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

Written by first-year medical students for the next incoming class, the *Dis-Orientation* Guide is the definitive source for how to happily survive and thrive at Washington University School of Medicine.

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Welcome to Washington University School of Medicine! As you prepare to enter the next chapter of your life, the Dis-Orientation Guide (Dis-O Guide) will introduce you to the ins and outs of life as a medical student. Before you enter the guide, take in some words of wisdom from the Dean of the School of Medicine, the Dean of Admissions, and the medical student editors of the Dis-O Guide.
Welcome

Dear Members of the WUSM Entering Class of 2019,

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

From Dean Valerie Ratts

The editors have graciously given me room to say, “Welcome to Washington University School of Medicine and the Dis-O Guide.” This is a document truly written by our students for you. In our medical school, there are traditions, but much of what we do is consistently evolving. This Dis-O Guide 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 or a matriculated medical student moving into the Core apartments and waiting to start the Washington University Medical Plunge (WUMP). Since 1987, the Dis-O Guide has been produced to show you an inside look into what Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM), our medical students, and the St. Louis region have to offer. Hopefully, while reading, you will smile and recognize a part of yourself in the descriptions.

The Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM) mission statement calls for the training of the next leaders in biomedicine in a culture that supports diversity, inclusion, critical thinking, and creativity. Attracting the very best students — as we have done and are dedicated to continue doing — is a key step in meeting this goal. The next step is to make sure we provide the knowledge, experiences, resources, and mentorship to support our students in the journey to an amazing medical career. For those still making a decision, this guide will show you some of the possibilities available here. For those who have made their decision, I like the suggestion that the Dis-O Guide will provide “insider advice” to a great medical school and education.

What advice can I give you? 1) Get to know your classmates. Like you, they are amazing. Many will become lifelong friends and colleagues. 2) Do not lose your enthusiasm. You are starting down a pathway that will require diligence, sacrifice, and hard work, but will also bring tremendous reward. Doctors play truly special roles in the lives of people. It is an honor and privilege to practice this profession. 3) Rely upon the skills and characteristics that have brought you to this point. Attitude makes a huge difference. You were chosen because you have unique, elite attributes that will allow you to contribute to meeting the challenges of health care and biomedical research in the future. And remember, as a famous St. Louis Blues hockey player, Wayne Gretzky, said, “You miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.”

There are so many people at WUSM who wish to mentor, support, and grow young physicians. We hope the Dis-O Guide will be one source of information to assist you on your path to an unbelievably satisfying medical career.

Valerie S. Ratts, MD
Associate Dean for Admissions and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology
Welcome

From the Editors

Dear Entering Class of 2019,

Welcome to the 2019 Dis-O Guide! For the past 30+ years, first-year medical students at WUSM have annually prepared the Dis-O Guide to offer their perspectives and advice to prospective and incoming WUSM students. You’re reading not only the next installment in a long-standing WUSM tradition, but also a sample of our class’s contribution to WUSM history.

We are particularly excited to announce that this guide features the voices of 63 of our classmates (and some guest contributors from other class years) who were eager to share snippets of their lives here at WUSM. We also added a new section this year dedicated to service. Almost everyone in our class believes service is an important component of our medical education, so this year we wanted to highlight WUSM’s and students’ dedication to service both on campus and in the broader St. Louis community. Though it is not comprehensive, we hope you glean a sense of an involvement in service that extends beyond a commitment to serving our future patients.

Dis-O is also filled with information about what it’s like being a student at WUSM and living in St. Louis, so, regardless of where you’re coming from, we hope you’ll gain more insight into life at our medical school. We both found the Dis-O Guide to be incredibly helpful as we were making our decisions to attend WUSM. From reading about classes, to students’ experiences living in St. Louis, to even their apprehension about moving to the Midwest, we quickly recognized that we could all thrive here. WUSM is an amazing place filled with welcoming people, unique opportunities, and happy students, and the Dis-O Guide offers the honest, unfiltered opinions of our classmates who volunteered to write. Of course, it doesn’t encompass the extensive diversity of the experiences and beliefs of our class, but we hope that it gives you an idea of who we are and the reasons we love our school.

Sincerely,

Marina Nogueira and Sukruth Shashikumar
2019-2020 Dis-Orientation Guide Co-Editors-in-Chief
Meet the Guide Editors

Marina Nogueira  
Co-Editor-in-Chief  
I grew up in Santa Cruz, California, studied molecular biology and neuroscience at Princeton University, and then worked for two years in Boston doing cancer research. Besides science and medicine, I also enjoy swimming, weightlifting, cooking, and reading.

Sukruth Shashikumar  
Co-Editor-in-Chief  
Originally from Farmington Hills, Michigan, I graduated from Washington University with majors in biochemistry and Spanish. In my free time, I enjoy playing the piano, biking, and learning new languages.

Gabbie Johnson  
Section Editor  
I grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. I went to Princeton University, where I studied molecular biology and Spanish. When I’m not studying or at school, I enjoy watching Netflix, reading, and shadowing in the Barnes Emergency Department.

Genevieve Tuite  
Section Editor  
I’m from St. Petersburg, Florida. I just graduated from the University of Notre Dame with a major in the Program of Liberal Studies. I love to read novels, throw theme parties, and try new foods.

Adrienne Visani  
Section Editor & Cover Designer  
I was born and raised in Denver, and then moved out west to Los Angeles for college. After studying neuroscience at the University of Southern California, I spent two years doing neuroimaging research at the University of California, San Francisco. I’m a huge fan of mountains, reading, the YouTube cooking video revolution, stand-up and sketch comedy, and exercise!

Drew Del Toro  
Web Editor & Cover Designer  
Minnesota born and raised, then California educated with a biology major from Santa Clara University, I’ve come back to the Midwest for another taste of winter(-lite). When I’m not hibernating after class, I enjoy gaming of all types, putting in time on the erg, and devouring book after book on my phone.

Hannah Truong  
Section Editor  
Hi all! I’m from Bellingham, Washington, and went to Yale for undergrad, where I studied molecular biophysics and biochemistry, and had a curricular concentration in health care policy and economics. In my free time, I like throwing extravagant dinner parties, watching The Bachelor, drinking too much coffee, Instagramming, and talking health care reform.

Luxi Qiao  
Section Editor  
I grew up in Tallahassee, Florida, and studied chemistry at Williams College. I then spent two years in the UK studying for my master’s. In my free time, I love biking, hiking, cooking, and watching movies.

Jesús Bazán Villicaña  
Section Editor  
I grew up in Indianapolis and went to Indiana University for undergrad, where I studied microbiology and neuroscience. When I’m not playing soccer, I can be found eating at a new restaurant, playing board games, or watching a movie.

Monica Lim  
Section Editor & Photographer  
I grew up in Piney Woods of East Texas and made my way to Washington University to study biology and urban studies. I loved being here so much that I decided to renew my lease. Ask me about living in St. Louis, running in Forest Park, taking photos, or finding time for reading in med school.

Christine Ma  
Section Editor  
I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington, and studied biochemistry at the University of Washington (the other Washington University!). Now that I’ve (mostly) escaped the rain, I spend my free time playing the violin, reading and writing fantasy stories, eating barbecue, and singing in the shower.

Section editors are listed in their respective sections.
Why WashU

See some of the reasons we chose Washington University School of Medicine.

Section Editor: Gabbie Johnson
WashU has made my experience as an international student as comfortable as I could have imagined it. I was born and raised in Toronto, Canada, but unlike all of my fellow international classmates, I did not complete my undergraduate degree in the U.S. As a result, I had many concerns that I frankly did not know the answer to during the application process. Would I be able to afford the cost of medical school? Would I be able to go back to Canada to practice in the future? Would I be comfortable being so far away from my family? These were just a few of the things I was thinking about.

Ultimately, I decided to come to WashU because it was the place that I felt the most at home. This started during my interview day, where I was given a one-on-one financial aid briefing during which the advisor walked me through the exact steps I would have to take. This was very thoughtful and helpful, as the other financial aid presentations on the interview trail did not apply to me because I am not American. On top of the help I got from the financial aid office, WUSM’s Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion provided me with financial support that I would not have received from most other schools I applied to.

But the most important thing that helped me make my decision was the people that I met at Second Look weekend. I have never been away from my family for any extended period of time, so it was important to me to be surrounded by a great group of people. I ended up meeting my roommate at Second Look, as well as many others that I will be lifelong friends with. I still do end up homesick from time to time, but it is a lot easier to manage when I’m surrounded by the great support system that I have at WashU.

— Abraham O., M1

After I got to the St. Louis airport on my way back home to the West Coast, I remember gushing to my fiancée about my interview at WashU. I’ve always adhered to logic and reasoning when making big life decisions, but I couldn’t shake my gut feeling that WashU was the school where I would thrive as a medical student. I rambled on about the students and faculty I met who were helping deliver health care overseas, working to change national policy, or completing Nobel Prize-worthy research, and all of them seemed ecstatic to meet me. The whole day, the medical students and faculty spoke about how much care and support the medical students receive, and it all felt real. After about 30 minutes of my stream of consciousness distracting her from finishing her work for the day, my fiancée finally interjected, “Wow, it sounds like you really liked it! It sounds like you’re definitely going there!”

Now that I’ve been studying here for a few months, surrounded by an awesome class, I know that I definitely made the right decision. The admissions committee does an amazing job of bringing together extremely accomplished individuals who are also some of the most genuine and supportive people I have ever met. Our class became very close during our extended two-week orientation, which was both a great introduction to systemic challenges in St. Louis that our patients face, as well as a stress-free time to meet new friends. In addition to
my classmates, the professors are world-class researchers and clinicians but will drop whatever they’re doing to mentor a student, come into the anatomy lab on the weekend prior to an exam, or have students over for dinner to talk about their life story. Even the little things like daily free coffee and tea in the library, or our own dedicated study spaces and lounges, make me glad to be here. I am so happy that I am a medical student here, and I know that it is the people surrounding me that make WashU feel like home.

— Andrew C., M1

For me, the story of “Why Wash U?” goes all the way back to middle school. My seventh grade English teacher assigned all of us one monument to write about and I was assigned the Gateway Arch. Researching the 630-foot, stainless steel beauty that is the Arch was a highlight of seventh grade, and 12-year-old me grew ever so slightly obsessed with one day seeing the tallest manmade monument in the Western hemisphere. But time passed, and by the time I was graduating high school and moving from Florida to Massachusetts for school, I’d put my middle school fascination with the Arch far behind me.

After graduating college and completing two gap years in D.C., I was planning to continue my extended tour of the East Coast and make my way back down south. But one of my good friends/unofficial premed advisor suggested that I look into WashU. I’d never considered living in the Midwest and was a bit nervous about the prospect. But after researching the school and learning about the curriculum and incredible research opportunities, I was more than willing to give it a shot and sent in my application.

Fast forward to interview day: I’m flying into WashU, I look out the window, and see that beautiful, 630-foot monument visible from the sky! With that welcome to the city, I landed in St. Louis, took the MetroLink lightrail to Central West End (CWE), and made my way to Olin campus for the applicant pizza dinner. From the first M1 I met that night to the M4 that gave us a tour on interview day, I was immediately taken in with how genuine and positive the current students were. It was all good vibes and positive energy, and I felt at home. Even the faculty, from the deans to the professors, were very obviously committed to their students and made an effort to make us all feel comfortable throughout the day.

But what really solidified my WashU decision for me was Second Look weekend. I was once again amazed at how open and kind the current students were, and I loved meeting all my potential classmates. From socials on rooftops to my first (of many) trips to Atomic Cowboy (a local bar with great music and fries!), I was taken in by the city and all the incredible haunts that I could explore during my time here. Here I was in the Midwest, but I felt right at home in this beautiful city that was just big enough for plenty of stuff to get into, and small enough to not feel lost in. And with the fantastic financial aid WashU has to offer, combined with its commitment to educating students on St. Louis history and serving the community, I was sold.
With a little extra time on my hands, I hopped on the Metro and went downtown and finally went to the top of the Gateway Arch. So, I made my decision to attend WashU about 63 stories above the ground, and I’ve loved every minute of being here at WashU and in the Midwest. In fact, this East Coast native may be a permanent Midwest transplant.

— Jennifer B., M1

Throughout my life, I’ve moved many times: I grew up in Korea, lived in six countries, moved to the United States, and moved halfway across the country for college, from the East Coast to the Midwest. The only constant in my life was constantly changing environments, and I really loved how I could explore different cultures and push beyond my comfort zones by immersing myself in different environments. When I was applying to medical schools, I was fully set on moving to a whole new environment — not because I didn’t like St. Louis or WashU (I went to WashU for undergrad and loved it!), but to challenge myself to explore places that I’ve never been before.

Well, I decided to stay in St. Louis after all, and I’m well on my way to becoming a WashU lifer. Though my initial mindset pushed me to strive for a change in scenery, I had to trust my gut feeling about where I felt at home. For me, the pros of WUSM significantly outweighed my stubborn mindset of wanting to live in a new environment.

So, what pushed me to stay? As much as it is cheesy and clichéd to say, the WUSM community is, in my opinion, truly second to none. The administration, faculty, physicians, and staff at WUSM are extremely supportive of their medical students. They are so happy that we are here, and they work tirelessly to support us and make sure we are heard and happy in an environment that fosters our personal development within and outside the world of medicine. During my meetings with professors, administration, and physicians, I genuinely feel heard, listened to, and cared for. For instance, Dr. Ratts always invites M1s to her house for a dinner to make ongoing changes to the admissions process, and Dr. Ross had the entire M1 class over to his house as part of Washington University Medical Plunge (WUMP) — which, by the way, is incredibly unique and special to WUSM! I learned a lot about how to be a physician who is aware of the inequalities within health care and engages with the St. Louis community with respect and humility.

Most importantly, the M1s I talked with during Second Look won me over — the students at WUSM were not only talented and passionate, but also humble and genuine. Now as an M1 myself, these initial gut feelings haven’t disappeared, but have been confirmed over and over again. Our class has been invited to so many homes, dinners, potlucks, and gatherings; this is the type of community — one where we all take care of each another — that I fell in love with and am now so invested in. I couldn’t think of a better place to be a medical student, and I can wholeheartedly state that following my gut feeling to attend WUSM has been one of the best decisions I’ve made.

— Joanna K., M1
Medical School Experience

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

Section Editor: Genevieve Tuite
Academics

Anatomy

As one of the Anatomy course liaisons this year, I obviously had an immediate investment in the course, but I was still surprised that it became my favorite class. I came to med school dreading Anatomy, since I was a guy who hated classes that primarily depended on rote memorization, and Anatomy seemed like the worst culprit among our first classes. However, after a few weeks, I began to find a lot more enjoyment in the course. Anatomy is a subject that you can see and sometimes apply in your day-to-day life, which for me made it more bearable than other classes which are smaller scale. It also helps that you form tight bonds with your Anatomy group and can socialize with friends at different tables under the guise of “seeing the anatomical variation of their donor.” There are definitely times where you’ll swear you never want to see fat or fascia ever again in your life, but I’m sure I’ll miss dissection once it’s gone.

— Will F., M1

Anki

Every day, those blessed to follow our lord and savior Anki choose to further themselves along the path to irreparable thumb damage. This path, founded on the principles of “spaced repetition” and the infamous “high–yield,” is not for the faint of heart; no, doing that same damn flashcard for the 15th time in two days — because you just can’t remember if it’s TOM22 or TIM23 that imports proteins into the mitochondrial matrix — takes a special type of masochism.

In all seriousness, Anki truly has been a lifesaver for me. It helps both in memorization of those obscure facts medical school loves to test and in their retention, through the spaced repetition algorithm, past the test date and *fingers crossed* until Step 1 (and not a minute after). Previous years have done us a huge favor in consolidating flashcard decks within Anki that are class — and lecture — specific, so you don’t even have to spend time making a single flashcard of your own. In addition to the class decks, there are decks for Step preparation (notably the Deng deck, made by a WUSM alum, and Zanki, which can be found online), which students use to augment their class studies.

There are many ways to succeed in medical school and Anki is only one of them, but if you’re like me and need multiple rounds of repetition to get those nitty gritty facts to stick, it might be worth trying Anki out. Who knows, you might just learn something.

— Reid C., M1
Histology
Histology is all about microscopic anatomy, so it involves identifying different cell types (many of which, at a surface-level glance, unfortunately look the same) and learning how they interact at a cellular- and systems-based level. Having taken Histology in undergrad, the course was not new to me, which was why I was excited to be one of the course liaisons. What surprised me was how challenging it was the second time around. There was a collective feeling of confusion in almost every lab, which suddenly dissipated with practice and the professors’ guidance, and I found that I quite liked the eventual feeling of understanding. The group setting of the labs allowed me to become close with my partners as we worked through problems during team competitions and scoured through microscope and online slides looking for the elusive basophil. I am looking forward to the next block and the new challenges we will face, as well as to hopefully becoming more competitive for the team competition. Is it too much to hope that our team will win?

— Hosannah E., M1

Mentorship
Even though starting medical school can be like stepping into a scary new world, WashU has amazing and accessible mentorship that can help you find your feet during M1. Everyone is matched with an M2 Big Sibling (the first upperclass student you get to bond with) who will give you honest advice on how to survive in med school — not just the work part, but the fun part too. All M1s also get an M4 clinical mentor, who guides us through some of our first patient interactions and gives great advice on medical school and applying to residency programs. Furthermore, the administration, your society dean, and your professors are proactive and available, whether you need help right now or are uneasy about the future.

Outside of class, you can easily reach out to any one of the amazing speakers involved in all the different aspects of health care who give lunch talks (with free food!) throughout the year. There are regular specialty interest group dinners during which physicians come in to chat and connect with students. Some physicians even host dinners at their own homes! In short, you have a LOT of different ways to be mentored, and it’s super easy to reach out and get in touch with opportunities for guidance, mentorship, and advice at any point during med school.

— Ashwin L., M1
**Molecular Foundations of Medicine (MFM)**

Molecular Foundations of Medicine (MFM) is an incredibly well-run course designed to teach all the biochemistry you need to know to establish a solid basis for your future medical studies. Dr. Pike is an amazing course director and lecturer who has been running this class for decades and has it down to a science. Even though one block of biochemistry may not seem like much, Dr. Pike masterfully organizes the course to educate you thoroughly on everything from protein structure and function, to metabolism, GPCRs, cancer, and more. Between lectures, the coursepack, small group sessions, and the textbook, there are more than enough resources suited for any type of learning style. The clinical correlations woven throughout the course material also provide an essential connection from the basic sciences to clinical medicine. Dr. Pike also includes short segments in every lecture called “Know-Your-Food,” which are truly gems. She takes everyday guilty pleasures, like pizza and ice cream sundaes, and recommends small modifications that make for delicious and healthy alternatives.

— Erin W., M1

**On Pass/Fail Coursework**

The perks of attending a pass/fail medical school where students aren’t ranked according to grades can’t be overstated! In med school, there’s always something else to be studied or another Anki card to be done, so not having to worry about memorizing every single detail in classes like Physiology or Anatomy is a huge benefit. Percentages to pass range from 65% to 70% depending on the class, and no record of your class rank is tracked besides the fact that you passed. Your greatest motivator is you, and the unranked pass/fail curriculum is instrumental in building our supportive environment here at WUSM, where collaboration and sharing of resources are the norm.

There’s so much to be done with the extra free time: napping, enjoying Addie’s Thai, running errands, going out with friends, trying food from cuisines all over the world in South Grand, doing research, getting involved in the St. Louis community through WashU-affiliated and non-affiliated organizations, and even interacting with interviewees at pizza parties. Pass/fail is just one of several factors that make WUSM a place where we maintain and build upon our hobbies and interests while enjoying the study of medicine.

— Sukruth S., M1
Physiology

If you’ve ever wondered how our bodies control blood pressure, how our cells respond to hypoxia, or how our kidneys filter blood — this is your class! In physiology, you’ll be learning all about how the human body works, from the cellular to the systemic levels. Taken over blocks 1 and 2, the course is split into sub-blocks that focus on the physiology of each major organ system: heart, lungs, kidneys, GI, and endocrine. There is a good mixture of basic science lectures, clinical lectures, and small groups scattered in each block.

The small group style is where we get to work in groups of four to six to problem-solve through case presentations and apply concepts learned in class to clinical scenarios. Small groups were a bit rocky at the beginning of the year, but after seeking and listening to all M1s’ feedback, the course directors were quite proactive in changing the small group styles to better meet our class’s needs. In general, I personally appreciate small groups because it’s a chance for non-lecture-goers like myself to take a break from napping/procrastinating/Ankiing and socialize with other members of the class, ensuring that we all continue to see each other and remain a tight-knit community.

— Sukruth S., M1

Practice of Medicine (POM)

Practice of Medicine (POM), our clinical skills course, is our first dive into patient care. After years of dreaming about becoming a physician, it is so exciting to start learning the hands-on techniques necessary to deliver care to those in need. Under the guidance of some fantastic faculty and specialists here at WUSM, we learn most aspects of the patient interview and physical exam by the end of block 1. Along with clinical skills, we also have discussions about health care policy, life as a practicing physician, and socioeconomic, cultural, and historical factors (to name a few) that affect how people interact with medical professionals and the health care system.

Personally, my favorite part of POM has been the opportunity to learn from a fourth-year clinical mentor. Two M1s are paired with one M4 who takes us into the hospital to practice interviewing and examining real patients several times throughout M1 year. Our mentors are an incredible resource, since they were in our shoes just a few years ago, and have so much insight into the WUSM experience, from preclinical courses to Step 1 to residency applications. I am grateful that as first-years, POM allows us to begin developing the skills and confidence we will use to take care of patients throughout our careers.

— Priyanka P., M1
WUMSWeb

A private website jam-packed with resources for WashU medical students (WUMS), WUMSWeb is a fantastic resource that is an instrumental part of student success and happiness at WashU. Files found on WUMSWeb include:

- Old exams dating back 15 years
- Premade Anki decks for each class
- An M1 class guide called “P = MD”
- A 120-page WashU-specific “clerkship survival guide” written for M3s
- Step 1 study resources
- And so much more!

