape to navigate, but there are also endless ways to get involved. For example, some students sign up for shifts using organized shadowing programs coordinated by student-led specialty interest groups. Nonetheless, just

as many students email specific physicians that they are interested in shadowing. Many of the physicians at WashU Med are happy and more than willing to have students spend part of the day with them. The opportunities are out there; it's up to you to take advantage of them when you're ready!

Chris. B, M1

Simulation/Procedural Events

Simulation/procedural nights are events offered by specialty interest groups that allow students to get hands-on experience with procedures in a variety of specialties. Students rotate through stations in which residents or attendings teach skills, techniques, or procedures that they regularly perform. It's a great way for students to get an inside look at equipment that they normally would not have access to until later in medical school. Sometimes these events are also in collaboration with the Saint Louis University School of Medicine, which can be a fun opportunity to meet new medical students.

Idoia D., M1

Support and Resources

Becker Support/Resources

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

Joshua L., M1

Class Resource Development Group

The Class Resource Development Group (CRDG) works to put together a Google Drive with study resources available to all incoming medical students. The Google Drive is divided by the Phase One modules and contains Anki decks, study guides, and lecture notes made by previous students. I use the class Google Drive often, and the resources have been immensely helpful in navigating how to study the Gateway Curriculum!

Hannah N., M1

Clinical Research

WashU Med places an emphasis on clinical research, which means that it is easy to get involved as a medical student. Many labs have availability and are happy to work with students. The Office of Medical Student Research and Scholarship (OMSR), under the leadership of Dean Koong-Nah Chung, associate dean for medical student research, makes the process of matching with a research mentor easy to navigate. The hours in clinical research can be more flexible than traditional bench research, which can make scheduling for exam studying and extracurricular activities less stressful. I have found being involved in clinical research both manageable and enjoyable during Phase One!

Nick B., M1

Coaching

Coaching is essentially a process where you get paired up with a real working physician or dean who will act as your coach throughout your time in medical school. The coaching groups are preset groups of people who are unique. My coaching group is really friendly and supportive. Coaching creates an environment where you can vent and discuss issues nonjudgmentally. What's especially cool is that your coach will translate your feedback into curriculum updates, so it feels like we have a more direct way to talk to administration. On a biweekly basis, the coaching sessions involve discussing everything from our current problems to more systemic problems in medicine. These sessions always are fun and spark stimulating conversation.

Eshan S., M1

Dean Chung and the Science of Finding a Research Mentor

Dean Koong-Nah Chung, associate dean for medical student research, is a wonderful source of support for students interested in research. She has some listings of previous projects and principal investigators who typically help students with high-output research, and makes note of publications to which they contributed. Beyond that, she also has a longer list of faculty names for broader, cold-emailing purposes. Dr. Aimee James, professor of general surgery, also helps people with research in general surgery, if that's of interest.

Eshan S., M1

Faculty Support

Medical school can be intimidating, especially at a large, highly-regarded institution like WashU Med. Luckily, the faculty here are a tremendous support for helping us navigate this thing we call medical school. The amount of faculty that have dedicated time for our own development and support is beyond what I could have imagined. In fact, there are so many resources that sometimes it is actually

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

Joshua L., M1

Master's Programs

Some of you may have interests 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 the few other students each year who choose to pursue a five-year MD/MBA at WashU Med. 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 Business School. 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 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

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 in Phase Two 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 Med) 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., WashU Med Class of 2023 & PGY-1 Resident at BJH

Support for Each Other, as a Class

My classmates have been the best support system at WashU Med thus far. From the beginning, everyone has been so kind, welcoming, accepting, and supportive of each other's interests. Medical school is a unique experience where we are all doing the same thing every day, so it's nice to have peers who are always willing to talk, listen, and commiserate in our shared struggles. When I have been stressed or having a bad day, many of my classmates have reached out to offer support. Despite spending so much time together during school, we are constantly hanging out outside of school because we love each other so much.

Kenzie B., M1

The Big Sib Program

The summer before starting at WashU Med, the incoming M1s fill out a survey with questions about themselves. These survey answers then are matched with a current M2 that shares similar backgrounds, experiences, and interests. From there, the Big Sib/Little Sib pairing is formed. It's been amazing to have a familiar face in the M2 class that I see on a frequent basis. It's also been nice to have someone I can reach out to with small or big questions related to medical school or St. Louis. Some people hang out with their Big every week, some people grab coffee or a drink now and then, and others simply just chat when they run into each other in FLTC. Your relationship with your Big can be whatever you both want it to be; this is something you indicate on the survey! I think this program makes WashU Med so special because it fosters a sense of community between classes and gives M1s extra support during their transition into medical school.

Mansi G., M1

Third-Party 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., M3

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

Hannah N., M1

Feedback Integration

End-of-Module Feedback

End-of-module feedback surveys are one of the many ways to submit feedback regarding the Gateway Curriculum. These anonymous surveys are completed at the end of each module and are extremely comprehensive. They allow you to write as much as you want about the lecturers, general module organization, workload, required events, or anything else that comes to mind. Overall, I appreciate that WashU Med actively seeks student feedback to continuously improve the Gateway Curriculum!

Hannah N., M1

Lecture Feedback

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

Chris B., M1

Module Liaisons

Personally, I loved being a module liaison because the position put me at the interface between students, module leads, and academic deans. Generally, one to two students are designated as module liaisons for each of the seven modules in Phase One. As a module liaison, one of my roles was to communicate to my peers which specific areas or lectures the module leads were looking for feedback on. However, the bulk of the work comes from collecting overall student feedback on content and teaching. I created student surveys and interviews, generated a report summarizing student feedback with proposed solutions, and met with the module leads and academic deans to share this information with them. It's

exciting to be able to represent the thoughts of my peers regarding the Gateway Curriculum by sharing their feedback with the module leads and deans who create the curriculum. These conversations will hopefully create improvements that positively impact the classes that come after us!

Cynthia C., M1

Real-Time Feedback on Exam Questions

On all of our exam questions, we have the option to leave feedback as we take our exams. Whether we have lingering questions about the wording of a question stem or want to further elaborate on how we came to our answer, we can quickly type some notes in the feedback box. The great thing is, since we have plenty of time to take our exams, we won't run out of time as we offer our real-time feedback. Once our professors start grading our exams, they will see the comments on any of the questions on which we provide feedback. At our proctored reviews (dedicated times where we can review what we missed on an exam), we will see if they have inserted a response to our feedback. Overall, the real-time feedback is helpful because we don't have to try to remember what our feedback was as we wait two or so weeks to get our exams back. Instead, we can provide the feedback during the exam and have one less thing to remember as we begin studying for the next exam!

Joshua L., M1

Thread Liaisons

As a thread liaison, you will work with the thread leads throughout all of Phase One to help interpret feedback and provide suggestions on behalf of your classmates. This is an amazing opportunity to interact with faculty members and have a positive impact on the curriculum for years to follow. As a Health, Equity, and Justice thread liaison, I have already had opportunities to contribute to new components. It is empowering to help deliver feedback from my classmates directly to the thread leads and be able to peek behind the scenes to learn how the feedback is considered. I've seen how much the leads value student input to create the best curriculum possible, and I feel fortunate to be a part of that for Phase One. If you're interested in how medical school education is designed, or just love brainstorming complex topics, I highly encourage you to consider being a thread liaison.

Mackenzie S., M1

Study Styles

Anki

Anki is an exceptionally popular study resource that you will likely encounter at some point during your medical school adventure. Anki is a flashcard program that uses spaced repetition, a science-backed approach, to maximize learning and long-term memory retention. Anki is a widely used study tool because of its flexibility and relative ease of use — after a short tutorial on how to use it. You can be as hands-on or hands-off as you like: making your own cards, using pre-made decks from other students, or studying from the famous “AnKing” deck. The sky is truly the limit when it comes to studying with Anki, and even those who are not technically savvy can still get a tremendous amount of value out of it.

Anki currently accounts for about 95% of my studying regimen since I find it so effective and efficient. I typically study for 30-60 minutes every morning and evening, using pre-made cards created by other students combined with some of my own cards to fill in any gaps. I’m a huge Anki fan, as are many other students, so I recommend you give it a try if you haven’t already!

Nicholas S., M1

Going to Class

Whether it’s required or optional attendance, in-person or Zoom sessions, you can almost always find me in class at the scheduled time. I’ve heard all the arguments for skipping class: having your own schedule, sleeping in a bit later in the mornings, or watching at two-times speed. While these are totally valid, I just like the structure and accountability that going to class affords me! Consistently going to class keeps me on schedule with lectures, provides me a structure to organize my studying, and allows me to ask clarifying questions in real time. Going to class is also an easy way to get familiar with our well-accomplished faculty and develop relationships with them!

When watching lectures on my own, it’s often easier to get distracted. The classroom environment is a good way to focus my attention strictly on the material for the duration of the class. Even if I don’t retain all the information upon initial presentation during lecture, I can always go back later and review recordings with a more focused eye for specific concepts that I need to work on. Plus, I think we are paying for this education, so we might as well take advantage of it! If going to class is what works for you, don’t be afraid to stick by it.

Amy P., M1

Skipping Class

I am someone who, unfortunately, 1) needs a lot of sleep, 2) overcommitted myself outside of class, and 3) struggles to stay focused for more than an hour of live lectures. To this end, my fatigue and subsequent inability to retain information

stopped me from going to non-required attendance classes about a week into Gateway Curriculum. To this day, I still only rarely attend non-mandatory sessions.

If one of those things from my list above applies to you, you are in luck. The Gateway Curriculum is set up very well for students who subscribe to offline learning styles. All lectures with testable content are recorded in good quality and posted with the lecture slides on Keystone (our learning management tool). Furthermore, you can control lecture playback speed and replay sections that you need extra passes to digest. The Gateway Curriculum, in general, gives you clear expectations of the content you need to learn and respects that people synthesize information best in different ways.

In short, this setup is highly flexible and allows students to learn efficiently at a pace and time of their choosing. Even if you are someone who goes to class, it's easy to catch up on material if you're sick, need to travel for conferences, or have other conflicts. If you just want some me-time and/or decide to sleep in — that works, too. Gateway has you covered.

Brian S., M1

To preface, going to every class, skipping the non-required attendance sessions, and everything in between are all viable strategies for consuming the material. The only common denominator is attending mandatory class sessions. My advice to all incoming M1s would be to try every learning method and find out what works for you. For me, it's skipping non-required lectures. Don't get me wrong, I still learn the material — or try to. However, watching the video on two-times speed or sometimes three-times speed on my own time is faster and more flexible for my own needs. By skipping class, I can workout, eat, and study when I want to and how I want to. For me, skipping class is a no-brainer.

Chris B., M1

Traditional Methods

I use mostly traditional study methods to get through the Gateway Curriculum. What one defines as “traditional” may be relative, but I like to think of it as whatever study techniques we used during our undergraduate studies. For me, this includes watching lecture videos, taking notes during lectures, reviewing lecture slides, and doing practice questions. While there are undeniable benefits to the spaced repetition provided by Anki, I feel like traditional techniques allow me to encode the information using multiple sensory modalities. I've realized that hearing, seeing, and writing the information helps me retain content better. The number one complaint with this study strategy is that it can be too time-consuming, so it may not be suitable for some students and/or schedules. However, all of our lecture videos can be sped up, so if you are a two-times speed master, there is still a chance that traditional study methods may still be right for you!

Christopher S., M1

Study Locations

Becker Library

Let me preface this by admitting that Becker Library isn't my favorite spot to study, given my talkative nature. I will say, though, that Becker is THE place to go if you really need to grind. Got a heap of Anki cards to get through? Hours upon hours of lectures to watch? Or do you just need an environment that will keep you accountable to do your work? Becker's got you covered.

Each floor has a different vibe that can fit your study style. I usually spend my time on the first and second floors because of the bigger tables and open space. I like saying hi to people I know who are coming in or going out; it makes me feel less isolated. The third floor has cubicles for quiet studying and houses the Office of Medical Student Education. The office is always open during business hours if you ever want to drop in to talk to any of our administrators or take a little snack break at the snack cart. As you go up the floors, you can find more study spaces, so the choices are endless. The seventh floor has the best views of the Washington University Medical Campus! One last piece of advice: Stay away from the lower level if you want sunlight; having to cram for a test is already enough torture.

Gabriel C.L., M1

Carrels (On Campus)

If you are an enthusiastic on-campus studier like me, you will love the carrels at WashU Med! 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 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., M3

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 cafe 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's also a local coffee shop called Kaldi's, with one location in the Mid Campus Center building and another just eight–10 minutes from campus, that has next-level pastries.

Stockton T., M3

Farrell Learning and Teaching Center

You will be fairly acquainted with the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) within weeks of starting school at WashU Med. We take most of our classes in FLTC, and most of our student groups and clubs host their activities in its many meeting spaces. However, the best part of FLTC is the student lounges. Found on the third and fourth floors, the lounges provide a space for working, eating, talking, sleeping, gaming, studying — you name it! I love going there with my friends to decompress after a long day of classes. There are private group study rooms, each with at least two whiteboards that are guaranteed to have someone's neat concept maps of lecture materials from the week. Each lounge has a napping pod for when being home isn't an option and a massage chair to comfort you when times are tough. There are also giant televisions and comfortable couches, so you can watch your favorite shows or play games in style! Wow, I really am simping for a study space, huh?

Gabriel C.L., M1

Social Events

MedBall

WashU Med's annual MedBall channels classiness, buffoonery, and carousing in all the best ways. The event is our version of Hogwarts' Yule Ball with a sprinkle of high school prom. A truly unforgettable experience, MedBall has been described by some as "the most fun I've had since neuroanatomy lab" and "the most compelling reason to attend WashU Med." A completely student-planned event, MedBall offers students and faculty a night full of a delectable multi-course dinner, flavorful libations, a live swing band, and a DJ that will have you 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 more informal 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., M3

Red Dress Affair

One of the highlights of medical school so far has been the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) annual Red Dress Affair, a fundraiser for the American Heart Association's Go Red for Women movement. Decorating for the event ahead of time with friends and then getting dressed up in our red-themed outfits was such a wonderful bonding experience. The entire first floor of the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center was transformed into an elegant space with tons of great photo spots. Additionally, the gala featured a silent auction, survivor keynote speaker, physician presentation, and delicious food and drinks. I can't wait for next year's Red Dress Affair!

Maya W., M1

Society Social Events

Society social events are a great way to meet other students at WashU Med, especially students in other years or phases that you otherwise might not see. My favorite event so far has been bowling, where the Class of 2026 took on the Class of 2027 in a bowling showdown. The class of 2027 won by a few pins! The events are true to what WashU Med is all about — building a community among students.

Mitch M., 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 coats.
- MedBall — With a team of students, we help coordinate our spring formal, a lively night of dinner, drinks, and dancing.

We also plan other events around SAMHSA's Eight Dimensions of Wellness model, which highlights eight categories: Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual. Our programming is focused on helping students in their wellness journeys, and we've done this through events like our

Mindfulness and Nutrition Workshop, Living on a Medical Student Budget session, our Career Talk Series, Match Week events, and more. Follow us @WUMSWell and contact us at MDStudentLife@wustl.edu with any questions you might have.

Brady Griffith, Senior Manager, Student Life

The Medical Student Government (MSG) collaborates seamlessly with our Office of Student Life to organize various events during Phase One that foster class unity and create lasting memories. One notable event was the Balloon Glow in Forest Park, which the Office of Student Life introduced us to during orientation. The Balloon Glow is an annual event in St. Louis that you will not want to miss (more on this in the “Life in St. Louis” section). This event was before I had the opportunity to meet many of my classmates, so this was a great, organized way for me to go with other students to an event off campus. Plus, the Office of Student Life provided vouchers for us to get free dinner at several of the food trucks that were present. Most recently, MSG and Office of Student Life teamed up to host a Friendsgiving for the entire M1 class. There was PLENTY of amazing food, from a mix of dishes made by students to dinner catered by a local restaurant. There was so much extra food that the rest of the food was placed in our student lounge for people to come indulge in the following day. This event was special not only because I was able to have a nice free meal with friends, but it was also a great way to celebrate the holidays for students that were staying in St. Louis for the holiday season! As you can see, student life social events have two major themes: food and more food!

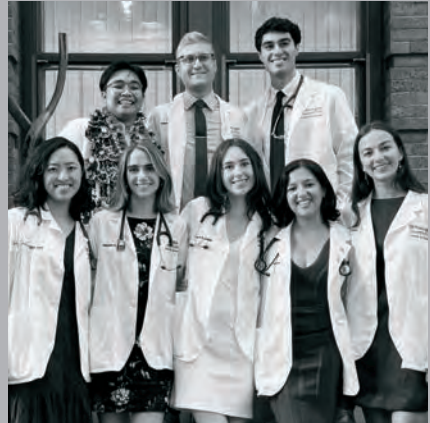
Joshua L., M1



MSTP Entering Class of 2023 outside of FLTC.



Phase 3 students learn where they matched for their respective residencies.



White Coat Ceremony 2023. Back: NJ M., Jackson H., Paco N. Front: Nancy J., Margaret M., Helen R., Kristie T., Elizabeth B.



The entire Entering Class of 2023 poses for a class photo after receiving their white coats from their coaches.



Student Groups

There are many student-run organizations that explore diverse interests and hobbies, with new ones being created every year. The following sections highlight some of these organizations, and a full list of organizations can be found on the MD Program website at md.wustl.edu.

SECTION EDITORS: CYNTHIA CHEN AND MELODY NGUYEN

Advocacy and Community Outreach

American Medical Association

The American Medical Association (AMA) is the largest national organization of specialty medical societies and critical stakeholders in medicine. Through our local WashU Med chapter, the AMA seeks to provide opportunities to attend conferences, lobby, get involved in local action, and engage through community service. If you're interested in advocacy and want to learn more about the intersection between lobbying, public health, and health care policy, then AMA would be a great student organization for you.

Georgi S., M2

American Medical Women's Association

American Medical Women's Association (AMWA) is an organization that functions from the local to national level to advance women in medicine and improve women's health. It is open to all students and consists of students interested in meeting female faculty, participating in community outreach events, attending programming to increase awareness of issues such as body-image awareness and interpersonal violence, and participating in socials. AMWA does not have weekly or monthly meetings for general members; members are free to choose which events they are interested in and sign up as desired. Events are held year-round, and AMWA is one of the largest organizations on campus. Some fun events we had this year include cheer stations for Girls on the Run, a Clerkship Advice dinner with more senior students, a Period Product and Diaper Supply Drive, book clubs, multiple small breakfasts with faculty who identify as women, tons of collaborations with other student organizations here at WashU Med, and so much more!

Jenna B., M2

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 well-being of incarcerated teens. The program visits the St. Louis Juvenile Detention Center weekly, and each student volunteer presents a health topic about once per month. Our hour-long sessions are structured as conversations rather than formal lectures, and we foster engagement through example cases and demonstrations. We currently have presentations on safe sex, mental health, toxic stress, healthy relationships, and addiction, and student volunteers are encouraged to add their topics. In addition to giving WashU Med students the unique opportunity to work with this marginalized and underserved population, our program provides a powerful introduction to disparities in health literacy, obstacles in health education, and issues in correctional medicine.

Yande M., M2

Dementia Understanding Opportunity

The Dementia Understanding Opportunity (DUO) is a year-long program for students to learn about the everyday experience of living with dementia. In partnership with the Knight Alzheimer Disease Research Center (ADRC), students from the MD, PT, and OT programs are paired with mentors in the St. Louis community living with early-onset dementia. Students meet with their mentors monthly to learn about their experiences living with their diagnosis and build personal relationships with their mentors and caregivers over the year. DUO also meets monthly as a student organization to debrief, host guest speakers, and discuss ongoing developments in dementia care.

Christina S., M4

Dis-Orientation Guide

Every year, medical students at WashU Med (mainly M1s) write and publish the Dis-Orientation (Dis-O) Guide, which is a resource intended to introduce incoming students to St. Louis, WashU Med, and life as a medical student. When I was deciding where to go for medical school, the Dis-O Guide actually played a serious role in leading me to WashU because it gave me so much insight into the school and city. I haven't seen anything else like it at other institutions, and I still continue to reference the Dis-O Guide for advice and resources even to this day. Hopefully you'll find this year's edition to be super helpful for you as well!

Daniel D., M1

Health Career Collaborative

The Health Career Collaborative (HCC) mission is to provide mentorship, engaging health curriculum, and exposure to health careers to high school students from underrepresented minority communities in St. Louis. HCC currently has monthly meetings with students from Clyde C. Miller High School, during which we walk them through hands-on activities like pig heart dissections. My favorite lesson was bringing them to WashU Med's Institute for Surgical Education, where surgery residents taught the students basic surgical skills! Getting to know the students over the year and seeing how continuously curious they are is always rewarding.

Kavya P., M1

Health Screening Education Group (HSEG)

The Health Screening Education Group (HSEG) is a new educational resource that provides medical students interested in volunteering in the St. Louis community with opportunities to practice basic clinical and communication skills. There are many existing student groups at WashU Med that organize health-oriented volunteer opportunities for medical students; Health Screening Education will host training sessions throughout the year for incoming students, allowing them to

practice skills such as taking vitals, checking blood glucose, and having conversations with patients, in order to ensure that they feel prepared when volunteering in the St. Louis community.

