Student Guide
The *unofficial* guide to the first year of medical school; current students provide the scoop on P&S
From the Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs:
Welcome to P&S! We are so pleased that you are joining us on the journey to become a doctor and that you have decided to spend the next few years with us at Columbia. The voyage you will take here will shape you both professionally and personally as you develop new friends, new mentors and teachers, and new skills along the way. It will be exciting, inspiring, tiring, at times stressful, and incredibly enriching. We are here to help you through and to make the experience as educational and supportive as possible.

We have so many wonderful resources at P&S, including our outstanding faculty and residents, our advisory dean program, our Center for Student Wellness and Student Health Service, our research and dual degree programs, and our vast array of activities under the umbrella of the P&S Club. And of course, New York City - the City that Never Sleeps - has something for everyone. We hope you will take advantage of all the resources that you need to make your time here as satisfying and positive as possible.
I have daily office hours and encourage you to stop by to say hello.
With regards,

Lisa Mellman, M.D.
Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs

From the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine
It is my privilege to welcome you to the Columbia University Medical Center community at an especially exciting time. The College of Physicians and Surgeons has been a preeminent medical school ever since it granted the first MD degree in the United States in 1770. As our 250th anniversary approaches, P&S has never had a more exciting curriculum or a more remarkable range of extra-curricular activities.

In your educational settings, you will interact with an outstanding faculty who will guide you in combining the fundamentals of medical science with the principles of humanity that define the patient-doctor experience. You will be learning and working side by side with others who share your motivation to become a great physician, but bring their own unique perspective and experience. The diversity here not only prepares you for your clinical career, but it also creates an environment in which novel approaches to existing problems are both welcomed and encouraged.

Your own curiosity about medicine brought you here. Now, let that same curiosity guide you to discover all that Columbia offers. Your discoveries – both the obvious ones and those that surprise you – will be an important part of your transformation from a first-year medical student to a physician, from a short white coat to a long one, from a vantage point of learning to a mantle of teaching. No matter how medicine changes, your potential to use your talent and education to improve health outcomes will not change. All of us at P&S are committed to helping you become leaders in medicine and science, have fulfilling careers, while remembering Columbia as an extraordinary catalyst in your lifelong medical education.

I look forward to meeting you and helping you simultaneously benefit from P&S and make it an even better place.

Lee Goldman, M.D.
Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences
Academics
Being a Student

Professionalism and Attendance

Med school is not college, it's not like other graduate schools (Master's programs, Law School) and it's not like a full time job. It does, however, have elements of all of these things, and it's a good idea to know what is expected of you so that you can build trust and accountability amongst the faculty and your peers. Being accountable and establishing a track record of your professionalism is important: not only does that put you in good stead for when unexpected things or extenuating circumstances come up, but also it will form a bedrock of your professional identity to come. Ultimately, it will be up to you to manage your schedule, so if you haven't been accustomed to keeping a calendar, I highly recommend it. You'll see quickly that between classes, assignments, small group activities, clerkships, and extra-curriculars, it's almost impossible to keep track of things without the help of a daily planner, or Google Cal or iCal. Luckily, all class activities as well as SSN review sessions are posted on Oasis -- which you can sync to your preferred electronic calendar for efficiency.

Attendance: as a general rule, lecture attendance is not required, but small group activities (such as tutorials discussion groups, Patient as Professor sessions or TBLs in your second semester) as well as examinations are required. You can watch all recorded lectures on your own time if you choose not to attend the live session -- but do make sure that you are clear on which lectures in a given block will not be recorded. For example, the Patient as Professor sessions, which may occur during a normally scheduled lecture time, are not recorded to maintain protection of patient identity and information. If you need to miss a required event for religious reasons or because of a personal emergency, you can email your course director as well as psfundamentals@columbia.edu to make arrangements.

Professionalism: Although at times the long lecture hours in the preclinical curriculum may make you feel like you've slipped back into your premed seminars, medical school is not college and there are increasing demands to act in a professionally appropriate manner. This means respecting your peers by coming to required sessions on time, being accountable for lateness or absences by communicating appropriately with faculty, having respect for patients by complying to HIPPA, etc. While it may feel like no one will notice your absence to one or a few required sessions, they will absolutely take note if you handle absences proactively (reaching out to the course director, emailing if you know you are running late to something, etc). In the unanticipated event that you have an extenuating circumstance, the reputation that you build can make things much easier.

Learn more: Check out the comprehensive document called "Suitability for the Practice of Medicine" that discusses the "Domains of Professionalism" and what is expected of P&S students at every step of the way http://ps.columbia.edu/education/node/1952. Also the "P&S Guidelines on Professionalism" is a shorter list of expectations of the community. http://ps.columbia.edu/education/honor-code-policies/ps-guidelines-professionalism

~Ashley White-Stern, P&S 2018, apw2130@columbia.edu
**Honor Code**

The honor code here at P&S is a loosely based off of the *Hippocratic Oath* that we all take during the White Coat Ceremony. During orientation week, you will be asked to sign the official Honor Code document, after much discussion about what it means to be a good person, doctor, colleague, etc. Basically, the code is in place so that we keep our incredible community cohesive and team-based. One aspect that is unique about the honor code at P&S is that it is crafted to make it easy to get advice on social and professional situations from upper classmen. Believe it or not, some unique issues can arise in medical school that are unique to the medical profession, and the honor code has been designed to help students navigate through potentially sticky situations. You will have many chances to discuss aspects of the honor code in small group sessions and will have an orientation to it during the first few weeks of school.