Overwhelmed by the first couple days transitioning into med school? You can read “P = MD,” a guide written by M2s for newly minted M1s on study strategies and resources to use for each M1 class. Want to hit the ground running and save time by not having to worry about making your own flashcards? WUMSweb has tried-and-trusted Anki decks for every class you will take as a preclinical medical student. And there’s no better way to study than by taking old exams for all your classes. The WashU-specific resources on WUMSweb undoubtedly play a huge part in students’ success in class and, thus, our overall satisfaction and happiness.

— Sukruth S., M1

Extracurriculars

Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)

The WashU chapter of the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) is focused on offering opportunities to advance health advocacy for Asian and Pacific American populations. WUSM APAMSA, in conjunction with the Saint Louis University School of Medicine APAMSA, regularly hosts health screenings targeting Asian and Pacific American populations. Students get to learn and practice skills such as taking vital signs, taking a history and physical, measuring blood glucose, and conducting vision screenings. APAMSA also has a selective for learning medical Chinese, and hosts multiple events that celebrate Asian Pacific culture, such as Diwali and Lunar New Year Festival. Getting involved in volunteering with APAMSA is a fantastic way to not only practice your basic medical skills but also gain a greater awareness of many of the issues faced by the Asian and Pacific American community.

— John D., M1
Business Extracurriculars

WUSM is within a 10-minute walk of the Cortex, a unique start-up and entrepreneurship hub with which medical students can easily get involved. If you want to try working on that biotech idea that’s been in your head, Sling Health is an incubator that recruits WashU medical students to join one of many project teams looking to invent and innovate. You connect with other health care and engineering students, network with and get feedback from prominent businesspeople, and basically go through an entire new business/startup cycle — all as an M1!

If you want to join a company, Epharmix is a telemedicine startup founded by WashU medical students and run mainly by M1s and M2s. You can use the Epharmix platform to work with physicians to serve a wide patient population by engaging in simple yet innovative telehealth interventions, while conducting research and running clinical trials. It’s a great way to get directly involved in implementing a new health care idea while also connecting with physicians and getting clinical research published.

There’s also the Olin Grand Rounds selective made for and catered to those with a health care business interest (see Adrienne’s blurb in the section on selectives). If you’re a med student with an economics/business passion like me, WashU gives you amazing hands-on opportunities that would be really difficult to find elsewhere — and you can dive straight in during M1!

— Ashwin L., M1

Graduate Professional Council and Interclass Events

Leveraging the strength and the breadth of graduate/professional training here at WashU, the Graduate Professional Council (GPC) is designed to provide a platform for the trainees of different graduate programs to interact and learn from each other. More specifically, students have the chance to meet their peers from other schools through various GPC-organized events. Some examples include skating/hiking, service opportunities, and Health Professional Student Leadership Council (HPSLC)-organized case study nights. You will not be disappointed if you are passionate about interdisciplinarity and/or getting to know folks outside of your medical school class!

— Ziheng X., M1
**Grand Rounds**

Grand rounds are one–hour morning conferences in the hospital offered by a given department. They are usually lecture style: Physicians either talk about a specific technique or practice, or about different cases that they have seen recently. Grand rounds happen pretty early in the morning, but the upside is that they never conflict with classes. Going to grand rounds is a great way to learn about and get a feel for a specialty that interests you. It’s also an interesting way to hear about different clinical applications for material we’ve learned in class, and to be introduced to fields you didn’t know existed. For example, I didn’t know the field of orthopedic surgery oncology was a thing until I went to a fascinating grand rounds session on that exact topic.

— Emily J., M1

**NICU Cuddlers**

As a NICU cuddler, I spend several hours each month at St. Louis Children’s Hospital’s neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), cuddling babies who are upset, as well as interacting with babies who are awake and ready to play. NICU parents cannot always be by their baby’s side, and the nurses, who are often busy with other responsibilities, cannot always hold upset babies. As part of the NICU team, NICU Cuddlers’ goal is to minimize the amount of negative experiences babies have during their NICU stay. As a student interested in neonatology, I have enjoyed learning more about the NICU environment while having the unique privilege of interacting with NICU babies. On top of that, I’ve found that cuddling babies is an excellent way to de-stress after a hard week of classes!

— Momo O., M1

**Shadowing**

Shadowing as a first-year medical student is exceedingly easy. At the beginning of the year, M2s host an activities fair where you can sign up for any of WUSM’s wide range of interest groups. The groups then email out spreadsheets with dates and times, and you can simply put your name down in a slot that works best with your schedule to shadow. In addition to that, you can email physicians not on the sign-up spreadsheet and ask to shadow. Most physicians are more than happy to have you, as they love to teach students; they often take extra time to teach and accommodate you. It’s also possible to get hands–on experience while shadowing as a medical student — I’ve taken patient histories and done physicals, put in Foley catheters, and participated in level 1 traumas. It’s a great way to reinforce the things that you are learning, to explore all the different specialties, and to get to know the faculty.

— Gabbie J., M1
Research & Dual Degrees

MD/MBA

I’ve wanted to do an MBA ever since I knew it was a possibility — in fact, I wasn’t sure I wanted to do medicine until I decided to go for it years later! WUSM students have an established tradition of taking a year off to do additional research or earn another degree. As I have a robust background in health care business and had taken a year off to work in health care consulting, one of the deciding factors for me while choosing WUSM was the accessibility of getting involved in the Olin Business School and taking selectives there as a medical student.

A few students will choose to do the MBA each class year. Most stay for the generous scholarships given to medical students at Olin, but every now and then, some decide to go to a different institution as well. Whether you want to get involved in health innovation, administration, or operations, an MBA is becoming increasingly useful in a rapidly changing health care market.

— Hannah T., M1

MD5 Year

A great irony of the medical school application process is that at applicant pizza parties, it is the current students who are most heavily scrutinized. That is, of course, after you differentiate who among the sea of 20-somethings are the current students and who are the applicants. From here, the small talk commences, until you, the applicant, pull out the hard-hitting questions you spent the entire flight into Lambert crafting. Do you need a car? Is St. Louis safe? What’s the deal with the curriculum? I, the current student, deftly parry your concerns with witty yet thorough responses, until finally, you deliver the coup-de-grace: Why should I choose WashU?

When asked this question during my first semester here, I would not really know how to answer the question other than, well — it is WASHU — by throwing out platitudes about the collaborative environment, the diverse patient population, the research opportunities. But last November, I made the crazy decision to take an MD5 year after only one semester. The MD5 year is a year-long, non-degree-conferring research program designed to give medical students the opportunity to take a step back from medical school and do research, for whatever reason. Many invoke the MD5 between third year and fourth year, in order to pad their residency applications with field-pertinent publications for competitive specialties (read: orthopedic surgery), but there are myriad reasons why one may choose to pursue a research year. Personally, having proceeded directly from college to medical school, I felt I needed time to explore my burgeoning interest in research and more broadly, reflect on my goals as a person and professional.
This past year has been one of the most fulfilling and productive periods of my life. As I prepare to re-enter M1 classes, I feel a renewed and augmented sense of wonder and excitement for the field of medicine. I also feel profound gratitude for the opportunity to have left medical school behind for a year to pursue research, with no fear of administrative consequences. Perhaps most importantly, however, is that I now have an engaging and genuine answer to your dastardly pizza party question. Choose WashU not only because of the collegial faculty and students, the boundless resources, and the unmatched quality of its biomedical research, but because of the respect WashU has for you, the medical student, in choosing your own path to becoming the best doctor you can possibly be.

— Yang-Yang F., M2

Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

What make the WashU Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) special are all the ways in which our structure provides us room to grow. First of all, I love, love, love that our MSTP class is so big. I've made many of my best friends within the MSTP, but because there are so many of us, I've been able to really find my people and I don't feel like there's social pressure to only hang out with MSTPs all the time. This leads to my second point: We are 100 percent integrated within the larger medical school class. I have as many friends among my MD classmates as among my MSTP classmates. This is not the case at all MSTPs, and it's something for which I've learned to be truly grateful, because I honestly find myself reflecting on how much I learn from my MD friends at least once per week.

Finally, the MSTP gives us immense freedom to make our education what we need and want it to be. Maybe you'll realize that global health is your calling and want to do research abroad, or maybe you'll have a parent fall ill and want to take time off to care for them, or maybe you'll decide to go into a specialty that makes it hard to balance clinic and research. Being part of the biggest MSTP program in the country means that whatever problem you run into, someone else has probably dealt with it before, and the entire staff has been with WUSM MSTP for so long that they know exactly what to do. Brian, Wayne, Linda, and the rest of the MSTP staff will support you through it all. They are really the MSTP’s greatest asset.

— Morgan T., M1

Public Health Research

There is a fairly robust contingent of programs and researchers at WashU involved in public health work. The secret is knowing where to find them.

The university divides public health into three main organizational units: the Brown School (brownschool.wustl.edu, on the Danforth Campus), the Institute for Public Health (IPH, publichealth.wustl.edu, on both campuses), and the Division of Public Health Sciences (publichealthsciences.wustl.edu, on the medical campus).
Dr. Koong-Nah Chung, Associate Dean for Medical Student Research, is a great resource when looking for research opportunities at WUSM. Dr. Chung facilitates pairing M1s with research mentors across the School of Medicine. If you still have trouble finding a good match, reach out to Jacaranda van Rheenen; she knows just about every public health researcher at this institution.

In addition, population-health minded researchers are hidden in most departments and divisions, even where you might not expect; as a WashU undergrad student, I spent several years doing public health nutrition work through the Program in Physical Therapy. Public health is more flexible than basic science research, where you may have to regularly go into lab to check on experiments. Personally, I ended up doing a lot of my research work at home in the evenings.

Additionally, the IPH hosts a few half-day conferences every year on public or global health topics, which are a great way to supplement your public health education or present your research. I’m sure the interested souls reading this will enjoy being part of WashU’s personal yet prestigious public health community.

— Karthik R., M1

Research After M1

For most medical students, the summer between first and second year is the only time they will spend doing full-time research. Dr. Chung will give a number of presentations first semester about how to find a research mentor, so don’t worry about that too much. There are faculty in every department who are looking for med students to mentor during the summer. I would suggest finding out if past medical students have worked with the professor you’re interested in doing research with, and speaking with them.

— Shariq K., M2

Research During M1

From basic metabolism to human genome sequencing to microbiology, WashU has been at the forefront of advancing our collective medical knowledge. If you happen to love research, you are most certainly in the right place.

M1 is a great time to balance research, school, and your life. I can’t speak from experience, but word on the street is that M2 and M3 years are no joke, so it never hurts to start when classes are more chill. Most students do research on campus the summer after M1, but it’s important to me to go home and do nothing important, so I’m trying to not feel too guilty about that. There’s a bunch of different types of projects students can get involved in, but a case study, retrospective chart reviews, and a textbook chapter are the three I’m working on. These can mostly be done on my computer, and it’s nice to get bits and pieces done throughout the day. Other M1s do basic science research; I’ve sworn that off like the plague, but those who are involved in it enjoy it a lot.
PIs are usually understanding when you tell them you want to stretch out the timeline to not overextend yourself. Residencies like to see sustained research in an area, so M1 is a good time to start a general project that can branch into future follow-up projects. Most specialties don’t mind if your research is in a different field, so don’t shy away if you don’t know what you want to do yet.

— Sean Y., M1

Summer Research Before M1

MSTP students are required to complete at least two research rotations before starting grad school, but the program strongly encourages students to do some research on campus in the summer before the M1 year. About half of matriculating MSTP students do start early with research, aided by an advance stipend that helps cover living and moving expenses. Especially for matriculating students who took a gap year or more between college and medical school, spending one to three months in a lab before orientation is a great way to get acquainted with St. Louis, the campus, faculty/staff, other students, and what it feels like to clip on the WashU ID badge every morning. Starting early with a PI also opens up opportunities to continue the project through the M1 year and potentially into grad school. Interested students should begin directly reaching out to PIs as soon as a decision is made to attend WashU. Early research opportunities are open to matriculating MD students as well, although they generally take part in research during the summer after the M1 year.

— Sid S., M2

Selectives

Advanced Medical Spanish

The Advanced Medical Spanish selective is a great way to practice your Spanish and learn how you can apply it in clinical settings while being sensitive to patients of different cultures and backgrounds. The first semester is more humanities-focused and includes discussions of socioeconomic and cultural barriers to care, traditional medicine, ethics, and health policy, to name a few. The second semester is more clinically-oriented and involves learning vocabulary/skills focused on each component of the history and physical. There are also several opportunities to practice what you’re learning on standardized patients. Overall, it’s a very chill and fun course!

If you’re eager to continue learning/practicing, you can participate in the longitudinal Medical Spanish curriculum, which opens opportunities for using your Spanish skills in clinical settings in M2 and beyond. Among other things,
the program allows you to take the Clinician Cultural and Linguistic Assessment (CCLA) phone exam to be certified as a bilingual provider starting from your M3 and M4 rotations (this accomplishment is noted on your Dean’s Letter). And, excitingly, it also lets you apply to volunteer as a medical interpreter at Casa de Salud, a low-cost clinic for the uninsured and underinsured population of St. Louis!

— Alex Z., M1

Intro to Emergency Medicine

Intro to Emergency Medicine was one of my favorite classes this year! It provides an overview of the different cases that are common at emergency departments, and allows us to work through the patient to figure out what is wrong and how to appropriately treat the patient. There are two different parts of the class, one in the fall and the other in the spring, which cover topics like trauma, cardiovascular emergencies, and pediatric emergencies. Though this is a lecture-based course, Dr. Wichelman is a great lecturer and she finds a way to always make class interactive and fun. This course has taught me the most practical knowledge about medicine as of yet, like how to read an ECG and what blood tests to order for certain symptoms. Even if you are not interested in EM, this is a great course to take to learn general medical knowledge that most first years do not have yet!

— Sydney S., M1

MSTP Journal Club

The MSTP Journal Club can count as a basic science selective. If you’re an MSTP student who is receiving selective credit for Journal Club, the sessions are mandatory. Journal Club is also recommended for students that are interested in transferring into the program. Hence, it’s a valuable opportunity to chat and keep up with your fellow MD/PhD students. We meet weekly, but unlike other selectives, Journal Club lasts throughout all our years at WashU, both MD and PhD.

Perhaps most importantly, the club is entirely student-directed. Each week, one of the students presents on a research paper, usually a seminal paper in the field they’re interested in, or an article with novel, breakthrough findings. An informal Q&A and discussion follows every presentation. Each week we hear fellow students’ perspectives on science they’re passionate about, allowing us to ask even the most basic (or in other cases, very intricate) questions in an entirely relaxed environment. And, best of all, lunch is always provided!

— Simona S., M1
Olin Grand Rounds
If you’ve never been exposed to the business and administration aspects of health care (or even if you have), this selective is for you! It’s particularly unique because it is offered at the Olin Business School on the Danforth Campus and because your fellow students come from law, business, and undergrad programs: Olin Grand Rounds is one of the few chances you’ll find to get outside of the med school bubble. Each week, Dr. Cynthia Wichelman, the course director, brings in speakers from hospital administration, biotech, and private practice to talk about their piece of the health care landscape and the challenges they face day to day.

We heard from the CEO of BJC HealthCare, one of the largest nonprofit health care delivery organizations in the country (whose flagship hospital is WUSM’s Barnes-Jewish Hospital); the CEO of the pharmacy benefit manager Express Scripts; the CMO of the insurance company Centene; and other high-profile speakers with real expertise. A highlight for the med students was learning about medical malpractice and hearing about the experiences of WashU physicians who have been sued. The speakers can be a little hit-or-miss, and the course reads more like a smattering of interesting case studies than a comprehensive survey course of the health care industry, but overall, this course has something for everyone and may even spark a new career interest.

It’s worth noting the hefty-ish time commitment: It’s a three–hour seminar every Monday night for the whole first semester, and we were assigned a fair number of written assignments based on Harvard Business Review case studies. That said, 13 other M1s took the class with me, and it was a good bonding experience for those of us willing to brave the challenge — and the journey over to the Danforth Campus!

— Adrienne V., M1

Queer Theory
I enjoy learning about what I’m not. Not because I’m boring, but … well … I’m boring. Straight, white, cis-gendered males aren’t exactly the bee’s knees. Thus, I decided to dip my toes into the world of queer theory. Did this leave me an expert? No. However, did I get to listen to the finest minds from the Danforth Campus talk about the “down-low” (i.e., how sexual behavior doesn’t necessarily correspond to sexual identity), or HIV prevention and treatment, or German queer history? Yes. Where else can you get that? Not from Olin Grand Rounds, that’s for sure (not a shot at Olin Grand Rounds — just facts). Throw in two fantastic physician-instructors, Dr. Glass and Dr. Sternhell-Blackwell, who even take you out to a fancy Italian restaurant, and you got one hell of a selective.

P.S. If you are really nice to Dr. Sternhell-Blackwell, she will diagnose your skin conditions (hint: she’s a dermatologist). Sadly, mine were not treatable, but she tried.

— Andy N., M1
Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic

Alongside the volunteering opportunities that pre-clinical and clinical students can engage in at the Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic (SNHC) — WUSM’s student-run free clinic — our school also offers a selective course about the SNHC. Students in the selective are trained to coordinate at the clinic. Responsibilities include taking charge of patient intake, monitoring clinic flow, discharging patients, and all other aspects of care management. Coordinating at the SNHC is a unique opportunity to learn about aspects of health care delivery that happen outside the patient exam room.

Students in the selective also get the opportunity to learn from people doing amazing work all over St. Louis. Guest speakers include Dr. Heidi Miller, known for her work in local and national health advocacy and policy, and Rob Freund, the CEO of the St. Louis Regional Health Commission, a collaborative aiming to increase access to health care, reduce health disparities, and improve health outcomes among marginalized and disadvantaged populations in St. Louis. By learning more about the community we live in and people’s efforts to continue improving it, we are ideally positioned to make an impact to improve the lives of those around us.

— Ziheng X., M1
Alex testing out laparoscopic tools at a surgical procedure night.

M1s celebrating the last Anatomy lab of the year.
Perspectives

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

Section Editor: Adrienne Visani
Identities

Atheism/Agnosticism
It’s not challenging to be an atheist or agnostic in medical school: Don’t be a theist or don’t be a gnostic. It’s so easy you will hardly ever think about it, and you will probably never be asked about it. It should come as no surprise that you will have plenty of good company among scientists and doctors. From Dr. Carl Sagan to Dr. Oliver Sacks, there have been many before you and there will be many after you. That being said, there are not many avenues to advocate for atheism or agnosticism. There is no club (although you could start one). The closest thing you’ll find to activism is this blurb. That’s just fine with us, though. If you’re looking for support for your skepticism, look no further than the contents of every lecture.

— Toby M., M4

Bahá’í Faith
There is a great Bahá’í community at WUSM and in the greater St. Louis area that hosts devotionals, study circles, and different service activities throughout the city. It’s a really welcoming, supportive, and ethnically diverse group. St. Louis also isn’t too far from the Bahá’í temple in Wilmette, Illinois, so some people take a weekend trip to Chicago to visit and spend time there. It’s a really wonderful community!

— Gabby A.-G., M4

Catholicism
My name is Chris, and I am so glad that you are considering WashU. Please know that I am praying for you and your journey into the medical profession. As you might guess, being a practicing Catholic and a medical professional has its challenges. This hopefully should not discourage you, but rather inspire a deeper love within you for advancing both your faith and your medical practice. We need Catholics at the forefront of medicine: It is within the Catholic spirit to pursue knowledge and better our communities. There are, however, important moral issues that you should be aware of and ready to talk about. WashU is not a Catholic institution, and you may find some of the practices here challenging. I would encourage you to lean into the discomfort and never be closed off to hearing other people’s thoughts. Don’t be afraid to be firm in your beliefs, but never miss an opportunity to love another human being and pray for God’s will to be done. I have found that the happiest I have been in medical school is when I have taken an extra moment here or there to offer my work to God and to pray for our community. We have a small group that likes to go to Mass and faculty dinners together, and we hope you will consider joining us!

— Chris N., M1
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

WashU embraces diversity, religion included, which provides opportunities to see other perspectives and to share what I believe. This diversity also allows me to live my religion comfortably. The congregation here is absolutely fantastic and is full of many fellow professional students, several of whom are in the medical field. The temple is only 20 minutes from campus, which makes it easy to attend regularly. Remaining involved in church has helped my wife and I really become integrated into St. Louis. And don’t worry — of course we have church ball!

— Erik N., M1

Hinduism

St. Louis has a pretty vibrant Hindu community, and there are several places where one can get involved. The Hindu temple is in Town and Country, which is about a 20-minute drive from campus. It’s a really nice space; they have a full gopuram (the classic temple entrance tower) that makes quite the impression. They’re also building a new community center on their grounds, so I’m sure they’ll also have larger social events and poojas. I personally recommend going to the temple around lunchtime on Saturdays or Sundays: On weekends, the temple kitchen serves tiffin (South Indian brunch). In addition to the usual brunch offerings, they have idlis (savory fermented rice and lentil cakes) on Saturdays and dosas (savory crepes) on Sundays. The temple also has great snacks, like spicy mixture and laddus.

If you’d like to stay closer to campus, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKON) organization has a small temple on Lindell. They have free dinner on Sundays which is quite tasty, but the services are definitely non-traditional (lots of sitting and tuneless chanting of “Hare Krishna.”) The ISKON community is also very tightly knit, and they might try really hard to recruit you if you attend one service. I felt very welcomed, but I was also a little uncomfortable. Depending on your comfort level though, it could be a really nice experience. I know there are a few other places in St. Louis, but these are the two that I’m most familiar with.

— Gowri K., M1

Humanism

Medicine is all about humanism. That is to say, medicine is about empathy and respect for our patients and our colleagues. It is about striving for excellence and skill. It is about fighting for justice and defending the defenseless. It is about cultivating virtues like honesty, perseverance, and fortitude (even in the presence of terrifying sights and smells). It is about deeply valuing human life and endlessly battling against death and disease, its destroyers. So, every good physician is a humanist of some sort, whether a secular humanist like myself,
a religious humanist like many of my amazing classmates, or even someone who shuns the term but is still driven by most of the same fundamental principles. If you’re interested in organized Humanism with a capital H, St. Louis definitely has organizations. In fact, St. Louis is home to one of the oldest and largest Humanist congregations in the world, the Ethical Society of St. Louis, with its own impressive building and a full schedule of regular meetings and activities.