Maddie T., MSTP G1

Interprofessional Pro Bono Clinic

The Interprofessional Pro Bono Clinic is an interdisciplinary clinic where WashU MD, PT, and OT students are able to put into practice some of the concepts learned in class and provide holistic care to patients at no cost. Phase One, Two, and Three MD students are welcome to work in the clinic in different roles. Phase One students can take a patient history, practice the basics of the physical exam, and counsel patients on the social determinants of health under the supervision of an attending physician.

Brian D., M2

Latino Medical Student Association

The Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) here at WashU Med and nationwide aims to support medical students that want to improve health care equity regarding the Latin population. This organization is open to everyone from any background. We have previously connected with our local Latin community and even with other LMSA chapters at nearby medical schools. This has personally helped me find mentorship, find community, and stay connected with my culture after moving to a new city far from home. We plan social events like Charlas to meet other Spanish-speaking health professionals and to provide a sense of community with each other. In addition, we provide service opportunities in our local St. Louis community, such as volunteering at local health fairs to provide free basic health care to individuals who have difficulty getting into the medical system in St. Louis. LMSA also coordinates Medical Spanish (MedSpan), an 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., M2

LGBTQmed

LGBTQmed is an affinity group at WashU Med dedicated to fostering community amongst LGBTQmed students, educating peers on LGBTQ+ health care topics, and advocating for the health and well-being of queer individuals. We also partner closely with OUTMed, which is more broadly composed of faculty members and students from other health care programs, for social, educational, and mentoring purposes. Some of our main events include participation in St. Louis and Tower Grove Pride, panels with queer-identifying physicians or those who treat predominantly queer populations, and social events to strengthen connections between students. We also partner with other affinity groups to facilitate discussions on intersectionality in health care.

Luke C., M2

Medical Students for Choice

Medical Students for Choice (MSFC) is an international organization dedicated to educating medical students about abortion and reproductive health care at large. The MSFC chapter at WashU Med 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., M2

NICU Cuddlers

NICU Cuddlers is a volunteer group through St. Louis Children's Hospital that provides comfort to babies in the NICU. As a part of the Cuddlers program, we go into the NICU for a weekly shift and spend time holding and rocking the babies to help with their emotional, social, and physical development. The program is a great way to give back to the St. Louis community and give parents peace of mind when they cannot always be there for their children. NICU Cuddlers has been an amazing experience, and I cannot imagine a more fulfilling study break!

Mary Kate F., M1

Pediatric Life Savers

With Pediatric Life Savers (PLS), we have the opportunity to teach infant and child CPR to parents and caregivers who have children in the ICU at St. Louis Children's Hospital. We have the immense privilege of helping prepare parents for these emergency situations, giving them the confidence to take action to save a life. Membership in this group allows students to gain their BLS certification early, get early exposure to working with patients' families, and provide the opportunity to engage in the community.

Braxton G., M2

Saturday Scholars Program

The Saturday Scholars Program is one of WashU Med's longest standing outreach programs and volunteer opportunities, started over 30 years ago. The Office of Diversity Programs sponsors this student-run program. It brings about 60 students from local high schools to campus for five Saturdays of organ system-focused lectures, case studies, clinical skills, and anatomy lab. Medical student volunteers of all levels run every session, work directly with students, and gain valuable teaching experience while opening up the world of medicine and giving back to the St. Louis community. As a high-school participant in the

program in 2014 and now a four-time medical student volunteer, I can attest to its profound impact on students' high-school careers. This is a meaningful way to shape your medical school story.

Andrew B., M4

Science and Healthcare Abilities Coalition

The Science and Healthcare Abilities Coalition (SHAC) is WashU Med's disability affinity and advocacy group. We are an interdisciplinary organization with members across programs within the medical school. SHAC aims to improve health care for disabled people and create a community for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses and their allies across all programs at WashU Med. Some of our past work includes incorporating content on caring for disabled patients into all three Phases of the MD Gateway Curriculum, including a Keystone Integrated Science Course (KISC) focusing on living in the community with a disability. We also host meetings for community building, experience sharing, and student-to-student support.

Rosie R., M3

Student National Medical Association

Established in 1964 by medical students from Howard University and Meharry medical schools, the Student National Medical Association (SNMA) is a student-led organization committed to promoting an environment in which underrepresented, minoritized medical students can excel, addressing and improving health care delivery to medically underserved communities, and increasing the number of clinically excellent, culturally competent, and socially conscious physicians. At WashU Med, SNMA hosts many events to promote student well-being and acclimation while creating spaces for mentorship to flourish from the undergraduate level to residency and beyond. Here at WashU Med, we are privileged to be a part of the rich and diverse history of St. Louis while also recognizing the longstanding health inequities in our surrounding community. SNMA at WashU Med strives to build bridges within our community, at the medical school, and with the greater St. Louis area. We are so excited for you to join us and can't wait to see how your presence helps us cultivate a spirit of unity!

AudreyStephannie M., M1

Unhoused Health

Unhoused Health seeks to provide medical students with a deeper understanding of the housing landscape in St. Louis and the effect of housing status and stigma on health care outcomes. We aim to expand medical students' opportunities to work with and learn from an often misunderstood and diverse population by providing the unhoused community of St. Louis with low-barrier health care and addiction support. We prioritize judgment-free care, a harm-reduction philosophy, structural violence frameworks, and partnerships with existing community

resources and workers as a group. In addition to connecting students with the local community, we frequently host lunch/dinner talks at WashU Med, focusing on the psychiatric, infectious, and dermatological effects of housing instability.

Jay T., M3

WUSM Sustainability Group

In 2015, the World Health Organization (WHO) named climate change as the greatest threat to global health. U.S. health care contributes substantially to environmental perturbation, and, if our health care system were considered a country, it would rank 13th in total carbon emissions. The goal of WUSM Sustainability 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, setting up climate change and health lunch talks, and connecting students with sustainability-related volunteering and advocacy opportunities.

Joshua P.C., M3

Faith-Based

Catholic Student Center

The Catholic Student Center (CSC) is a short drive/MetroLink ride away, on the Danforth Campus. They have Mass and dinner on Sundays at 4:30 p.m., as well as various weekday Mass times. The CSC is a beautiful study spot for when you need a break from campus, and it is open 24/7 with free snacks and coffee! They also offer many activities to get to know other graduate students and young adults, including happy hours, prayer groups, and an annual Awakening retreat. I was involved at the CSC as a WashU undergraduate student, and I highly recommend it for its wonderful sense of community.

William C., M1

Christian Medical Association

The Christian Medical Association (CMA) has been a very welcoming community where I've been able to discuss various aspects of faith with other health care students and faculty. In addition to medical students and faculty, our weekly meetings also feature people from other health care professions such as the nearby occupational therapy, physical therapy, and nursing schools. Furthermore, some students from CMA usually attend events together held by The Carver Project, and the community has been a launching point for several Bible studies and book clubs. I would definitely recommend coming to CMA to explore how faith and medicine intersect, whether you consider yourself Christian or are questioning/curious about faith.

Daniel D., M1

Jewish Medical Student Association

The 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., M2

Medical Muslim Student Association

The Medical Muslim Student Association (MMSA) aims to support Muslim students in various capacities on the Medical Campus through programming, mentorship, and advocacy. We host several events throughout the year, including smaller ice cream socials and larger Ramadan/Eid dinners. We also work with WashU's undergraduate Muslim Students Association (MSA) to provide mentoring/support and endeavor to facilitate greater access to volunteering in the larger St. Louis Muslim community through organizations like Project Downtown and the VIM clinic. The MMSA can also help students get in touch with faculty/resident mentors through the more extensive network of Muslims at WashU/BJC.

Hamza J., M1

Interdisciplinary

Clinical Research Journal Club

Clinical Research Journal Club holds monthly lunch presentations around clinical research. This can be an ongoing or previous research project or just an article that you found interesting. We accept signups for both full-length and lower-commitment abstract presentations. This is a fantastic way to practice your presentation skills, get feedback on your ideas, and get involved in and share your clinical research.

Annie F., M2

Sling Health

Sling Health offers a low-stakes and flexible entry into health care innovation, exemplified by the success of Geneoscopy, a thriving GI health care start-up born from a Sling Health project. Beginning with Problem Day in early September, participants present their problems, form teams, and receive a \$2,000 kickstart fund. Throughout the year, there is a set of design reviews and educational resources for guidance. Furthermore, you will be able to connect with mentors, teammates, and other entrepreneurs. At the end of the project year, Sling Health also provides legal support for patent filing and incorporations. With opportunities to connect

with mentors, teammates, and entrepreneurs, Sling Health supports innovation from idea generation to legal aspects, making it an ideal choice for those interested in entrepreneurship.

Ze O., M1

The Hippocratic Forum

The Hippocratic Forum (HF) is a group of doctors and medical trainees committed to rediscovering ideals in medicine. It was started by a group of trainees 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. Our chapter here at WashU Med hosts seminars and monthly lunch discussions on topics related to ideals in medicine, including practical wisdom, cognitive reframing, mindfulness/interior recollection, work-life harmony, justice, courage, and more.

Justin S., M3

Interest Groups

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Medicine

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Medicine club, also known as AIM, is a student-led hub where we explore how AI is changing medicine. We're all about sharing knowledge and sparking curiosity in AI through workshops, lectures, and hands-on research. It's not just about learning; it's a chance to innovate, collaborate, and grow in a field where AI meets health care.

If you're considering WashU Med, AIM offers a unique peek into the future of medicine and AI. It's a place where you can engage with cutting-edge technology, connect with peers and experts, and be at the forefront of this exciting intersection.

Dani W., M2

Cardiovascular Interest Group

The Cardiovascular Interest Group (CVIG) is a student interest group that works with the division of cardiothoracic (CT) surgery to foster students' interest and understanding of CT surgery. Each year, the CVIG hosts several events including an introductory informational session, presentations regarding current research in the department, and physician panels in which students can directly ask their questions about CT surgery to the current CT fellows. Our most popular event each year is our Anastomosis Lab, in which students learn how to suture an anastomosis directly from the CT surgery fellows and our CVIG faculty lead, Dr. Muhammad Masood. We aim to help students learn more about this field and to connect students with the surgeons and researchers that can help further their involvement in cardiothoracic surgery.

Megan H., MSTP G1

Child Psychiatry Interest Group

The Child Psychiatry Interest Group at WashU Med is part of a national group called Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation (KTGF), which provides programming and support for medical students interested in the field of child psychiatry. Our KTGF Child Psychiatry Interest Group facilitates opportunities for students including shadowing, research, and mentorship with residents. We also work with students to attend and present at the annual KTGF conference, which takes place at various medical schools around the country.

Alice J., M2

Dermatology Interest Group

The Dermatology Interest Group (DIG) is dedicated to introducing medical students to the dynamic and fascinating world of dermatology! Throughout the year, DIG organizes a variety of events designed to offer valuable learning experiences and networking opportunities. One highlight is our subspecialty panel event, where students can explore diverse paths within dermatology, such as pediatric dermatology, dermatopathology, Mohs micrographic surgery, and more. This unique platform allows students to gain insights into different subspecialties and establish connections with experienced physicians in those fields. In addition to these panels, DIG hosts educational talks. Recently, a guest speaker from the Skin of Color Society discussed disparities in diagnoses among patients of color. The conversation delved into understanding how skin conditions might manifest differently, and we explored strategies to address and mitigate these disparities. As part of our yearly activities, we also organize an M4 match panel, allowing matched students to share their experiences with the application cycle and offer valuable advice. We aim to foster connections between students and the field, connecting them with faculty members and offering opportunities to delve deeper into dermatology beyond the standard curriculum.

Sabrina M., M2

Emergency Medicine Interest Group

The Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG) collaborates with a team of Emergency Medicine (EM) residents and faculty in the department to organize events that introduce students to the world of EM. The group has organized many engaging events such as a panel discussion on life in EM with faculty, a talk on the impact of climate change in medicine, and a night dedicated to watching media depictions of emergency medicine. Additionally, the group provides career development opportunities, including shadowing and emergency/trauma case simulations. Whether you are curious about emergency medicine or seriously considering it as a career, I highly recommend that you check out the EMIG. It's also an excellent opportunity to meet new people and enjoy a delicious slice of pizza.

Melody N., M1

Infectious Disease Interest Group

Are you a medical student intrigued by infectious diseases? Well, the Infectious Disease Interest Group (IDIG) is the group for you! We recognize that not everyone lives and breathes microbiology, so the goals of IDIG are to endorse general interest in the field and provide opportunities for students to explore those interests. For example, we organize student volunteering opportunities for the annual WashU flu shot clinic, adult and pediatric shadowing, infectious disease-related lunch talks, and review nights for you (gunners) to flex your Sketchy Micro knowledge. We are connected to a wide network of faculty who have such unique paths in the field ranging from public health advocates to bacterial, virus, and parasite experts to hospital leaders and everything else in between. So whether you're ready to apply to an Infectious Disease fellowship tomorrow or you just want to hear about some of the wildest case reports, our door is open!

Jesse P., MSTP G1

Internal Medicine Interest Group

The Internal Medicine Interest Group seeks to connect medical students to faculty and mentors within the field of internal medicine. Internal medicine is a foundation for all the subspecialties, and we encourage students to explore the field and learn more about its unique opportunities in longitudinal patient care and procedures. Some of our events include panels with physicians from different internal medicine subspecialties as well as procedural training events, such as joint injection workshops. We also provide funding for internal medicine-related conferences. To patients, internal medicine physicians are key players in their primary care, taking care to think of all systems at once.

Olivia M., M2

Medical Ethics Student Society

The Medical Ethics Student Society (MESS) is a new student group whose mission is to foster discourse among students, faculty, and leading figures in the broader health care landscape about ethical practices in modern medicine. MESS organizes a mix of events, including smaller discussions about the role of ethics in patient care as well as larger seminars and panels about recent ethical controversies in medicine. Two of my favorite events have included a lunch talk about how patient narratives can shape end-of-life care in the case of ambiguous patient directives, as well as a panel composed of nephrologists, a journalist, and a health insurance CEO discussing the ramifications of increasing private-equity-based hospital ownership. MESS is a wonderful way to learn more about the medical humanities and participate in ethics-based dialogue about the practice of medicine.

Pallavi J., M1

Medicine-Pediatrics Interest Group

Although WashU Med does not have a formalized Internal Medicine-Pediatrics residency program, the Medicine-Pediatrics Interest Group (MPIG) strives to increase awareness of the dual-specialty program among students at WashU Med. Medicine-Pediatrics residency provides a wide breadth of training in caring for individuals of all ages ranging from newborns to geriatric patients. Medicine-Pediatrics residents go on to pursue many different subspecialties (cardiology, infectious disease, pulmonary/critical care, women's health, sports medicine, and more) and work in a variety of settings, including private practice, academic medicine, and hospitalist programs. MPIG supports students interested in applying to Medicine-Pediatrics by providing opportunities to connect with Medicine-Pediatrics faculty and facilitating lectures, case discussions, and workshops that expose students to the many careers open to Medicine-Pediatrics physicians.

Maddie T., MSTP G1

Neurosurgery Interest Group

The Neurosurgery Interest Group (NSIG) aims to expose students to the field of neurosurgery. This group offers networking opportunities with attendings, residents, and other medical students interested in neurosurgery. Some of our past events include student research panels and case presentations. These events portray the daily life of a neurosurgeon and offer advice on preparing for a career in neurosurgery. NSIG also offers shadowing with residents and can establish connections for both clinical and basic science research.

Lucas B., M1

Obstetrics & Gynecology Interest Group

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

Caroline C., M2

Oncology Interest Group

The Oncology Interest Group connects students with networking, shadowing, and learning opportunities in oncology. Historically, we've organized survivorship panels, "specialty speed dating" events to connect students with potential mentors, and more. We're working on a shadowing sign-up sheet to make oncology shadowing easy for students (stay tuned!). We hope that through our various activities and opportunities, we can foster more understanding of oncological specialties and get people interested in this field.

Isabel R., MSTP G1

Ophthalmology Interest Group

Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG) fosters medical student interest and exposure to ophthalmology through lunch talks, shadowing experiences, and surgical workshops. OIG's most popular events every year are our introductory lunch talk, suturing workshop (with pig eye corneas), and resident panel regarding the ophthalmology application, match process, and residency experience. We hope to help existing and newfound eyeball enthusiasts gain insight and mentorship in the field.

Lilly G., M2

Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group

The Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group (OSIG) is a student group for people interested in the musculoskeletal system and all things related to orthopedic surgery. OSIG connects students to orthopedic residents/attending physicians and offers research opportunities for members of the group. OSIG has also put on various events such as a model sawbone lab, in which students were able to simulate repair from traumatic events by placing compression plates and screws.

Mitch M., M1

Palliative Care Interest Group

The Palliative Care Interest Group (PCIG) is a brand-new student group that exposes students to palliative care and hospice medicine. Palliative care spans disciplines, and even if you do not anticipate becoming a palliative care specialist, the lessons in patient quality of life, goal-concordant care, and person-centered medicine are invaluable for all physicians. Throughout the year, we hold panels with various palliative care professionals, such as chaplains, pediatric and adult palliative care physicians, and hospice physicians. We also set up shadowing opportunities and provide resources for existing volunteering opportunities.

Alex M., M1

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation Interest Group

Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation (PM&R) Interest Group is an integrated, multi-disciplinary specialty focused on improving quality of life and restoring function and independence in patients who have injuries, chronic diseases, and disabilities. Some describe the PM&R specialty as “ortho without the bro.” The PM&R Interest Group holds presentations from physiatrists, facilitates shadowing, and hosts procedure nights to practice skills such as ultrasound-guided injections, epidurals, EMG, and more. Since PM&R is a smaller, more niche specialty, the interest group is a great way to get to know the faculty and residents at Barnes-Jewish Hospital and get exposed to the specialty early on. They are some of the nicest people and are super excited to get students interested in learning PM&R skills that are applicable to any specialty you go into.

Kenzie B., M1

PsychSIGN

Our psychiatry student interest group is part of the Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (psychSIGN), which is the medical student branch of the American Psychiatric Association (APA). We lead and support efforts to promote the advancement of psychiatry, mainly by promoting student interest and supporting student involvement in the field. We also support departmental and community efforts. For example, this past year, we applied to and were awarded a grant to fund and attend the APA annual meeting. We matched medical students with psychiatry resident mentor “buddies” and offered shadowing opportunities. Additionally, we organized medical student volunteers to promote and staff our psychiatry department’s first-ever public lecture series. As part of a national organization, we extend beyond the “WashU bubble” and hold mixers with Saint Louis University School of Medicine and Ponce Health Sciences University students who are also interested in psychiatry. We also attend events with the St. Louis Psychoanalytic Institute, and the national psychSIGN executives often put on regional events like the regional psychSIGN conference. If you’re interested in organized medicine and psychiatry, our interest group is a great first step to getting involved. I joined our psychSIGN group and then led it this past year. Now, I have a position with national psychSIGN as regional research chair. I aim to pursue a fellowship with the APA to continue to explore my interest in leadership in organized psychiatry. If you don’t know what you’re interested in, you should still join our group because nothing is required, and there may be an unexpected group event or opportunity that interests you!

Melissa V., M2

Radiology Interest Group

The Radiology Interest Group is a student organization for medical students interested in radiology. It offers a space for students to explore the vast opportunities within radiology via panels with experienced radiologists and medical students applying to the field. We organize Interventional Radiology panels and Leading Edge of Medicine talks to introduce medical students to the field and its emerging medical technologies. We also partner with other interest groups on campus to host case-based discussions. Last November, we co-hosted a case-based discussion about neurovascular diseases with the Neurology Interest Group. The group also conducts skills-based workshops where medical students can learn to carry out ultrasound-guided procedures, such as placing a central line.

Favour G., M4

Student Interest Group in Neurology

Student Interest Group in Neurology (SIGN) is a great way to check out neurology as a specialty and connect with mentors and students interested in neurology. SIGN offers extensive shadowing opportunities in different services offered by the Department of Neurology: adult inpatient general, adult inpatient stroke, adult

patient consult, pediatric inpatient, pediatric FL/Emergency Department, and the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). It is super easy to sign up, and the attendings and residents are super nice to shadowing medical students! SIGN also offers a series of case studies, including a recent neuro-interventional case where residents walked us through how to perform thrombolysis in the brain through the femoral artery. It was super cool! Whether you are interested in neurology or are just exploring career options, you should definitely check out SIGN!

Ze O., M1

Student Interest Group in Pathology

Pathology plays a crucial role in patient care and interfaces with nearly every branch of medicine, yet medical students often have minimal exposure to this specialty over the course of their training. The Student Interest Group in Pathology (SIGP) provides students with more opportunities to learn about the role of the pathologist and to explore pathology as a potential career choice. We work collaboratively with residents and faculty to organize regular events, arrange shadowing opportunities, and connect interested students with mentors in the field who can provide career guidance throughout medical school. From open houses and tours of BJC's facilities to faculty research panels and hands-on microscopy practice, our events give SIGP members a glimpse of all that anatomic and clinical pathology have to offer— and you'll find that everyone involved is excited to share their enthusiasm for the field with you!

Jennifer B., M4

Urology Interest Group

The Urology Interest Group coordinates professional enhancement for students interested in exploring urology. We set up opportunities for students to learn more about the specialty, network with faculty and residents, and get connected with research projects in the department.

Dan S., M2

Vascular Surgery Interest Group

The Vascular Surgery Interest Group (VSIG) helps medical students explore this exciting field through a variety of events with vascular surgeons, fellows, and residents. This is a great way to see if vascular surgery is right for you or to get connected with ongoing research projects. Be sure to check out VSIG for some great food, career advice, and interesting cases treated by our busy vascular surgery department.

Oliver F., M1

We have many other medical interest groups including (but not limited to):

ENT/Otolaryngology Interest Group (ENTIG)
 Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)
 GI Interest Group (GIIG)
 Infectious Disease Interest Group (IDIG)
 Internal Medicine Interest Group
 KTGF Child Psychiatry Interest Group
 Medical Genetics Interest Group (MGIG)
 Oncology Interest Group (OIG)
 Ophthalmology Interest Group (OIG)
 Pediatrics Interest Group (PIG)
 Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R)
 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

Being an at-large member of the Medical Student Government (MSG) is a great, low-commitment way to get involved with behind-the-scenes decisions at WashU Med. There are two at-large positions: Member for the Health Equity and Anti-Racism Committee and Member for the Committee on the Oversight of Medical Student Education (OMSE) and Phase One Operations. Each position attends meetings with their respective committees and is responsible for providing class input into the subjects discussed. As someone who hadn't been involved with student government in the past, I've really enjoyed connecting with the administrative faculty, as well as voicing my classmates' perspectives.

Gabriel C.L., M1

Class President

Hi, future WashU Med students! My name is Jiwon, and I have the privilege to serve as the M1 class president. My favorite aspect of serving as the class president has been the opportunity to contribute to building a cohesive student community, as well as to meaningful, positive changes for our school. In this role, I serve as a bridge between our student body, the deans, and other members of the administration dedicated to our education and student life. As president,

you get to serve as a student representative on various committees and ensure that the perspectives of our fellow students are heard on topics ranging from the intricacies of the curriculum to the pulse of student life and the nuances of school policies. Beyond this, the class president gets to organize interclass and interprofessional events by collaborating with upper-year MSG members and representatives from other health professional programs (e.g., physical therapy) at WashU Med. Finally, I've loved the opportunity to support the independent initiatives of other class officers, who have come in with amazing ideas!

In the Medical Student Government (MSG), you get to work with a dedicated and passionate group of folks on initiatives that can directly impact the medical student experience. Whatever position you are in, you get to be a resource and a voice for your classmates. If any of this resonates with you, I highly encourage you to run for a position with the MSG!

Jiwon Y., M1

Community Engagement Representative

As the Community Engagement Representative (CER) of Medical Student Government (MSG), I serve as the person who connects WashU Med students with other WashU graduate programs and the greater St. Louis community. In this position, I work with medical school administrators, fellow graduate peer committees, WashU faculty, and community organization leaders to strengthen our engagement and understanding of our place within St. Louis. I share volunteer and service-learning opportunities with WashU Med students, and I meet with MD student group/community partnerships to assess their effectiveness in supporting community organizations and in delivering equitable, actionable care. Beyond creating dialogue and long-term partnerships between WashU Med and the community, I also work closely within the Gateway Health Equity and Justice Curriculum to facilitate medical student involvement in the St. Louis community health care. It is truly a privilege to be the CER, to learn more about frontline community issues, and to foster WashU Med's continued growth and compassionate service toward people of all backgrounds and needs.

Joanna L., M1

IT Liaison

Interested in technology? Want to help shape education at WashU Med? IT Liaison might be the role for you! We work closely with the Educational Technology and Innovation Unit (ETIU) and the Office of Education (OE) to convey student requests to the administration, share technology tips and tricks with fellow classmates, test rollouts of new educational platforms, and communicate admin/IT updates with our class. Personally, I've been amazed by how much ETIU empowers us to do — from suggesting code for Keystone (our teaching/learning platform) to coding applications for fellow students! If you like programming or classwide organizing, this is a great way to advocate for your classmates and to learn more about medical education!

Justin C., M1

Medical Education Representative

As a Medical Education Representative (MER), I have been deeply impressed by the extent to which WashU Med values prompt and effective action to student feedback. My role involves active participation in meetings with administrative faculty and overseeing the various components (i.e. modules, threads, etc.) within the Gateway Curriculum. These meetings serve as platforms for addressing real-time issues and devising strategies for continuous improvement. Many of our meetings focus on student feedback, with some sessions even featuring randomly selected students to ensure inclusion of a diverse range of perspectives. Working as a MER, I collaborate with our thread and module liaisons to present feedback gathered from the student body.

It's worth noting that each module and thread undergoes annual adjustments based on prior feedback. This commitment to iterative enhancement ensures that the Gateway Curriculum remains in a state of continuous improvement and productive change, ultimately benefiting current and future students.

Carolena M., M1

Officer of Student Representation

The Officer of Student Representation (OSR) at WashU Med is in charge of two major roles: (1) being the class' officer of student representation, and (2) representing the school at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Organization of Student Representatives. As your class' officer of student representation, you'll be the wellness and professionalism representative, which basically means that you're in charge of promoting and creating wellness activities. Whether it's bringing puppies before exams, organizing a WashU Med Friendsgiving, or planning a gingerbread house decorating event, the OSR role is largely what you make of it. Furthermore, you'll travel to and represent WashU Med at the annual AAMC LSL and GSA-CiM-OSR conferences along with the other OSRs from each class. These conferences have been a great way to hear about what's going on in the broader medical community and network with both faculty and students from other medical schools.

Daniel D., M1

Social Chairs

The Medical Student Government (MSG) social chairs plan social events for the entire class throughout the year! Collaborating closely with the Office of Student Affairs and the MSG, our primary responsibility is to curate and coordinate a range of events catering to our peers' diverse interests. From organizing small-scale initiatives like group coffee chats to planning larger events like holiday parties, there's something for everyone! This position is an excellent opportunity to fine-tune your organizational and communication skills, particularly in liaising with the administration and other student leaders. More importantly, organizing these

social events fosters a sense of community and belonging among our peers, creating a more cohesive and supportive atmosphere within the bustling environment of medical school.

Sophia T., M1

Wellness, Performance, and Social

ACE Inhibitors

ACE Inhibitors is for tennis lovers at WashU Med. We have tennis nights for people to come out to hit and meet others who are passionate about the game. We welcome people from different skill levels and training levels (medical students, residents, attendings, etc). You can look forward to occasional friendly tournaments, coaching clinics, and grand slam watch parties. See you on the courts!

Nancy J., M1

ClimbRx

Would you like to make new friends, get a great workout, and have tons of fun all at once? If so, then ClimbRx is for you! ClimbRx is our rock climbing club that offers students significant discounts and social events at the local gym in town, Climb So iLL. Whether you are an experienced climber or have never been more than two feet off the ground, rock climbing is a great way to destress after a long day of classes. Virtually anyone can climb regardless of athletic ability, making it a popular choice amongst students across both the Danforth Campus and Medical Campus. So, if you're in the mood for a great time and don't mind getting a little sweaty, check out ClimbRx!

Nicholas S., M1

Film Society

The Washington University School of Medicine Film Society is a community at the intersection of medicine and culture. Join us for insightful screenings and discussions, exploring medical, cultural, and ethical themes beyond the classroom. Our society provides a break from the demands of medical school, offering a space to relax, connect, and broaden your perspective through the art of cinema. We dive into thought-provoking films and engage in conversations with peers who share your passion for both medicine and storytelling. The Film Society enriches your academic journey while providing a meaningful escape from the stresses of medical education. Join us for an engaging blend of cinematic exploration and community building.

Chris H., M2

Hippocrene

The Hippocrene is an annual print magazine that publishes works created by Washington University graduate students. Our most common published material is poetry, prose, visual art, and photography, but we encourage submissions of any work that can be displayed on the printed page. Outside of our annual print issue, we organize gatherings at local art museums and host group readings and film screenings (with free food, of course).

Jackson B., M3

Histones a Cappella

The Histones a Cappella group aims to provide students opportunities to perform music in a collaborative and interprofessional environment and share music with the Washington University community and beyond. We rehearse once a week for 90 minutes with several performances throughout each semester and sing a variety of music, including but not limited to pop, Disney, musical theatre, classics, and science parodies. The Histones is made up of students from WashU Med-affiliated programs and is open to students of various experience levels who love to sing. The Histones provides students with the opportunity to connect with students of other programs, including MD, OT, PT, and PhD, and is a great creative outlet for students!

Duyen B., DBBS GR2

Intramural Sports

I have played on an intramural, three-versus-three basketball team for the past few weeks, and it has been a great time. Spending time with my friends in a team setting has allowed me to get to know them better and have fun in the process. It is also nice to spend time on the Danforth Campus and compete against other members of the WashU community. Outside of basketball, there are a variety of different intramural options that can be competitive or just to have fun!

Jake G., M1

Krebs Cyclers

Krebs Cyclers is a cycling club for graduate students at WashU Med. We organize group rides around St. Louis County, host information sessions on cycling topics such as how to change a tire, and participate as a team each year in Pedal the Cause, which is a fundraising event for cancer research. Pedal the Cause brings thousands of riders from all over Missouri to ride anywhere from 25 to 100 miles. Riders of all experience levels are welcome to join any of our events!

Mackenzie L., M4

Med School Musical

The Med School Musical is an annual musical theater production entirely directed, produced, designed, and performed by students in WashU Med-affiliated programs. Students with any level of previous theater experience (including none!)

rehearse one day per week for several months, with show week in the mid-to-late spring. It's an excellent opportunity to express your creativity, challenge your comfort zones, and tap into your dance, singing, acting, or design skills. It also allows students to meet and connect with others across the WashU Med-affiliated programs, including MD, PT, OT, PhD, and PACS. Recent productions include *Grease*, *Shrek the Musical*, *Addams Family*, *Beauty & the Beast*, and *Legally Blonde*. The 2023-2024 production will be *Little Shop of Horrors*!

Philip F., M3

Medical French

Medical French (MedFrench) organizes lessons in Medical French as well as occasional social events focused on French culture. We welcome French speakers of all levels and backgrounds.

Dan S., M2

Narrative Medicine

Writing will most definitely accompany you on your journey to become a physician, and at WashU Med, we encourage you to continue fostering your written communication skills. In the Narrative Medicine club, you can explore using language to create stories that convey meaning and emotion or just come for the goodies and snacks. Either is okay!

Felicia W., M1

Wilderness Medicine Interest Group

The Wilderness Medicine Interest Group (WMIG) is an awesome opportunity to merge interests in the outdoors and medicine, while also meeting others with a love of the outdoors. The club includes lectures on wilderness medicine topics, organized camping and backpacking trips, and MedWAR, a yearly wilderness medicine competition. During MedWAR, teams of students race to treat actors portraying different wilderness medical scenarios, ranging from snake bites to trauma-induced childbirth. If you are looking to meet like-minded outdoorsy individuals while learning more about practicing medicine in the wild, WMIG is the club for you!

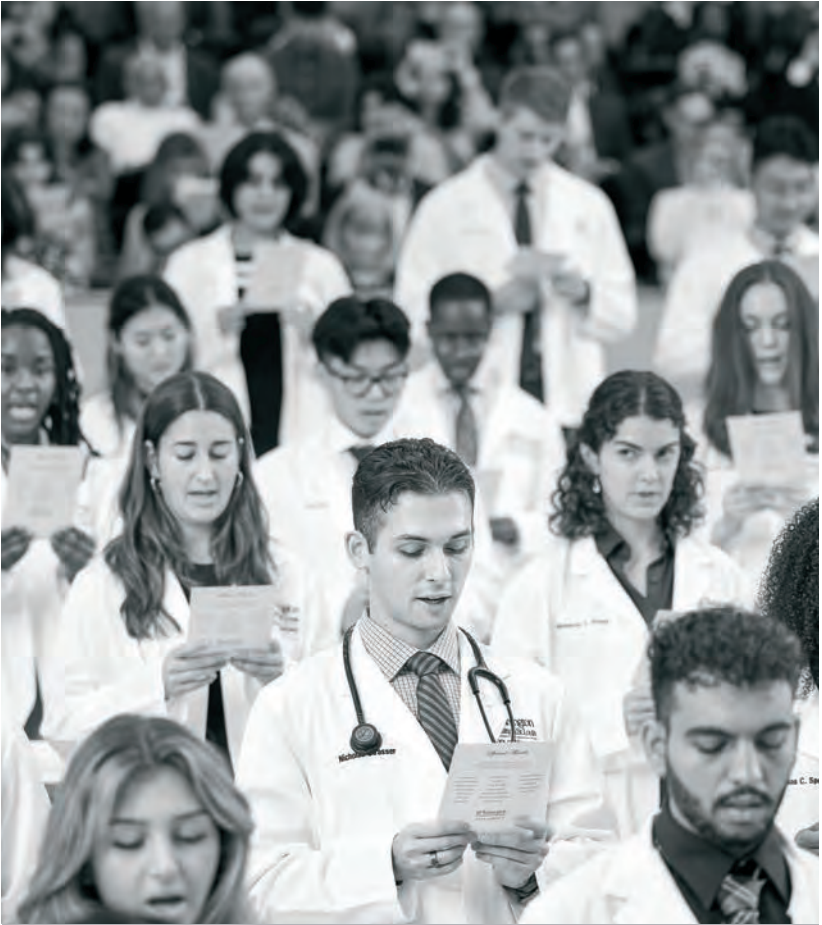
Annabel G., M1

WUSM Mindfulness

WUSM Mindfulness is a collective of students from the allied professional and graduate schools united by a common goal: to create a dedicated space for weekly shared mindfulness meditation practices. Our group welcomes participants from all backgrounds and provides a supportive environment for practicing mindfulness meditation. Through regular practice, our aim is to encourage mindfulness, alleviate stress, and promote comprehensive mental and physical well-being as a part of the daily life of our participants. By fostering mindfulness

and awareness through shared practice, we hope to provide valuable tools to navigate the challenges and emotions of daily life, as well as create a supportive network among graduate and professional students.

Colin M., MSTP G3



Perspectives

Read about the unique perspectives of our diverse student body at WashU Med — including cultural backgrounds, relationships, and interests — and see how they impact our study of medicine.

SECTION EDITORS: ANGIE ANAEME AND ADITYA SANTOKI

Identities

Abstaining from Alcohol

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

Samik P., M1

Being a Disabled Student

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

sions with Career Counseling about how to navigate disclosure in applications, I'm open enough about being disabled to be writing this piece at all, and I'm excited to see what the future holds. Good luck!

Peppar C., M3

Being Asian

I grew up in Hawai'i and then spent college and my gap years in the San Francisco area — both of which were quite populated with Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. Moving to the Midwest was definitely not something I imagined for myself, and I'd be lying if I said I wasn't nervous to live in a place with very few Asian Americans. I was even more apprehensive about not finding Filipino or Southeast Asian communities specifically, given that even Asian American/Asian affinity spaces tend to skew East Asian.

But I'm here to say that I was not only surprised with the Asian American presence in St. Louis and at WashU, but have also managed to find pockets of home and comfort. Pan-Asia Supermarket and Jay International Foods both have a vast array of Asian ingredients from all over Asia. When perusing the Tower Grove Farmers' Market, I found a few Asian-owned food vendors serving comfort foods like samosas and spam musubis. My Filipino friends and I even managed to find an authentic (and yummy) Filipino restaurant with the cutest, most rambunctious titos and titas. Even my apartment building hosted an apartment-wide Diwali event with local catering and good camaraderie. Admittedly, all these examples are of food. But needless to say, Asian and Asian American visibility exists — it's just a matter of seeking it out and integrating with the local community. I hope this helps, and welcome to St. Louis!

NJ M., M1

Being Black

Is it wild to move to a city without knowing much about it? Probably. I feel as though I had an idealistic vision of what my experience would be. When I thought of St. Louis, I thought of a place with an abundance of Black people where I would be able to enjoy this vibrant Black community throughout all spaces.

There is a very diverse community of Black people here with vastly different experiences and perspectives. It's been very refreshing getting to meet them as I was coming into WashU Med. I've loved the opportunities provided by WashU Med and otherwise to learn about and interact with the local community. In knowing St. Louis, you come to better understand the socio-economic disparities largely affecting the Black community and much of the history that has contributed this.

This knowledge of both past and present has made me feel much more empowered as a Black individual in medicine. I'm better able to appreciate the need for Black patients in these communities to see someone who looks like them and who has the education to approach their care with full sensitivity. So much of medicine is focused on having the answers or solutions, but I've come to

realize that we often don't get to fully understand the questions we're attempting to address before we begin to offer remedies. I greatly appreciate WashU Med's intentionality in pushing us to understand our environment from multiple perspectives, including the social aspect, before attempting to provide solutions from a medical point of view. This allows us to develop a habit of truly treating the full human, and I hope I'm able to continue to serve and leave as lasting a mark here in St. Louis as it has left on me.

Anonymous

Being Hispanic/Latinx

As a Puerto Rican born and raised on the island, coming to the mainland U.S. has been an ongoing adaptation process. I did my undergrad in Boston, which has a prominent Latinx population, so I could still find communities that made me feel at home. I was very much afraid that things wouldn't be the same as I was preparing to move to St. Louis. However, I was surprised to find an ever-growing group of Latinx and Spanish-speaking people here. Through the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), I've been able to meet and interact with people as if I were back on the island. What can I say: Nothing can bring people together better than a Bad Bunny playlist.

When it comes to food, you might have to do a little traveling in order to find places that are more authentic. Some of the classics are Mayo Ketchup (Caribbean) and Fritanga (Nicaraguan), which are close to the Central West End. Farther out, there's a couple of places on Cherokee Street and in Maryland Heights where you can eat some great food and shop for Latinx household classics. Yes, there's Goya Adobo. Moreover, there are a variety of Latinx festivals and activities that provide you with a taste of many Latin American cuisines. There are also opportunities for LMSA members to volunteer at these types of activities, allowing us to serve a patient population that is similar to those at home.

Gabriel C. L., M1

Being LGBTQIA+

As a queer South Asian who came out in college, finding a safe and affirming environment was a priority for me when choosing a medical school. While I was initially hesitant about moving to St. Louis, I've honestly been so pleasantly surprised by how welcome I've felt on campus and in the city. From small things like faculty and students wearing inclusive pride flag lanyards to hosting lunch talks for Transgender Awareness Week, WashU has made it clear that they care about their LGBTQIA+ students. Fellow students and faculty are also very approachable and willing to engage in difficult and nuanced conversations, including discussions about recent policies and their implications on the LGBTQIA+ community within and beyond WashU. The LGBTQmed student group has hosted some really fun social events and even surprised our class with cupcakes for National Coming

Out Day. One of the deans also had an OUTMed networking dinner at his house and we got to connect with students across different programs, faculty, and providers over tasty food and drinks!

Outside of campus, St. Louis has a really vibrant queer culture and community. The Grove is a short commute from campus and has some really fun places to go out (I really like Rehab and Handlebar) and get some food! And while I can't speak for everyone, many of my queer classmates and I have talked about feeling safer than we expected while expressing ourselves and our identities in ways that feel most authentic to us throughout our time here so far.

Like many other places, WashU is by no means perfect, and many members of its student body, faculty, and staff are committed to holding the institution accountable and helping it grow in its capacity to support the LGBTQIA+ community at large. I can sincerely say that regardless of the identity you hold or where you are in your coming out journey, we will welcome your authentic self with open arms here.

Karan M., M1

Being Persian

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

Chris B., M1

Being South Asian

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

Mansi G., M1, and Nikita S., M1

Our Furry Friends

Dog Sitting

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

Kenzie B., M1

Having a Dog

My partner and I decided to get a dog the night before my White Coat Ceremony, at the end of my first module of medical school. Was this a good idea? Probably not. Do I regret doing it? Only sometimes. But I like to say that if you're living without regrets, then you aren't being bold enough! Jokes aside, what I can say for sure is that being able to come back from a long day of class to a buddy who's always happy to see you never fails to brighten my day. From one medical student to another, if you're going to get a dog in medical school, I would seriously consider a few things:

1. Do you have enough time to care for a dog? It's a lot of time, not just to train a new dog and care for its basic needs, but also just to watch them so they don't destroy your house. If you're already struggling to find time just for yourself at the end of the day, I would put a lot of thought into this question.
2. Are you financially stable enough to care for a dog? They're expensive, not just initially, but also long-term. Vet visits, food, toys, etc. all add up, and it isn't cheap, so keep that in mind.
3. Will owning a dog severely take away from other areas of your life that you value? Hanging out with friends, studying, and everything in-between gets more difficult when you must consider your canine friend back at home and their needs. Make sure you're taking care of yourself and your needs first, and only then would I consider adding more onto your plate.
4. Do any of these things even matter cause OH MY GOSH that dog I saw on TikTok today was so cute and I JUST HAVE TO HAVE ONE!