— Weston M., M4

Islam

Our Muslim community at Washington University includes the Muslim Student Association of the Danforth Campus and of Saint Louis University, which both undergraduate and graduate students may join. Although our immediate Muslim community within WUSM is relatively small, our neighbors are very active and inclusive. Students at the Danforth Campus arrange rides to masjids (like the West Pine Masjid), host iftar and Eid parties, and organize Friday Jummah prayers. You can also attend Jummah at the hospital. Additionally, many Muslim students live in apartments close to WUSM (like Del Coronado) and there are plenty of opportunities to hang out outside of these formal events. In terms of socializing within your class: Although it’s true that many social events involve alcohol, your classmates understand that everyone has different ways of having a good time, and you’ll never feel any pressure. There’re also many non-drinking social alternatives (see the Perspectives Section: On Being Alcohol-Free).

— Fatima A. & Gazelle Z., M4s

Judaism

Because I grew up in St. Louis, I had the opportunity from an early age to participate in St. Louis’ vibrant Jewish community. For anyone interested in religious opportunities, St. Louis has multiple reform, conservative, and orthodox congregations. Central Reform Congregation is within walking distance of the medical school. In addition, WashU undergrad has both Hillel and Chabad chapters, the WashU graduate schools have an organization called JGrad, and the medical school has a chapter of the Jewish Medical Student Association. St. Louis also has many Jewish organizations that students can volunteer with, such as the Jewish Food Pantry, National Council for Jewish Women, STL Jewish and Muslim Day of Service, Jewish Community Relations Council, Holocaust Museum and Learning Center, and more. All of these organizations afford medical students multiple options for involvement in the Jewish community at whatever level suits them, whether through religious services, Shabbat dinners, social events, or volunteering.

— Sarah C., M1
On Being Alcohol-Free

Avoiding alcohol can seem daunting in medical school, when so many events involve drinking at nightclubs, bars, and parties. After all, you want to connect with your class, build your social environment, and have a good time like anyone else. Whether you don’t drink for religious, cultural, health, and/or personal reasons, the truth is that you can do all these things and more. It’s totally possible to have fun at house parties, post-exam celebrations, and nights out. No one pressures you to drink, and you can still let loose and enjoy yourself in your own way.

Outside of parties, there are so many social activities to choose from — sports, going to the movies, baseball games, weekly board game nights (super popular in our year), bake-offs, museum trips, and more. We have such a supportive social environment that you can make friendships and memories in a multitude of ways. I’ve had loads of fun and a great quality of life socially without touching alcohol, and if you want, you can too!

— Ashwin L., M1

On Being Asian-American

Often used in sweeping references, the term “Asian-American” does little justice to the enormous variety of life experiences and family backgrounds you may bring to the table. While Missouri may have a relatively lower population percentage of Asian-Americans, WashU has many students and faculty with whom you will find valuable cultural common ground. Rather than letting a fear of isolation discourage you, explore both sides of your hyphenated ethnic identity, perhaps through a student group like APAMSA. Then use your valuable platform to build bridges with those who might not fall inside the same checkbox as you! P.S. Ask around for food recommendations!

— Tiffany W., M2

On Being Black

Coming from Atlanta, and then a liberal undergraduate institution, I was nervous about moving to St. Louis. However, my experience at WUSM has been incredible. St. Louis is a complicated city and the faculty and staff here do a great job of educating the class about how past events have shaped factors of inequality here, as well as empowering students to get involved with and make a difference in the local community. Within the medical school, the faculty and students also work to create a welcoming and engaging community for minority students. No place is perfect, but there are numerous channels in place to ensure that WUSM maintains a positive and supportive learning environment for everyone. My peers of all races here have continually impressed me with their willingness and ability to engage in difficult discussions and contemplate the impact that privilege, or lack thereof, has
had on their lives. Being black in medicine has its challenges, but WUSM arms you with the resources to thrive here, and St. Louis provides an opportunity to live, work, and play in a large black community.

— Jason M., M2

On Being Conservative

School, and medical school in particular, should be a time of growth, and growth does not come from being comfortable. WUSM is like many other universities in that the conservative voice tends to be in the minority. At times this can be challenging, but that challenge is a good thing. Being surrounded solely by people who agree with you tends to foster group polarization without necessarily grounding ideas any further. There is nothing inherently wrong with leaning right (or left) as long as you have a strong enough foundation to support your beliefs. Being a conservative at WUSM means that you will frequently meet people who come from a completely different point of view and so have arrived at quite different conclusions. If you are careful to be respectful of others, then I think you will find your experience here to be enjoyable and transformative.

— Mitchell L., M3

On Being Hispanic

Coming to St. Louis, I wasn’t sure what to expect in terms of the Hispanic community both in my own class and in the surrounding area. While it wouldn’t compare to communities in places like Chicago or California, I was happy growing up in the Hispanic community in Indianapolis and hoped that St. Louis/WashU could offer something similar. I was pleasantly surprised to experience the sense of community upon starting school. I quickly signed up for the Medical Spanish selectives, which are a part of the relatively new four-year Spanish curriculum that aims to train bilingual physicians. It has been a great way to meet and converse in Spanish with other classmates. I also became involved with the Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) chapter. The organization provides opportunities in service, policy, mentoring, advocacy, and social events. I have enjoyed volunteering at health screenings, where translators are often needed. Spanish speakers can also volunteer at Casa de Salud, a clinic focused on uninsured immigrant populations who face barriers to health care. I hope to become involved with the organization in the future.

In St. Louis itself, Cherokee Street (15 minutes from WUSM) and the surrounding neighborhood is well known as a Hispanic hub due to its abundance of Hispanic restaurants, bakeries, grocery stores, and clothing stores. In other areas, there are also other popular Hispanic cuisine spots including El Burro Loco, Nixta, and Mission Taco (a class favorite due to their late-night special of $2 tacos & tequila). Additionally, with the help of the salsa lessons offered through one of our student
groups, you can practice your dance skills at places like Club Viva. There are also festivals like the Dia de Los Muertos, the Greater St. Louis Hispanic Festival, and Cinco de Mayo, among others that occur throughout the year. Overall, St. Louis and WashU have plenty to offer in the Hispanic department!

— Jesús B., M1

On Being LGBTQIA+

In my role as admissions liaison for LGBTQmed (the queer and allied student group here at WUSM), the question I get most often from applicants has been, “Is St. Louis the kind of city you can be ‘out’ in?”

This is a fair question: We are in the Midwest, and Missouri doesn’t have the best track record when it comes to LGBTQ rights. But St. Louis has a great history of LGBTQ inclusion, a perfect Municipal Equality Index score from the Human Rights Campaign, and is consistently highly ranked by The Advocate’s list of the Queerest Cities in America (#4 in 2016!). And the Central West End and The Grove boast some great bars, drag clubs, and LGBTQ-owned businesses for you to try during your time here.

But more importantly than these tangibles, I have found that WashU as an institution celebrates diversity in all its forms, not as a way to check a box but as a way to make everyone’s education that much more powerful. LGBTQmed has a great mentorship program with OUTMed, the organization for queer physicians at WashU, and I love that I get to study at a place that not only makes sure I am safe being who I am, but also encourages me to lean into my whole self and to help my classmates learn from my experiences as I learn from theirs.

— Thomas V., M1

On Being Progressive

I was initially a little terrified of moving to Missouri. After my interview here, I still remember walking in the CWE and noticing a sign in the Whole Foods window stating you couldn’t bring concealed weapons into the store. What?! People here are normally carrying their guns around? After growing up in California (and let me tell you, my hometown of Santa Cruz is a special type of liberalism and hippie-ism, even for California standards), and then studying and working in the Northeast, I could not imagine moving to a red state.

I’m not going to lie, I still haven’t gotten used to Missouri conservatism (and hopefully I never will), and there are political, social, and economic issues here that are incredibly frustrating. It also doesn’t help that our one Democratic senator (bye, Claire) lost her seat to a Republican in the most recent midterm elections, and that when I looked up how Missourians voted, the whole state was red — except for a few pockets, including a very blue St. Louis!

So that brings me to the best part — St. Louis is a very liberal city, and except for the whole guns thing, I’ve felt quite at home. I’ve also been surprised by how many liberal and progressive areas do exist. If you take a walk in Tower Grove, for
example, you’ll find many homes displaying banners stating “Black Lives Matter” or “No Human Being is Illegal.” There are multiple progressive bubbles in the city with passionate folks who want to make a change in Missouri. Just to give you an idea, check out Left Bank Books in CWE (“Literacy and justice for all!”).

Regarding the medical school, it’s probably not surprising that most of my classmates tend to lean liberal, and from what I’ve gathered from my interactions with faculty and physicians at WashU, they also tend to lean more liberal. That being said, WUSM may not be the school where you’ll find many medical students actively engaged in activism, although I truly believe this could change! And quite frankly, sometimes I feel like I’m talking into a void when I go on some political or social justice rant.

However, overall, I have sincerely appreciated leaving my liberal bubbles and moving to the Midwest. It’s been an eye-opening experience, and one that I believe is critical during this time. I recommend truly listening to other people, trying to understand their perspectives, and staying open-minded. So, come to Missouri, and please register to vote!

— Marina N., M1

On Being South Asian

It was around April 2014, and I had made the decision to commit to Washington University for undergrad. I grew up surrounded by a support network of South Asians in a community where roughly 15 percent of the population was Asian. So, knowing that the Asian-American population of St. Louis was lower than what I was accustomed to while growing up, I was a bit apprehensive of moving, although my parents, who attended graduate school in Missouri, told me there had already been a sizable population of South Asians in the greater St. Louis area by the early ’90s.

I soon found out, however, that WashU has many students and faculty with whom I share a cultural background. Through WUSM’s Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) chapter, fellow Desi (and non-Desi) Americans and I celebrated Diwali with fun dance and lots of good food.

If you’re craving some creamy mutter paneer, South Asian restaurants abound in CWE and the greater St. Louis area. A classic is Rasoi in the CWE; I would also recommend Taj Mahal (on the Delmar Loop) and India Palace (in Maryland Heights — go for the buffet and snag some groceries at the neighboring Indian store while you’re there!). Seema is a chain of South Asian grocery stores throughout the greater St. Louis area (15 minutes away by car), but for something closer, check out United Provisions (on the Delmar Loop, seven minutes by car).

You can visit the Hindu Temple of St. Louis, a large, peaceful place of worship (20 minutes away by car) that regularly hosts events; the Sikh Gurdwara is also 30 minutes away. The South Asian community in St. Louis is pretty involved. I’ve been invited to attend Kannada community events by people I’d just met. And at night, Club Viva in the CWE hosts Bollywood dance nights, so grab a group of friends and dance the night away to old and new Bollywood hits.
It didn’t take much searching to see that South Asians are very much present in the greater St. Louis area. (Check out our local Costco to get an idea!!) Now, almost five years later, I can reassure my younger, apprehensive self that the Asian-American community of St. Louis stands strong.

— Sukruth S., M1

On Having a Cat

Although adopting a pet during, or bringing your pet to, medical school can seem intimidating, always remember what I heard from an M2 (at another institution) on the interview trail: “Can you have a cat in medical school? I have three kids and I’m in medical school. Of course you can have a cat!” St. Louis is a pretty pet-friendly city, and as someone who grew up with no siblings and no pets, my dearest wish as a recent college grad was to have a fluffy buddy to call my own. My cat helps me balance self-care with medical school: Taking care of another living thing reminds me that I can and should have priorities outside of Anki, and never more than when my cat sits on my keyboard and skips 50 Anatomy flashcards the night before an exam.

— Urvi S., M1

On Having a Dog

Having a dog in medical school (and in life) is the single greatest choice I have made. I’m exaggerating slightly, but seriously — I love having a dog. Besides being adorable and endlessly loving, my dog is a great study buddy and keeps me happy and sane during exam periods. With a dog, I am forced to get outside at least a couple times a day, which is a welcome break from studying inside.

All of that being said, having a dog in medical school is A LOT OF WORK. There are times you will come home from school and discover your dog has eaten everything in the pantry. Not only will you have to clean the mess, but you will also have to deal with the digestive aftermath for the next three days (true story). Beyond the day-to-day work, dogs are extremely expensive. Doggy health care doesn’t work the same way as human health care, so vet bills tend to be entirely out of pocket. Finally, having a dog in medical school requires advanced schedule planning. I map out the days I will not be able to walk him and schedule a walker for those days ($). I also have to find a pet sitter for him weeks in advance when I leave on vacations (more $$).

Overall, loving and caring for a dog has been an incredibly rewarding experience. It is entirely possible to have a dog in medical school, but everyone should weigh the pros and cons first before deciding to adopt!

— Meg G., M1
Relationships

On Being Married
A wise teammate in undergrad once told me, “Man, you get to go home to someone who loves you at night, and I get to go home to our roommate who’s loud and stinks!” Although your roommate may not have that level of B.O., it is fantastic to have the love of a spouse to come home to, and my wife is nothing less than amazing. I spend the majority of my day on campus studying so that when I’m home, I’m free to spend time with her. Having these clear boundaries is a pattern that works best for us; however, some fellow married students do this differently. Find what works best for you but know that a spouse is definitely a huge blessing!

— Erik N., M1

On Being in a Long-Distance Relationship
Everyone always says that long distance is tough, so I was definitely nervous to transition to long distance in med school. On top of that, I was stressed about meeting new friends while in a relationship because I thought I’d have to miss out on fun times to take Facetime calls. I can now say with all honesty that long distance in grad school is just not a big deal. I’ve made the best of friends and had the best time, all while staying close to my partner.

My boyfriend is in law school, and the fact that we are both busy has actually made it easier. Since we can’t see each other often or talk for hours every day, communication and realistic expectations have been really important. Long distance might not be perfect and wonderful all the time, but it can still be really fun and romantic overall with the right attitude. I may have had to swap long walks on the beach for long lines at the airport, but my relationship is just as magical as it was before.

— Genevieve T., M1

On Dating Someone Outside of Medical School
My boyfriend is not a WUSM student, and I am very glad he’s not! When I’m laser-focused on my next Anatomy exam, I love that he brings me back to reality and reminds me to relax. Conversely, when I really, really, don’t want to study, he gently reminds me why I should. He's eternally impressed and excited to hear about whatever I learned in class that day. He’s a graduate student, so although we both have to study a fair amount, our most stressful times generally do not overlap. We’re able to support each other with cuddles and cat pictures. When we both have free time (which is honestly more often than you might think), we enjoy exploring St. Louis together.

— Morgan T., M1
**On Dating Someone in Your Medical School**

Congratulations, you are in love! The inertia of the single life is — how do I put this — inescapable. But you are a lucky one and have found a partner in crime in medical school! Your classmates will complain about being single all the time and you will just nod in agreement, secretly thinking about all the fun things you and your beau/belle will do later.

I’m not Dr. Phil, PhD, so I will not overreach in giving advice. My only words would be for both of you to define what you want your relationship to be from the onset. My partner and I like to separate school from our relationship, but that’s just us. You will see it is easy to have medical school banter dominate any conversation, so be wary!

It is really nice to have a best friend who knows what you are going through to decompress with at the end of the day. Be supportive of each other, intentionally build your partner up, and watch yourself be more successful than ever before.

— Ryan S., M1

**On Planning a Wedding**

It might sound crazy to try to plan a wedding from halfway across the country at the same time as starting your first year of medical school, but it really is possible here at WashU! Whether I needed to move assignments around a bit or fly out to California for dress fittings, our program here has been incredibly understanding and supportive, and the faculty and instructors have gone above and beyond to help minimize my stress levels. Plus, there are TONS of resources like amazing course TAs and instructors, free tutoring, student counseling services, financial aid and budget experts, and so many other people who are here to help you succeed, regardless of the stresses you may be going through (because life can be stressful enough as it is!). Seriously — this program is amazing and I’m so glad to have had so much of their (and, of course, my now-husband’s) support throughout this wild planning ride!

— Jackie W., M1

**School**

**On Going to Class**

While not a requirement, I pretty much attend every class. I would consider about half of the class “lecture-goers.” I personally get more out of attending the lecture than watching the video recording later, but having the option of re–watching portions of lectures is very nice. The professors are great and love to interact with
the students that actually attend. Having lecture in the morning gets my day moving and is a good incentive to be productive in the morning. There are countless educational outlets available; you just need to decide what works best for you.

— Alex S., M1

On Skipping Class

One of the wonderful things about WUSM is the fact that you almost never have to go to class! There may be a few mandatory classes each week, but they are things you would not want to miss anyways, like some small group activities or learning how to do a neurological exam in Practice of Medicine (our clinical skills course). All of the lectures are video- and sound-recorded for ease of watching at 2x speed. I would say our class is still evenly split between people who go to lecture and people who don’t, but I never feel like I am being judged or slacking by not attending any lectures.

We even have great resources like professor-written “coursepacks,” which are like written–out forms of every lecture. These are so well written that I usually don’t even watch the lectures, since I learn way better by reading. I love this option since I still know all the testable material without having to pretend to listen in class and take notes like I did in undergrad.

Regardless of your learning style, WUSM has resources for each class so that you don’t have to feel guilty about skipping class but can enjoy playing basketball with friends, shadowing whenever you would like, or just sleeping in and watching Netflix.

— Sydney S., M1

On Studying in the Carrels

I basically live in the carrels … highly recommended! Each student receives an assigned study carrel, which consists of a desk and personal locked cupboards for storage (I store snacks, athletic apparel, my stethoscope, white coat, and more snacks). I’m currently considering bringing a pad to take naps. It’s the place to be! WashU has provided this awesome study/social space that keeps the whole class tightly knit. I do all my studying there, but it’s also a relaxing space where you can hang out with classmates. The carrels are unlike anything offered elsewhere and legitimately are a valuable asset. There is also a kitchen and lounge space where mounds of free food somehow land! Get pumped for the annual winter carrel decorating contest, it’s a blast!

— Erik N., M1
Where We’ve Been

On Being Local
After growing up on a steady diet of toasted ravs, Ted Drewes, and Cardinals baseball, and then going to WashU for undergrad, staying in St. Louis for medical school wasn’t high on my radar during the start of my application season. But the more I got to know the school and my class, the more I realized that this was the best place for me to be. I loved how the school really tries to embrace all aspects of its students’ diversity and would allow me to develop my non-medical interests during my preclinical years. Everyone I have met in my class is an expert in something, and we all bring our different perspectives to bear on the study of medicine.

But even more important, I knew that if I stayed in St. Louis for another four years, it would need to be with a school that really cared about my city, and I saw that WashU really recognizes its responsibility as a major care center in the area and works to engage its students in addressing health disparities early and often. (Be sure to read about WUMP elsewhere in this guide!) So, if you are from St. Louis, know that after 22 years here I’m still learning new things about my city, and there’s always more to do in the Lou!

— Thomas V., M1

On Being a WashU Grad
Congratulations, you have survived the crucible of Washington University undergrad. Many fellow Bears perished along the way, but you are one of few that has been chosen to attend WUSM: the shining beacon that rises above Forest Park, visible from the front steps of Brookings.

Joking aside, it rocks being at WUSM now. It is paradoxically refreshing to start school just two miles from where you previously spent four years. You are stepping into a new role in a community you obviously care about if you are still reading this. Your evolution within the Washington University community will be more powerful than at any other medical school, because you will be surrounded by your mentors and memories.

WUSM will not just be a medical school, but a home to you. It definitely won’t feel the same as undergrad, for better or for worse. You will live in a different part of town, have new friends, and chase new goals. But you will have more confidence than the average medical student, and that, my friend, is a priceless feeling.

— Ryan S., M1
On Being an International Student

When I was interviewing at WashU in the distant fall of 2017, the admissions office told me that, as an international student, I would be treated just like any other applicant. This might sound a bit stressful if you’re fresh off the interview trail, but it’s unfortunately the truth. Getting into medical school as an international student is tough — as if getting into med school wasn’t hard enough already.

(Paragraph indent with pause to congratulate yourself for making it this far!)

However, WashU has been committed to helping us foreigners avoid jumping through any more admissions hoops than the required minimum! And the support for international students doesn’t end there. The Office for International Students and Scholars (which has our very own location on the medical campus) is dedicated to keeping us up-to-date with policies and reminding us to bring our travel documents with us every time we leave the country. (As someone who only remembered that I left my I-20 at home as I was boarding my transatlantic flight from Macedonia, I found this extremely helpful, if not life-saving.)

For those of you who are going, “Where/what was Macedonia, again?” (and don’t worry, there’s fewer of us than there are Nevadans — we’re quite a little nation), it’s smack in the center of the Balkans, north of Greece and south of Serbia. I came from my lovely hometown of Skopje to New York for my undergraduate studies at 18, and now, at 22, have committed eight years of my life to St. Louis (I’m in the MD/PhD program). Certainly, it’s tough being an ocean away from home (and all your relatives, and your mother’s kitchen), but the diversity of the WashU community, and even of St. Louis more broadly (especially with the large Balkan immigrant population), has helped make this place feel closer to home. From my experience, WUSM is an institution that offers you the opportunities to justify leaving home, and the support and growth to justify staying abroad!

— Simona S., M1

On Being from a Big City

Brazil, Morocco, London to Ibiza, straight to L.A., New York, Vegas to … St. Louis? Wait, that’s not right. I guess Missouri isn’t what Pitbull thinks of when he’s rattling off the locations where he wants to get on the floor. But it wasn’t until I started telling people I was going to medical school in St. Louis that I realized just how many people had pretty extreme prejudices against St. Louis, and against the Midwest more generally. It made me wonder — could it really be that bad? Could it really be boring, crime-ridden, redneck, cookie-cutter, white-bread, decaying, and slow-paced, somehow all at the same time? I was curious to come find out for myself.

I spent the six years before med school in big California cities (college in L.A., two gap years in San Francisco), and I really got used to it. I got used to ethnic diversity, to beautiful beaches and mountains, to being around outdoorsy people, to having the luxury of getting amazing Thai/Mexican/El Salvadorean/Himalayan/
Ethiopian/you-name-it food at any time of the night, to having a million-and-one bars and music venues to choose from every weekend, to pop-up museums, to being at the center of the entertainment and tech industries … and I DEFINITELY got used to fresh avocados. I was worried that I would feel out-of-place and unsatisfied in St. Louis.