In all seriousness, having a dog in medical school is pretty much exactly what you would expect; it's a lot of responsibility and a huge time commitment, but if you manage your time well and understand what comes along with it, then the

experience will be exactly what you make of it! Having a partner or willing friends helps share the workload, and moving your schedule around is not as hard as one may think. Sure, sometimes I have to go home in-between classes to let the dog out or give up an hour of sleep because they got the zoomies at 6 a.m. (-_-), but at the end of the day, if dog ownership is something you value then it's all worth it. I hope this helps anyone considering getting a dog as a medical student. Good luck, and enjoy!

PS: My miniature long-haired Dachshund Boomi is sitting on my lap as I write this.

Cameron M., M1

Nothing beats the heartwarming, joyous feeling of coming home to my dogs greeting me with pure joy on their little faces. I'm unapologetically and deeply obsessed with my pups, and they've been such an amazing source of comfort and emotional support during many highs and lows of my life (including medical school). I love that even on days when I'm knee-deep in studying, my dogs give me a reason to take a break, leave the house, and go for a walk. St. Louis is an incredibly dog-friendly city, and there are a ton of restaurants, breweries, and cafés with dog-friendly patios. I've also been able to volunteer as a foster with several amazing rescue organizations around the city, which is a great way to care for a dog in need for a few weeks at a time.

Jiwon Y., M1

Having a Pet Fish

Being from Florida, the ocean, everglades, and canals have been a part of my daily life. After moving to the Midwest, I began to miss the comfort of water. To make myself feel better, I got a pet betta fish named Grapefruit (inspired by my love of grapefruit boba)! A fish is an easy and fun pet to have in medical school, and I would definitely recommend it.

Natalia A., M1

Having Cat(s)

I adopted my cat (Casanova, Cass for short) back in 2020 during the pandemic from the Humane Society in St. Louis, and he's my favorite little guy (a.k.a. emotional support animal) to have around when I'm studying! I'm super lucky in that he's friendly with new people and is great about traveling. If you're worried about being a first-time cat owner, cats are extremely low-maintenance and very easy to take care of, and this is coming from a first-time pet owner! If you're interested in adoption or fostering, there are several shelters and cat cafes within St. Louis that would love to have you! Several students within the WashU Med community also foster cats, and Catnips, a student group, provides support and volunteer opportunities for cat foster parents and cat lovers.

Cynthia C., M1

It's really easy to have cats as a medical student here. The low living expense in St. Louis means I can afford a bigger space for my two cats. If you're looking to adopt, fostering is a great way to help the community and bond with your potential forever cats; all up-to-date vet care is included in a reasonable adoption fee. There are several shelters close by as well as cat cafes where my friend adopted her cat.

Truc P., M1

Relationships

Being in a Long-Distance Relationship

First, I want to say that every relationship is different, and the boundaries and expectations set within your own relationships as you enter medical school are for you and your partner to decide. With that being said, being in a long-distance relationship is not the easiest thing for me, and it requires a lot of open communication and intentional scheduling. I'm blessed to have a partner who respects me and my goals and understands the support I need while undergoing this huge life transition. In the beginning, that support came in the form of understanding that I may allocate time away from him and toward adjusting to the academic and mental demands of school or fostering new support systems. Or it comes in the form of being realistic with our expectations of one another given our respective busy schedules and the time difference. But because of all of this, the time we do reserve for one another has become all the more precious. We try to carve out a block of undisturbed time for each other each week and fill it with things like cooking meals together over FaceTime, building Lego plants, or watching a show on Netflix Party. Having a long-distance partner is most definitely doable and the flexibility of our Phase One schedule has given me more opportunities to visit him than I expected. Though few and far between, these moments of reunion have carried me through medical school thus far. Regardless of where in the world he may be, to have a partner that can motivate and comfort me when school begins to feel overwhelming makes it all worth it. (Plus it's nice having someone to call and update on all the new characters and plots in my life).

NJ M., 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 friend’s matches, match with a previous date’s roommate(s), or run into previous dates in coffee shops and restaurants. These are all real possibilities; I speak from experience.

If dating is not a priority for you starting out school — you’ll be fine. Although it may seem that everyone is in a long-term relationship, engaged, or married, don’t feel pressured to date just because everyone else is! It’s not research or volunteering; residency programs won’t axe you for being unlovable, trust me. We are all adults here (or at least kids with adult responsibilities), so you won’t miss out on anything really because you’re single. If anything, it frees you up to get to know all your classmates, go on trips, and live your best independent life!

Carolyn C. & friends, M2

Dating Someone in Your Medical School

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

Tim H., M3

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., M2

Religion and Spirituality

Being Christian

Since coming to WashU, I've found many wonderful opportunities for Christian community both in and outside the medical school. At WashU, I've enjoyed going to the Christian Medical Association (CMA)'s weekly gatherings, where we hear physicians and other health care professionals share about their journeys and how their faith relates to medicine. It's always a warm and encouraging space. The group includes students from OT, PT, and Social Work programs as well, which I appreciate. I've also attended some very stimulating dinner discussions through the Carver Project, which fosters dialogue around contemporary issues. Outside of WashU, there are many good churches of various denominations that students can plug into. A couple of classmates and I visited churches together at the start of the school year which was a lot of fun. Committing to a local church community has been a great way to meet people from the broader St. Louis community as well. Amidst the stress of medical school, it's been good to be immersed in rhythms of rest and worship, prayer and breaking bread, laughter, learning, and service.

Nancy J., M1

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 at 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 (CWE) 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, WashU Med 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., M2

Being Muslim

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

Aseeyah I., M4

The Medical School Journey

Being a First-Generation Student

Navigating medical school (and higher education in general) as a first-generation student definitely has its obstacles, but WashU Med does its best to provide as many valuable resources as possible. My coach has been super helpful, and it's been especially meaningful to have a physician who has a lot of shared life experiences as a role model and mentor whom I can always go to for advice. We're also currently working on forming a First-Gen group, and there's been a First-Gen Students dinner, so there's a small community here that is looking to support other first-generation students. It's also been super helpful to connect with older medical students through experiences like Clinical Mentorship, because they're also

super happy to give you any advice that'll help you through understanding the “hidden curriculum” of medical school. Overall, there's a wide variety of resources and ways to find mentors, and there's no shortage of people at WashU Med who are super happy to give you advice and help you navigate medical school as a first-gen student!

Aya A., M1

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

Tim H., M3

Being a Younger Student

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

Chris B., M1

Being an International Student

Being an international medical student in St. Louis has been an immensely enriching experience for me. The city itself offers a vibrant and diverse community where I've had the privilege of interacting with people from all corners of the globe. From the mosaicism of languages here in a local game of intramural soccer to finding my own community as a Moroccan immigrant, St. Louis truly feels like a city of immigration where anyone can find their place.

WashU, as a renowned medical institution, attracts not only exceptional talent but also an incredible array of individuals from various cultures and backgrounds. My journey here has allowed me to forge friendships with faculty, fellow medical students, and exchange students hailing from all around the world. Learning from their pathways to medicine has been of great value to me, offering diverse insights that have enriched my own educational experience. Whether one's interests lie in global health opportunities or simply gaining a broader understanding of health care from different angles, the WashU Med community is welcoming and supportive. While adjusting to a new health care system and a different culture has its challenges, the unwavering support of our community has made this journey not only manageable but also rewarding. St. Louis has become a second home, and the warmth of people I've met here has made my medical education a truly fulfilling one.

Adam B., M1

Being Involved in Extracurriculars

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

Joshua L., M1

Coming from a Large State School

I've been going to public schools for my entire life, from way back in grade school to that large West Coast public undergrad institution that's way better than our rivals across town. And while I loved my undergrad experience, going to a large public school did come with a lot of challenges. While navigating the pre-med years, my school did not have a pre-medical counselor or office that I could consult directly for advice. I had to go out of my way to make relationships with professors for possible recommendation letters down the line, it was difficult to stand out in classes of 350 students, and there were times when the class atmosphere was a bit too intense for my liking. Getting support services from university resources could sometimes feel like waiting for your number to get called at the DMV. With all that being said, it's been such a pleasant and welcome change coming here to WashU Med! With a class of 124, it's so easy to get to know faculty and deans and begin to form some valuable networks. We have so many resources at our disposal as medical students, from health services to financial counseling to student wellness to career advice. And with many of the deans knowing us students by name and on an individual basis, asking questions and getting support from many aspects of WashU Med feels not only easy but welcomed! Having this plethora of resources and being this individually cared for as a medical student is a huge perk of this place for me, made all the sweeter coming from my dear old public undergrad.

Amy P., M1

Coming from a Non-Ivy League School

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

Sydney W., M1

Coming from a Smaller School

Coming from a small school is understandably intimidating, as many of your classmates may have come from larger, more well-known institutions. I came from the University of North Florida, a lesser-known state school in Jacksonville, Fla. While I was not particularly concerned with how the administration would perceive me in class (I thought, “They did pick me, after all”), I was concerned about how my peers might perceive me. Thankfully, it took less than five minutes on campus to see how welcoming everyone was.

Once you’re at WashU Med, people don’t care about your MCAT score or what school you came from. Everyone knows that each student worked tooth and nail to get where they are. We all want to see each other succeed, regardless of how we got here. So, if you’ve come from a small school, rest assured that it will not impact your time here at WashU Med.

Nicholas S., M1

Coming Straight from Undergrad

Having graduated in the early summer, I wondered if I would burn out going straight through to medical school. But, with the comparatively long summer WashU Med offers, I felt energized and ready to go when school started. Medical school will almost certainly be more different than undergrad, but without a gap year, the adjustment will probably be less drastic. Just keep in mind that some of your classmates will have some cool life experiences, so listen when you can so you don’t miss out on all the cool stories around you.

Chris B., M1

Taking Gap Years

I took 1.5 gap years before coming to WashU Med. Having this gap between undergrad and medical school was useful for so many reasons. I worked two different clinical jobs during this time — one in a large hospital and one in a small

neighborhood clinic — and gained a lot of valuable experience that I've been able to use while I've been here at WashU Med. Coming from a non-medical family, this exposure was incredibly helpful in breaking down the learning curve of the medical field's complicated hierarchies, systems, and jargon that I had not been exposed to before. Most importantly, having a full-time job let me save plenty of money for my medical school living expenses. I also lived in my undergrad apartment for half of the gap year and at home with my family for the other half. Outside of my work shifts, I was free to spend quality time with my friends and family without the burden of academics. Knowing the long academic journey I'm about to undertake as a medical student, I value my gap year experience even more and am so thankful I gave myself that break.

Idoia D., M1

Where We've Been

Being from a Big City

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

Nancy J., M1

Being from a Rural Area

I was born and raised on a family farm in rural Iowa and attended a small college not too far from where I grew up. After spending a gap year in Philadelphia before moving to St. Louis, I can say that it is extremely easy to escape from "city life" here and get to a place with a lot more space, and this is even more true if you have a vehicle. St. Louis is certainly still a city, but I feel as if I have more space to myself here than I did during my gap year in Philadelphia. Forest Park is just a short walk away from where I'm living in the Central West End, and it's a great place to take a quick stroll to decompress. I still have not been able to explore everything it has to offer. Additionally, there are a lot of great nature trails right outside of the city that you can drive to on the weekend that are worth the adventure.

Caleb L., M1

Being from St. Louis

Like many people who grew up in St. Louis, I was raised with a strong sense of city pride. I've always been an ardent Cardinals fan and a staunch defender of Provel cheese. I can rattle off a long list of influential people who spent at least some of their formative years in St. Louis. Still, I did not fully appreciate what the city had to offer in terms of lifestyle until I moved back a few months ago. After relocating to Chicago for undergrad and staying during my gap years, I worried about readjusting to life in a smaller city. While I was excited about being closer to my family, I had never fully experienced St. Louis as an adult. Since moving back, however, I have a newfound appreciation for St. Louis's abundance of free and affordable things to do. I love being able to make plans on a whim without worrying too much about logistics like cost or parking. On any given Saturday, I might go for a bike ride through Forest Park, enjoy a picnic on Art Hill, go out with friends in The Grove, or enjoy some live music on Cherokee Street. It's been a lot of fun showing my classmates around the city. In the process, I've also been rediscovering just what makes St. Louis so great.

Jasen J., M1

Being from the East Coast

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

Kavya P., M1

Being from the Midwest

I spent my childhood on both sides of Missouri, growing up in St. Louis through elementary school and later moving to Kansas City where my family still lives. I then went to college in Philadelphia, and although university provided me many deeply formative experiences in a different part of the country, I'm incredibly excited to be back in Missouri for medical school. One of the greatest advantages

of living in the Midwest again is how much easier it is for me to visit my family and vice versa due to the decreased travel time and cost, and I'm so grateful to have such increased accessibility to my support network. St. Louis has all the friendliness of the Midwest combined with a wealth of activities and a rich culture to tap into. Whatever you're looking for, whether nightlife, sports, concerts, historical sites, or restaurants, you can find all of this and more! I also appreciate that all four seasons are divided equally throughout the year to help mark the passage of time, which I sorely missed in Philadelphia. St. Louis boasts beautiful fall colors, snow in the winter, rainstorms and dogwood blossoms in the spring, and good old Missouri humidity in the summer. I could not be happier to be spending the next four years in what feels like a home away from home!

Pallavi J., M1

Being from the Mountain West

I'm from a suburb of Denver, Colo., and I went to WashU for undergrad and now medical school. In my time in St. Louis, I've discovered two truths: First, Missouri is not going to have the same astonishing natural splendor as the Rockies, and second, Missouri is still lovely. It has its own flora, fauna, and lush beauty that are fun to explore. The state is hilly and woodsy. There are things I can see in Missouri that I can't get in the Rockies (like lots of water!), and there are still areas of forests and green space that make me feel a little more at home. Some of my favorite ways to get outside in Missouri include biking, walking, and running in Forest Park, hiking in Missouri's many state parks, and finding lakes to swim and boat in when it's warm. WashU Med also has dedicated groups to help you get outside including a cycling group, hiking group, and rock climbing group. One note about going outside in Missouri: Don't forget your bug spray!

Anna D., M1

Being from the Non-Continental U.S.: Hawai'i

Whenever I tell people I'm from Hawai'i, they're absolutely astonished that I left my home to come to the Midwest. And while I do miss the beaches and year-round warmth, what I miss the most is the people. Maui is a small island community — one where everyone looks out for one another and treats each other with kindness and care. And in my short time in St. Louis, I've experienced that same kindness and Midwestern charm in many of the people I've met thus far. I'm a SUCKER for community and most of my interactions with local St. Louisans, whether it be the front desk people in my apartment or baristas in local coffee shops, have been nothing short of lovely.

Aside from the people, I love experiencing the seasons. Fall is such a foreign concept to me and seeing the leaves turn shades of red and orange all around Forest Park was so beautiful — even my parents frolicked through the fallen leaves when they visited for White Coat weekend. Another foreign concept to me is the cold. Word of advice if you're also coming from Hawai'i (or anywhere that doesn't

get lower than 55 degrees): Learn to layer, get a coat, get some good footwear, maybe invest in some Uniqlo Heattech. Especially since our classrooms are already an arctic tundra.

One thing I do NOT miss about home (and California, where I spent my college and gap years), is the high cost of living. A gallon of gas for less than \$3 is unheard of there and my rent here is very affordable given the size of my apartment. This was a big pull for me and knowing I can remain financially stable has alleviated so much mental burden.

Overall, I'm thoroughly enjoying my time in St. Louis, and if you're anything like me, you'll learn to find home and foster community regardless of where you are.

NJ M., M1

Being from the South

I grew up on my family's flower farm outside of Bowling Green, Kentucky, and attended the University of Mississippi for undergrad (Hotty Toddy!). I'm a life-long southerner, so I was nervous to make the move to the Midwest, but I've found that most everything I love about the South I've also been able to find here in St. Louis. In the Midwest, the accents are a little different, but the kindness and hospitality that I've grown up with are definitely present in St. Louis. There are also several other students that hail from or attended school in the Southeast, so there are plenty of people who share my cultural experiences, interest in SEC football, and can commiserate about the cold weather (I'd recommend buying a hat and gloves). Although I miss my regional southern chains (Zaxbys, Kroger) and southern fare, I've loved discovering some of the great restaurants and activities St. Louis has to offer.

Sydney W., M1

Being from the West Coast

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

Laith F., M1



M1s at the Missouri Botanical Garden during Orientation Week.



M1s weekend brunch. From left, Madeleine Y., Alex M., Darby L., Annabel G., Alex C., Katherine L., Julia P., Sophia T.



Weekend trip to Nashville. Back: Nick B., Cole D., Mackenzie B., Annabel G.. Front: Julia P.



Roadtripping to Nashville. From left, Chris B., Oliver F., Mitch M.



M1s attend the annual AMWA Red Dress Gala. From left, Adam B., Todd S., Chris B., Nick B., Jake J.



M1s attend the annual AMWA Red Dress Gala. From left, Anna D., Cynthia C., Liz B., Amy P.



M1s after the White Coat Ceremony.



Housing

Lions and tigers and bears, oh my! Moving can be daunting and fraught with many choices. Find valuable housing information that can help make the transition a little bit easier.

SECTION EDITORS: KAMAL KOLLURI AND ANNA YANG

Apartment Complexes

Aventura

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

Price range: \$1500+ for a one-bedroom, \$1,800+ for a two-bedroom, 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, valet trash, and recycling service

Pet policy: Pets allowed for extra \$25/month rent, plus \$150 one-time fee and \$200 pet deposit, weight limit on dogs. Dogs (over 40 lbs.) are welcome on the first floor only. Very pet friendly; there's a dog park right next to the complex!

Parking: Free gated parking for residents, covered carports available for \$50/month extra (the ports are only covered on top). There are always enough parking spots, but you might need to park further away when late at night. Guests can street park outside the complex.

Commute to class: ~10-minute walk to campus. The door right next to the Home2 Suite hotel can be accessed with a passcode and is the shortest path to campus.

About: Aventura proves to be an excellent residence for WashU Med students, situated conveniently south of campus near The Grove area, which has a lot of bars and restaurants. The management team is excellent. Whenever you put in a request, it should be resolved in a day or two. If it is an emergency, someone will still come in at night and fix it for you. There is a dog park, swimming pool, a small gym, and an outdoor area to hang out and grill. The gym is small but nice when you don't want to walk to the Core. The Chouteau Park, right next to the complex, offers nice outdoor basketball courts and green spaces. The building is recently renovated and really new, so you don't need to worry about bug infestation problems. The units are spacious and come with all the amenities you need. The outdoor patio space is a great place to relax after a day of work. One downside of the building is that there is no elevator, so if you live on the third floor, moving days can be tough! I think a lot of residents and M2-M4s live here too, showcasing the convenience factor of Aventura.

Ze O., M1

Gateway Lofts

Address: 4400 Manchester Ave.

Rent: ~ \$1025-\$1325 for a studio (one- and two-bedroom units also available)

Parking: Garage and lot parking are available

Amenities: Balconies with each unit, newly built, gym

Pet policy: Allowed, but will require an additional pet deposit and monthly fee

Commute to campus: Five-minute drive, <20-minute walk

About: When I was deciding where to live, I didn't hear much about The Grove area. I ended up visiting St. Louis during the summer to tour a few apartments, and

stumbled across my current building: Gateway Lofts. The apartment complex is a newer building with a garage and parking lot, which was a priority for me bringing my car from home. It also has an updated gym, which is great for working out early mornings or late nights. Additionally, each unit has a balcony large enough for a few chairs which is great to enjoy coffee in the morning. The apartment is pretty quiet, but the street can be a little noisy at night. Other than that, it's a great place to live!

Alex C., M1

Marlowe

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

Rent: \$1,600-\$2,300 for a studio/one-bedroom

Amenities: Garage parking, bike storage, in-unit washer/dryer, central AC/heating, gym, study rooms, shared lounge spaces, shared outdoor grills and patio, pool and hot tub, Wifi included in rent, free fancy coffee machine in the lobby

Pet policy: Pets allowed (for a fee)

Commute to campus: 10 minutes walking

About: I live in a studio apartment in Marlowe and really enjoy living there. The entire building was built around five years ago so everything in the building is nearly brand new, and the property management company is super responsive. You definitely pay a premium to be in a new building so close to campus, but the amenities are all really nice and make it worth it for some. Especially at the beginning of the fall semester, having a pool and outdoor spaces to study was really nice, and the shared grills and common spaces are nice for having guests over. My apartment itself has a nice layout, but for what I am paying I definitely could have more space elsewhere so there is a trade-off. Overall, if it is in your budget, I would definitely consider living in Marlowe!

Annabel G., M1

Metropolitan Flats

Address: 4535 Forest Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63108

Price range: \$1500+ for a one-bedroom, \$1,800+ for a two-bedroom, utilities not included

Amenities: In-unit laundry, bike storage (free), wood flooring, ensuite bathroom, air-conditioning, smart thermostats, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, trash, gym, coffee, concierges/front-desk, security/keyfob or keycard access, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, communal events, communal space, conference room, dog park, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, elevators, handicap accessible

Pet policy: Two pets per apartment unless authorized in writing. There is a one-time, non-refundable pet fee of \$300. There is monthly pet rent of \$25 per pet each month.

Parking: \$150/month for standard vehicles, \$175/month for electric vehicles

Commute to class: Five-10 minutes walking

About: Metropolitan Flats is in the Central West End and directly across Forest Park from campus! The walk to class is only five-to-eight minutes, so the location is incredibly convenient. The apartment amenities are great with a dog park, free coffee bar, gym, updated appliances, and in-unit laundry. The parking garage is underground with a fob-access garage door, so I never have to worry about my car. Additionally, the manager and maintenance team are incredibly kind and go out of their way to help! The rent is on the upper end of what is available in the area, but the amenities and location are worth it.

Mary Kate F., M1

Montclair on the Park

Address: 18 S. Kingshighway Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108

Price range: \$1,400-\$2,000 for a one-bedroom, one-bathroom

Amenities: Communal laundry (extra charge), wood flooring, ensuite bathroom, 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

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

Parking: Extra charge

Commute to campus: 10-15-minute walk to campus

About: I live in a one-bedroom apartment at Montclair on the Park and have enjoyed it so far! The location in the Central West End is great; it's a 10-15-minute walk to campus, and Forest Park is right across the street. The room itself is spacious, well-lit, and was recently renovated. The apartment has a beautiful rooftop, a shared laundry room, a fitness center, a concierge, and a lounge area. The property management company managing Montclair also puts on a couple of monthly events with free food and drinks, which is a great perk. Although you're paying a bit more to rent at Montclair, I think the price is well worth it for the location, amenities, and resident services.

Hannah N., M1

Parc Frontenac

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

Rent: \$1200-\$1600 for studio and one-bedroom

Parking: \$85-\$125 (garage, covered)

Amenities: Communal laundry (\$1.75 for wash, \$0.25/10 min of drying), free bike storage and air station, standard kitchen appliances, hardwood floors, 24/7 concierge service w/ packaging, dog washing station, outdoor grills, apartment community events, elevators, free coffee, tons of cute pets always saying hi, amazing rooftop

Pet policy: Dog/cat friendly (\$50/pet)

Commute to campus: Five-10 minutes walking

About: I really enjoy living in Parc, much more than I had expected! While I'm personally not very particular about my living situation, I've come to really appreciate the nice aspects of Parc, and have not had many issues. My neighbors are all quiet, the amenities are high quality, maintenance is relatively responsive (typically fewer than three days), and the front desk staff are all very kind and welcoming.

In terms of the location, we have a great commute to campus from Parc as it's just far enough to get a small walk in the morning, but not so far that I'm dreading getting to class. It's also perfectly situated from everything else in the Central West End, whether you want a hot bowl of pho from Saigon Kitchen, a classy cocktail at Brennan's, or some fantastic ice cream from Clementine's. Lastly, I think that the best aspect of living in Parc is how close I wound up being to everyone else in my class. All of my best friends are within a five-minute walk so I can see them whenever I want, but I still have enough privacy and space to do my own thing if I need some time to myself.

Some of the downsides include that gas utilities are shared which can feel unfair (around \$50/month/person), the apartment can feel dated sometimes, overhead lights are not always present in bedrooms, and people have had hit-or-miss experiences with maintenance.

While the price isn't the cheapest, Parc is one of the more economical options around the Central West End and I've had no qualms about living here whatsoever. If I had to make the decision again, I'd choose Parc in a heartbeat and I am considering living here for my second year as well!

Jake J., M1

Residences at Forest Park

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

Rent: \$1,600-\$2,000 for a one-bedroom, one-bathroom

Parking: Garage and lot parking are available with extra charge

Amenities: In-unit laundry, storage unit (extra charge), air conditioning, heating, kitchen appliances (fridge, oven, microwave), dishwasher, gym, vending machines, coffee, maintenance, mail room, package lockers, communal events, communal space, dog park, outdoor communal area, outdoor grills, elevators

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

Commute to campus: 10-20-minute walk

About: Overall, living at the Residences in the Central West End has been a fantastic experience! It is located directly across from the Shake Shack/Whole Foods on Euclid, only an eight-to-10-minute walk from campus. The building itself is gorgeous and has plenty of great amenities including a decently-sized gym, dog park, pool table, fireplace lounge, and free coffee in the lobby. I live in a two-bedroom, two-bathroom, and I really enjoy my unit. The floorplans are spacious, have large windows, and orient the bedrooms on opposite sides of the common living space, which I really like. There is also an in-unit washer/dryer, an underrated luxury!

Christopher S., M1

The Core Apartment Residences

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

Price range: ~\$900-\$1300 for studio/one-bedroom units, two-bedroom units available but less common, utilities included in rent

Pet policy: One pet (under 25 lbs.) allowed in 718 units; \$200 deposit plus \$100 fee, \$20/month

Amenities: Fully furnished (including in-unit washer, dryer, and Smart TV), access to Core gym, cable, internet, game room, common kitchens and study rooms, rooftop, patio areas, and secure package receiving

Parking: Clayton Garage (\$84/month), 818 lot (\$92/month)

Commute to class: Less than a five-minute walk

About: The Core is a great place to live if you want a short commute to class, easy access to Forest Park, and a modern apartment space. There is a great sense of community amongst the Core residents since many are also medical students or affiliated with WashU Med. Moving into a furnished apartment made the move from out-of-state a lot easier. The staff are super friendly and helpful, and the place is well maintained. Overall, the Core is a good option for those looking for a convenient apartment.

Jessica R., M1

Living Arrangements

Buying a Condo

After I made my decision to go to medical school, my mom decided it would be a good investment to buy an apartment where I went. WashU Med was perfect as the housing prices aren't ridiculous, but the areas around Washington University Medical Campus are increasing in popularity each year. We found a great realtor in the area through recommendations from family friends and toured condos during the weekend of Second Look. Our realtor knew the ins and outs of the neighborhoods in St. Louis, as well as which condo associations were better than others. Thankfully, we found one that fit both our budget and my vision for my space! Because I know I will be here for at least four years, I painted the entire condo and did some home renovations in August before school started which was a great learning experience for me! With owning, I do have to deal with general maintenance and problems that arise with the condo. So far, I have found some great maintenance people in the area who are super affordable and kind (happy to give recommendations). Being a part of an HOA is great, as I don't have to worry about trash, water, landscaping, snow removal, or parking. Both my neighbors in my building are physicians, and we all do our best to help each other out when we can. Having a condo usually means you have more space than renting and usually nicer appliances. In

my two-bedroom, two-bathroom condo, I have a newly renovated kitchen, office, dining room, living room, and deck! I absolutely love my space, hosting friends for big events, and making it feel like a real home!

Kenzie B., M1

Finding a Roommate

Going into medical school, I went back and forth about whether to live with a roommate. I really enjoyed the friendships I developed with my college roommates, but I did not know anyone in our incoming class beforehand. Ultimately, I decided to try to find a roommate to have some additional company and keep housing costs down. The upper-class WashU Med students were super helpful and provided a spreadsheet that included information about different neighborhoods and apartment complexes near WashU Med, as well as a section where incoming students could share their contact information and what they were seeking in a roommate. I ended up reaching out to several students from my class over the summer and used FaceTime with my eventual roommate before we agreed to live together. It is OK to be selective when choosing your roommate to ensure that you are a good match. Even if you do not end up living with someone that you talk with over the summer, it's still a great way to meet your future classmates and friends. Having a roommate has been great for me (so far) and if you are considering it, I highly recommend just going for it because at the end of the day your class is going to be full of smart, motivated, and interesting people!

Oliver F., M1

Finding Affordable Housing

You might hear that the Central West End (CWE) is expensive when you visit St. Louis. That may be the case for some apartment complexes, but it is possible to find affordable apartments if you're willing to do a little bit more work. I live on McPherson Ave in the CWE, just an eight-minute bike ride to campus, and I pay half the price for an entire condo unit (including a porch, shared swimming pool, and indoor parking) as many of my classmates pay for a studio. The best way to find these good deals is to talk to current students looking for roommates or renting out their places. Another option is to walk down the street in CWE, look for "for rent" signs, and call the phone numbers mentioned. One disadvantage of this kind of search is that these places are often not listed online, so you can't read reviews of the realtors associated with them, which can feel suspicious. However, if you reach out to current students and do appropriate research on the place before you sign the contract, you'll find that this process is not as daunting and complicated as it seems!

Melody N., M1

Living With a Medical Student

Living with another medical student has been nothing short of fantastic. Not only was it nice to have a familiar face on the first day of class, but it has continually been nice to have someone on the same schedule as me. We are able to share tips and tricks very readily and consistently remind each other of important deadlines coming up. I highly recommend living with a classmate. #Moliver4ever

Mitch M., M1

Living with a Non-Medical Student

At first, I was nervous about living with a non-medical student because I thought it would impact my ability to form a community with my peers in medical school. However, I have found that I have been able to form an even larger circle because of the fact that my roommate is a second-year PhD student at WashU. Not only have I been introduced to my roommate's friends, but it is also comforting to have a separation between my work and living environment. Since my roommate knows nothing about medicine, we have very few conversations about the topic, which is refreshing after spending most of my time surrounded by it. I would definitely recommend finding a roommate outside of medical school if you have any interest in it!

Natalia A., M1

Renting for the First Time

As one of the medical students that came straight from undergrad, I never had to rent before. I was a little worried about this experience, but luckily finding apartments in St. Louis was fairly easy. My first step: looking at the Dis-O Guide. The Dis-O Guide is a one-stop shop for all things housing. Prior to deciding on my current apartment complex, I read the entire housing section, which not only helped me get an overview of the main apartments that other medical students stay in but also gain an understanding of what to look for in an apartment (i.e. gated parking, mail rooms/package lockers, maintenance services). Being in school while also looking for apartments, I was unable to travel to St. Louis to check apartments in-person. I contacted each of the apartment complexes I was interested in to request a virtual tour. Ideally, in-person is always the best route before signing a lease; however, the apartment complexes are pretty considerate of medical students that may have to sign their lease before moving to the city. From there, the leasing papers are quite straight-forward, although I would recommend getting a second pair of eyes to read over the agreement to ensure that everything checks out. There are medical students at almost every apartment complex you will be considering, so we are happy to help facilitate any first-time renting questions you may not feel comfortable asking the complexes themselves.

Joshua L., M1

Neighborhoods

Central West End (CWE)

As someone who has spent the first half of M1 without a car, I have found the Central West End (CWE) to be a great location to live given its proximity to the Washington University Medical Campus, as well as its proximity to Forest Park, grocery stores such as Whole Foods, and small coffee shops and restaurants throughout the area. Living in the CWE is generally more expensive than other areas of St. Louis, but there are a wide range of housing options to accommodate your needs and circumstances. Having so many things within walking distance has been a great convenience personally. Many of my classmates live in the CWE, both with and without roommates, and have enjoyed their experience as well!

Katherine L., M1

Maplewood/Richmond Heights

When choosing where to live, it can often feel like a choice between “Central West End” and “everywhere else.” For me, I wanted to strike the best possible balance between cost, safety, and niceness, which is how I settled in the Maplewood/Richmond Heights area. Located no more than 10 minutes west of the Medical Campus, I’ve found the area to be a great way to decompress from school life. Much of the area is residential, meaning you’ll likely live in a smaller complex with more greenery compared to high-rises. You will have to drive to campus, which has associated gas and parking costs, but I find the commute completely reasonable. For instance, my place is 10 minutes from campus, five minutes from most stores like Walmart or Costco, and five minutes from the Danforth gym.

Cost-wise, I had found several nice, ~500 sq. ft. apartments in the \$950-\$1050 range, which is very reasonable in today’s market. Plus, when dealing with landlords managing 10 units instead of 200, you often get better service (mileage may vary). One additional thing to consider is the fact that you are away from a lot of the “action.” You can’t exactly walk home from your favorite club on a Tuesday night, so ensure you are okay with being slightly separate from all the controlled chaos!

Nicholas S., M1

Skinker/DeBaliviere

DeBaliviere is a cute, safe, residential neighborhood just north of Forest Park. Most of the people who live here are graduate students or young professionals, so it’s a great spot to be if you don’t want to live directly in Central West End (and want to pay a lot less for rent/have free parking). It takes me about 12 minutes to get to campus either by bike through Forest Park or by taking the MetroLink (light rail) one stop. Since the apartments are more residential, they are huge, have lots of character, and are a great place to host a big group of friends. I also love being able to walk five minutes and be in Forest Park.

Kenzie B., M1

The Grove

The Grove is a neighborhood north of Tower Grove and just south of the Medical Campus. Living in this area is great if you love being in the center of activities and nightlife. There are so many great restaurants, coffee shops, and bars on Manchester Avenue, within walking distance. The culture in The Grove is laid back and queer-friendly, with lots of young professionals. My favorite spots on the weekend are Gramophone for a late-night snack, Handlebar, Just Johns, and Rehab to dance! Restaurants are diverse and delicious, with Creole With a Splash of Soul, Sameem Afghan Restaurant, and Grace Meat + Three as local favorites. There are also always events held on Manchester Avenue, like the Urban Chestnut Brewing Company Oktoberfest. There are different living options, including apartments, townhouses, and condos all in the area with many budget-friendly options! Depending on your exact location, you can walk to campus most days, and it takes me less than 20 minutes from my door to the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center on campus. If you are looking for a lively, close but removed place to live, The Grove may be for you!

Alex C., M1



Life in St. Louis

Discover all that WashU and St. Louis have to offer.

SECTION EDITORS: DARBY LE AND KARAN MIRPURI

Attractions

Art Hill

Art Hill is a really cool spot in Forest Park, one of my favorites for picnics and sitting next to the giant statue of Saint Louis himself (King Louis IX of France, namesake of the city). At its summit is the Saint Louis Art Museum, a great place to spend an afternoon regardless of your artistic knowledge, given that it has both historical and contemporary art. There are also a lot of free events and concerts such as the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's annual free Forest Park Concert, which happens every September at Art Hill.

Eshan S., M1

Eckert's Farm

Ever heard of apples? Well, you won't get enough of them at Eckert's! There are three locations in southern Illinois. They all provide a peak setting for fall she-nanigans with the homies. For \$7, you get to ride a wagon to the apple orchards and the pumpkin patch, where you can pick as many as your arms can carry. The sights are beautiful and the experience of finding the perfect apples is second only to having zero Anki cards due. There are also many spots for cutesy pictures if you're not into the whole apple-picking business. If not for anything else, going is worth it just to get away from the Central West End!

Gabriel C. L., M1

Forest Park

For those fond of spending time outdoors, you're in luck because the Washington University Medical Campus sits right next to Forest Park, one of the largest urban parks in the U.S.! This beautiful space is filled with miles of pedestrian and bike paths and plenty of spots to sit and take in the scenery. It's also home to the Saint Louis Art Museum, Science Center, Zoo, and Missouri History Museum, which are all free to enter, and The Muny, which hosts outdoor musicals. If you're ever looking for something to do within walking distance, Forest Park is a great option!

Jessica R., M1

Left Bank Books

Left Bank Books, which was founded by a group of WashU graduate students, is the oldest independent bookstore in St. Louis, with the mission to promote "literacy and justice for all." Nestled right next to Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, it has everything you could want in a bookstore: stacks and stacks of new books, used books, a resident cat named Orleans, and an abundance of non-book things like postcards, tote bags, mugs, and shirts. It's both roomy and cozy, a great place to go with friends or go alone to clear your head, browse, and escape for a little bit.

Elika N., M1

Missouri Botanical Garden

If you're looking for an opportunity to take a nice long walk in nature or a spot for some great photo ops, the Missouri Botanical Garden is definitely the place for you! It features a ton of plants both native to St. Louis and from places around the world, and it includes a greenhouse (Climatron) and a sensory garden with plenty of smells, textures, and even tastes for all to sample! I would also highly recommend checking out the Children's Garden which is fun for all ages. The Missouri Botanical Garden also hosts the Garden Glow every winter season, during which a ton of beautiful holiday lights are placed around the garden that are a must-see! The Botanical Garden is honestly huge and will probably take multiple days if you want to see the whole thing, so it's an ideal spot for a cute date, a fun getaway with family or friends, or just a relaxing day to feed the ducks and fish.

Karan M., M1

Saint Louis Art Museum

The Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) is located in the heart of historic Forest Park and faces a beautiful and expansive grassy slope perfect for picnics. Admission is free and there are free or paid parking options available. This three-story building consists of various exhibitions and pieces from BCE to contemporary art. If you ever get a chance to check the museum out, you have to go to the basement! The exhibitions may rotate but you will definitely get transported into another world (full of clay earthen dolls and pots or medieval spears, swords, and more)!

Felicia W., M1

Saint Louis Science Center

Even though it's geared toward younger people, the Saint Louis Science Center is a great place to embrace your inner child! It's not the largest, but it has a lot of interesting and interactive exhibits, and you can finish them all in one trip. They also have a giant T-Rex and it's free, so that's pretty fire.

Shubhanjali M., M1

Saint Louis Zoo

I LOVE the Saint Louis Zoo. So much so that I've been to the zoo six times in the three months since school has started. While I'm a little biased (I grew up in St. Louis and went to the zoo every weekend as a kid), I can fully say that the Saint Louis Zoo is the best one I've been to so far in terms of the animal variety, size, and staff. On top of all that, it's somehow free?! Whether you want to get up close and personal with the giraffes, see some MASSIVE tortoises, or swoon over the red pandas, the Saint Louis Zoo has it all, and I feel so lucky to have such an awesome attraction nearby. It's a great place to take a walk and clear your head, show friends and family visiting from out of town, or just have fun hanging out with some buddies.

Jake J., M1

St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station

The St. Louis Aquarium at Union Station is a beautiful place! Although smaller than major aquariums in the country, there's still a wide variety of exhibits with otters, sharks, jellyfish, and more. There are freshwater and saltwater tanks that feature creatures local to Missouri and also creatures from around the world, and there are also exhibits such as the Shark & Ray Touchpool and the Tidepool which allow for a hands-on experience. The aquarium itself has some fun and unique features, such as archerfish that can shoot water high out of their tank and a beautifully crafted clock at the entrance that both keeps time and serves as a tank for discus fish! The location of the aquarium itself is in downtown St. Louis and is close to attractions such as the St. Louis Wheel, Stifel Theatre, City Museum, and many other museums and restaurants.

Katherine L., M1

St. Louis Sports

If you're not a sports fan when you come to St. Louis, you will be by the time you leave! The St. Louis CITY Soccer Club blew the opposition away by finishing its inaugural season at the top of its conference, and the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team ~almost~ escaped last place in its division! But no matter how successful the team is, attending major league games in St. Louis is always contagiously fun, whether you're a fan of the sport or not. Personally, I don't understand the rules of hockey whatsoever, but I had the time of my life just soaking up the ambience in the St. Louis Blues arena. It's usually easy to find affordable last-minute tickets, or you can check out a bar near the stadium for a free way to catch the game (with cheaper drinks).

Michael L., M1

Steinberg Skating Rink

Need a breath of fresh air after a cold, winter day studying in Becker? Look no further than Forest Park! Steinberg is a seasonal, outdoor skating rink that's super close and reasonably priced. Even though it's a little small, it can be a cute little excursion to hang out and drink hot cocoa with your friends or a date. And if you do decide to lace up your skates, I'm sure it'll make for some wonderful memories or, if you're a klutz, be a great chance to practice your clinical skills.

Shubhanjali M., M1

The Fabulous Fox Theatre

The Fabulous Fox Theatre is the premier locale to watch your favorite musicals and performances. I watched a recent production of *Les Misérables* and really appreciated the great acoustics and ornate, pretty designs. The tickets are also very reasonably priced, so I would definitely recommend checking out a production there when you have the chance.

Nick B., M1

The Gateway Arch

Ascending the Gateway Arch via a small elevator pod takes you from ground-level scenes to an expansive cityscape. At the summit, the view of St. Louis and the Mississippi River offers an awe-inspiring spectacle. It's definitely a must-do that blends history, architecture, and breathtaking views.

Pranay S., M1

Drinks

Beer, Beer, Beer

St. Louis has an amazing craft beer scene beyond just Anheuser-Busch! There are so many microbreweries around the city, and whether you're just getting into craft beers or a seasoned connoisseur, there's a little something for everybody.

- For happy hour and casual celebrations: Urban Chestnut Brewing Company and Rockwell Beer, both in The Grove
- For IPAs: Modern Brewery, near the Saint Louis Science Center
- For pale ales and lagers: 4 Hands, Schlafly
- For sours: Alpha Brewing in Tower Grove South
- For stouts: 4 Hands Brewing (great seasonal stouts in the winter, like the Madagascar vanilla milk stout) and Perennial (I recommend their coffee stout)

In addition to these microbreweries, places like International Tap House (iTAP; locations in the Delmar Loop and Souldard) have huge selections of local and other craft beers from around the country.