On the contrary, St. Louis has been awesome. People are friendly, there’s a bunch of students in the area, the weather is totally bearable (seasons exist!), and there really is PLENTY to do with the free time that I have. Every week, I see Facebook events about community gatherings, new museum exhibits, live music and comedy, and festivals of all kinds. The brewery scene rivals California, too. But unlike in bigger cities, most of it is free and also convenient to get to. With Forest Park a two-minute walk from campus, I’m much closer to greenery than I ever was in the city, and the park is filled with free events all spring/fall/summer long.

I almost chose to stay in San Francisco for medical school, but I almost think that such a stimulating, crowded, and expensive environment wouldn’t have been as conducive to building relationships with my classmates, focusing on school and extracurriculars, and getting to know the city’s community (our patient population). St. Louis has a lot of problems — with segregation, inequality, obesity and cardiovascular disease, gun violence, and more. But WashU does a great job of addressing these with us. At one of the panels at Second Look, a student remarked that St. Louis feels like just the right size for the medical school and its students to make an actual impact. That really feels true. As much of a big city girl as I am, and as much as I love California, I really feel more connected to the St. Louis community and less like an anonymous face in a crowd.

— Adrienne V., M1

On Being from a Small Town

I’m originally from a SUPER tiny town in Nebraska (1,111 people strong!) and went to undergrad and did my gap year relatively close to my hometown, so I knew that moving to St. Louis would be an adjustment for me. I was most worried about losing the sense of community that comes along with growing up in a small town. However, I have found a wonderful community at WashU amongst my classmates and within St. Louis. Everyone here has been so kind, welcoming, and accepting, making my transition much more seamless than I anticipated. While St. Louis is definitely the largest city I have lived in, I have enjoyed that it doesn’t feel overwhelming. Everywhere I need to go is easy to get to, and there are so many new places to explore. In addition, Forest Park is perfect for when I feel like I need a quick escape from the city feel. Overall, St. Louis has exceeded my expectations with the wonderful people combined with a busy city full of things to do.

— Morgan P., M1
On Being from the East Coast

While I grew up in Massachusetts and worked in Boston for my two gap years, I went to college in Minnesota and am a huge fan of being educated in the Midwest! First off, St. Louis has all the fun activities of a city for a much cheaper (or free!) price. There’s a good variety of restaurants and bars in the neighborhoods surrounding the medical school, and the huge and beautiful Forest Park right across the street includes a history museum, art museum, and zoo (all free). It’s also affordable to live in a spacious apartment within walking distance of the medical campus AND most housing is pet-friendly! The only downside is that public transportation is not as frequent or extensive as it is in some of the East Coast cities. However, many of your classmates will have cars and it’s very easy to get a ride to Trader Joe’s if you are deeply craving their peanut butter cups or lime popsicles. In terms of weather, think Northeast weather, but add approximately 10 degrees to every season. If you are like me and love snow, rest assured that St. Louis still gets some beautiful flurries (and you’ll be endlessly amused by their definition of a snowstorm). I’ve loved living in St. Louis so far and am so happy that I chose to come back to the Midwest!

— Natalie K., M1

On Being from the Midwest

I grew up in North Dakota and attended college in Minnesota, so when I decided on WashU, I was excited to check out a different area of the country! I had always thought of Missouri as the South, but since moving here, I’ve realized that it has a lot of Midwestern vibes that make it feel like home. It’s a lot bigger than I anticipated and has a fair number of events and food options that work for a med student budget.

— Anna H., M1

On Being from the South

As a North Florida native and a lover of all things BBQ, sweet tea, and Southern hospitality, I was not too sure that I’d find what I was looking for in St. Louis. After going to college in Boston and then spending my gap years in D.C., my plan was to make my way slowly back down south. But in a twist of fate, St. Louis stole my heart during interview day and Second Look, and this Southern belle was suddenly a Midwest transplant. So, what tore me away from my Southern dreams, you ask? Let’s chat.

First and foremost, THE FOOD! The BBQ here rivals some of the best spots in my hometown. Sugarfire, Salt + Smoke, and Pappy’s, to name a few, can serve up some of the best pulled pork and baked beans I’ve ever had, and with some Southern prices to boot. Speaking of prices, the cost of living here is wildly cheap. I never thought I’d live in a city that had prices to rival those of places below the
Mason-Dixon line. Housing, entertainment, and food are cheap and readily available, even on a grad student budget.

Aside from the food, the people here could give some Southerners a run for their money when it comes to hospitality. Everyone on campus, in CWE, and even downtown is willing to lend a hand when I inevitably get lost on the way to the Metro or need recommendations for things to get into. St. Louis just has this intangible quality of good Southern vibes that makes me feel right at home even though I’m smack dab in the middle of these United States.

— Jennifer B., M1

On Being from the West Coast

If you have accepted your destiny to spend a third of your life stuck in traffic, or if you consider your college hoodie to be your “winter coat,” then the move from Southern California to St. Louis can both pleasantly surprise and thoroughly humble you. The cold here is no joke. The day will come when it starts being painful to exist outdoors, and your Amazon cart will fill up with all sorts of fuzzy accessories. You’ll have a blast building your first sad misshapen snowman and throwing snowballs at your non-West Coast friends who don’t understand what the big deal is. The sports scene is also a step down from home. Instead of the glory of the Dodgers and Lakers you get the mediocrity of the Cardinals and the nonexistence of St. Louis basketball. On the bright side, the Dodgers and Giants visit 4+ times a year to crush and get crushed by the Cardinals, respectively, and tickets are cheap!

In general, minus beach-y and some nature-y things, you will find in St. Louis whatever you would have back home — museums, great restaurants, parks, concerts, nightlife, and even Six Flags, and everything is pretty close to campus. You’ll never lack for something to do on a weekend. Most of all, you’ll come to love the incredible friendliness of Midwesterners who make you feel at home. There’s no place in the world like California, but this slower-paced, friendly, budget-happy town has certainly made a convert of me!

— Sean Y., M1

On Coming Straight from College

A year is a long time. Having been dreaming of being a physician for over 20 years, I decided against taking an extra gap year before medical school. For me, waiting another year was too much to bear after countless years of education. Although some of my classmates had exceptional experiences during their gap years, I have found plenty of time to check off my own bucket list items during summers and recesses without delaying the pursuit of an MD. Now I find myself back in the swing of classes without having to relearn how to study. While I’m sure gap years were exciting and rewarding for those who utilized them, I’m happy to be on my way, notably a year sooner than some, to becoming a physician.

— Ryan P., M2
On Taking Gap Years

Before starting at WashU, I spent one year living and working abroad after graduating from college. Returning to the life of a student was a challenging transition, but definitely manageable.

1) I needed to ease myself back into the studying mentality. It takes time to rebuild momentum, so my key piece of advice is to give yourself time and not be too hard on yourself. For some it may be a few weeks, for others a few months — there’s no rush.

2) Never regret having taken a gap year! In the depths of the studying grind, it may be tempting to fantasize about how far along the MD path you would be had you gone straight to med school. But your gap years are an invaluable part of your medical journey, and they will color M1 in ways you might not anticipate. Keep your eyes open for those moments.

— Cyrus G., M1

On Taking a Lot of Gap Years

I came to WashU as a non-science major (philosophy and Russian) six years out of college. I’d just completed a PhD in a non-medical field (philosophy again!) and had moved to St. Louis with my wife, who was also starting a new career. While winding paths to medicine are becoming more common, mine is still far from the norm. So, it’s important to be aware of the potential challenges of being a non-traditional student at WashU, as well as of the (more numerous) opportunities. My biggest adjustment was reacquainting myself with a very general basic science curriculum heavily focused on memorization. Naturally, some degree of rote learning in medicine is inevitable. But non-traditional students with other work backgrounds, or students from other disciplines, might find the first-year curriculum more constricting than someone just out of college, for whom such classes may be more familiar.

However, WashU provides numerous outlets for those still adjusting to the style of first-year classes. It’s really easy to drum up enthusiasm for new student groups, and your classmates are incredible partners with whom to explore your interests. In my case, it meant getting involved with a Medical Humanities group that organizes discussions on topics in clinical medicine and bioethics, attends poetry readings together, and throws amazing dinner parties! You can also get involved with research early on, and WashU faculty are incredibly supportive, even if you lack experience in their field.

Finally, non-traditional students should embrace the biggest advantage they have as new physicians-in-training. As older adults who have worked other jobs, started families, and had to pay bills on their own, they are far more similar to, and thus well positioned to empathize with, the patients we serve here in the St. Louis community. And this empathetic service is, of course, what medical training is all about.

— Michael R., M1
WUSM students stand in solidarity with SAFE (Scrubs Addressing the Firearm Epidemic), September 2018.
Every year, students from each class perform a dance at the Diwali celebration.

Anatomy professors Drs. Ritzman and Bauernfeind posing in front of caricatures as they judge the carrel-decorating contest.

Meg and her fiancé on the day they adopted their Greyhound, Zane.

Urvi with her cat Cleo.
Life

Our tips to help you stay healthy, safe, and true to what matters most to you. Plus, the best food in St. Louis.

Section Editor: Hannah Truong
Basics

Mental Health
Medical school is an exciting time, but it can also be stressful at times. Many students travel far from home to attend school, often for the first time. The pressure to do well, even in a pass-fail system, can still feel overwhelming. Whether or not you’ve experienced mental health issues in the past, you may find that medical school places additional strain on your mental well-being. Luckily, WashU has numerous resources in place to ensure that you have the support and care you need. “Wellness Wednesdays,” hosted by Student Support Services, provide students with a variety of relaxation and self-care activities, including yoga, pickup basketball games, and mindfulness meditation. Intramural sports teams and fitness-centered student clubs provide opportunities to maintain fitness and reduce stress. Additionally, Washington University has several wonderful, compassionate psychologists on staff who are trained to help students manage the unique stresses that come with medical education. You can easily schedule an appointment with one of them at any time, or get a referral to see the staff psychiatrist. Above all, your professors and the administration are completely understanding of the many stresses that medical students can face, and are willing to make accommodations to ensure that all students have the resources and support they need to thrive in medical school.

— Jamie M., M2

Safety
I understand that perhaps some of you had previously heard horror stories of St. Louis before coming here. I did too. But the safety and coziness at WashU have frankly blown away all my preconceived notions.

WUSM is located in one of the most beautiful neighborhoods of St. Louis, the Central West End, which is filled with restaurants, bars, shops, and apartment buildings. And the streets in the CWE are ridiculously walkable! (Okay, the one thing you might have to watch out for is a particularly reckless Lime scooter zooming down the sidewalk.) As in any city, it’s important to be aware of your surroundings and take common-sense precautions.

If I want to go to another part of the city for extracurriculars, community service, or a delicious dinner at a restaurant, public transportation has not disappointed me. The MetroLink light rail has a stop right on campus and is clean, convenient, and safe, especially during the daylight hours. The bus system is somewhat less efficient than the train but will still get you where you need to go. And yes, public transportation is free for all WashU students!

WashU itself has consistently put in the effort to ensure the safety of the surrounding area. WashU has its own dedicated Protective Services unit that will escort you on foot or by vehicle. There’s also an Afterhours Neighborhood
Shuttle program from the medical campus to six neighborhoods in the city. And just recently, WashU gave us free registration for the Noonlight phone app. If I am ever walking around at night and feel unsafe, or even just nervous, all I have to do is hold down the button in this app. Upon releasing the button, the app will silently call the police, or I can cancel the alarm by entering a previously set passcode.

And like every other aspect of the school, WashU is continuously improving the safety and comfort of its students. Your time here will likely be even safer than ours!

— Christine M., M1

Shopping

There are many shopping malls in the St. Louis area. The closest one to campus is the St. Louis Galleria, which has all the necessities: Nordstrom, Dillard’s, Apple Store, Sephora, etc. This is pretty much your average, go-to mall. There’s also Plaza Frontenac Mall, which is a little further out from campus. It is smaller, but has more high-end stores: Saks, Neiman Marcus, Lululemon, Madewell, Athleta, Brooks Brothers, etc. If deal-hunting is more your style, there are also two outlet malls nearby! Taubman Outlets and St. Louis Premium Outlets in Chesterfield both have great deals on stores like Banana Republic, J. Crew, Ann Taylor, Clarks (go-to for comfy clinic shoes), Cole Haan, and many more. Happy shopping!

— Lindsey H., M1

Student Health Services

Student Health Services (SHS) is excellent. We are all seen by the same doctor, Dr. Winters, who is wonderful. I once emailed her on a Sunday night with an urgent concern, and she responded within a few minutes and immediately called a prescription in to the local Walgreens for me because SHS was obviously closed. During business hours, it is simple to call and make an appointment if you have any health concerns. You can even drop in anytime if you just want to consult with the nurse. If your problem is urgent or causing you serious anxiety, and you need the doctor (because you need an exam and/or a prescription), you should tell them that on the phone so they can try to get you an earlier appointment.

Lastly, if your medical problems are interfering with your schoolwork, Dr. Winters is great about helping you manage that problem, even communicating with your professors if necessary.

— Ariella C. R., M2
Life

Fitness

Basketball
Face it, Dean Perlmutter is a basketball fanatic and you must be too ... or maybe you just got a 528, sooooo either way we'll see you in the Olin basement for some intense ball! I would just like to give a shout-out to all my fellow M1 ballers because we dominate the current M2s. We do not plan to be dethroned, and since we didn’t join the ghastly Lakers, we plan on keeping our crown. It’s a great time to take a study break, increase that cardiac output, and join in some friendly competition. So, come on out and bring your A-game. LET’S GOOOOO!

— Erik N., M1

Biking
St. Louis is becoming more and more of a bike-friendly city. There are many beautiful bike trails in the city, and the most popular one, the Forest Park Loop, is right across the street! I really love riding through the park during the fall. In addition to the beautiful foliage, some of the highlights of the bike loop are the rows of beautiful houses with eclectic architectural styles on Lindell. Making a turn from Skinker, it is an exhilarating downhill ride through the forest until you go up a small hill and see the Medical Campus peak behind the trees. If you ever get bored of Forest Park, there is also a great trail in nearby Tower Grove park. Within the Central West End, though bike lanes are inconsistent, drivers are usually respectful and there are plenty of bike racks. On the Medical Campus, there are bike racks near the MetroLink station and behind the Core. There is also a gated bike rack near the car pick-up loop by Shell Café that we have access to with our IDs. If you ever have problems with your bike, Mike’s Bikes in the CWE is a great place to go. And though my bike has been safe, I have heard a very strong lock is recommended.

— Luxi Q., M1

Climbing
Despite Missouri’s lack of mountains, there are plenty of opportunities to pursue rock climbing in St. Louis. For indoor climbers, the St. Louis area is home to two different rock gyms, each with a thriving climbing community. WUSM’s own climbing club, ClimbRx, offers a discounted membership at a nearby gym (Climb So iLL) that includes all the rental equipment you need to get started. If you like to venture outdoors, there are several outstanding options within driving distance. Most notably, some of the world’s finest stone lies less than six hours away in the Red River Gorge of Kentucky. Closer options include Horseshoe
Canyon Ranch in Arkansas (five hours) and Jackson Falls in Illinois (two hours). Ultimately, whether you are just getting into climbing or are a seasoned veteran, St. Louis will meet all of your climbing needs.

— Adam K., M1

Cycling

My favorite way to fitness is indoor cycling. If you’ve never tried it before, you’re basically in a dark room riding a stationary bike with loud music playing. While there’s no SoulCycle in St. Louis, there are plenty of other good studios nearby. The Danforth Campus also has a large gym with group fitness classes, including cycling, that are free to medical students. This isn’t your typical gym cycling class; they have a leaderboard that tracks your performance and great instructors. (Favorite is Meghann!) If you want something a little more advanced and truer to indoor cycling, there is a Cyclebar nearby that offers student pricing on classes, and shoes are complimentary! In the Central West End, there is a studio named Steel Wheels that also offers an immersive class experience.

If you prefer biking outside, St. Louis has some amazing bike trails that are well done and very scenic. Riding in the city can get a little dicey; people aren’t as used to bikers here as in other big cities, so be very careful on the road! However, Forest Park has really pretty trails and is just across the street from campus. The biggest trail is Katy Trail, which is over 200 miles long and stretches across the state, including a section along the Missouri River. There is also a trail on the Mississippi River that starts near the Gateway Arch. Many trails are former railroads that have been converted to paved trails, and there are many beautiful areas to explore!

— Lindsey H., M1

Racquetball

Playing racquetball was a huge staple for my friend group during undergrad. Given this, I was elated to find out that there were courts at the Sumers Recreation Center on the Danforth Campus. I quickly hyped up this lesser known sport and roped several other M1s into joining me for regular sessions. Not only is it great cardio, but it’s also super fun to hit a rubber ball as hard as possible and watch it bounce off the walls. Access to the gym and ball rental are free for med students. As for racquets, there are three options: You can bring your own, purchase one from the equipment desk, or rent one for free and hit the ball with twice as much power. Either way, racquetball is a great way to have a nice competitive outlet with friends and it’s a very fun way to stay in shape!

— Alex L. S., M1
Recreational Facilities

If you didn’t know, WashU’s rec facilities were ranked as one of the top three in the nation! The Danforth Campus recently built new state-of-the-art fitness and recreation facilities, the Sumers Recreation Center, that all WUSM students can access for free. They offer free classes that run the gamut from meditation to power yoga to spin! There is an indoor pool, furnished relaxation spaces, massage therapy, and a health promotion suite. Did I mention towel service as well?

At the WUSM campus, there is the gym at the Core, our on-campus housing that is a three-minute walk from the Farrell Learning and Teaching Center (FLTC) — super convenient! It has most of the gym equipment that you need, and it’s open 24/7 (if you want to work out at 3 a.m., you can!) So really, it’s easy to keep up a healthy exercise routine at WUSM!

— Joanna K., M1

Running

I am going on my 13th year of running in St. Louis, and I don’t see myself slowing down anytime soon. There are so many great parks that I can assure you there is a trail for you! Here is a short list with the following rankings out of 10: toughness/beauty/busy level (at roughly 5:00 p.m.)

- Forest Park: 5 miles around on the bike path. Mostly flat. 3/8/10
- Tower Grove Park: 2-3 miles around on the road. Very flat. 1/4/6
- Castlewood State Park (River Trail): essentially endless. Flat, can be muddy. 2(8 with mud)/9/2
- Queeny Park (Falcon Trail): very hilly. Paved for 40 percent, trail for 60 percent. 9/7/8
- Creve Couer Lake: very flat, 4-5 miles around. Busy. 1/8/8
- Bootleggers Trail at Creve Couer Lake: winding single track trail. Do not run after rain. Seven miles of trail. 7/10/2
- Katy Trail: essentially endless and flat. Far away. 1/4/7

— Chris N., M1

Soccer

Football, the universal sport, the beautiful game, or soccer — whatever you may call it, you will always find a place to enjoy this wonderful game. Are your dreams of becoming a professional soccer player on hold because of medical school? Don’t worry, we got just the place for you! Join “St. Louis Pick Up Soccer page” on Facebook (with over 5,000 members), where people play pick-up games daily.

Are you a casual soccer player looking to destress and make new friends? Look no further: WashU offers indoor and outdoor intramural soccer leagues (FREE OF COST!!) where you can make a team with your friends and play against other WashU people!
Are you up for a challenge with your new classmates and want to take on other teams? St. Louis is home to many soccer leagues, one of them being Vetta Sports, where you can play against local teams!

Whether you are a beginner or you were a super star in your undergraduate intramural soccer league, there will always be a place for you. All you need to do is to strap your boots on and enjoy the beautiful game.

— Moses C., M1

**Swimming**

Are you an ex-swimmer who can’t be motivated to jump in a cold pool by yourself? I was really happy to find a group of M2s and M1s who want to swim on a “weekly” (weekly may be too ambitious now) basis. We usually organize rides over to the pool at the Danforth Campus, someone writes a set, and then we all do the workout together. It’s been a nice way to kinda stay in swimming shape and have fun.

— Marina N., M1

**Table Tennis**

Table tennis is a great activity to help break up long study sessions! Whether you’re into competitive table tennis or just some pick-up with your friends, WashU has facilities for both. There is a brand-new table in the Core Apartments 818 building that is available to use for any medical student, and the undergraduate club is open to all WashU students and competes as a part of the NCTTA Collegiate league in intercollegiate tournaments twice a year.

— Reid C., M1

**Weightlifting**

Do you even lift, bro? Well, even if you don’t, there’s no better time to start because the gym at the Core is brand new, it’s only a 3-minute walk from school, and it’s open 24/7! With three new squat racks, a weightlifting platform, and your standard variety of free weights, you’ll be hitting new PRs in no time. If you like machines though, you’re out of luck because there aren’t many options. It’s rarely crowded to the point where I can’t get my workout done, but I’ve noticed it tends to be significantly busier in the beginning of the school year, after January 1, on Mondays (is this at all surprising?!), after classes are done, and before dinnertime. I should note that if you’re looking for a place to work out without your classmates around, you should trek over to the Danforth Campus (which has an insanely nice gym). Personally, it hasn’t bothered me that so many of my classmates are around while I’m working out, but I have heard other people complain about this reality … But if you need someone to spot you, or you need to vent about that upcoming Anatomy exam in between sets, you can almost always find a friend.

— Marina N., M1
Food

Common Spots

Breakfast/Brunch
• Rooster
• Kingside Diner
• Wildflower
• Café Osage
• Southwest Diner
• The Mud House

Coffee
• Becker Medical Library (Suite 220): Free coffee and tea for all students between 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. Perfect for a quick stop between lectures!
• Kaldi's Café (in FLTC and the Mid-Campus Center)
• Comet Coffee
• Starbucks
• Rise Coffee
• Blueprint Coffee

Desserts
• Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams
• Clementine’s Creamery
• Ted Drewes
• The Fountain On Locust
• Piccione Pastry
• Baileys’ Chocolate Bar
• Insomnia Cookies

East Asian Food
• Cate Zone
• Tai Ke
• Szechuan Cuisine
• Mai Lee
• Pho Grand
• Thai 202
• Mandarin House
• West End Wok
Grocery Stores
On that medical student budget and don’t want to eat out all the time? Fear not. Here is a list of the most common grocery stores we frequently shop at!