Jiwon Y., M1

Cafés and Coffee Shops

My favorite study spots are cute, cozy coffee shops, and St. Louis has so many great options! My favorites that I have visited so far are Northwest Coffee, La Finca, Fiddlehead Fern, and Coma Coffee. Northwest Coffee has an indoor-outdoor setting with a converted garage that lends a cozy atmosphere for chilly days. La Finca is right on Manchester Avenue and has lots of tables for studying with unique latte options. Finally, Fiddlehead Fern serves delicious brunch options and also offers indoor-outdoor seating with a private patio.

Alex C., M1

St. Louis has some great coffee shops that I love to study at! Some of my personal favorites are Maypop, Living Room, and Kaldi's.

Sammy R., M1

Cat Cafe

If you like cats and coffee, boy do I have a recommendation for you: Mauhaus Cat Cafe. This is an easy way to pet a cat and also drink a beverage with your friends, two things scientifically proven to brighten your day.

Natalia A., M1

Game Bars

If you're looking to spice up a night of drinks and dining with a competitive edge, there's plenty of places nearby to check out. Up-Down is a great arcade bar located within walking distance in the Central West End with a lot of games, craft beers, and good pizza. I would also check out The Armory, which is a giant bar that has a ton of interactive games like corn hole, arcade machines, and table tennis, a giant stage for live entertainment, massive TVs (great to watch games), and even a slide! If you want something a bit more chill, Pieces is also within driving distance and has a nice selection of board games to pair with your food and beverages (there's also an escape room next door to check out if you have a long wait).

Karan M., M1

Karaoke Bars

I've been to two karaoke places during my time in St. Louis, and I believe these are the two places that most students frequent. W Karaoke Lounge is a super accessible karaoke place in Delmar Loop (you can take the MetroLink there), but it does have mixed reviews. Joo Joo's is a better place for karaoke, in my opinion, that has good Korean barbecue and Korean food in general, but it is a lot further out in Creve Coeur (so you'll need a car).

Kevin H., M1

Festivals and Events

Balloon Glow

Balloon Glow is a very special annual St. Louis tradition! It usually comes right around the beginning of the M1 year, so it's a great thing to do with your new classmates. There are about 20-40 hot air balloons set up in Forest Park, and you can walk around them and watch them glow as evening sets in. This year, the festivities were capped off with paratroopers coming in from above, a concert, food trucks, and fireworks. The day after Balloon Glow, the hot air balloons participate in The Great Forest Park Balloon Race which can be seen from campus or the rooftops of some of the nearby apartment buildings.

Anna D., M1

Festival of Nations

Festival of Nations is an awesome, annual, free admission event in Tower Grove Park where there are over 100 local vendors and performers from cultures all over the world. I went to Festival of Nations for the first time as an M1 and had a blast sampling different cuisines and listening to live performances on a huge stage. Be prepared to spend money and look out for the weather forecast before going.

Kevin H., M1

Garden Glow

Garden Glow at the Missouri Botanical Garden is one of my favorite holiday-season events in St. Louis. It usually runs from mid-November to early January and involves the already gorgeous garden being decorated with nearly two million lights. There's both projection light shows and light tunnels lining the walking paths throughout the spacious garden grounds. It has a very magical feel and is the perfect place for a cute photo op with friends or a cozy, romantic date.

Sophia K., M1

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is a really fun St. Louis tradition that we look forward to every year! St. Louis actually hosts the second-largest Mardi Gras celebration in the country (after New Orleans, of course). All the streets in Soulard are closed down, people throw beads, and there's a great parade with a ton of floats.

Nick B., M1

Oktoberfest

At the end of September, the city of St. Louis hosts a few different Oktoberfest celebrations. Oktoberfest is a German-based holiday, and given the large amount of German heritage in St. Louis, it is no surprise that we do it well. Take some time off from studying to put on your lederhosen and enjoy a bratwurst and a stein full of lager.

Mitch M., M1

Fitness and Outdoor Activities

Ballroom Dancing

I started doing weekly ballroom dancing sessions with other WashU graduate and medical students (and some partners), on the Danforth Campus. I'm in the beginner class (there is a more advanced one), and it's a ton of fun. We've done waltz, cha cha, rumba, foxtrot, tango, east coast swing, Viennese waltz . . . It's been a good way to take a break from books and be immersed in the elegant (and often hilarious), embodied experience of moving in sync with the music and another person.

Nancy J., M1

Basketball

Although I'm pretty average at the sport, I love basketball. Olin Residence Hall (a literal three-minute walk from your classes on campus) has a court in the basement. If you want something a little more extravagant, the Danforth Campus Summers Recreation Center has three courts and games of pickup running daily, and there are outdoor courts at Chouteau Park and Tower Grove Park for nice days when you want to be outside. M1s reserve Olin on Monday nights, and the M1s and M2s try to play most Fridays. Additionally, we have a 271-person (and counting) GroupMe across WashU Med and beyond dedicated to organizing games of pickup. And if that isn't enough basketball, there are 3v3 intramurals in the fall and 5v5 intramurals in the spring at WashU.

Chris B., M1

Bowling

I have only been bowling once, but it was an absolute blast. The Erlanger-Graham Society reserved Pin-Up Bowling (see: Societies), and we ended up with a friendly M1 vs. M2 competition where we M1s won by one point. It was as intense as an exhibition bowling match gets: Side bets were made, an anonymous M1 took a dive, and another one even risked re-tearing their ACL; talk about stakes!

Chris B., M1

ClassPass for Workout Classes

I got ClassPass when I started medical school, and I love going to workout classes around the city! There are a bunch of yoga studios, pilates spots, and barre classes available, but my favorite by far is the spin class at CycleBar. There's a group of M1s that go to spin class together on Tuesday evenings, and it's been a fun way to bond with classmates outside of school.

Mansi G., M1

Cycling

The area around the Washington University Medical Campus is very flat for bike commuters. There are at least two fenced and covered bike locking areas that are accessible with student ID cards. Forest Park next door is very bikeable throughout, with a six-mile perimeter loop for biking/running.

If you are an avid road biker, St. Louis has got the climbs and flat sprints for you. Through the undergrad cycling club, you can always find fellow bikers to go on those 3,000-foot climbs or century rides.

Ben M., M1

Cycling (Spin Class)

Coming into medical school, I loved taking CycleBar classes but needed to keep my expenses low. Summers Recreation Center at the Danforth Campus offers free cycle classes in a dark room every day of the week! A group of my classmates and I go every Sunday with one of our favorite instructors (Jake). We also have a spin group chat where people send when they're going. While they aren't exactly the same as CycleBar, they're still super fun, a great workout, have great music, and (most importantly) are completely free. Like other studios, it does take a little bit of trial and error to find the instructors that fit your style. Overall, it's a great way to add some cardio into your workout routine, listen to great music, and bond with classmates!

Kenzie B., M1

Dance

I was pretty involved in the SoCal dance scene back home in Los Angeles, so coming here for medical school I knew that dance was something that I wanted to keep up with in some capacity, and I've found a good diversity of styles available at the studios and clubs here in St. Louis! For more classical styles like ballet, lyrical, contemporary, and jazz, CKDC is a dance company that offers wonderful drop-in classes. Yes, Honey Studio in The Grove is a great place for fun, high-energy cardio, dance workouts, but they also have some great choreo combo drop-in classes as well (especially their Advanced Hip-Hop sessions on Sundays at 7 p.m. that I personally love). For the advanced, open-style/commercial-style dancer, Kode Redd is a pre-professional dance company here in St. Louis founded by Anthony D. Williams (considered by many to be the best in the Midwest), and they have incredible, seasonal open workshops. Also, Club Viva is a super fun dance club right here in the Central West End that has Reggae Wednesdays, Dancehall Fridays, and Latin Night Thursdays and Saturdays (where they have free salsa/bachata classes before open dance)! There's definitely something for dancers of all forms to either train their existing skills or to try out new styles!

Amy P., M1

Gyms (Danforth Campus): Summers Recreation Center

The Summers Recreation Center is located on the Danforth Campus, about a 10-minute drive west of the Washington University Medical Campus. WashU Med students receive free access to everything it has to offer including the weight room, basketball/volleyball/badminton/racquetball courts, indoor track, and swimming/diving pool. Summers also offers 50+ free fitness classes each week ranging from yoga to Zumba to spinning. It also organizes intramural sports year-round if you're feeling competitive.

Ben M., M1

Gyms (Off-Campus): Fit City Gym

I always joke around with people that my only hobby is weightlifting (not really a joke), so it was really important for me to find a space where I could find everything I need for my workouts. I looked online and found Fit City Gym, which is only a 10-minute drive from my apartment at Parc Frontenac. On top of that, we get discounts as medical students, which means I pay only \$36 a month with no contractual obligations and no annual fees.

The culture of the gym is fantastic with a kind and supportive crowd, and I've even begun to make some friends and connections through going to the gym at a consistent time. Fit City is the type of place where you can always ask for a spot and always expect other members to be hyped to see you hit a new PR. In terms of the machines, you have all of your standard commercial gym equipment, but we also have tons of specialty machines, including a genuine pendulum squat, three types of leg press machines, monolifts, calibrated kg plates, squat/bench combo racks, and other machines I don't even know the names of.

Whether you're just trying to get started out in the gym or have been a passionate gym-goer for years, Fit City is a great, affordable, and relatively accessible (car needed) gym that I feel extremely lucky to have around me!

Jake J., M1

Gyms (On-Campus): 818 Fitness

I work out pretty casually, so the gym at The Core Apartment Residences (818 Fitness), which is a few minutes walk from the majority of our classes in the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center, has everything I need. There are four squat/bench racks, a belt to add weight, various machines, dumbbells, and a cable machine. Beyond weightlifting, there are multiple cardio machines and TVs. Plus, the treadmills have attachment sites for tables for anyone that likes to walk and work.

Chris B., M1

Hiking

There are many trails 30-40 minutes from the Washington University Medical Campus; my favorite so far are the White Bison Loop in Lone Elk Park (an elk was hanging out on my trail) and the White Rock Trail (the drive there during fall foliage is part of the charm). For good elevations, the Mark Twain National Forest is a two-hour drive and the Ozarks are four hours away, making for great weekend trips.

Truc P., M1

Intramural Sports

I have played on an intramural, three-versus-three basketball team for the past few weeks, and it has been a great time. Spending time with my friends in a team setting has allowed me to get to know them better and have fun in the process. It is also nice to spend time on the Danforth Campus and compete against other members of the WashU community. Outside of basketball, there are a variety of different intramural options that can be competitive or just to have fun!

Jake G., M1

Pickleball

I had only played pickleball a few times before starting medical school, but it has been a fun way to get more exercise and meet other medical students! There are pickleball and tennis courts conveniently located right next to the Washington University Medical Campus and Barnes-Jewish Hospital, and our class has a group chat to plan times to play together after class and in the evenings. Overall, pickleball has become a great study break and a way for me to meet more people in my class, and it is really nice to have courts literally right next to our campus!

Annabel G., M1

Running

I started running in 2020 and continued my journey when I started medical school in 2021. Since then, I've fallen in love with trail running and completed my first 53k ultramarathon this September! We have the beautiful Forest Park right next to campus which is a perfect place for road running during the week, and on the weekends I love exploring all the trails in the area. My favorites for trail running are the Lewis and Clark Trail in Weldon Spring, Rockwood Reservation in Wildwood, and Pere Marquette State Park in Illinois! St. Louis also has a wonderful running community, with several local road and trail running organizations (Big River Running, St. Louis Track Club, Terrain Trail Runners, St. Louis Ultrarunners Group) that organize lots of races throughout the year. I've had no problems finding time for running during medical school and have loved training and running in the St. Louis area!

Dante N., M3

Soccer

St. Louis has a rich and storied history of soccer culture, from hosting the nation's first fully professional league to the addition of our very own Major League Soccer team just last year. There are plenty of ways to twinkle those toes whether at a facility nearby campus, in an intramural league, or at a regularly scheduled pickup game on the Danforth Campus. If you're more of a spectator, get tickets to watch St. Louis CITY SC or grab a pint at Amsterdam Tavern with your fellow fans.

Dan S., M2

Table Tennis

Every Wednesday evening and Saturday afternoon, people of all skill levels and from all walks of WashU life show up to the South Campus gym to put out Butterfly tables, string up nets, and play table tennis for two hours. We're a smaller community compared to a lot of on-campus sports, but newcomers of all skill levels are welcome; just bring a racket and a good attitude (if you don't have a racket, borrow mine).

There's also a table in the common area of the Core Apartment Residences (818 Fitness is in here too!) that some of my classmates use to duel each other after or between classes.

For anyone who takes table tennis very seriously (or wants to), I play competitively (USATT ~1900) and have been pleasantly surprised by the level of play at WashU. You'll have no trouble finding a practice partner to train and improve with. We also have an A Team and B team that competes in NCTTA tournaments; A and B teams both compete in Divisionals, and the A Team represents WashU at Midwest Regionals and Nationals. If you're interested, come try out!

Brian S., M1

Tennis

As a tennis aficionado, I'm glad that a lot of my peers are passionate about watching and playing tennis. I love the camaraderie among my tennis peers; we even watched a livestream of the U.S. Open championship match between Djokovic and Medvedev at a friend's apartment together. In terms of playing tennis, St. Louis has plenty of real estate dedicated to tennis. I highly recommend Shaw Park Tennis Center, which has 10 hard courts that have been kept in pristine condition and are free to play on after 5 p.m. on the weekends. If you live at or close to The Core like I do, you can also try the two tennis courts at Hudlin Park near Barnes-Jewish Hospital.

Kevin T., M1

Yoga

I've been going to yoga classes at Align Massage & Yoga Studio in Tower Grove since starting at WashU Med. It's a fun way of de-stressing, and I've managed to rally a couple of my friends into going with me to some pre-lecture yoga. There are a ton of yoga classes that you can sign up for through WashU Rec (for free), ClassPass (at different yoga studios around the city), or individual yoga studios, and they range from beginner to advanced levels.

Nikita S., M1

Food

Allergen-Friendly Eats

I am allergic to milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, and fish, so when I moved to St. Louis my first year, I was anxious to see how the restaurants in the area dealt with food allergies. Thankfully, I've found that many restaurants have allergen menus, and those that do not are more than willing to make accommodations from my experience! I've had no problems finding things I can safely eat at all of the most popular places near the medical school and in the city. Some of my favorites include Jeni's Ice Cream (they have vegan flavors!), Protagonist Cafe (their bakery is almost entirely vegan and nut free), Nudo House (ramen!), and Saucy Porka (Puerto Rican/Asian fusion).

Dante N., M3

Barbecue

I'm fan of Salt + Smoke and Sugarfire. Both have great food but with different vibes. Salt + Smoke is more of a sit-down place, and at Sugarfire you order at a counter and get your food on a big tray (they also have a great selection of local sodas). Near the WashU Medical Campus, I've heard good things about the BBQ Saloon but I haven't tried it myself (yet)!

William C., M1

Brunch

My favorite brunch spot is City Coffee and Creperie, located west of Forest Park in Clayton. They have a wide selection of sweet and savory crepes (my personal favorite is the strawberry-banana-Nutella one). It has an order at the counter and seat yourself set-up. There's also lots of outdoor seating for when the weather is nice!

Ritu D., M1

Cheap Eats Around St. Louis

Blues City Deli and Gramophone both serve great sandwiches. Gramophone is located in The Grove and is open late, while Blues City Deli is a bit farther but in my opinion has better sandwiches! Other great spots I've found are Sauce on the Side (also in The Grove and serves calzones), U-City Grill (in The Loop and serves Korean food), Hi-Pointe Drive-In (near the Danforth Campus and has the best burgers in the city), BLK MKT (near SLU and serves sushi burritos), and Lona's Lil Eats (south of downtown St. Louis and serves burrito-sized spring rolls).

Ethan L., M1

Chinese Food

These restaurants are scattered in St. Louis and within a 10-15-minute drive.

- **Cate Zone:** A cozy restaurant with a wait sometimes, but they've got legit dishes from multiple Chinese cuisines that keep people going back.
- **Chao Zhou Cuisine:** Authentic Cantonese cuisine for all your duck dishes and lou mei needs.
- **ChiliSpot:** Authentic Szechuan cuisine. Period.
- **Corner 17:** Szechuan restaurant with hand-pulled noodles and spicy dishes that's loved by all WashU undergrad students.
- **Lulu's Seafood:** Traditional auspicious red decor, huge round tables, and massive menu.
- **Joyluck:** Best bang-for-your-buck, Chinese buffet that is nearby.
- **Soup Dumplings STL:** Some say it's like Din Tai Fung in St. Louis, but cheaper.
- **Tai Ke Shabu Shabu:** The most welcoming owner runs this Taiwanese restaurant with amazing stir fry dishes and delicious Taiwanese street snacks.
- **Vegas Wok:** THE wok that makes quick and affordable takeout dishes which many undergrads live on.

Ben M., M1

Desserts

For the full St. Louis experience, you'll have to try gooey butter cake and frozen custard. Gooey butter cake is ubiquitous in any bakery you enter; it's served as a square and perfectly lives up to its name — it's gooey and buttery. There are a few competing frozen custard places around town, and they're all open late to satisfy the late-night cravings that medical school induces. The most famous (but it's a drive from campus) is Ted Drewes, which offers infinite build-your-own frozen custard options and is a popular hangout spot for community members. Arguably the best custard comes from Andy's, where there are fewer options and a steeper cost, but it's impossible to go wrong. Anything bigger than a "small" size from Andy's is a two-person endeavor. Finally, for a classic ice cream dessert that never misses, try Clementine's Creamery, Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, or Ices Plain & Fancy.

Michael L., M1

Farmers' Markets

Shopping at farmers' markets is a great way to support St. Louis's local businesses, and it's often cheaper and fresher than the grocery store! The Souldard Farmers' Market is located just south of downtown (about a 10-minute drive from campus) and is advertised as the oldest public market west of the Mississippi. It's

open year-round from Wednesday to Saturday during business hours, but there are the most vendors present on Friday and Saturday mornings. It's a great spot to pick up affordable produce and confections, but you can find just about anything there, including every type of meat imaginable (seriously), various breads, plants, clothes, and souvenirs. There are also \$3 cocktails to sip on while you shop around, and make sure you bring cash because many vendors don't take cards. In addition to the Soulard market, many local neighborhoods have vibrant farmers' markets during harvest seasons, including University City and Tower Grove. Touring a farmers' market is a great way to spend a weekend morning and get in touch with the local community!

Michael L., M1

Food Around Campus When You're Feeling Lazy

The St. Louis Children's Hospital cafeteria is not only GOOD, it's CHEAP. It's a small walk away, but luckily the Link (if you can figure it out) makes it readily accessible without having to go outside. It has a variety of food including pizza, burgers, Philly cheesesteaks, and more. Also, the seating area is so cute with skylights and a large hot air balloon. One time, there was even a miniature horse to pet.

NJ M., M1

Food for When Your Parents Are Visiting

There are tons of great restaurants in the Central West End (CWE) such as Brasserie by Niche, Bar Italia, and, my favorite, Yellowbelly. There is also a great collection of Italian restaurants on The Hill (about a 10-minute drive from the CWE), my favorite being Charlie Gitto's (but make sure you book in advance)!

Ethan L., M1

Gluten-Free Eats

Katie's Pizza and Pasta has delicious gluten-free (GF) pizza and pasta alternatives. You can also get a GF hamburger with a GF bun at Yellowbelly. Salt + Smoke has GF barbecue with a dedicated GF fryer. Lona's Lil Eats also has amazing GF options. Britt's Bake House and Prioritized Pastries are two GF bakeries in town (although I haven't tried them yet). I recommend using the Find Me Gluten Free app to locate other spots with GF offerings in town (especially helpful if you have celiac disease and diners leave reviews on cross contamination).

Danielle S., M1

Korean Food

When it comes to Asian food in St. Louis, there may be areas where, compared to the East or West Coasts, the quality of the cuisine can be lacking. However, after living here for the past six years, I've found that Korean food is (luckily) the exception! There are numerous Korean restaurants and grocery stores around St. Louis, so here are just a few of my favorites to get you started:

1. Seoul Garden (in Creve Coeur) has a-la-carte and all-you-can-eat options, as well as tables for group cooking. The quality of the meat is excellent, there are rotating Soju cocktails year-round, and at around \$30 for a quality all-you-can-eat (with free Banchan), this place is my go-to for a weekend splurge.
2. Wudon has a-la-carte and all-you-can-eat options, as well as tables for group cooking. Wudon's quality of meat is a bit lower than Seoul Garden's, but the food's still very delicious — and at only \$24 for all-you-can-eat, you can't go wrong with this place. Free Banchan and larger tables for big groups makes this my go-to for Korean barbecue with a large group of friends. Note: Wudon allows for reservations but only 24 hours in advance, so keep that in mind if you have a big group!
3. Joo Joo does not have all-you-can-eat and is therefore the most expensive of these three; however, the quality of the meat (and side dishes!) cannot be denied. The kimchi fried rice here is to die for, and they have karaoke rooms that you can book as well! I personally stick mostly to Seoul Garden and Wudon, but if you've got the money and love to sing, then give Joo Joo a try!
Tip: the more friends you bring, the cheaper the bill split will be for everyone.