• Whole Foods Market
• Schnucks (the local supermarket chain)
• Trader Joe’s
• Sam’s Club
• Dierbergs Markets (the other local supermarket chain)
• Costco

Italian Food
You might hear fellow students talking about “The Hill.” So, what is it? The Hill is a vibrant Italian-American neighborhood located two miles south of Forest Park and is home to many Italian bakeries, groceries, restaurants, and businesses. It is also where the baseball greats Yogi Berra and Joe Garagiola Sr. grew up!

• Pastaria
• Pi Pizzeria
• Zia’s On the Hill
• Charlie Gitto’s On the Hill
• Bar Italia
• Katie’s Pizza and Pasta

Latin American Food
• Nixta
• Mango Peruvian Cuisine
• Mission Taco Joint ($2 shots and tacos after 10 p.m.!) 
• El Burro Loco
• Pueblo Solis

Dietary Needs
Gluten-Free
Whether you’re gluten-free (GF) because of celiac disease, just for preference, or anywhere in between, St. Louis has great options! My personal favorite GF bakery/cafè is New Day Gluten Free, which is about 10 minutes away from campus. They are a dedicated gluten-free, nut-free facility, with dairy-free options also available. They do breakfast all day, and I would highly recommend the French toast. They also have sandwiches and a nice selection of frozen items you can take home. (I always get the biscuits to cook later.) I even got a cake from there for my birthday. It’s that good!
If you’re craving pizza, Pi Pizzeria has a great GF crust and is good for carry-out or a quick dinner. As for pasta, Pastaria is a great option for a more upscale lunch or dinner. Favazza’s also has a GF pasta, and they can make many of their signature dishes with it. (Baked ziti anyone?) I also like Café Napoli for date night or when family is in town, as they do great grilled steaks and have GF pasta available. At all the places mentioned above, the servers I’ve had were generally knowledgeable about gluten allergies and helpful with modifications.

Seedz is a vegan restaurant that also has a lot of GF options, and it’s good for meat-eaters and vegetarians/vegans alike! They don’t have a GF bun available for sandwiches, but pro tip — you can get any of their veggie burgers on top of cheesy rice instead. Trust me, it’s better anyway! Lulu’s Local Eatery is also a vegan restaurant with tons of GF options, including tater tots and mac n’ cheese. Seedz and Lulu’s both have GF denoted on the menu, which is helpful. If you’re more of a meat eater, most of the barbecue joints in the area are GF-friendly; I would recommend Pappy’s or Sugarfire. Some sides and sauces are not GF, so you just have to ask when you order. Overall, I’ve been very impressed with gluten-free dining in St. Louis, and there are many more options available. I always check the menu and call before I go to a new place just to double check, but it’s been easy to find!

— Lindsey H., M1

Vegetarian & Vegan

When my vegetarian family moved to St. Louis in 1996, it was truly a meat-and-potatoes city. We could essentially only eat at Olive Garden, and we could only ever order breadsticks, mozzarella sticks, and minestrone soup. In the last two decades, St. Louis has had a very exciting restaurant boom that caters well to the dietarily restricted population.

I’ve listed some restaurants that specifically serve only vegan or vegetarian food below, but almost all of the fun restaurants in St. Louis have vegetarian options, and many have excellent vegetarian options. Thanks to the recent popularity of plant-based diets, many newer restaurants are cropping up with balanced plant-based and meat-based dishes. For example, I recently went to 58Hundred, a restaurant based on a collaboration between a butcher and a gardener. About two-thirds of the dishes are vegetarian, and everything I tried was excellent.

My main advice is to check the menus before you try a place. I like to check beforehand for restaurants that serve food from cuisines with traditionally fewer vegetarian options, like Chinese food or steak houses (some do have clearly demarcated vegetarian options!), as well as traditional St. Louis establishments that were around before the proliferation of trendy restaurants.
Vegan Places:

• **Lulu’s Local Eatery**: My favorite vegan place in town! They’re best known for the buffalo cauliflower bites and tater tots. I love how hearty the dishes are while still being very vegetable-heavy.

• **Seedz Café**: A little pricey with more of a health-food vibe, and a number of their dishes are also raw. I’m not sure if $10 is worthwhile for a smoothie, but it was quite tasty if you’re looking to treat yourself.

• **PuraVegan**: I haven’t tried this place yet, but the vegan mac and cheese, açaí bowls, and desserts have been highly recommended to me.

Vegetarian Places (with good vegan options):

• **Treehouse**: This place has a classy modern-American vibe. I think it’s a little bit expensive for the quality of the food, but it might be a fun place to go when family is in town.

• **Pizza Head**: This is a tiny punk-rock themed, New York-style pizza joint. They only have vegetarian-pepperoni, cheese, veggie, and vegan pizza that you can buy either by the slice or whole, as well as beer/soda. I’m a big fan when I’m in the mood for that kind of thing.

• **Frida’s**: Frida’s is my favorite vegetarian restaurant in town. They have a good range of vegetarian/vegan/gluten free/raw options. They’re styled a little more like a health food place than Treehouse is, but there are definitely hearty options.

• **Small Batch**: This is a vegetarian tapas place and whiskey bar. The food isn’t the best I’ve ever eaten, but it’s a lot of fun (and my favorite ice cream place, The Fountain on Locust, is right next door!).

• **Gokul**: I’ve never been to this place, but I feel like I have to mention it. It’s a vegetarian restaurant that has a vegan buffet on Mondays that the St. Louis Veg Group always attends. I’ve heard that the food is gross but in a cheap and satisfying way, and it might be a good way to network with vegans if you’re into that.

Completely Subjective Other Places that I Like that have Vegan/Vegetarian Options: Lona’s Lil Eats, Tai Ke, Cate Zone, Sardella (for brunch), 58Hundred, Pastaria, Pi Pizza (also has vegan pizza), The Clover and the Bee, The Fountain on Locust, Polite Society, Layla, Nudo, Tower Taco.

— Gowri K., M1

**Favorites**

**Barbecue**

Welcome to St. Louis, a barbecue mecca! First off, we have the best ribs you will ever dream of, found at the one and only Pappy’s Smokehouse. Don’t just take my word for it; Food Network listed them as the #1 ribs in America. They often sell out, so go for lunch or call ahead. Pro tip: Eat them upside down to get all
that seasoned goodness all over your tongue! I also highly recommend the wings and brisket at Salt + Smoke. Other fantastic spots include: Sugarfire, Bogart’s, and Adam’s Smokehouse.

— Erik N., M1

Brazilian Food
After growing up in California and then going to school in the Northeast, I knew St. Louis would be alright when I found not one, but two Brazilian restaurants in the general region! Brazilians are not really known to immigrate to the Midwest, but apparently some of them got tired of hot and humid weather and decided to brave the frigid winters of the region and open some restaurants. Brasilia is located on South Grand (along with many other international cuisines) and serves some of my favorite appetizers. They also have a Sunday buffet where you can eat Brazilian-styled barbecue, which features some unique cuts of steak that you can’t find elsewhere. Yemanja Brasil is a bit pricier, and I haven’t actually eaten there yet, but they do have a food truck that frequents the Medical Campus at least once a month, and the feijoada (think: black bean stew with meat) is good. I wouldn’t say they’re the best I’ve ever had, but when I’m missing home and craving Brazilian-style rice and beans, fried foods, and other favorites, these places hit the spot.

— Marina N., M1

Brunch
During my Second Look weekend, I remember walking about the streets of the Central West End when I came across a sign that read, “Brunch without mimosas is just a sad lunch!” I would not be exaggerating when I say that this sign (and the millennial brunch culture it represents) was one of the key reasons why I chose WashU and St. Louis. Now, even though I’m an international student, one of the American traditions I’ve embraced wholeheartedly is the weekend brunch, be it a bottomless-mimosa Saturday hangover cure or a Sunday Hail (Bloody) Mary. Half a year after I saw that delightful sign, at what I now know is the Brasserie, I have to say St. Louis has not disappointed.

Brasserie by Niche: The Brasserie is one of St. Louis’s most notable brunch spots, and it resides in our very own Central West End, a couple of minutes away from campus. Their cocktail menu is innovative, their French breakfast very European, and their tartines heavenly. The clientele ranges from fellow med students that you likely ran into the night prior at Tin Roof, to attendings and their partners who are also unabashedly partaking in the morning prosecco consumption. If you’re looking for a dependently lovely brunch, the Brasserie is the choice for you.
**The Pat Connolly Tavern:** If you’re a true believer in the bottomless mimosa but are also a fan of the old-school bar atmosphere, the Pat Connolly Tavern is the place for you. Though the Irish pub is not your usual mimosa environment (or at least not mine), Pat’s is an absolutely charming, historic neighborhood tavern in Dogtown with a smashing brunch menu. The fried chicken is their specialty and is absolutely delicious, but all of their sandwiches are just as indulgent. To top it all, they have four innovative flavors of mimosas, apart from the traditional, and the bartender will be willing to make each one to sample (and more to enjoy, if you’re quick on the uptake!).

**Sardella:** A bit farther away, Sardella in Clayton is a favorite of St. Louis townies and county-dwellers alike. More of an upscale locale, Sardella is also a beloved dinner spot, but I would say their brunch is where they truly excel, which is made obvious by how packed it is each weekend (so make sure to make your reservation ahead of time!). The restaurant blends together old Italy with 21st century St. Louis, with a continually changing and innovative menu. If you’re a coffee lover, they offer a long list of coffees from the classic espresso to more decadent lattes. Perhaps the best thing about Sardella, however, is that each and every part of the meal is aesthetically perfect and totally Instagram-worthy!

**Panorama at the Saint Louis Art Museum:** If brunch is as much about the environment and aesthetic experience for you as it is for me, Panorama at the Saint Louis Art Museum is the place to go. Though the prices reflect the upscale location, Panorama offers truly delectable food and the perfect cocktails to compliment your meal. When I tried their apricot-almond brie, I briefly considered changing my sandwich to another order of the appetizer, so I had another entire cheesy baguette to myself. The restaurant has floor-to-ceiling windows that offer an unparalleled view of the park (particularly gorgeous in the changing colors of the fall), and a perfect amount of sunlight to illuminate you and your meal (if you’re looking for that golden glow social media shot). Finally, after your meal, you can walk around and peruse the art on display at the museum, making for a perfect Saturday or Sunday afternoon.

— Simona S., M1

**KBBQ**
Coming from a smaller city in Texas, my options for Korean food were limited to my house. I’ve been happy to find a range of options in St. Louis. Whenever family comes to visit and when I’ve stored enough acorns for the winter, I’ll pay a visit to Seoul Garden, located somewhat near the St. Louis airport, for real cook-in-front-of-you Korean Barbecue. Otherwise, my favorite place is the small kitchen of U-City Grill, where I can warm up with a bowl of yook gae jang for an affordable price. There are also several fusion places like Seoul Taco and the traveling K-Bop food truck that makes it easy to find familiar tastes and smells around the city.

— Monica L., M1
Mauhaus
If you’d like to play with some cats and don’t have the time or space to care for one yourself, Mauhaus is a cat café located a short drive away from campus. Some of the cats are residents, while others are just here for a stop on the way to adoption. You can either pay an entrance fee or buy a scone or coffee in order to spend time with the cats. While the food itself is not something to rave about, you’ll definitely leave feeling much less stressed and ready to hop over to the library or another café to hit the books.

— Monica L., M1

Pho
I always have a pho craving when it’s cold/rainy outside! For authentic pho, I recommend grabbing a group of students and driving to Pho Grand. They have plenty of other delicious Vietnamese soup options too, like bun bo hue and bun mang vit. Another option is Mai Lee near Brentwood Target. I was pretty surprised to find a lot of Vietnamese restaurants sprinkled throughout St. Louis, so just take your pick!

— Sandy H., M1

Ramen
On a cold, Midwestern winter day, there’s nothing better than a warm bowl of spicy ramen. Good ramen is not far from campus; grab a friend with a car and drive over to Clayton and check out Nami Ramen. They have a good lunch deal, and their tonkatsu ramen is delicious. If you’re feeling adventurous, you can even ask for it to be made spicy, but it’s not for the faint of heart! Midtown Sushi and Ramen is another great spot right next to IKEA, and both restaurants also have great appetizers.

— Sarah C., M1

Tacos
As you’ll learn in the student financial responsibility talk during orientation, it’s important to be frugal in medical school. Fortunately, local CWE businesses understand our predicament, and no one gets it better than Mission Taco Joint. After 10 p.m. every night of the week, tacos and tequila shots are $2 each. If you’re feeling Asian fusion, Seoul Taco on the Delmar Loop has great tacos. And if you just want a good, authentic taco, Taqueria El Bronco and other spots on Cherokee Street are guaranteed to please.

— Urvi S., M1
On Campus

Free Food
Everyone loves food, but when it’s free, it suddenly becomes a thousand times more delicious. Perhaps it is the luxury of expending little more energy than the lifting of a fork to fall into that deep ambrosial food coma. Perhaps it is because free food placates your inner penny-pinching ego, and the fullness of your wallet fills you with a sense of pride. Whichever way free food touches your soul and lifts your spirits, WashU has got you covered. In the past four months, I have purchased groceries only twice. With a keen eye and honed scavenging skills, it is entirely possible to eat three meals a day, five days a week, without spending a dime. During application season, the applicant breakfasts overflow with leftovers aplenty. If you tire of the applicant fare, each hospital department also hosts grand rounds once a week which offer, beyond engaging lectures, Einsteins Bagels and Coffee. Lunch is catered by various organizations hosting lunch talks at least four times a week; Addie’s Thai is served on at least two days. During application season, pizza is served every night in the Core. But if pizza isn’t your thing, between interprofessional events, galas, guest speakers, and leftovers from catered evening selective courses, there is plenty of food to go ‘round. Bottom line, you will not go hungry.

— Alex S., M2

Food Around Campus
Put aside all your preconceived notions about hospital food; the food on and around campus is some of my favorite in St. Louis, just for those rare days when there’s no lunch talk offering your favorite free foods, and when you still haven’t gotten into the groove of meal prep. Physicians, students, and patients alike enjoy the hospital cafeteria on the first floor, and many professors and TAs can be seen frequently in Shell Café, which provides soup and salad, a grill station, and a comfort station. Kaldi’s has a location right in the lobby of the FLTC, providing a quick and delicious option for a quick snack or a breakfast sandwich if you were running late to one of those oh-so-early 8:30 a.m. Molecular Foundations of Medicine lectures.

A fan favorite from our class has been the food trucks — parked just outside the doors of the FLTC every day. They provide a range of options from Hawaiian (that surf plate tho) to Greek (amazing gyros with fries inside them!!) that rotates every day, and you can generally expect to spend around $8-12.

If you’re craving those old chain haunts, fear not: a few minutes’ walk away are Starbucks and Chick-Fil-A on the St. Louis College of Pharmacy campus, as well as a Panera Bread (even though it’s called St. Louis Bread Co., it’s the same Panera you know and love) across Forest Park Parkway.

— Sarah C., M1
WashU BakeOffs

Our class has started a monthly bakeoff competition to enable a favorite pastime of medical students, “procrastibaking.” Anyone who wants to participate brings in a baked good for that month’s theme, and the whole class gets together to try all the baked goods and vote on a winner. It is a fun way to test your culinary skills, hang out with classmates over delicious food, and bake something without eating the whole thing yourself.

— Isabelle Z., M1

Travel & Getting Around

Air Travel

Taking flights out of St. Louis Lambert International Airport is really easy and convenient. Most airlines fly here, including Southwest, but you may have to have a layover or two if you’re not traveling to or from a bigger city. I highly recommend the MetroLink lightrail to get to the airport, since we can ride for free with the school-provided pass. It takes roughly 20 minutes to get from the Central West End stop to both terminals of the airport, and the trains have enough space that I can comfortably sit with luggage. Uber and Lyft are also available for transportation and might be the easier option if you have a lot of luggage, but they’ll probably be around $25-30 and will likely take longer than the MetroLink. The airport itself is easy to navigate and, so far, it hasn’t taken me longer than 15 minutes to get through security. I’ve made a really bad habit of leaving from my apartment in the Central West End an hour before my flight departs and taking the MetroLink since I can still be at my gate in time for departure. Of course, I don’t recommend this, but it’s probably doable in most cases. And if you’re interested in having some exciting international adventures during breaks, I’ve also heard rumors of some really affordable flights (Iceland has been mentioned a couple of times), so that’s something to look into!

— Pramodh G., M1

Life Without a Car

As someone who loves driving with loud music as a pastime, I was nervous about moving to St. Louis without my homey Honda Civic. Turns out, St. Louis is very walkable and public transportation is easy to use. I live on campus, so it takes me no longer than two minutes to walk to class and 10 minutes to grab food on Euclid Ave. (And if you live near Euclid Ave., as many students do, it’ll take you around 10-15 minutes to walk to class.) For groceries, it’s easy to ask in our class-wide GroupMe for a ride from a generous student with a car. To go
downtown or around Forest Park, I use the MetroLink, which all WashU students have free access to. For any other situation, I take an Uber/Lyft or a Lime Scooter, which I found are extremely affordable compared to my hometown (D.C. area). So, life without a car has been pretty easy!

— Sandy H., M1

Life with a Car

St. Louis is a really car-friendly city. While the Central West End doesn’t have quite as many large, free parking lots as I’m used to (I grew up in suburban Georgia), street parking here is actually not that bad, and I’ve found that it’s usually free, especially outside of normal business hours. Gas is fairly inexpensive, and other than a relative slowdown during rush hour, traffic is really manageable. While the Central West End has most things you need within walking distance from school — grocery stores, restaurants, shops, etc. — having a car really broadens your options. I tend to go to Clayton or Brentwood for shopping, and it’s nice not having to walk all your groceries back. I’ve also been trying out a lot of the food in St. Louis, most of which is a lot easier to access with a car. And since St. Louis is only a few hours away from some destinations like Chicago, Kansas City, and Nashville, having a car gives you the flexibility to enjoy a quick weekend getaway. One thing that I’d recommend checking out before you bring a car, though, is what kind of parking is available wherever you’re living. I live in the Core, which has a really convenient parking lot, but I’ve heard of other complexes having a long waitlist or not having many parking options. All in all, I highly recommend bringing a car! As I’m a newcomer to St. Louis, it’s definitely helped me experience the city more fully.

— Pramodh G., M1

Public Transportation

I worked at the medical school for two years before matriculating here and I took the MetroLink (St. Louis’s light-rail system) every day. You will receive a free pass for being a WashU student, and you will surely milk this benefit. The MetroLink stops at many great destinations, including the Enterprise Center for hockey games, the airport, Busch Stadium for Cardinals games, and even 100 meters from your lecture hall. Seriously, the Central West End MetroLink stop will let you off hilariously close to the school. The MetroBus system is great too, and has routes all over St. Louis. You can carry bikes on both the MetroLink and the MetroBus, and the trains generally arrive on time (except when there is construction on the tracks). Please keep in mind, though, that this is a city and there are precautions you should take whenever you ride alone late at night. For me personally (as a male), I have always felt safe on the MetroLink in over 1500 riding trips.

— Chris N., M1
WUSM students exploring the Midwest and trying to stay warm on a very cold night in Chicago.

M1s preparing to indulge in the tastiest of catering options: Addie’s Thai.

It’s hard to resist eating ice cream when Jeni’s is so close.

There are always many students at WUSM who want to play soccer.
Whether your idea of fun is cheering on the Cardinals at the next baseball game, dancing the night away, or catching a play at the Fabulous Fox Theatre, we have first-hand reviews of some of the best St. Louis activities.

Section Editor: Luxi Qiao
Festivals & Events

CWE Cocktail Party
Did you know that the first cocktail party recorded in history took place in the CWE (at what is now the Archbishop's house) in 1917? That's all right — you are still invited to celebrate this historic event each June in the streets of the CWE, with unique cocktails crafted by CWE restaurants, live music on two stages, and a cocktail competition! P.S. It is free!

— Michael N., M2

Cinco de Mayo
I have become a total festival junkie since moving to St. Louis, and I can say with confidence that Cherokee Street Cinco de Mayo is my favorite festival yet! It features three stages with live music and intermittent dance performances, many restaurants and bars offering specials out on the street, and friends and families from all over the city coming together to spend time on the street that has come to be known as the focal point of Mexican-St. Louisan culture! P.S. It is free!!!

— Michael N., M2

Fair Saint Louis
Fair Saint Louis is an annual free summer event held at the newly renovated Gateway Arch National Park. It’s a huge, three-day Fourth of July festival that’s always crowded and a lot of fun. The park literally becomes a sea of hundreds of thousands of people lounging on beach chairs and towels while enjoying good food, live entertainment (past performers include Jason Derulo in 2018, Akon in 2017, and Flo Rida in 2016), and fireworks each night. Overall, it’s a fun St. Louis tradition and a relaxing way to spend the Fourth of July holiday with friends both in and outside of the WUSM community.

— Sukruth S., M1

Festival of Nations
I never expected that St. Louis could be home to such a large variety of communities until I went to the Festival of Nations, where dozens of countries were represented in food, crafts, and performances. Next to the stage where dancers swing brightly colored dresses, you can start learning different languages or buy a hand-made gift. Held every year in Tower Grove Park at the end of summer, the Festival of Nations welcomes vendors, restaurants, and local community members to share various aspects of many different cultures. The festival is also a reminder of St. Louis’ historical role in welcoming refugees to the area. The
International Institute is located a few blocks away, and on Grand Blvd. which borders the park, you’ll find international grocery stores and Vietnamese, Bosnian, and Afghan cuisine.

— Monica L., M1

IndiHop

What could make a beer festival better? What if you were to replace a sticky and poorly ventilated warehouse with the streets of the Grove and Cherokee neighborhoods, and the booths and long lines with local businesses agreeing to host a brewery with plenty of standing room? Well, you would get IndiHop! Taking place every May, IndiHop costs $30 for bottomless tasters of delicious craft beers, free shuttle rides back and forth between the two neighborhoods, and a wicked good time exploring local shops!!!

— Michael N., M2

Japanese Festival

After having lived in Japan for a year, I came to St. Louis really looking forward to the Japanese Festival. At the event, you’ll be able to find bonsai vendors, a variety of Japanese foods, a beautiful series of Japanese gardens, musical and cooking performances, and so much more. The festival attracts a big crowd every year, and there’s plenty to do and see while you’re there. If I’m being candid, it is not necessarily an “authentic” Japanese experience, but still worth going if you’re at all interested.

— Cyrus G., M1

Mardi Gras

St. Louis has the honor of hosting the second-largest Mardi Gras in the country (outside NOLA) in the historic Soulard neighborhood. If an early morning parade in the Midwest winter doesn’t seem like your thing, think again! My tips: Wear leggings under your jeans and gloves, drink a hot (or adult) beverage to warm you up, and don’t forget to catch those beads!

— Urvi S., M1

Shakespeare in the Park

Having grown up in St. Louis, I have attended this festival at least 10 times. It is an awesome free night of amazing Shakespeare entertainment in Forest Park, the medical school’s backyard! Come see plays put on by a professional theater company FOR FREE. High-yield tips:
1) Bring a date who likes theater (I’ve done this a couple of times).
2) Bring a group of friends who love wine and cheese.
3) Bring a picnic basket and eat before (and during) the show!
Also, go on a night with nicer weather, since summers in St. Louis can be humid.
— Chris N., M1

Nightlife & Bars

Atomic Cowboy
While St. Louis is more known for its bar scene, there’s a handful of notable dance floors, and none closer to school than Atomic Cowboy in The Grove. With a lively DJ and a great mix of students and locals, this bar/club is a great option if you love to dance but don’t want to Uber for more than five minutes. It’s also minutes away from other great restaurants and clubs in the Grove, like Grace Meat + Three and Just John’s.
— Urvi S., M1

Beer Bars
St. Louis is hands-down one of the best beer cities in America. Beyond the obvious powerhouse that is Anheuser-Busch, there are tons of other breweries and beer gardens throughout the city. 4 Hands Brewery is one of my favorites and being within walking distance from Busch Stadium makes it a great place to grab a beer before a Cardinals game. Urban Chestnut’s beer hall is just down the street from the med school campus, and along with great food, they have an awesome research brewery right next door where you can try out some new experimental brews they’ve been working on. Between these, Schlafly, and a ton of smaller microbreweries, you will have a hard time getting tired of all the variety in St. Louis.
— Alex S., M1

Board Games
During orientation, we went to a board game bar called Pieces and it was a ton of fun. Since that night, there has been a solid group of M1s (10+) who regularly meet up to play games together on Sunday nights. One of the favorites is a game called Avalon, which is essentially Mafia on anabolic steroids. Other crowd pleasers include, but are not limited to, Codenames, Deception Murder
in Hong Kong, Settlers of Catan, and Sheriff of Nottingham. Playing board games on Sundays nights is a great way to rest up and recover from an otherwise eventful weekend.

— Alex L. S., M1

**Club Viva**

Club Viva is known for its Latin dance nights and is conveniently located right in our CWE neighborhood! It has a great atmosphere and draws people of all skill levels and ages, from newbies in their 20s to older veteran salsa dancers. And don’t be afraid if you have never done Latin dances before. They have short intro lessons at the beginning of the night so you can jump right in!

— Alex Z., M1

**The Pageant**

Funny story: I got last-minute tickets to see an artist at the Pageant and left before they came onstage because we thought the opener was the main act. The Pageant is a concert venue located on the Delmar Loop and offers a range of musical and other performances. Some of the most recent headliners included Bastille, El Monstero, Switchfoot, and Allen Stone.

— Monica L., M1

**Outdoors**

**Fun at the Farms**

A 30-minute drive away, Eckert’s Farm is the place to go to satisfy all your fall cravings. Stroll through the rows of apple trees and reach into the fragrant branches heavy with fruit, finding delicious treats covering the whole spectrum of sweetness and crispness. Beyond the apple field, you can also acquire a new Halloween decoration in the pumpkin patches, catch up with friends while meandering through the corn mazes, or bond with the most wholesome and adorable furry friends at the petting zoo. The alpaca was especially affectionate! So, get a group of friends, make a playlist for the car ride, and go take part in this classic fall ritual. The ticket to enter the farm was $13, but parking was free.

— Luxi Q., M1

**Hiking**

One of my favorite parts about living in the Midwest is the chance to experience real autumn, and my favorite way of celebrating the season is taking a walk. Besides the fact that Forest Park is just a minute away from the medical school
campus, you can visit a variety of parks just outside of St. Louis. Castlewood is the closest and offers some short hikes (some with an incline, for those who doubt elevation potential in the flat Midwest). Go to the Lewis and Clark trail to catch a sunrise or sunset. Go east to Cahokia mounds, the most sophisticated prehistoric native civilization north of Mexico. You can also take a day trip on the weekends to Johnson’s Shut-Ins (if you’re craving the water) or Elephant Rocks State Park.

— Monica L., M1

St. Louis Attractions

City Museum
If you could take Willy Wonka’s Chocolate Factory and throw out all the candy, I feel like you would get something resembling the City Museum. In all seriousness though, it’s basically just like a huge playground, spanning some four floors and filled with slides, metal-wire tubes, skating ramps, ball pits, and tunnels. It’s hard to understand how big it is until you actually visit.

For a kid, the City Museum would basically be a dream come true. For an adult, the appeal may fade quickly. It may not be worth more than one visit, as the cost of admission is a bit pricey ($14 plus tax, $10 parking), but it is definitely worth going to at least once. The atmosphere there is always amazing as there are usually a lot of families. It’s a very energetic and wholesome environment. It’s like a cultural institution at this point. If you want to start to figure out what St. Louis is about, this isn’t a bad place to start!

— David Z., M1

Forest Park
Whenever you need a break from the library, you can walk literally one block to one of the best attractions in St. Louis: Forest Park. Even bigger than New York’s Central Park, Forest Park has miles and miles of trails, a golf course, and a FREE history museum, art museum, and zoo. It’s the perfect place to run, people-watch, or just take a mental health break. There are also countless events in the park all year round. One snowy day I was walking and actually stumbled across a giant ice-skating rink. How magical is that?! We are really lucky that our school is right across the street from such a unique and beautiful resource.

— Genevieve T., M1
**Gateway Arch**

I first learned about St. Louis and the Gateway Arch during a third grade presentation, where I talked about the conspiracy theory that the Arch could control Midwestern weather. For years, St. Louis was the Gateway Arch to me. Now, the Arch is the vantage point from which I can see all the places that make up my new home and city. After contorting into the pods that take you up 600 feet, you can look out on downtown and squint to make out the medical campus buildings (just a quick six-mile run away). Turn left to check out the Cardinal’s Busch Stadium. Look down on the picnic-goers at the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial (newly finished) and make out the start site of the Go! St. Louis marathon. You’ll also see the Old Courthouse, the streets you traversed for Mardi Gras, and the rooftop of the City Museum where you met your classmates during orientation. You can even look across the Mississippi River into Illinois. At this point, I’ve experienced enough temperamental weather in St. Louis to make the whole weather-control theory unlikely. However, it’s still good to look back and see the ways in which my perceptions of St. Louis have changed since that third grade presentation.

— Monica L., M1

**Missouri Botanical Garden**

My first exposure to the Botanical Garden was during Second Look Weekend. The event was catered with an open bar, so it was super nice getting to walk around and look at all of the flora with a beverage in hand. Since settling down in St. Louis, I have revisited the Garden on several occasions. It is one of the nation’s oldest botanical gardens and the second biggest in North America (behind only the New York Botanical Garden). Not only is it a great spectacle for the eyes, but the Botanical Garden also does extensive work in the realms of research and science education. With nearly 80 acres of horticultural display and a 14-acre Japanese strolling garden, you can easily find yourself spending hours in a peaceful and meditative trance. Best of all, admission into the Garden is completely free on Wednesdays and Saturday mornings!

— Alex L. S., M1

**Missouri History Museum**

The Missouri History Museum is one of the reasons why I chose to come to WUSM. The museum is conveniently located at the top of Forest Park right off the Forest Park/DeBaliviere Metro stop, and it’s free, so there’s really no excuse not to go at some point! I went to the museum after Second Look and ended up seeing an exhibit that detailed the civil rights movement in St. Louis and the lasting effects it has had on the city. After learning more about the rich and complicated history of St. Louis, I realized it would be an amazing place to go to medical school, as
it is a city where med students really can make a difference in the community, and it is a place where we can learn so many valuable lessons from the residents of St. Louis themselves. The museum also hosts several events throughout the year, so it’s always fun to check it out on special occasions!

— Alanna W., M1

**Saint Louis Zoo**

The Saint Louis Zoo is one of the many gems of Forest Park! Not only has it won national awards (consistently ranking in America’s top 10 zoos), but it also is completely free! And it’s only 2.5 miles away from WUSM, so you can easily stop by while strolling/running in the park. There is so much to see, but my favorite exhibits include the prairie dogs, sea lions, hippos, and orangutans. Definitely one of my favorite things in St. Louis!

— Alex Z., M1

**Saint Louis Art Museum**

Easily overlooked, though it overlooks one of the best sledding hills in the city (Art Hill), the Saint Louis Art Museum is an excellent way to spend a steamy St. Louis afternoon in A/C or to impress your parents with the cultural merits of the Gateway to the West. Like all good things, admission is free. While the unique rotating exhibits require an entry free or a reasonably priced membership, the museum is full of timeless pieces from every era from Baroque to Modern. There’s plenty to love for the history buffs too. As an added plus, there are frequent special events and shows on Art Hill, from movies to the famous Balloon Glow.

— Drew D., M1

**St. Louis Cardinals**

St. Louis is definitely a baseball city, and we love our Cardinals! A summer night under the stars relaxing and watching some baseball is a great way to spend an evening. Plus, tickets can be very cheap! You can easily get many of them for under $10 on StubHub or from other Cardinals promotions. Plus, they give away free prizes at many of their games. Go grab a Card’s shirt at Goodwill and get yourself some tickets!

— Erik N., M1
The Arts

Fabulous Fox Theatre

The Fox is St. Louis’s answer to FOMM (fear of missing musicals). Located just a short MetroLink ride (or a longish walk) from the Medical Campus, the Fox plays a mixture of off-Broadway musicals, including classics like Phantom of the Opera or Aladdin, and newer shows such as Come From Away or Anastasia. It also hosts a variety of other productions and events. Single-show tickets are usually available for reasonable prices, but the best decision, especially for those seeking temporary respite from the medical school bubble, is to order a seven-show season ticket package. You might think you don’t have the time for it, but trust me, you do! There are no bad seats in the house, which is an incredibly funky and beautiful amalgam of architectural styles, and season tickets for the seven shows combined start at just $190. For those even remotely intrigued by the thought of sampling a musical every now and then, or for those with significant others trying to plan date nights, the package is the way to go.

Pro-tips for maximizing your experience include the following: have a delicious dinner beforehand at Vito’s (Italian) or the Fountain on Locust (old-timey soda fountain with homemade ice cream and chocolate malts); don’t forget that the Fox itself houses local ice cream (Clementine’s) and a bar, neither of which should be skipped; and make sure to chat with those sitting nearby once you’ve committed to buying tickets. A night at the Fox is a great way to explore the city and make some new friends in the process!

— Michael R., M1

Live Music in STL

What do Scott Joplin, Chingy, Miles Davis, Chuck Berry, and Nelly have in common? They’re all from St. Louis! Some of the biggest names in blues, rock-and-roll, and hip-hop have called this city home, and because of their legacy, St. Louis has an awesome and diverse music scene. I’ve wandered into Mangia’s pizza parlor at 1:30 a.m. to find some truly talented jazz musicians jamming away. I’ve also seen the St. Louis Symphony perform at the historic Powell Hall.

If you’re a stadium concert-goer, most big-name acts hit St. Louis on their world tours. M1s have seen Drake, Taylor Swift, Fleetwood Mac, Ed Sheeran, and more. If you’re an indie music lover, the Pageant and Blueberry Hill on the Delmar Loop and the Ready Room in the Grove neighborhood book really great mainstream and newer alternative artists.

Blues has historically been a big part of the music scene. St. Louis is home to the National Blues Museum, and bars and restaurants around St. Louis have lineups of local blues, jazz, and Americana artists. Broadway Oyster Bar is one of
the most famous of these venues. It’s a New Orleans-style restaurant serving up Cajun food and hosting blues, reggae, and funk in one of the oldest buildings in St. Louis. And though it’s not my cup of tea, the RYSE Nightclub is known for its EDM lineups. Concert-going is also a great excuse to have fun and get to know your new classmates!

— Adrienne V., M1

**St. Louis Symphony Orchestra**

Step into beautiful Powell Hall, and you’ll feel like you’re stepping into the early 1900s. The symphony is always celebrating something, and you’ll find St. Louisans coming in all forms of dress to be swept away by Mendelssohn, Handel, or Elgar. What’s even better? The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra offers student nights throughout the semester, so you can get tickets for only $10! While on Grand Blvd., check out the Fabulous Fox Theatre and Jazz St. Louis, two other musical venues showcasing the artistic community of St. Louis.

— Monica L., M1

**The Muny**

Are you a fan of musical theater? Then St. Louis is the perfect place for you! St. Louis is home to the nation’s oldest and largest outdoor musical theater, the St. Louis Municipal Opera Theatre (est. 1917), affectionately known as The Muny. Every summer, The Muny produces seven musical theater productions, including classics such as The Wizard of Oz and West Side Story. With such incredible quality productions and its convenient location in Forest Park, The Muny draws huge crowds every night, easily filling their 11,000 seats. In addition, over 1,000 seats are available for free on a first-come, first-served basis. So, come and join the St. Louis summer tradition of enjoying a musical summer evening at The Muny!

— Momo O., M1
Board game nights happen every week and always draw a large group of people together.

M1s taking a study break in the Central West End neighborhood.
M1s after a night of skiing and snowboarding at Hidden Valley — a ski resort 30 miles from St. Louis.

Chris, Alex, and Michael cheering on the Cardinals at Busch Stadium.

Luxi and fellow M1s enjoying fall festivities at Eckert’s Farms.

Be sure to check out the penguins at the Saint Louis Zoo.

Take a tram ride to the top of the Gateway Arch.
Housing

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

Section Editor: Jesús Bazán Villicaña
Apartments

4371 Laclede Ave. Apartments

**Price range:** $1100 for a two-bedroom, one-bathroom townhouse  
**Pet policy:** Pets allowed  
**Amenities:** In-unit washer/dryer, dishwasher, patio, central AC/heating, community herb garden  
**Parking (monthly):** Gated covered parking permit $15  
**Walk:** 15 minutes

Aventura at Forest Park

**Price range:** $1325+ for a one-bedroom, $1650+ for a two-bedroom/ two-bathroom  
**Pet policy:** Pets allowed  
**Amenities:** In-unit washer and dryer, private balconies and patios with storage, private swimming pool, 24-hour fitness center, 24-hour emergency service, gated dog park  
**Parking:** Free gated parking and covered carports  
**Walk:** 10 minutes

I love living at Aventura! It’s a short walk away from campus and there are always dogs around the building, which really brightens the place up. Aventura is also a newly built complex (2014), and the maintenance staff is very responsive. There is also always coffee (and occasionally cookies) available in the leasing office! Although the fitness center is very small, the gym at the Core apartments on campus is only a short 10-minute walk away. The living room has hardwood floors while the bedrooms are carpeted. Utilities are not included in the rent. My roommate and I pay roughly $100 a month (split between the two of us). However, the free gated parking is very convenient and saves both of us a lot of money each month. The largest downside to living at Aventura is that there are not really any restaurants within a 20-minute walk of the complex (other than the café at WUSM). But if you want to put a positive spin on this, it forces me to eat the groceries that I buy more often than not. Overall, I really enjoy living at Aventura and I can’t see myself leaving any time soon!

— Abraham O., M1
Buckingham Court

Price range: $1000+ for a two-bedroom/one-bathroom; two-bathroom units also available
Pet policy: Pets allowed for a fee
Amenities: Basement laundry, water and gas included in rent, renovated kitchens
Parking: Uncovered lot for $50
Walk: 10 minutes

The best thing about living in Buckingham Court is its location. It's a 10-minute walk from class, so you can roll out of bed and still make it to lecture on time. Whole Foods is only a block away, so, depending on your budget, you won't need a car for groceries. Buckingham is really small (only about 30 people in three buildings), so you probably won't have classmates with you. For me, the best part is how close the building is to the Del Coronado apartments (two-minute walk). Del Coronado is usually a pretty popular place to live, and I love being close to so many of my classmates.

Other than location, the actual facilities in Buckingham Court are fine. You have central air, but the only laundry machines are in the basement. My biggest gripe about the place is that it is just a bit old. I think it was built in the 20s, and while it has been renovated a couple of times, the age still shows in some places. The outlets don’t have a ground, so they only have two holes instead of three. The paint is kind of cracked in some places. There isn’t an elevator for moving in. All in all, though, the inconveniences aren’t terrible and it’s still a pretty good place to live. It’s definitely what you make of it, and you can make it really comfortable!

— David Z., M1

Del Coronado

Price range: $930+ for a studio, $1280+ for a two-bedroom/two-bathroom unrenovated, $1630+ for a two-bedroom/two-bathroom renovated
Pet policy: Two pets/apartment limit, additional monthly charge for pets
Amenities: Fitness center, lounge, on-site maintenance, laundry units on every other floor, bike storage, front desk staffed 24 hours some nights
Parking: Gated parking $60/month, uncovered garage $70/month, covered garage $80/month
Walk: 10 minutes
Website: delcoronadostl.com

Del Coronado is centrally located in the Central West End, just steps away from bustling restaurants and stores, and its reasonable prices for a comfortable living space have contributed to its reputation as traditionally being filled with
medical students and residents. Forest Park is half a block to the west, Whole Foods is right across the street, and school is three blocks south. Three types of rooms (studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom) come in two options: unrenovated and renovated. Unrenovated apartments are older but cheaper and have carpeted floors with a kitchen fully separated from the living room. Renovated apartments recently received an upgrade and have hardwood floors and updated bathroom and kitchen countertops, with a half-wall separating the kitchen from the rest of the space.

Recently, medical students have had trouble with the leasing office, especially delayed communication with regards to initially signing the lease, and, more importantly, problems with the office not communicating increases in rent during the rental cycle with adequate notice. The apartment has also been known to have old piping and thus problems with plumbing. Balancing the perks of being centrally located with the occasional frustrations of working with the leasing office will be left to each student’s discretion.

**Ellsworth Apartments**

**Price range (monthly):** $650-$1000 for a one-bedroom  
**Pet policy:** Pets allowed  
**Amenities:** All utilities included except summer AC, washers/dryers in the basement, pool access in sister apartment building one block away  
**Parking (monthly):** Gated parking lot fee  
**Walk:** 15 minutes

**Euclid + Pine**

**Price range (monthly):** $800 for a one-bedroom, $1199 for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom  
**Pet policy:** Pets allowed  
**Amenities:** Basement washer/dryer; gas, water, and electric included in rent  
**Parking:** Street parking only  
**Walk:** 10 minutes

**Lofts @ Euclid**

**Price range (monthly):** $1008 plus electric and internet  
**Pet policy:** Pet friendly  
**Amenities:** Central heat and air, ceiling fans, huge windows, high ceilings, recently renovated kitchens, roof terrace, gym, bike storage  
**Parking (monthly):** Outdoor gated parking $50 or indoor garage $100  
**Walk:** 20 minutes
**Metrolofts**

**Price range:** $1320+ for a one-bedroom, $1720+ for a two-bedroom/two-bathroom  
**Pet policy:** Two pets/apartment limit, additional monthly charge for pets  
**Amenities:** Furnished units, fitness center, bike storage, courtyards with grills, cookies and coffee daily  
**Parking:** Underground garage parking $100/month  
**Walk:** 7 minutes  
**Website:** metroloftscwe.com

Located right across from the Medical Campus on Forest Park Avenue, Metrolofts was at the top of my list because of its convenience — five minutes to the McDonnell Pediatric Research Building, where my lab is located, and seven minutes to the FLTC (where we have most of our classes). Also, being next door to two major bars in the Central West End, Tom’s and iTap (not to mention the Panera on the first floor), makes the apartment a prime gathering venue.

However, the design of the apartment might not work for everyone. The apartment is loft-style, meaning that, for some parts of the room, the wall does not go all the way up to the ceiling. My roommate and I had to build a wood frame to fill up the gap around my bedroom. Otherwise, the industrial layout of the interior design and the acceptable rent make the apartment a relatively ideal place!

— Ziheng X., M1

**Montclair**

**Price range:** $950+ for a studio, $1060+ for a one-bedroom, $1315+ for a two-bedroom  
**Pet policy:** Pets allowed  
**Amenities:** Fitness center with common area, game room, study rooms  
**Parking:** Outdoor parking $60/month or garage parking $95/month  
**Walk:** 10 minutes  
**Website:** montclaironthepark.com

The Montclair is a pretty nice place to live. It is one of the more expensive options (it’s not that bad, but you can find cheaper buildings), but it is newly renovated, spacious, and 10 minutes away from class, all of which make it pretty worth it. The building has a gym, rec room, and work rooms downstairs. There is also a rooftop terrace, which is great for lounging/hosting events/grilling/yoga when it’s warm. The building also has a staffed front desk from 8 a.m. to midnight, which is great for receiving packages/general security if you’re a person who is concerned about that. The front desk staff is amazing, and the Montclair also puts on fun events for the residents every month (think Wine Wednesdays). There is no in-unit laundry (there is shared basement laundry), and it can be a bit louder if you have
a Forest Park-facing room because it’s near a main road (though it’s quiet if your room doesn’t face that side!). Overall, I have enjoyed living in the building and would do so again next year!

— Alanna W., M1

Monticello

Price range (monthly): One-bedroom starting at $750, studios starting at $650
Amenities: Washer/dryer in basement, 24-hour access to fitness room in Fairmont apartment building, locked mailboxes. Rent does not cover electric, cable/internet, or air conditioning.
Parking (monthly): Underground garage beneath building $70
Pet policy: Allowed, with monthly fee
Walk: 15 minutes

When I was looking for apartments, there were a few things I was looking for: cheap, great natural light, decent kitchen, and walking distance from the med school. While Monticello certainly isn’t fancy, an “unrenovated” apartment gave me most of what I wanted. The management (which runs out of the Fairmont, one block north) responds quickly (within a day) to most issues, fixing chipped paint and broken window shades, installing my air conditioner, and signing for packages. Not all the apartments in this seven-floor building are the same, obviously, and there are certainly some issues. The bathroom is tiny and needs a major update. The shower will sometimes randomly get hot/cold. My bedroom got really hot this summer, so I had to buy a second air conditioner on top of the one they included. The elevator also stops working every 1-2 months. Mainly, though, I love my big huge space and bright light. It’s also close to all the good food around Maryland Plaza, and the public library. It’s great to be able to afford to live alone, and the 15-minute walk home to Lindell is well-lit and normally feels safe. I personally love to walk, so the sunlight and fresh air can wake me up in the morning before class. I’m planning to live here for at least a couple of years!