Hopefully this helps get you started on some spots for good Korean barbecue in St. Louis. My best advice is to always keep exploring new options because not only are new spots popping up every year, you also just never know what's going to be your favorite place! Enjoy and happy eating!

Cameron M., M1

Late Night Food

Late night food in the Central West End is sadly not the easiest to come by. Many food locations close around 8-10 p.m., and this can make it pretty tricky to find a midnight snack if you're in a pinch. If you happen to be near one of the hospital cafeterias that close around 2 a.m., cut your losses and drop in, or order some Taco Bell.

Chris S., M1

Lebanese Food

As someone from New York City, I was definitely a little nervous about finding good quality Middle Eastern food in the Midwest, but I'm happy (and very relieved) to report that Taste of Lebanon in the Central West End (CWE) definitely delivers! It's also open later than other restaurants in the CWE, and its location is super convenient (only a few blocks away from Whole Foods). I recommend the chicken shawarma wrap!

Aya A., M1

Pasta

St. Louis has a wide range of restaurants sure to satisfy pasta cravings! The Hill neighborhood has streets lined with great Italian restaurants to explore, such as Charlie Gitto's, Favazza's, Mama's, and Zia's On The Hill. Beyond The Hill, some other places for pasta and Italian food around St. Louis and beyond include Katie's Pizza and Pasta, Lombardo's Trattoria, Pastaria, and Trattoria Marcella.

Katherine L., M1

Pizza

There's a pizza place on every corner in St. Louis, so you'll be able to find any Chicago, New York, St. Louis, or fast-food pizza that your heart desires. St. Louis-style pizza is Chicago deep dish pizza's under-appreciated little brother. The three hallmarks of St. Louis-style pizza are extra thin crust, square cuts, and delicious Provel cheese. For the authentic St. Louis-style pizza experience, your first stop should be Imo's Pizza, and make sure to try some Cinnimos while you're there. For a unique twist, definitely check out Sauce on the Side in The Grove or Clayton for giant, affordable, and delicious calzones.

Michael L., M1

Places to Eat with a Large Group

City Foundry STL is a food court with great international and local restaurants. It's a fun place to sample different cuisines and go with a large group of friends. You can also watch sports there and get drinks.

Akhil K., M1

Places to Take a Date

South Grand is a neighborhood known for its international eateries, vintage shops, and great vibes. There are several restaurants there that are fantastic, such as Sheesh, Meskerem, Lemongrass, Lulu's Local Eatery, The Vine, and Pho Long. There's a bookstore called Dunaway Books that carries old and out-of-print books, and a store called Urban Matter that carries lots of locally made products. There are also several brunch spots around the city that are great, including Songbird, Polite Society, Bowood by Niche, The Creperie, Half and Half, and Herbies (in order of how good they are, lol).

Akhil K., M1

Sushi

I'm a huge fan of Sushi Ai! They have locations in Clayton and Downtown with very affordable prices on made-to-order, all-you-can-eat sushi, as well as dump-lings, miso soup, and fried Oreos for dessert. Plus, you get 10% off if you show your student ID! There's also Kampai Sushi Bar on the first floor of Del Coronado if you want something within walking distance.

Will C., M1

Tacos: Seoul Taco

Seoul Taco offers an enticing fusion of Korean and Mexican cuisines, blending flavors in dishes like their signature Korean barbecue tacos and Gogi bowls with marinated meats or tofu. The vibrant and inviting atmosphere creates not just a dining spot but a gathering place for locals and visitors alike to savor delicious food and enjoy a welcoming dining experience for a fair price. Seoul Taco is a beloved culinary gem in the heart of St. Louis.

Pranay S., M1

Thai Food

Thai Country Cafe is a great place on The Loop. It's very reasonably priced, and you get really large portions, making it a popular choice for WashU undergrads.

Sen Thai is another tasty place. It's downtown, so it'll be a bit of a drive, but it's also well-priced and has some really nice ambience. I would definitely recommend it for a cute date.

Fork and Stix is another really cute place to take your not-so-sneaky link (it's actually really small). The food is a bit more expensive here and the portions are smaller, but it's really delicious and the restaurant has a warm and comforting aesthetic.

Shubhanjali M., M1

Vegetarian and Vegan Food

I didn't know what the vegetarian/vegan scene would look like in St. Louis before moving here, but now that I'm here, I've never struggled with finding multiple vegetarian options at places, or even all-vegetarian restaurants! For veggie/vegan-only restaurants, I recommend Treehouse, Small Batch, Frida's, and the Vegan Deli! The Veggie sandwich at the Gramophone is also incredible.

Kavya P., M1

Vietnamese Food: Phở

Everyone has their favorite phở restaurant around town, so you'll have to explore different places to pick yours. For easy access, Saigon Cafe is within walking distance of the Washington University Medical Campus, but it can get busy during dinner hours. A little farther away, you can never go wrong with Phở Long, Truc Lam, or Mai Lee. The Grand, Delmar, and Olive neighborhoods are full of tasty Vietnamese restaurants, so go explore! If one thing is certain, it's that there's no shortage of options from which to choose.

Michael L., M1

Grocery Shopping

Grocery Delivery Services

Grocery delivery services let me get groceries directly to my door! Most of the grocery stores around require driving, and Whole Foods in the Central West End is a bit on the expensive side. I use Imperfect Foods, Amazon, and Weee! for Asian groceries. Not only do I save time going to the physical grocery store and perusing aisle after aisle, I also have a wider selection of foods and they're conveniently delivered to my apartment lobby. Usually there is free delivery available when you hit a certain amount. Another popular option I've heard of is Instacart. However, I'll admit nothing beats a good grocery store wander every once in a while!

Sophia T., M1

Grocery Stores

Whole Foods, Schnucks, and Trader Joe's are the main three grocery stores where most students shop. Whole Foods is located in the Central West End and is a quick walk from campus. While Whole Foods is more expensive than other options, the convenience is very nice. Schnucks and Dierbergs are two local St. Louis grocery chains that are more "classic" grocery stores with a bit of everything. These are both easily accessible by car. I also sometimes go to Trader Joe's, which is a 10-15-minute drive away. Overall, there are many different grocery options that are close to campus and easy to access.

Jake G., M1

International Groceries

Jay International Foods, located on South Grand Boulevard near Saint Louis University, is your one-stop shop for pretty much any cuisine you can think of. Asian, Latin American, African — you name it, they probably have it. They also have great prices on bulk produce! If you are specifically looking for Asian groceries, I would recommend Olive Supermarket or Pan-Asia Supermarket. They both have a huge selection and a good seafood section (live fish and lobster!)

Ethan L., M1

Transportation

Biking

As someone who lives outside the Central West End, I commute to school on my bike almost every day! In St. Louis, biking is a viable transportation option almost year-round (with the exception of about six weeks in the winter). Riding through Forest Park is a convenient, healthy way to wake up on the way to class, and it takes about 15 minutes to ride from one end to the other. You can keep your bike

in one of the locked bike cages on the Washington University Medical Campus, and there are mini-service stations if you need tools for minor DIY fixes. WashU even sponsors free bike tune-up events on campus throughout the year. For recreation, check out the Katy Trail, Grant's Trail, and the Riverfront Trail.

Michael L., M1

Having a Car

TLDR: Having a car isn't necessary for your first year, but it can really broaden your access to St. Louis in general. It's relatively affordable and is 100% worth it to me personally. I would highly recommend it if you're on the fence.

Having a car for my first year of medical school was a decision that I went back and forth on for several weeks before I put the pedal to the metal. Since then, I haven't regretted the choice at all! For full transparency, having a car is NOT required for Phase One at WashU Med, but is necessary for later parts of the curriculum. Nonetheless, I wanted to have a car because I thought it would be convenient for running errands, exploring St. Louis, and just generally having more access to things around the city. While having the car definitely tightened other parts of my monthly budget in terms of parking fees, I think it's been more than worth it for me personally. I use my car every morning to go to a gym that is a 10-minute drive off campus, regularly grab lunch with my brother near the Danforth Campus, and can drive my friends around if we ever want to go to parts of St. Louis outside the Central West End! Despite how often I use my car, gas is also relatively cheap, and I rarely need to fill my tank more than once a month.

Jake J., M1

Life Without a Car

Life without a car here in St. Louis is what you make of it, and your experience truly depends on your unique circumstances and needs. So far, I've realized that living in the Central West End (CWE) without a car is 100% doable for me, but this is mainly due to its close proximity to the Washington University Medical Campus and other resources such as grocery stores, restaurants, and sites for leisure. I mainly use Uber, Lyft, and electric scooters to get around if my destination is not walkable. The CWE MetroLink stop for the blue/red lines is also an incredibly convenient, cost-effective, and safe option if you are trying to get to the Danforth Campus, the airport, or downtown St. Louis.

Chris S., M1

Parking on Campus

Unfortunately, parking is not free because of the number of people working on campus. Students can purchase a permit in the Clayton Garage for \$84/month. This garage is about a five-minute power walk from the classrooms. For an additional \$40/month, you get unlimited access to 20 Level 2 charging stations in the Clayton Garage. Street parking around the Washington University Medical

Campus is available on a first-come, first-served basis for \$2/hour. Another option for people living farther from campus is the free Metro Park-Ride program. These are also first-come, first-served and free parking lots that let you park and directly ride the Metro to campus.

Ben M., M1

Road Tripping to Other Cities

There's a reason that St. Louis is in the MID-west. The city is pretty much in the center of the country, providing great opportunities to explore other cities close by. Although we typically have classes on Friday morning, Friday afternoons are almost always free. Therefore, traveling on Friday afternoons and coming back on Sunday evenings provides a nice weekend in another location of your choice. Many of my classmates and I have gone to the following cities (and this isn't even an exhaustive list!): Memphis, Tenn.; Nashville, Tenn.; Chicago; and Kansas City, Mo.! Most recently, several friend groups traveled to Nashville to explore the city and all its touristy destinations. Some folks even find time to travel to western Missouri for a nice outdoor hiking or fishing trip.

Ultimately, there are plenty of places that you can get to within five hours, providing a nice change of scenery after a long week of studying. Although driving to the East Coast or West Coast is not very feasible from St. Louis, some of my classmates have also made long weekends flying to visit friends, families, and loved ones! While studying is priority No. 1, don't let it stop you from taking advantage of St. Louis's great proximity to a number of cool places. Grab some classmates, find your favorite oldies but goodies, and enjoy the ride!

Joshua L., M1

Traveling: Airplanes, Trains, Buses, Etc.

St. Louis has several transportation options (beyond driving) for travel plans that are farther from the city. St. Louis Lambert International Airport is a less than 30-minute drive, or about a 45-minute ride on the MetroLink, from the Central West End, and Gateway Station, accessible by MetroLink, serves as a hub for Amtrak and multiple bus lines that run throughout the country. Fortunately, there's a MetroLink station right on the Washington University Medical Campus, which makes travel that much easier!

Katherine L., M1



M1s playing pickleball near Barnes-Jewish Hospital. Back: Eshan S., Pallavi J., Jackson H., Margaret M. Front: Elisa C.



M1s attend Garden Glow at the Missouri Botanical Garden. From left, Anna Y., Kevin H., Daniel D.



Hot air balloons at Balloon Glow in Forest Park.



M1s Cameron M., Chris B., and Jake G. win the WashU Intramural 3v3 Basketball Championship!



Coaching group KBBQ dinner at Seoul Garden. From left, Melody N., Cameron M., Katherine L., Matthew S., Daniel D., Mackenzie B., Pranay S., Alex C.



M1s see Adventure Club in Saint Charles, Mo. Back: Jake J., Mitch M., Chris B., Nick B. Front: Cole D.



M1s hanging out at El Burro Loco during Orientation Week.



Free Saturday morning yoga in Tower Grove Park.



Hiking in Castlewood State Park. From left, Mackenzie B., Sophia T., Katherine L., Madeleine Y., Alex M., Annabel G.



Advice

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

SECTION EDITORS: CHRISTINA PING AND BRIAN SUN

Advice from Phase One Students

Make Time for Family and Friends Not in Medicine

I've always found it grounding to have close relationships with people who are not in medicine. As a former pre-med and current medical student, I've realized that it's so easy in spaces with our peers to get caught up in the realm of grades, exams, publications, etc. and lose the bigger picture. However, my time spent with my non-medical friends always serves as a nice reality check that there's life outside of medicine and helps remind me of my priorities. It also helps me support a better school-life balance because whenever I'm with them, I get to show up as my whole self and not just as a medical student. Maintaining long-distance relationships with friends and family can be difficult but is worth prioritizing. A little communication is better than none, so I often find myself sending random texts, memes, songs, etc. as I think of loved ones. I also utilize my walk home from school and mealtimes at home for catch-up FaceTimes and phone calls, especially with my parents. Phone calls with my mother always remind me that school isn't everything and that self-care is a top priority. Overall, fostering relationships with those outside of medicine helps keep me balanced, on both a personal level and as a medical student.

Sophia K., M1

Make Time for Yourself and Your Hobbies (You're Going to be Okay!)

In my short time here so far at WashU Med, I've realized three things: there's always another research project to work on, another specialty to shadow, and another specialty interest group to get involved in. And while you'll want to get involved in these opportunities, you may also feel the pressure to do it all within the context of being a medical student. You'll be faced with a lot of material to digest, and not a lot of time to do so; this will only become truer over time.

All this means is that it may be tempting to let your health and hobbies take a backseat, especially if you see some classmates doing "so much more than you." However, remember that the things that keep you well will also keep you successful in class. Module 1 is a great time to learn how and when to say "I'm done for today." Sometimes that means leaving a lecture video for tomorrow because it's already 12 a.m., or skipping optional morning sessions in favor of a run in Forest Park. Other times, it may even involve taking an entire day off because you feel particularly worn out. (I speak from experience in all three cases.) Phase One grading is truly pass/fail, and students aren't ranked, so use this opportunity to lay the foundation for both your academic and personal success through a healthy school-life balance, whatever that looks like for you.

Learn to get comfortable with saying "No" when you've already got a lot going on. Your health is worth more than an extra line on your CV.

Brian S., M1

One Day at a Time

Most of you reading this will probably ignore my advice, and that's okay. BUT, and I cannot stress this enough, take it one day at a time. Medical school is a lot, and the amount of information you receive can be overwhelming. However, as you learn and realize just how much you're learning, the whole experience becomes really rewarding. In medical school, you're also surrounded by people with so many shared formative experiences and interests, which makes your time so much more enjoyable. Because of this, there's always more to learn and to do. But if you earnestly engage with all of it, you'll look up after a while and wonder where the days, weeks, and months went. So save time in the day to relax, engage with your hobbies, catch up with family and friends, and reflect. You may not realize it now, but the time will truly fly by.

Chris B., M1

The Big Sib Program

Every incoming WashU Med student is paired up with a Big Sib in the class above them based on their hobbies, backgrounds, and/or medical interests, and it's a channel to direct any questions you may have about St. Louis, medical school, or life in general. And while Big-Little relationships vary quite a bit, I personally view both my Big and my Little simply as close friends. Don't get me wrong — it's been super helpful to be able to ask my Big Sib about topics like study tips, recommendations for the best scrubs, or the clerkship experience. However, my favorite thing to do with her has just been getting “girl brunch” and talking about life. Meanwhile, my Little and I are exceptionally similar and have a shared interest in good food, so we spend time cooking together and exploring the restaurants in St. Louis. Personally, I try to hang out with each of them at least once a month and find it to be a great way to get out of the bubble that is my own medical school class. The Big Sib system provides a way for classes to mingle among each other, and I've met so many of my friends in the year above by going to events with my Big.

Grace C., M2

Advice from Phase Two Students

How to Thrive in Clerkships and Support Systems Available

Clerkships are one of the most challenging yet rewarding parts of medical school. It's a time where the most growth happens, but like with any major life changes, it comes with some growing pains.

When it comes to preparing for the actual clerkship, advice for success will really vary per clerkship, so the best advice is to ask your Big for their tips, or to connect you with someone who has been through that rotation. As clerkships move along, you can also start asking your classmates for advice. Each rotation will have its specific challenges and tips for success, and I really relied on talking to someone who has been through the rotation for key information.

Generally, though, it's important to be prepared. Read up on patients and make sticky notes in Epic so you can see them efficiently in clinic. Read up on conditions that are highest yield for your rotation, and set expectations with teams on the first day. When you have at least some background knowledge and are able to stay engaged, it makes the learning stick so much better and makes everything so much more interesting.

Self-care during this year is critical to prioritize. Build routines that work for you — whether that be meal prepping, grocery shopping on certain days, setting a day aside for chores, or building in time dedicated to your hobbies or exercise. Also, build time for relaxing and turning off your brain! Something that keeps me motivated throughout each clerkship is scheduling activities with friends to have something to look forward to, especially during the weekends. Some of my friends and I always have a paint night during each clerkship, and it has been one of the things I look forward to the most. Clerkships can feel extremely time consuming, particularly with all the studying, but being able to connect with your people can help you stay grounded and de-stress. Don't be afraid to take a day — or more — off if you need it.

Also, a quick plug for mental health services that WashU Med's Student Health offers at really reasonable co-pay rates (\$10 per session). It can be extremely helpful to have someone to talk to through the ups and downs of clerkship year, and I know many students have really benefited from seeing a therapist regularly. You can find more information at studenthealth.med.wustl.edu/students/mental-health-information/.

Remember, you will learn SO much during clerkships, but the reality is that it can be super tough to juggle it all. Be kind to yourself if you can't follow the rigid study schedule you had set for yourself at the start, or when you incorrectly answer a question your attending asks. It is all a part of the process! At times you may feel incompetent or like a deer in headlights on a new rotation, but the whole point of this year is to learn things you have never experienced before. You are not expected to know it all. At the end of the day, you are finally doing what you came

to medical school to do — to take care of patients. Don't forget that! Build relationships and go the extra mile for your patients. Oftentimes, medical students can make the biggest difference, and it is truly a rewarding experience to finally be able to make a real difference in patients' lives.

Tiffany C., M3

Advice from Phase Three Students

Choosing a Specialty

Choosing a specialty within clinical medicine is one of those fundamental questions tied to your identity as a medical student. Your parents want to know, your residents and attendings will want to know, and you want to know for yourself what you'll spend the next 20-30 years doing day in and day out!

First, let's remind ourselves that life is long and flexible. Even once you commit to a specialty field, you will have flexibility to take on additional fellowships or different jobs to practice aspects you love and avoid parts you find tedious. With that said, here is a relatively simple algorithm to follow: Do you like surgery or medicine? Now, you can go forth and explore the various subspecialties within general surgery and surgical subspecialties (neurosurgery, orthopedics, plastics, urology, otolaryngology, ophthalmology, etc.) or in medicine and pediatrics (allergy, rheumatology, cardiology, gastroenterology, hematology/oncology, etc). For example, if the OR is your favorite place in the hospital (but not in the world), choose anesthesiology. If you like cerebral medicine but don't like patient contact, consider radiology or pathology. If you like a bit of everything, consider internal or family medicine. Women's health plus surgery? Obstetrics and gynecology. And once you've narrowed down your choices to similar subfields, you should consider lifestyle and financial aspects of a typical practitioner within those fields to differentiate.

I came into medical school knowing I was most interested in surgical care, started research in a niche-surgical specialty subfield to give myself options in the future, did rotations in almost all the subspecialties, and came down to two similar choices. Ultimately, I chose a field whose people I most enjoyed spending time with and that gave me the most flexibility in future types of fellowships, practices, and lifestyles that I could accommodate alongside my non-medical interests. At the end of the day, being around people you enjoy, patients who appreciate your care as much as you appreciate them, and clinical experiences that make time fly by, will keep you uplifted.

Kwasi E., M4

I started medical school thinking that I would go into psychiatry or orthopedic surgery. I started shadowing both to get a better feel for the specialties and knew that I would get even more exposure during clerkships. Now that I'm in my fourth year, I'm applying into emergency medicine. Picking a specialty can be a challeng-

ing process, and it's important to not rush through it. My advice would be to think about the day-to-day in a given field, not just about the most exciting parts. For me, there was a lot to love about both psychiatry and orthopedic surgery, but the day-to-day of emergency medicine had me waking up even more excited to go into the hospital. I've found that the actual experience of rotating with a certain specialty can feel vastly different than what you might imagine, so make sure to rotate through as many services as you can. There are always rotations that you will enjoy far more than expected and rotations you enjoy far less than you imagined. Lastly, I find it helpful to write about my experience on each rotation both during it and immediately afterwards. It'll be helpful to reflect on months later when you're looking to make your final decision.