— Sarah S., M2

Parc Frontenac

Price range: $1000+ for a studio, $1250+ for a one-bedroom, $1800+ for a two-bedroom/two-bathroom
Pet policy: Pets allowed
Amenities: Basement laundry, gym, 24/7 doorman, open roof with lounge chairs
Parking: Ground lot $50/month
Walk: 10 minutes
Website: parcfrontenac.com
I absolutely love living at Parc Frontenac. It’s a little pricey compared to some of the other buildings, but I think it’s 100 percent worth it. My apartment is really large and has a beautiful view of Forest Park (hello, sunsets!). The building has lots of laundry machines, a nice gym, and a rooftop with views of the Arch that is great for parties. The 24/7 doormen are always really helpful, and they even remember my name (sometimes). Most of the residents are fellow med students or residents. Extra bonus: frequent cute dog encounters in the elevators.

— Genevieve T., M1

The Chesterfield

**Price range (monthly):** $750-$1000 for a one-bedroom, $1100 for a two-bedroom  
**Pet policy:** Pet friendly  
**Amenities:** Central AC/heating, some apartments have in-unit washer/dryer and balconies, access to outdoor pool, patio area with grills, gym, nearby dog park  
**Parking:** Free gated lot  
**Walk:** 30 minutes

The Core Apartment Residences

**Price range (monthly):** $742-1350 for studio and one-bedroom, $1268-1863 for two-bedroom (utilities included)  
**Pet Policy:** Pets allowed (additional fee)  
**Amenities:** Apartment: air conditioners, dishwasher, furnished, hardwood floors, microwave, refrigerator, in-unit washer/dryer. Community: media room, BBQ/picnic area, fitness center, library, off-street parking, on-site maintenance, on-site management, package receiving, recreation room, recycling.  
**Parking (monthly):** Available through WUSM Transportation  
**Walk:** On campus!

Living at the Core has been super convenient and easy! All the apartments/studios come fully furnished (a.k.a you really don’t need to buy much furniture to move in, which made it a really easy transition for me). Rents are “all-in” with pricing that includes furniture, internet, cable, and utilities. Did I also mention the in-unit washer/dryer and a dishwasher? Also, since it is so close to the FLTC, I am able to walk back and forth from my apartment to class within minutes (this is extremely helpful if I forget my books/equipment needed for class!). What has been the most helpful for me is that there are quite a few M1s living at the Core, so it is easy to form study groups to study together in lobby areas. It may be difficult to find a spot (especially two-bedroom apartments) — so start your search early!

— Joanna K., M1
The Parkway

**Price range (monthly):** $725 for a studio, $850 for a one-bedroom  
**Pet policy:** Cats only; 20-lb. maximum and two-pet limit. $150 fee per cat.  
**Amenities:** Window AC May-November; rent includes all utilities except for internet.  
**Parking (monthly):** Surface lot $50  
**Walk:** 10 minutes

The President

**Price range (monthly):** $1000 for a one-bedroom, $1605 for a two-bedroom  
($1700-$1850 for a two-bedroom with den)  
**Pet policy:** Cats only  
**Amenities:** Cool lounge downstairs, popcorn and sometimes nachos on Fridays, free coffee in the lobby, free printing, a gym, a sun deck, and decorations for the holiday season. Rent includes gas, electric, water, and trash.  
**Parking (monthly):** Garage parking $50  
**Walk:** 15 minutes

The President is a fantastic place to live. It’s probably the complex that is the best bang for your buck. Apartments come in one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and efficiency styles. The apartment that my roommate and I live in right now is 1800 square feet and we pay around $815/month each with utilities included. The building was built in the 1920s, so it is an older building, but the management is very responsive and does a great job with keeping the place looking new and beautiful. Any issues with maintenance have been dealt with almost immediately. There’s package storage, free coffee, and even free popcorn on Fridays. It’s about a 15-minute walk from school but about a five-minute Lime scooter ride, and it’s just down the block from a movie theater and a Whole Foods. There is a long waiting list for parking, though, and laundry is coin-operated on the first floor. Overall, it’s a great place to live, with a lot of charm, and I don’t know any other classmates that have more space.

— John D., M1
The Residences
Price range (monthly): $1500-1900 for a one-bedroom, $1900-2100 for a two-bedroom
Pet policy: Pets allowed
Amenities: In-unit washer/dryer, gym, complementary storage in basement
Parking: Free outdoor gated parking
Walk: 10 minutes
The Residences are amazing! Coming from San Francisco, I was very impressed with the amenities offered at the Residences for such an affordable price. The building itself used to be a hotel, so the bottom floor has a massive marble lobby, with additional space in the back containing a fireplace and lounge area, a pool table, and a kitchenette — all of which can be reserved for private events (Friendsgiving!). The building is very pet friendly and has a dog park and a human park (non-dog park). They also have gated garage parking, a great gym facility (with towel service!) in the basement, and all the units have in unit washer dryers (no more quarter-hoarding). The staff are also insanely friendly and helpful with holding packages, fixing things, etc. To top it all off, there is always free coffee and tea (via a big Keurig) and fresh fruit/bars downstairs for all the residents.
— Celia C., M2

Tramore Castle & 4515 Lindell
Price range (monthly): $650 for a studio, $725 for a one-bedroom, $825 for a two-bedroom, $1150 for a three-bedroom
Pet policy: Cats only
Amenities: Patio with grills (behind Tramore Castle), hardwood floors throughout, on-site management
Parking (monthly): Uncovered parking $35, covered parking $60 (Tramore); $65 (4515)
Walk: 15 minutes

West End Terrace
Price range (monthly): $785 for studio; $900 for a one-bedroom; $1120 for a two-bedroom; $1400 for a townhouse
Amenities: In-unit laundry in some apartments, 24-hr laundry room, 24-hr fitness center, 24-hr office center
Parking: Free gated parking lot
Pet policy: Pets welcome
Walk: 15 minutes
West End Terrace is a complex of buildings located about a mile from campus. There are a variety of living arrangements, including one- and two-bedroom apartments and two-bedroom townhouses. A portion of the units are also recently renovated. All of the units have electrical AC, heat and dishwashers. Some have in-unit laundry and/or hardwood floors. The leasing facility has a basic exercise facility, a few desktop computers (with free printing), an outdoor pool, and coin-operated laundry. Rent includes gated parking. My roommate and I really like our apartment! We have plenty of space and convenient amenities. We are within walking distance but can also take a bus to campus. Parking and laundry are so nice, and maintenance has been extremely responsive to the few requests we have made.

— Clara K., M2

Arrangements

Buying a Condo

I chose to pursue my MD/PhD training at WashU in part because I wanted to live like an adult during my 20s. WashU’s MSTP stipend relative to the cost of living in St. Louis affords one a comfortable, middle-class lifestyle that includes the opportunity to buy surprisingly nice real estate. Knowing that I’d be living in St. Louis for eight years, I wanted to purchase a condo as soon as possible. In addition to not losing the better part of a decade’s worth of rent, I was excited to buy so I could enjoy improving my investment and customizing a place for throwing awesome parties.

After deciding on WashU, I found a realtor and toured several condos with my mom and girlfriend at Second Look. Eventually, we found an awesome condo in DeBaliviere Place, which is one MetroLink stop west of campus and a block north of the beautiful Forest Park. My realtor put me in contact with a banker that specializes in (future) physician’s loans, and we worked out a loan with a small down payment and reasonable monthly installments without requiring a cosigner. I moved in before my summer rotation and have been enjoying the perks of being a homeowner since.

So far, I have hosted a few gatherings at my place. Believe me when I say owning a condo beats the dorm life!

— Travis T., M1
Finding a Roommate

Second Look can be a good time to find a roommate, though I thought that was a bit hard because I wasn’t sure who would actually commit to WashU or if I would at that time either. Luckily, the upperclass students set up a great Google doc that had a bunch of housing info on it, as well as a page for people who were looking for roommates. This included people in our class who wanted a roommate, and people in the classes above who had an open space in their apartment. People listed their living styles and what they were looking for, so it made it easier to figure out who you might be compatible with. I had luckily met my future roommate during Second Look, so after a couple of emails we decided it would be a good fit and the rest is HISTORY!!

— Alanna W., M1

Living Alone

I really enjoy living alone! In college, I lived in large groups (four, eight) for a few years and then with one roommate my junior and senior year. There are many aspects of having roommates that I miss: I liked always being able to hang out or chat with people without having to intentionally make plans, and I really enjoyed having people over.

Living alone also has its advantages though. I like to study in my room, and it’s nice to not have to worry about when the space will be quiet. I also feel less guilty if I leave a little bit of clutter around or keep odd hours. One benefit of living in the Core is that it’s a little like a dorm. Many of my neighbors are good friends of mine, so there are always people around to study or hang out with.

— Gowri K., M1

Living at Home

Living at home is the bomb. Let me address your concerns.

- The transportation is not a big deal. I commute 30 minutes both ways. I pray the rosary and listen to podcasts or call my long-distance fiancée. Parking is usually at a friend’s apartment with an extra spot, or at a free Metro parking spot at Richmond Heights.
- I am really saving a lot of money. Whatever deal you work out with your parents will probably be better than a landlord.
- I still have friends in med school! Sometimes, I even crash at a buddy’s place if I happen to be at the med school late. I pay them back by inviting them over to play with my parents’ dogs. They are a huge hit.

TL;DR: You can live at home if you are lucky enough to have the option, still have friends, and save as much money as you think you’re going to save.

— Chris N., M1
**Living with Other M1s**

Living with a medical student is the best! Nothing is better than coming home and knowing another M1 is there to understand how tough that Anatomy dissection was or how fun the M1/M2 mixer was. We get to relax together, study together, and pick up each other’s groceries when needed (s/o to my roommate <3). There are so many things going on in medical school and it’s great to have a roommate to share the experience with.

— Sandy H., M1

**Neighborhoods**

**Brentwood/Richmond Heights/Maplewood**

Most people live in the CWE, but if you want to venture out for a little more space, the Richmond Heights, Maplewood, and Brentwood areas are very nice family neighborhoods with many apartments, townhouses, and small houses. My wife and I live in a house, and we love the area. I take the bus (free bus pass provided by the school), and it is super convenient. Plus, we are close to many grocery stores (Trader Joe’s, Whole Foods), the St. Louis Galleria mall, Target, and Ted Drewes... enough said!

— Erik N., M1

**Central West End (CWE)**

The CWE is the area of St. Louis that the Medical Campus is situated in, and it is where many medical students (including myself), residents, and doctors live. It’s a great area for medical students to live in because of the proximity to the medical campus (my daily walk is less than 10 minutes), the affordability of living expenditures, and the fun/trendy/young vibe of the neighborhood.

Speaking of fun, the CWE has a lot of it! The neighborhood is known for its many amazing restaurants, cute shops, fun bars, and the annual CWE Halloween street party. I love seeing classmates in the neighborhood and being able to pop out of my apartment for coffee or brunch with my WUSM Big Sib. Beyond the amenities inside the neighborhood itself, the CWE is located directly across the street from St. Louis’ incredible Forest Park (larger than New York’s Central Park). From my CWE apartment, all I have to do is cross the street to escape into a world of natural beauty. I often go on runs through the park when the weather is nice, and I can’t even count the number of random weekend walks I’ve taken through Forest Park.

— Emily J., M1
DeMun/Clayton

DeMun is a small, historic neighborhood within the city of Clayton, right outside of St. Louis city. The houses were all built in the early 1920s, so the architecture is very charming and unique. The buildings vary between single-family homes, duplexes, and smaller apartment buildings. No high rises in this area! The neighborhood has a good mix of students, young professionals, and families. There is a beautiful seminary in the heart of this neighborhood, which provides ample space for exploring and going on walks. The main street in DeMun has a Kaldi’s, a Clementine’s Creamery, and many other yummy restaurants — all within walking distance. DeMun is in close proximity to the WashU Danforth Campus, where medical students have access to the gym and study spaces. It is also close to the west side of Forest Park, and it’s a short drive to the Delmar Loop and the shopping centers in Brentwood. The apartments in DeMun are much bigger than the apartments in the Central West End and slightly less expensive (for the most part). The only downside to living in DeMun is that commuting to school by car is necessary (technically, it’s a 20- to 25-minute bike ride through Forest Park, but who’s really going to do that in winter?). Overall, I have loved my experience living in DeMun, and would highly recommend it!

— Meg G., M1

Forest Park Southeast/The Grove

Forest Park Southeast is the neighborhood just south of the Medical Campus. There is a convenient pedestrian footbridge that you can take from the Core/Forest Park entrance to get across the I-64 highway, making Forest Park Southeast just minutes away from WUSM by foot. The area is mostly residential, with a lot of families in the area and only a couple of our classmates. Living spaces here are usually larger, since they are actual homes, but they have less availability. Aventura is just down the street as well, but otherwise it is a pretty quiet area. There is a dog park and a lot of neighborhood activities occur in the area. Everyone is friendly and it makes for a great place to live if you can find someone to rent a home or condo from.

The Grove is a vibrant and eclectic commercial district within the neighborhood, on Manchester Avenue. It’s about a 10-minute walk from the highway bridge, and it contains an abundance of restaurants, bars, and shops. Urban Chestnut is a popular brewery here for hanging out, and the social spaces down the street make it a convenient place for a night out. Since 2009, there has been an effort for renewal in the area and it is a currently a highly diverse place to take a stroll through, with many LGBTQ businesses.

While most of my classmates live north of campus in the CWE, this is a great option if you’re looking for somewhere quieter and more residential, but with proximity to a bustling area. Regardless, WUSM campus is just a skip across I-64!

— Jesús B., M1
Skinker/DeBaliviere

Skinker/DeBaliviere is awesome! I live in a six-unit apartment unit, and my roommate is also in the MSTP program. We have so much space; literally my current room is twice the size of my room in Boston (and I pay almost half the rent that I did before). We have a deck, sun roof, and large open-floor plan. Admittedly, DeBaliviere is not as close to school as the apartment complexes in the Central West End. However, it only takes seven minutes to walk to the MetroLink station, which is one stop away from the medical campus. Alternatively, there is a bus stop two houses away from me, and the bus takes about 15 minutes to get to campus. If you like the chill, spacious life, then DeBaliviere could be for you!

— Favour A., M1

Tower Grove/Shaw

When you join the incoming M1 Facebook group, you will quickly realize that almost all of your classmates want to live in the Central West End. If that’s for you, go for it, but don’t be afraid to explore options outside of CWE. I liked Shaw because I wanted to live alone, have a pet, and have more than a few square feet to live in without going broke. Living outside of the CWE means that when I go home for the day, I can leave my school-related stress behind me. As an added bonus, I can chat with my neighbors, see kids playing in the street, and see Trick-or-Treaters on Halloween!

— Urvi S., M1
Service

Service is a mindset here at WUSM. It’s in the personal missions that we have given ourselves, as evidenced by phrases like “doing the smallest good” or “serving others with empathy or humility,” in response to our “What My White Coat Means to Me” event. It’s built into the framework of the curriculum through programs such as WUMP and selectives, where students spend afternoons and weekends in high schools and student-run clinics. Service, as a value and an act, is also present in the ways our classmates fill in when other classmates are sick, or in the baked goods we share in the carrel kitchen. Despite the variety of reasons why people choose WashU, there’s a sense of care here that is shared among all.

— Monica L., M1

Section Editor: Monica Lim
Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)

The WashU chapter of the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) is focused on offering opportunities to advance health advocacy for Asian and Pacific American populations. WUSM APAMSA, in conjunction with the Saint Louis University School of Medicine APAMSA, regularly hosts health screenings targeting Asian and Pacific American populations. Students get to learn and practice skills such as taking vital signs, taking a history and physical, measuring blood glucose, and conducting vision screenings. APAMSA also has a selective for learning medical Chinese, and hosts multiple events that celebrate Asian Pacific culture, such as Diwali and Lunar New Year Festival. Getting involved in volunteering with APAMSA is a fantastic way to not only practice your basic medical skills but also gain a greater awareness of many of the issues faced by the Asian and Pacific American community.

— John D., M1

CHOICES

WUMP, our orientation, focused on the dramatic health disparities in St. Louis and the history that contributed to them. At the end of those two weeks, many of us wanted to get involved in addressing those disparities on various levels, from high-level policy advocacy to volunteering in affected communities. I joined CHOICES (Choosing Healthy Options in our Community, Environment, and Schools), a program focused on empowering incarcerated youths to make healthy decisions. Incarceration and many of the life circumstances these kids have endured have been disempowering, so we use a case-based, interactive, conversational approach to addressing health choices. With small groups at the youth detention center, we cover topics such as navigating the health care systems and healthy relationships. They are always curious and excited to have us come, and we have some fun and fascinating conversations in which we all end up learning from each other! They get a chance to ask questions and discuss in a safe space, which often teaches us about the life factors and cultural beliefs that affect their health choices.

— Olivia R., M1

Washington University Medical Plunge (WUMP)

Washington University Medical Plunge, more affectionately known as “WUMP,” was the primary reason I chose to come to WashU. This is not your average medical school orientation. In these first two weeks, you will not only be introduced to the curriculum and classrooms where you will earn the degree “MD,” but, more importantly, you will learn about the people for whom you will care, and the
history and continued struggles of the place you will come to call home. The experience of WUMP gives rich context to the rest of your medical journey, and it was everything I had hoped it would be.

Some of the activities and topics that you can expect:

- A boots-on-the-ground tour of health disparities in St. Louis
- Discussions on how birthplace and residential zip codes define health and life
- An incredible day with Professor Bob Hansman, who will share stories and lived experiences of young black teenagers that will demonstrate the importance of trauma-informed care in the physician’s role
- Learning about the history of mistrust of medicine and the factors that have and will contribute to perpetuating it
- Advocacy initiatives addressing critical public health issues, such as gun violence and access to health care

WUMP demonstrates that WashU aims to train physicians that are more than great clinicians and scientists. WashU trains physicians that see their patients as more than their diagnosis, who advocate and act for health equity in the communities where they practice. This is a reflection of the physician that I want to be, and I could not think of a better place to begin my training.

— Hannah T., M1

Given my prior involvement with community engagement (classes on health care disparities, volunteering in the local community, and service projects in underserved areas), WUMP was still refreshing enough to blow me away. It’s particularly powerful because the messages delivered are raw, personal, and real. You hear stories from local community members and notice problems that are quite frankly difficult to take in — but this forces you to open your eyes to what’s going on in the city you’ll call home for the next four+ years.

Most importantly, WUMP calls on you to make a difference. Of course, there are limitations you need to accept and work within, and WUMP teaches you to recognize that. However, our students, often energized, driven, and well-supported, do put themselves out there, whether by joining one of the many awesome service organizations or even trying to start their own initiative (which our class did with their MedVan project).

WUMP is jarring but also inspiring, and it shows you that you can start to make connections, expose yourself to problems, and join efforts to bring about sustained change.

— Ashwin L., M1
I really care about my city, having lived in St. Louis my whole life. It is a city that many grow to care about after spending even a few months here. So, I appreciated that WUSM spends so much time introducing every incoming class to the city, helping them learn about its unique history and the challenges that came with it. What I didn’t realize was how much I myself would learn during WUMP! In the span of only one week, we learned more about racial disparity and segregation, local public health policy, and the lasting effects of racism in medicine than I got in my entire upbringing here. It was a lot of information to take in and sometimes seemed overwhelming, but it was amazing to see how invested the entire class became in my city and in beginning to do their part in addressing these disparities. In the end, WUMP did a great job of teaching students who are just setting foot in St. Louis for the first time how to have humility when working with different people and cultures, and it was honestly one of my favorite experiences so far as a first-year!

— Thomas V., M1

Health Professions Recruitment and Exposure Program (HPREP)

As a volunteer for Health Professions Recruitment and Exposure Program (HPREP), I’ve had the opportunity to work with high school kids in an engaging and interactive way. We work with local high schools and the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC) to set up individually-themed teaching sessions throughout the year. During my first session at the JDC, I was able to talk to the kids about lung pathophysiology as a result of asthma and cigarette use. We also engaged in fun activities together to reinforce abstract concepts. As one of the coordinators for HPREP, I’m currently involved in planning the annual field trip. We organize a day for high school students to visit WUSM and learn skills like suturing and interpretation of radiological scans at a basic level. It’s a great way to engage with the community and foster these kids’ love for STEM. I’ve had an amazing time volunteering with them, and I’m hopeful that organizations like HPREP can have even a small impact on the way that kids view science and medicine.

— Nadia B., M1
Health Career Academy

Health Career Academy is an amazing selective. Yes, it counts as a credit for your first year! This is a mentorship opportunity where you visit a high school in North St. Louis and build mentoring and teaching relationships with students who may be from underserved backgrounds. For the first two sessions, you will help guide high schoolers on two case studies on patients who might present to an emergency room. This is a great way to talk about common medical diseases and treatments! Then, you help guide the students on a four-session project that will involve creating a presentation about a health topic that affects their community. They will give these presentations to doctors at the medical school! Definitely consider taking this if you 1) enjoy teaching 2) love people 3) like fun.

— Chris N., M1

Geriatric Outreach Group

I came to WashU after majoring in neuroscience and working in an Alzheimer’s research lab for my two gap years. As such, I knew a lot about the molecular mechanisms of neurodegeneration but not as much about the personal and interpersonal ramifications that accompany a dementia diagnosis. The Dementia Understanding Opportunity (DUO), run by the Geriatrics Outreach Group, is a longitudinal program that pairs WashU M1s with members of the St. Louis community who have recently been diagnosed with early-stage Alzheimer’s disease. They serve as our mentors as we talk about the lived experience of dementia. We meet with our mentors monthly for coffee, lunch, a shared hobby, or an excursion to a museum or another St. Louis attraction. I even participated in my mentor’s Improv for Memory Loss class!

The student participants also attend lunch seminars with renowned experts who speak with us about Alzheimer’s and dementia from biological, clinical, and ethical/legal perspectives. As one of the rare opportunities to develop a longitudinal interpersonal relationship with members of the patient population served by WUSM and Barnes-Jewish Hospital, the DUO program provides a space for my mentor and her husband to let me into their world of navigating a new diagnosis and coping with change. It’s also an opportunity to challenge misconceptions that you may have about Alzheimer’s disease and to learn about tenacity and contentment from older (and wiser) adults.

— Adrienne V., M1
Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic (SNHC)

The Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic (SNHC) is the free primary care clinic run by WUSM students on Saturdays. Students oversee the entire operation, from the clinical encounter to public relations to patient referrals to specialty care clinics. During my first time at the SNHC, I was overwhelmed by all the components that go into providing quality care for a patient. You really have to consider how interactions you have with the patient affect their relationship with the health care system — and how that relationship will change their health outcomes. If you’re interested in learning more about the safety net of health care and various barriers to health care access, such as transportation, cost, and language, you will have the opportunity to learn here while seeing patients, writing notes, and presenting to volunteer physicians.

— Monica L., M1

Med Van

A couple of weeks after WUMP wrapped up, Dr. Will Ross, the Associate Dean for Diversity, met with our class to brainstorm how we as medical students could begin to help address the injustices we had learned about during WUMP. The idea that generated the most excitement from our class was the possibility of developing a mobile prenatal clinic. The infant and maternal mortality rates in some predominantly African American St. Louis ZIP codes are comparable to those in developing countries, and transportation is a significant barrier to women living in those neighborhoods from getting adequate prenatal care.

With the enthusiastic support of Dr. Ross, a group of us began meeting with community members and organizations who are already working on reducing infant and maternal mortality disparities. We learned more about their work and received feedback about our idea. We very quickly realized that launching a mobile prenatal clinic would take many months to accomplish, and while we are still pursuing that project, we also wanted to do something more immediately. We decided that founding a student group would be the best way to enable medical students to learn more about maternal/child health in St. Louis and actively engage in work already being done to reduce mortality disparities. We’re not an official group quite yet, but we’re hoping to organize lunch/dinner talks, advocate for policies that will improve the health of St. Louis moms and babies, connect students with volunteering opportunities at local organizations, and hold events like diaper drives. We are also developing a selective for next year focusing on maternal/child health in St. Louis. Keep an eye out for us at the activities fair next year, and please consider registering for our selective! We’d love to have you!

— Samantha K., M1
Navajo Nation Service Trip
The annual M1 trip to the Navajo Nation builds on a long-standing relationship with the community there and introduces first-year medical students to health care providers at the Northern Navajo Medical Center. Like many activities at WUSM, mentorship is a focus — and trip participants always love getting to spend time with students on the reservation, sharing their experiences while learning more about the Navajo culture and history. Besides the days you spend indoor camping and traveling with community health representatives, you also spend 18 hours in a car together with other M1s and visit national parks near the community.

— Monica L., M1

Schnucks Health Screenings
Schnucks Health Screenings are an amazing way to get involved in the community your first year! We go into local Schnucks grocery stores and provide free blood pressure and blood sugar screenings. It’s a really amazing and super fun experience, as it’s a chance for us to learn more about the community and the people we’re serving in St. Louis. The people tend to be interested in hearing about their health and the (little) advice we can offer them. It’s a great way to practice your clinical skills, but more importantly practice talking to patients!

— Alanna W., M1

Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)
Our Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) is a chapter of the national organization that aims to represent, support, educate, and unify Latino/a medical students. Whether you’re Latino/a yourself or are interested in health advocacy for this population, there are lots of opportunities to get involved. We have regular health screenings at the El Torito supermarket and health fairs/festivals, as well as opportunities to mentor underrepresented students and interviewees. If you’d like to practice your Spanish or celebrate Latin culture, we have lunch gatherings with Spanish-speaking faculty and social events like going to the Greater St. Louis Hispanic Festival and celebrating Las Posadas. We also help organize the Medical Spanish selective and are involved in the regional and national LMSA conferences. It’s a really fun and welcoming community!

— Alex Z., M1
Sun Protection Outreaching Teaching by Students (SPOTS)

Sun Protection Outreaching Teaching by Students (SPOTS) is a great way to get involved in educating the community about skin cancer. There are two training sessions in which you learn about identifying different types of skin cancers, risk factors, treatments, and prevention. After the trainings, you have the opportunity to teach adolescents in middle school about skin cancer and the importance of sun protection. SPOTS can be taken as a selective or done as an extra volunteer activity. Either way, it is a good opportunity to spread awareness about skin cancer and effective methods of sun protection to teens in the community.

— Dana S., M1
Advice

Adjusting to medical school can be difficult. Here, graduating M4s and some of our M1 class’s most popular WUSM faculty share words of wisdom on how to make the most out of your time in St. Louis.

Section Editor: Christine Ma
From Amy L. Bauernfeind, PhD, and Kari L. Allen, PhD

Course Masters, Anatomy

“Have fun. This is not incompatible with learning!”
— The Conroys, WUSM Anatomy faculty from 1983 to 2016

Dear Students,

Welcome to WUSM Anatomy! We love teaching this course, and we hope you will love it as much as we do. 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. Human anatomical dissection is a rare and privileged experience, and you will learn more from the process than from any textbook. As stated by our predecessors, the Conroys: “What lies beneath the skin reveals human commonality and individuality as written in the pattern of blood vessels, nerves, and muscles.”

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 coursemates, exploring the material through tactile discovery. Small group activities, such as radiology lectures, Questions of the Week, and demonstrations of pre-dissected material will complement your dissection work and provide a deeper review of challenging concepts. Radiology plays heavily into the course, as this is the mode by which many of you will interact with anatomy throughout your careers. 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.

The Anatomy course provides a great opportunity for practicing professionalism — time management, group work, and empathy for your patients (donors). Participation in lab is required, and punctual and consistent lecture attendance is strongly encouraged. With such a large volume of information to learn, preparation is key! The lectures prepare you for what you will discover in lab that week, and the dissector acts as your guide for lab — so, be sure to read ahead. In addition, the course includes many guest lectures from WUSM and BJC HealthCare physicians who bring an exciting and tangible clinical perspective to the anatomy you are discovering in lab. Please honor their time by attending. The lab is a fun, collaborative, and non-competitive environment, but this does not make it easy. Work hard, early, and often, and we know you will succeed and enjoy the experience!
From Caroline Min, M4/MPHS

I’m what you call a “non-traditional” student, as I’m taking an extra year between my third and fourth years to pursue a Master of Public Health. But among WashU students, this “non-traditional” path has become increasingly popular. In fact, students are supported and even encouraged to pursue their passions outside of the traditional curriculum in order to enhance their medical training and future careers. Although WashU does not have pre-set tracks for students to choose, the School of Medicine supports its students to pave their own tracks and design their own medical training.

Before beginning medical school, I had a passion for public health, but I felt unsure how to “do” public health. However, with the support and advice from my mentors at WashU, I learned about the many different avenues for pursuing public health: obtaining a Master of Public Health (MPH) through the Brown School or a Master of Population Health Sciences (MPHS) through the School of Medicine, interning at the Integrated Health Network, researching at the Institute of Public Health, etc. I quickly realized that there are endless ways to “do” public health. At WashU, I have been given the incredible opportunity and guidance to decide which avenue is best for me.

No matter what your passions are, WashU supports countless “non-traditional” opportunities for you to customize your medical training. Not an MSTP, but want to do research? Get a Master of Science in Clinical Investigation (MSCI) or in the basic sciences (MA/MD). Or obtain support from internationally renowned institutes, such as the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). Wanna get away while doing research? Spend a year at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or even in Malawi! How about business? Pursue a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Olin Business School. Love policy? Study at the Brookings Institute in D.C. (with which WashU has a partnership). Interested in medical writing? Get a Master of Fine Arts (MFA). These are only a handful of the amazing ways you can make your medical training your own! Although this seems overwhelming, the incredible WashU mentors and world-renowned leaders are here to support and guide you!

Finally, I realize that pursuing these opportunities does not have to be done within the confines of medical school. If you realize while in residency that you are interested in business, obtain your MBA then. Additionally, if you’re able to accomplish your goals in four years, then proudly get hooded in four years! However, it is important to consider (at least it was for me) that medical school offers the best flexibility to assist your pursuit of your passions, which might be less feasible while in residency or as an attending. And the cherry on top: Pursuing these opportunities as a medical student can help to distinguish yourself in the residency application process!
From Craig Yugawa, M4

Internal Medicine

Congratulations on getting into WUSM!

YOMSO: You Only Med School Once! This is a great opportunity to find out what you want to do for the rest of your life. But don’t forget, you have the rest of your life to do medicine, so enjoy the med school years while you can. Build lasting relationships with new med school friends, travel as much as you can, and watch a few episodes on Netflix (no matter what the CEO of the NBME says). You are the most important patient you will ever have, so make sure to keep yourself well and do whatever you need for your mental health.

The best single piece of advice I can give is to find out what you’re passionate about and get involved with it in the community. If you’re a fan of art, join the Young Professionals Board for the Saint Louis Art Museum or one of the many local arts charities. If you love sports (Go Jazz Go, #takenote), consider volunteering to coach or referee young athletes around the area. And if you love board games, join a local tournament or two. Most of these activities are very low demand and give you a great avenue to make friends outside of medicine! Many organizations in the area love to have WashU students involved, and being a medical student gives you a unique perspective and experience that can benefit any organization. I did a lot of public policy and legislative work before medical school and have continued that involvement since moving to St. Louis, both through student groups and community organizations. It has really helped me to have activities and friends with whom I can completely leave med school life and escape for a few precious minutes.

In terms of specialty choice and getting ready for the match, some of you are absolutely sure you’ll be an orthopedic surgeon before ending up in internal medicine (plot twist: me). Others of you will enjoy every one of your clinical rotations and leave it up to chance. Still others will have been absolutely set on being a pediatrician since they were 5 and will settle for nothing else. Wherever you are on choosing a specialty, don’t worry about it; most people change their minds anyway. Shadowing prospective research and clinical mentors during the second half of first year really helped me find a great PI; consider doing this a few days, if possible. Shadowing is a great way to get a general feel for specialties but can have limited value.
### From Elizabeth Graesser, M4

If I could turn back time … While I may not have as much desire to time travel as Cher, there are a few important things I wish I would have known as a first-year medical student at WashU (and they don’t involve a list of the best Step 1 study resources). So, on that note, I’ll share some of them with you:

1. You are going to be fine. Even in the worst of times, like slaving away at UWorld Qbanks while studying for Step 1 or working 36 hours straight on no sleep during sub-I rotations, you will find a way to get through it and you’ll come out a better person on the other side. You’re stronger and more resilient than you think.

2. In the times you don’t feel like you are going to be fine, reach out to someone to talk about it. It’s okay to feel that way. We all do at some point or another. Always remember that there are people that love and support you and want to see you succeed, whether it is your classmates, faculty, family, or friends outside of WashU.

3. Look out for your fellow classmates. You are all on this crazy, exciting, scary, exhausting, fulfilling journey together. Build each other up, root for each other to succeed, and keep an eye out for those who are struggling.

4. You deserve to be here. I spent the majority of my M1 year suffering from imposter syndrome. It seemed like I heard about a new accomplishment of my incredible classmates each and every day, and it left me feeling very inadequate. Remember that there is a reason you were chosen to be here, and don’t forget that.

5. Enjoy every single moment. When people say that these will be the best four years of your life, they aren’t kidding. Take advantage of every opportunity presented to you. Get involved in organizations you are passionate about, find mentors who inspire you, volunteer at SNHC on Saturday mornings, go to happy hour and game nights with your classmates, and explore the hidden gems of St. Louis.

### From Gabriela Abrishamian-Garcia, M4

Finding a balance in your life is definitely possible during medical school. Med school does not need to be studying in the library 24 hours a day, living off Soylent, not exercising, and giving up all of the things you love. The earlier you’re able to establish a balance that works for you, the better it will serve you when school gets busier, and when you transition to clerkships and beyond. Here are a few tips for how to strike that balance:
1. Prioritize sleep. Seriously, sleep makes everything better. You will learn better, feel better, and avoid the dark, wrinkly circles under your eyes that Botox can’t fix. First and second year give you PLENTY of time to study outside of the classroom and there is really no need to pull all-nighters like we all did in college. The only time you should be sleep-deprived is during your surgery rotation in third year (and then during residency, but don’t worry about that yet).

2. Move! Try to move in some way every day. Whether you take a break from studying and go for a quick walk in Forest Park (or walk to the cafeteria for a snack), go for a run during lunch, hit the gym right after class with friends, or do some pushups in your apartment, it is always better to move than to sit all day. (Studies have shown: even seven minutes of something is better than not exercising at all. You always have seven minutes — no excuses!)

3. Study smart. Quality > quantity. Be very critical of how you’re studying and don’t be afraid to change things as you go. If you find that reading the textbook doesn’t stick, then try Anki or watching Youtube videos (online MedEd is great). Ask your friends what works for them and play with different study methods to figure out what works best for you. The more efficiently you study, the more time you’ll have to do fun things (and sleep) and actually enjoy the time away from studying, because you will feel accomplished.

4. Keep your passions. You don’t need to give up all of the activities that you enjoyed before med school. Whether it’s playing a sport or an instrument, writing, cooking, traveling, doing yoga, or anything else that makes you happy, don’t be afraid to set aside time to do that! You 100 percent should keep it up! It will make you feel more fulfilled and will be a welcome break from thinking about school.

5. Make time for friends. The friends that you make in medical school will be some of your closest and longest-lasting friends. You may always feel like you “should be studying,” but make time for your friends because you’ll be much happier. Use plans with friends to get dinner/watch a movie/go out as motivation to get your studying done early so you can enjoy that time without feeling guilty.

6. Don’t eat garbage! Don’t always rely on leftover free food for all of your meals (if you can help it) and try to get a good balance of fresh fruits, veggies, and whole grains. We can’t tell our patients to lose weight and eat healthy if the only veggies we eat are the tomatoes and sad mushrooms on our pizza. But froyo counts as dairy/calcium so that’s fair game.

Enjoy these years! We are just going to get busier and busier as we move along in our careers, so now is the time to get into healthy habits that help us feel balanced and fulfilled. Good luck!
From Koong-Nah Chung, PhD

Associate Dean, Medical Student Research

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

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 Lisa M. Moscoso, MD, PhD

Associate Dean, Student Affairs

You’re in — congratulations! I am here to support you on your journey as you transform into a doctor. Yes, transform into a doctor! That will happen in the next four or more years. There will be many joys and challenges on this journey. As you begin medical school, it will be important to develop a community of support to celebrate your joys and be there for you in the challenging times. Many of you may have an extended e-community, and I would encourage you to maintain that virtual community while growing face-to-face relationships with classmates, mentors, other graduate students and others at WUSM and in St. Louis with common interests. Balance will be a challenging virtue to achieve while you are a student and perhaps for the rest of your life. Know you may find your life unbalanced at times. Medical school is demanding of your time and energy. However, you can be aware of what you may need to do to regain and maintain a healthy balance. Here are a few bits of advice that might be useful:
1. Build relationships and build a strong community of support. Quality is important here, not necessarily quantity. You need not look far. Many future lifetime friends, colleagues, mentors and advisors surround you.
2. Respect others in your actions and words.
3. Appreciate your family and friends. Stay connected.
4. Exercise.
5. Play outside.
7. Read for fun.
8. Notice something beautiful today.
9. Be grateful for something or someone every day.
10. Life will bring challenges, so please ask for help or support if you need it.
11. Participate in or lead a student-run program.

From Robert W. Mercer, PhD

Course Master, Physiology

Welcome to Washington University School of Medicine. During your years here you will be expected to master a tremendous wealth of knowledge, all with the hope that you will become a competent and compassionate physician scientist. In the next few weeks you will be getting acquainted with your fellow classmates, the infrastructure of the medical complex, the medical school course load, and life in St. Louis. If at any time you need help navigating this transition, I invite you to seek out the faculty for assistance. The reputation of WUSM as having a collegial, inclusive environment is hard earned and well deserved. You will find that the faculty is always accessible to the students. This open attitude allows students the opportunity to interact directly with experts in the fields of science and medicine. No other medical school can surpass this feature of Washington University. While you are here, I also urge you to take advantage of the many medical school activities and organizations. Participate in the student–run activities, the summer research program, and the wonderful summer Departmental Softball League. Above all, please make an attempt to attend your classes! Only by attending classes are you able to directly ask questions and clarify points that you and your classmates may have missed. The first two years of your medical school training have pass/fail grading. Therefore, learn for the sake of learning, not for a nonexistent letter grade. Help and learn from your classmates. Your fellow students will become your best and closest friends. Enjoy your first year, because believe it or not, it will go by very quickly. Above all, work hard, play hard, and don’t sweat the small stuff.
**From Sabrina Nuñez, PhD**

*Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Foundational Sciences; Course Director, Medical Genetics*

Each one of us has a collection of defining moments. These are the moments when we make decisions that leave indelible marks in our lives. They punctuate our stories and propel us forward. Each moment is very easy to appreciate in hindsight, yet not always obvious as it occurs. While I have not met you yet, I can quite confidently predict that your decision to come to WashU Medical School will be a defining moment in your life. This is the place where you will begin to forge your professional identity. No matter where life takes you, the early experiences you will have here will shape you as a professional and as a person. In the next four years you will meet peers that will become lifelong friends and colleagues. The host of possibilities that lies ahead for each of you can be a source of stress as well as excitement. My advice is simple: focus on the excitement. The potential you possess right now is an incredible gift; a key to unlocking the next defining moments that will punctuate your journey. Don’t let stress distract you from this wonderful chapter in your life. Spend time doing things that recharge you. Seek out mentors that can provide perspective and help you keep sight of your goals. Rely on family and friends to re-center you. Know when to ask for help. And know that there is an army of people, ready to welcome you, to befriend you, to mentor you, to educate you. I am excited to welcome you into our WashU community and look forward to meeting you.

**From Timothy T. Yau, MD**

*Course Master, Practice of Medicine I*

The advice I will give here is the same as what I will tell all incoming first-year medical students on day one orientation in my course. In other first-year courses, you will learn anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, and so much more. In the year-long Practice of Medicine course, you will learn how to be a great physician. The qualities that make an excellent doctor encompass so much more than just high test scores, which all of you already are capable of! Great physicians not only will have the clinical skills and knowledge to care for their patients, but also will possess an awareness of the realities of health care, and understand the importance of balance between their work and personal lives. The amount of information you will learn in the next four years is both staggering and intimidating. But the learning will not end there, and you are not empty pitchers to be filled with knowledge until you are full. You will never stop learning,
and 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, meaningful and longer lasting. Set goals for yourself to enhance your understanding of a concept or to improve a skill. Your individual path to fulfill your potential to be a great doctor will be decided by you. Faculty, like myself, are your guides. Lastly, enjoy your medical school experience. Some of the strongest bonds are forged here, and you will need support from family, old friends, and the new friends you will make. Get outside, enjoy 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: I have two video game consoles and three instruments in my office to take the occasional break. You’re always welcome to stop by for a game or to play a tune!

From Wayne M. Yokoyama, MD

Director, Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP)

Phew! You made it. You got into one of the world’s great medical schools, and certainly the most selective. Things are going great; you’re excited about meeting new classmates, decorating your new apartment, starting classes, learning to be a doctor … You will learn how the human body works from head to toe, from gross anatomy to subatomic structures, at least as we understand it, circa 2019. This complete systems overview will be invaluable in helping aspiring scientists, not just MSTP students, relate research findings to the clinic. However, some of the current concepts and “facts” you will learn will prove to be wrong. That’s right (actually still wrong). We just don’t know our ignorance (yet). It is certainly much easier to learn the materials if you just absorb it verbatim and don’t spend any time thinking about what you’re being taught.

But 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 mostly caused by a bacterial infection! (More on that in second year.) Pause to think about what you are learning, and keep track of things that don’t make sense to you. They will be great projects to work on in the future. (I am tempted myself to sit in on your classes to not only catch up but also to find great opportunities and problems on which to work!)
Welcome to Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis! As an incoming student, you will be immersed in the fascinating world of scientific discovery and medical innovation, but you will not be allowed to forget that the true purpose of medicine is to uplift the human condition. We hope our Washington University Medical Plunge (WUMP) and Diversity Retreat experiences will compel you to become a force for good in the St. Louis region. Many of you will go on to become leaders and volunteers in the Saturday Neighborhood Health Clinic, Casa de Salud, the Nutrition Outreach Program and other student-run programs that collaborate with the St. Louis community. During your years in medical school, make sure you connect to the greater community and experience the tremendous personal satisfaction of service; acknowledging the marked difference you can make on the lives of those less fortunate. Allow yourself to be trained, in essence, in our medical center without walls. Your overall experience as a medical school student will then be much more rewarding at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis.
WUSM students’ favorite things

FRONT: 1) Adam’s carabiner. 2) Pramodh’s notebook. 3) Gabbie’s stethoscope. 4) Raj’s coffee. 5) Monica’s Kodak camera. 6) Adam’s 20-sided dice. 7) Marina’s woman Lego scientist. 8) Raj’s caffeine coaster. 9) Karthik’s reflex hammer. 10) Drew’s Field Notes. 11) Anna’s pens. 12) Xinwen’s Totoro. 13) Noda’s controller. 14) Drew’s fountain pen. 15) Gowri’s Art Museum pass. 16) Simona’s iTAP passport. 17) Office of Medical Student Affairs’ free candy. 18) Alden’s ID. 19) Alden’s Metro card.

BACK: 1) Nirmala’s journal. 2) Michael’s Cardinals ticket. 3) Alex’s penlight and pen. 4) Ben’s scissors. 5) Alden’s lifeline. 6) Morgan’s cat, Fiona. 7) Thomas’ favorite coffee mug. 8) Netter’s flashcard. 9) Jesús’ Microbes flashcards. 10) Reid’s Anki. 11) Christine’s Spindrift. 12) Erin’s favorite game. 13) Hannah’s Kaldi’s rewards cards. 14) Rainbow caduceus. 15) Sukruth’s spring roll. 16) Karthik’s tuning fork. 17) Erik’s lip balm (mint edition, 3 out of 47 in the collection). 18) Drew’s harmonica.