Justin Y., M4

Taking Time Off to Explore Other Interests and Degrees

I'm doing a dual MD/MPH degree at WashU. This means that I finished three years at WashU Med, hopped over to the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis this year for an accelerated one-year MPH, and then will complete my last year of medical school next year. I've really enjoyed diving deeply into public health and using a different side of my brain this year. There are so many different options for taking an extra year at or outside of WashU Med in all interests, from research to entrepreneurship to health equity. WashU Med also gives you plenty of flexibility and support along the way. My advice would be to keep an open mind and to talk to older students and faculty mentors if you are interested in taking an extra year!

Shannon C., M4

Tips on Maximizing Phase Three

Phase Three begins after you complete your clinical clerkships. During this time, you're expected to write two of your board exams (Step 1 and Step 2), complete two mandatory Keystone integrated science courses (KISCs) and two advanced clinical rotations (ACRs — one in your selected specialty and one in medicine), prepare your residency applications and interview for residency spots, and complete a Capstone course aimed at preparing you to be a rockstar during your intern year. It can feel overwhelming at the start, but there are resources available at WashU Med to ease your experience.

Your coach, specialty advisor, mentors from your chosen field, Dean Kathy Diemer and Angie MacBryde from Career Counseling, and Phase Three/Year Four medical students applying to your chosen specialty will be your trusted guides to ensure your Phase Three experience goes smoothly. Therefore, my first tip for maximizing Phase Three involves engaging and staying connected with all the aforementioned individuals from the end of Phase Two until Match Day. They can advise you on how best to schedule your rotations (including away rotations) and

board exams to ensure that you obtain everything you need to prepare for residency applications, which open in early September. They can read your personal statement, which you should start writing as early as possible in Phase Three, and help proofread your residency application.

Making the most of your sub-internships and elective rotations is also equally essential for refining your clinical skills and clarifying your career goals. These rotations aren't just about showcasing your medical knowledge. It is also about improving clinical skills and demonstrating teamwork, communication, and adaptability, providing you with meaningful experiences to discuss in your personal statement and during your interviews. It is also the best time to gather stellar and outstanding recommendation letters from faculty. After submitting a great application with all the necessary materials, utilize available resources — mentorship, mock interviews, and workshops — to fine-tune your interview skills. Approach each interview as an opportunity to showcase your capabilities and assess the program's fit with your aspirations. Additionally, as interview season can be stressful, it may be best to schedule vacation blocks or non-hectic rotations to ensure that you have time outside of interviews and rotations to relax and take care of yourself. Finally, celebrate all the little successes (every interview matters) and hope in the fact that all your hard work, dedication, and perseverance will eventually pay off when you match and become the amazing physician you have been working so hard toward becoming.

Favour G., M4

Advice from Our Mentors

From Eva Aagaard, MD

*Carol B. and Jerome T. Loeb Professor of Medical Education,
Senior Associate Dean for Education, Vice Chancellor for
Medical Education*



Eva Aagaard, MD

Welcome! I hope each of you takes a moment to breathe, take pride in your accomplishments, and to thank those who have helped you to achieve them. 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 joys of my life and the focus of my career.

Here are a few things to consider as you progress through medical school and the rest of your career as a physician:

- Reflect on what you enjoy and what you don't enjoy. When you have a really great day, ask yourself what made it great and why? 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 helpful partners as you reflect on these things to choose your next steps.
- 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 well. You will benefit from these habits and patterns for the rest of your career.
- Get to know your patients. We can become 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. These stories help us tailor their care in partnership with them and their priorities. Moreover, when patients feel seen and heard, they experience better care.

- Get to know each other, 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. Many of these folks will become your lifelong friends and colleagues.
- 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

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

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



Brian Edelson, MD, PhD

From Colleen Wallace, MD

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



Colleen Wallace, MD

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

Relationships are essential to the practice of medicine. The relationships you develop with patients, peers, faculty, and other colleagues will impact the care you are able to provide. These relationships — along with those in your personal life — will also help keep you balanced and bring meaning to your work. In every interaction, pause to think about what biases you may have and how you can mitigate their impact, what barriers to care may exist and how you can help overcome them, and above all — remember the person inside each patient, caretaker, and colleague. When we're tired or stressed, it's easy to forget that they all have their own stories, but one of the most important things we can do as a physician is to ensure that people feel heard and cared for. Remember the wise words of St. Louisan Maya Angelou: "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

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

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

From Erika Crouch, MD, PhD

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



Erika Crouch, MD, PhD

Welcome, class!

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

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

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

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

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

From Ilana Rosman, MD

Associate Professor of Dermatology, Dermatology Residency Program Director



Ilana Rosman, MD

Even before entering your first class and donning your first white coat, I'm sure you've already been asked, "So, what kind of doctor are you going to be?" You will likely be asked this every time someone learns you are a medical student. I would challenge you to think of that question differently than typically intended — not what specialty you will pursue but how you will doctor, what patients you will serve, and what attributes you will bring to the practice of medicine. One key way to do this is to keep an open mind in every lecture, patient interaction, and clinical encounter. Even if you are 100% certain you will pursue orthopedic surgery or pediatrics or dermatology, I promise you can learn something unexpected from patients, peers, and faculty in every other specialty you work in. These small nuggets will give you a richer foundation for your future career in medicine. And, you may even find many other specialties you are excited to explore. (It's actually amazing to love multiple specialties and have the freedom to choose among multiple career options!)

As a program director, I'm often asked — even by M1s! — how to build a strong residency application. My advice is to put residency applications out of your mind for as long as possible. Trust me, I know that's hard! I would challenge you to look at medical school not as the time to build your application for residency but rather as the place to develop the foundation to serve as a physician in whatever capacity is most meaningful to you. Remember that a career in medicine is not limited to the clinical practice of a specific specialty. Many physicians (including almost all of those you will work with throughout the next four years and beyond) have multi-faceted careers where, in addition to patient care, they engage in research, advocacy, education, or policy (or several of these!). Pursue the activities and experiences that you find personally and professionally fulfilling — regardless of what specialty they may be attached to. Your journey through medical school should be unique and incredibly personal to your own story, aspirations, and mission. And believe me, if you forge your own path founded on your passions and values, that will shine through when you're ready to apply for residency. Most importantly, you will be well on your way to crafting a meaningful and fulfilling career that will last well beyond your residency training. Enjoy this time and make the most of it.

From Jonathan Mullin, MD*Course Director, Clinical Skills*

The “reminiscence bump” is a psychological phenomenon where older adults preferentially remember autobiographical information from adolescence and early adulthood.

Researchers think this is because these memories contribute most to one’s sense of self. You are now (most likely) at an age that you’ll remember for the rest of your life. Most physicians (this one included) would tell you that their profession is a part of their identity. And your process of becoming a physician starts now. Like it or not, these are the times of your life you’ll look back on often.

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

Think for a minute about all it took for you to be here starting medical school at WashU Med: 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.

**Jonathan Mullin, MD**

From Koong-Nah Chung, PhD

Associate Dean for Medical Student Research

You will spend the next four-plus years at WashU Med 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 healthy 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 Missouri 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 Michelle M. Miller-Thomas, MD

Associate Professor of Radiology, Radiology Thread Leader, Director of Medical Student Education in Radiology, Vice Chair for Faculty Development

Congratulations on beginning your career in medicine! The volume of medical knowledge and vast complexity of skills that a physician needs to master can feel overwhelming for a new student. After 20 years of practice, I find that I am still learning every day. Some of this stems from the rapid changes occurring in medicine every year as we learn more about disease processes and discover better ways to care for our patients. It also comes from the wonderful environment that the WashU Med community provides for all of us to learn in. This is a place of discovery and innovation where our physicians and scientists are leading the research and development important for the future of medicine. It is a place where teachers and mentors patiently guide students and residents through their education. And finally, it is a place where everyone is empowered to ask questions with the intention of providing better care for our patients. I encourage all of my students to challenge me



Michelle M. Miller-Thomas, MD

and ask me why. As you ask questions to seek to understand my clinical reasoning surrounding a case or understand the foundational principles underlying a patient's condition, you are contributing to this community of learning and culture of growth. Medicine will continue to evolve and the pace of change will very likely accelerate over the course of your career, so developing a mindset open to learning and improvement will be a critical skill.

During your time in medical school, embrace all of the learning opportunities. You may not see yourself pursuing a specific field in medicine, but take the time now to learn all that you can learn about it. Run towards opportunities to practice skills or to try new things. Don't worry about being wrong or failing, but rather be open to feedback so that you can learn to do it successfully the next time. Remember that you can learn from anyone in the clinical environment; value the pearls of wisdom and seek feedback from health care professionals who are not physicians. Finally, take a moment every day to reflect on a small accomplishment along your path to becoming a physician to remind yourself that you are capable of reaching your goal at the end of the long journey.

From Nichole Zehnder, MD

Associate Dean for Educational Strategy, Associate Professor of Medicine

Dear Students,

It feels like only yesterday that our admissions team was calling you with congratulations, sharing the excitement of our Committee on Admissions about your potential as an integral part of this year's entering class. Your reactions — tears, screams, speechlessness — filled me with immense pride, a feeling that persists as I eagerly anticipate walking alongside you in this new chapter of your lives.

As you embark on your journey into the magnificent, complex, and inherently imperfect world of medicine, I urge you to embrace courage. Display it in subtle ways with your peers, your patients, and importantly, with yourself.

What does courage look like among peers? I recall, as a young faculty member, feeling overwhelmed by new leadership responsibilities, a young family, and a demanding clinical role. 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. Listen attentively, care deeply, and be prepared to embrace the real answers to "How are you feeling?"

Courage extends to your interactions with patients. Soon, you will be an integral part of the health care team, responsible for countless individuals. There will be times when you recognize the shortcomings of our health care system. In those moments, advocate for seamless follow-up plans and appropriate resources for



Nichole Zehnder, MD

your patients. Challenge your team if the care plan lacks a holistic approach. On exhausting days, resist the urge to end your shift, choosing instead to sit beside a patient, offering comfort and a listening ear. Do this even when you have had a long day and you are juggling nine million things. I am asking you to be courageous even when it is hard.

Finally, be courageous with yourself. As unique, incredible individuals, each of you has a story that resonated with our Admissions Committee. Stories of inspiration from family members, the richness of your diverse cultural backgrounds, and your accomplishments as perhaps the first in your family to pursue a career in medicine. As you delve into the medical profession, celebrate your personal journey. The medical field often emphasizes standardized pathways and protocols for the benefit of patient care. However, never lose sight of your individuality — your culture, passions, values, and identities. These are the elements that enrich the diverse tapestry necessary in medicine.

To the Entering Class of 2024, congratulations once again! I am thrilled at the prospect of welcoming you and witnessing your journey in this noble field.

From Timothy T. Yau, MD

Course Director, Clinical Skills

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

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

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

Lastly, we hope you are eager to learn, but also want you to ENJOY your medical school experience. Some of the strongest bonds are forged here, and you will need support from family, old friends, and the new friends you will make. Get



Timothy T. Yau, MD

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

From Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD

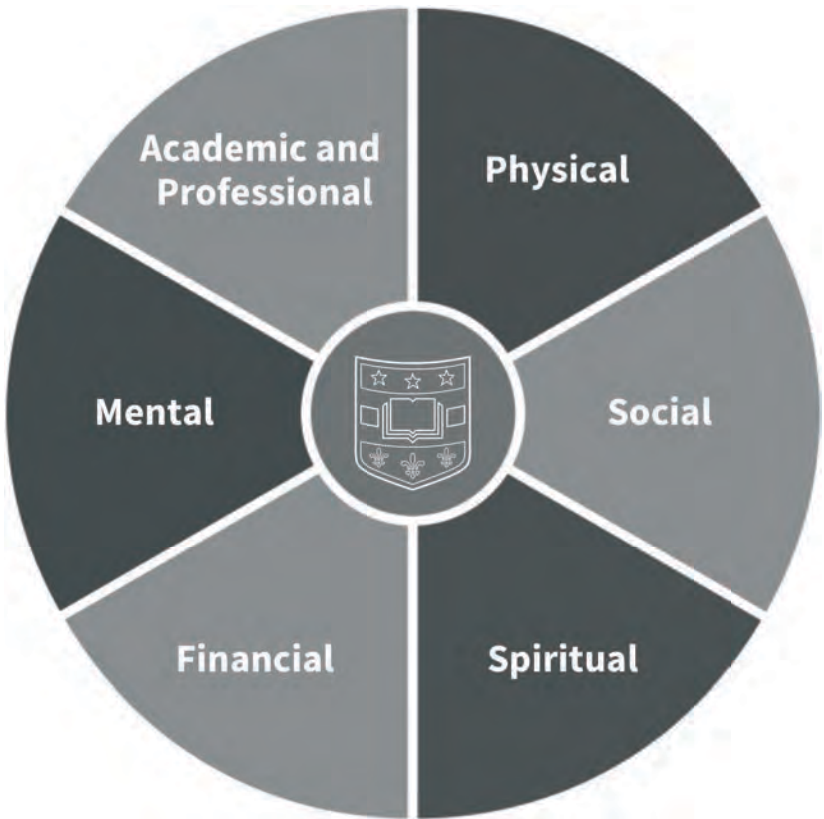
Director, Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

It's exciting to be a first-year medical student! You will learn how the human body works in detail, from head to toe, from gross anatomy to subatomic structures. However, some of the current concepts and "facts" you will learn will prove to be wrong. That's right (actually still wrong!). It's not that you're being deliberately taught misinformation. It's just that we don't know our own ignorance (yet). Keep in mind, what you're learning is how we understand things, circa 2024. But we don't know what we don't know.



Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD

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



Wellness

I will treat myself with the same grace I show my patients and colleagues, valuing my own wellness.

— an excerpt from the class oath written by the
Entering Class of 2023

SECTION EDITOR: NANCY JIANG

Wellness

Academic Societies

Every medical student at WashU Med is assigned to one of three Academic Societies (Cori, Erlanger-Graham, and Lowry-Moore). As a Lowry-Moore Society Lead, I've loved planning a variety of events for wellness, including large socials (Dim Sum Social, with 120+ people) and small dinners (Faculty Dinners, with ~10 people). As a whole, the Society Leads host fun and welcoming events to promote student wellness, belonging, and connection to faculty and upperclassmen.

Lilly G., M2

Coaching Groups

Coaching groups meet every few weeks and give you the chance to have conversations about medicine and life in general with a close-knit group of students and a faculty coach. Occasional one-on-one meetings with your coach also serve as a way to receive personal feedback regarding your clinical skills and curriculum progress. Coaching groups are also a great wellness resource with coaches and fellow classmates being willing to listen and offer advice on anything from good restaurants and workout spots to difficult life events. The coaches are wonderful and really care about holistically helping you grow as a person and as a clinician.

William C., M1

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 fewer 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, Course Director, Clinical Skills

Gratitude

To me, gratitude in medical school means practicing thankfulness toward ourselves, toward our loved ones and supporters, and toward this profession and everyone we have the privilege of meeting within it. To practice gratitude toward myself, I like to schedule a daily 30-minute block into my calendar to do something I love — from playing violin to FaceTiming my family and keeping up with their lives. I also try to journal two to three sentences every night in which I reflect on the things I appreciated and took away most from that day. Practicing gratitude toward this profession has also been essential toward my wellness as a medical student. Beyond expressing thanks to the incredible physician advisors and teachers, residents and medical student mentors, and my peers here at WashU Med, what motivates me day in and day out along this journey is being thankful for the patients and the health care teams whom I have the honor to interact with: people who help me learn how to be a more compassionate future physician, care and respect me, and teach me more about how I want to contribute to medicine moving forward.

Joanna L., M1

Medical school is universally recognized as a demanding journey. If you're anything like me, you've probably come across numerous TikToks and videos reinforcing that fact, as well as some tips to cut through it in the most efficient way possible. However, what I felt these videos rarely emphasized is that despite the challenges, expressing gratitude during this period can be the line between sinking and thriving. Will there be lectures where you feel lost? Absolutely. Will there be times when the number of Anki cards feels overwhelming? Most likely. Yet, amidst the struggles, it's vital to occasionally reflect on the privilege of learning from top experts, surrounded by some of the most cutting-edge technology that the field of medicine offers. This is the moment you've worked so hard for; you've made it! Therefore, attending that series of mandatory 8 a.m. lectures or participating in those late afternoon discussions is not a requirement to fulfill; instead, it's an opportunity you are privileged to have — a chance to explore further all those topics you dream of. Life doesn't begin after reaching residency or achieving any type of milestone after that; you are living it now. Take every opportunity to appreciate the journey, smell the roses, and acknowledge the blessings along the way.

Sydney M., M1

While I knew even before I was accepted that studying at WashU Med would be a privilege and that I would be grateful for the opportunity, I'm only just now beginning to see the exact reasons as to why I should be grateful. While I could drone on about all the great things at WashU Med, I think the single most important element here is the culture. From each person in the administration who somehow knows a dozen ways to help you, to my fellow students who somehow all know

more about everything than I do, every person is a source of knowledge and perspective. But more than that, every person is not only able and willing to help, but is intentionally active in doing so. From something as simple as giving you their personal phone number over their professional one to going above and beyond in finding resources to help answer your questions, the amazing people around me make it genuinely difficult for me to find reasons to not be grateful.

Jake J., M1

Gym and Facilities

A big part of wellness includes physical fitness, and I can emphatically say that I've had a fantastic experience with the WashU Med gym (818 Fitness) at the Core. There is everything you would need in a gym: plenty of cardio machines, free weights up to 100 pounds, three squat racks, a deadlift platform, as well as a giant cable machine with associated cable exercises. It's always clean and open for very reasonable hours (6 a.m. – 10 p.m.). The gym is also a mere three-minute walk from the Washington University Medical Campus, making it very easy to go before, between, or after class! The other nice part is that the gym is exclusively for WashU Med students, so it never gets terribly busy. I also really enjoy seeing all of my classmates and catching up with some older students whom I don't see as often. Overall, the Core has contributed very positively to my physical and mental well-being by offering a great gym to keep me fit while interacting with my wonderful friends and classmates.

Mitch M., M1

On Financial Wellness

Life as a medical student with no income and considerable expenses can be stressful, especially when you have unexpected expenses and a small budget. Coming straight from undergrad, I wasn't exactly sure how my expenses in St. Louis would stack up. However, I've always been a budgeter, and I've found that having a budget and an app to track my expenses has helped me feel in control of my finances. I've found that it's helpful to leave a little room in my budget for unexpected expenses like professional memberships, and for small, fun items like birthday gifts for a friend or the occasional sit-down meal. I've always been a bargain shopper, so I clip coupons on the Schnucks app or head to Aldi to get groceries. I've also taken advantage of auto-pay options for rent and utilities, which means I have one less thing to cross off my to-do list. The Office of Student Financial Planning, in addition to facilitating financial aid, is a great resource for financial planning and wellness, and even provides one-on-one appointments to help students create a budget.

Sydney W., M1

Student Health Services

Based on my experience, Dr. Karen Winters and WashU Med's Student Health Services are the best student health service in the country. According to my peers and many students in the years above me, this is not a hot take — it's a fact. The health plan is comprehensive (dental, no-cost imaging, self-scheduling for various specialties, highly accessible mental health consulting, etc.), and a physician appointment is just one phone call away. Personally, I've been thoroughly impressed by the turnaround time (<20 hours for comprehensive blood chemistry) and by the procedural skills of everyone in the office (by far the most painless procedures of my life). Health, both physical and mental, is so important in making sure that you are able to perform your best on this journey, and WashU Med's Student Health Services is simply unparalleled among all health institutions that I've visited in my life (and I grew up a train ride away from Massachusetts General Hospital).

Justin C., M1

WashU Med Student Health Services (SHS) provides students enrolled at WashU Med 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 WashU Med. SHS is a primary resource for medical and mental health services. The comprehensive array of services ranges from acute to chronic care, gynecological services, sexual health counseling and testing, travel advice, immunizations update, allergy shots, lab testing, etc. There is also a formulary for dispensing prescribed medication. We look forward to addressing all of your primary care health concerns and needs.

Karen Winters, MD, Student Health Services

What Wellness is to Me

To me, wellness means recognizing that there are some things worth prioritizing over work or studying. The summer before classes started, I wrote down a list of my non-negotiables, things that I would prioritize over work. I wrote down things that felt essential to who I am or what I need to feel my best (things like getting at least seven hours of sleep per night, being a part of a faith community, and making some time for cooking, hanging out with friends, and being creative). I made a promise to myself that no matter how much work I had to do, these things came first. They are not things that make me a better medical student or make me more productive, but they simply add a little more fun into my day and allow me to recenter on who I am outside of medicine.

Liz B., M1

Balancing your academic and personal life can be challenging, but it's achievable at WashU Med because of the amenities available to us both on and off campus. Every day after classes, I run my usual one to two miles on the treadmills at the Core Gym (818 Fitness), which I highly recommend. On the weekends, you'll find me playing tennis with my peers at either Shaw Park or Hudlin Park near Barnes-Jewish Hospital. And occasionally, I play the piano in the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center, trying to relearn and reminisce upon classical pieces that I performed at recitals many years ago. Through my habitual use of WashU Med's amenities, I have been able to maintain my physical and mental well-being.

Kevin T., M1