~Emily Weidenbaum, P&S 2018, emw2163@columbia.edu

**Pass/Fail**

Do I really need to expound the benefits here? The answer to that question is probably yes. You see, if you are like most medical students, including myself, you are probably a little competitive, a little obsessive, and a lot goal-oriented; your med school application probably didn’t contain a list of all the participation trophies you won. But I am here to tell you to embrace pass/fail with all your being. Med school comes in waves. What you learn in Anatomy will resurface in BHD, BHD will draw on the principles you learned in MM, and MCY will reinforce all of this knowledge. You don’t need to memorize impossible amounts of details the first time you see them, because they surely will present themselves again over the course of your education. In the long run, the handful of B’s or C’s you received in undergrad didn’t keep you from getting into medical school. Pass/fail is simply reassurance of this fact in the short term. So give yourself a break and take advantage of opportunities to shadow, run a clinic, join an interest group, explore NYC and/or spend time with friends or family.

A quick note on how pass/fail works: it is in full effect for the first 1.5 years of school (i.e. the preclinical segment). For Foundations of Clinical Medicine there is a set cutoff, but for all other courses, the cutoff is two standard deviations below the mean (or a 70, whichever is lower. And a 65 instead of a 70 in Anatomy). This is fairly generous (and if you find yourself on the wrong side of said cutoffs, take a deep breath and read the next section). In addition, since all your exams are taken on computerized software (ExamSoft), course directors have the ability to drop questions that most students get wrong from the grading. All of this makes for a much more congenial setting between you and the course directors and, better still, you and your classmates.

~Griff Curtis, P&S 2017, gmc2125@columbia.edu

**If you fail an exam...**

You’ll hit the refresh button on the browser a few times just to make sure the score is real and not some cruel prank by Dr. Barasch. The cutoff was 68? But like... They’ll round up a 67.5, yeah? They have to, right? Spoiler alert: they won’t. You hope that maybe you can slip by unnoticed, but within a few days, you’ll get an email from the course director asking you to come meet with them. And while your classmates are all heaving sighs of relief over passing another block, you’re busy thinking up exactly what you’ll say in order to garner the most mercy from the administration. Should you tell them how you were waiting three hours in line to see Catching Fire the night before? Probably not. You’ll just acknowledge that you didn’t stay on top of your coursework as best you should, and that will be enough. The course director will remind you of the resources available to prepare for the exam, and will ask how they could have helped
you better prepare. At the end of the day, it’s your professors’ goal to ensure your success, and they want to see that through.

Of course, you’ll also be getting an email from Dean Mellman to drop by and meet with her as well. The conversation will be similar to that with the course director, and she’ll take a few notes on what other activities you’re involved with on campus and what may need to be cut back upon. She’ll offer to coordinate you with an SSN tutor (do it!), as well as recommend talking with Jane Bogart in the Center for Student Wellness about time management skills (she’s awesome!). If the exam in discussion was from fall semester, you’ll retake it over spring break. Otherwise, it will be at the beginning of summer. Either way, you’ll have more than enough time to adequately prepare (pro tip: you’re allowed to review your old exam before re-taking it; make sure you do so).

While you may be beating yourself up over this minor slip-up, don’t. These exams are intentionally difficult; not to weed you out (those days are long gone, friend), but instead to make sure you’re well prepared for Major Clinical Year and Step 1. And by the end of first year, you’ll be surprised by how many classmates have secretly joined the club.

~Mike Hernandez, P&52017, mah22492@columbia.edu

Classes

Four-Year Academic Overview
Here is what the next few years will look like for you:

Fundamentals Semester 1 (Aug – Dec 2015): You will take three classes: Molecular Mechanisms, Clinical Gross Anatomy, and Foundations of Clinical Medicine (FCM). These are discussed in more detail below, but essentially you will be getting your feet wet through shadowing in the hospital (once a week for 2-4 hours with an assigned preceptor), taking basic biochemistry and other basic science courses, exploring a cadaver, and discussing some of the anticipated ethical dilemmas of medicine.

Fundamentals Semester 2 (Jan – Jun 2016): You will have three classes again: The Body: Health and Disease (BHD), Psychiatric Medicine, and FCM II. While you think this semester may be a bit easier because anatomy has come and gone (and you passed!), BHD and FCM are both more time intensive. In BHD you will have weekly quizzes (they are small and team-based, so don’t worry too much!) and mandatory small groups several times a week. BHD is the beginning of your systems-based education, during which you learn diseases, treatments, and work through a lot of clinical cases. In FCM, tutorials will be an added component separate from your weekly seminars. You will spend four hours a week with 3 peers and a preceptor who will teach you how to do a physical exam... on each other! Then you will spend some time interviewing patients, performing a physical exam on them, and learning how to create a medical write up (a key feature of your clinical year!). This is when you really begin to feel like you are making progress toward your MD.
Fundamentals Semester 3 (Aug – Dec 2016): This semester continues the second half of BHD and FCM tutorials. You hone your H&P (history and physical exam) taking skills in FCM, and complete the last few organ systems in BHD. A highlight of this semester is teaching SSN review sessions for the first year students (more about SSN below)!) You will also begin receiving more information on the Major Clinical Year that is quickly approaching!

Major Clinical Year (aka MCY) (Jan – Dec 2017): The lecture hall, library, and classrooms, will be replaced by time spent in the hospital, both at New York Presbyterian and off site locations. For a year, you will wear your white coat as you rotate through the major medical specialties (Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Surgery, Obstetrics-Gynecology, Psychiatry, Neurology) with the same group of classmates. This is when you take the time to find which specialty you want to pursue. Twice this year you will come back together as a class to reflect on your experiences in what is known as “M&P Week.” This stage of your education is intense and time-consuming, but the true first step into the adventure of clinical medicine.

The Boards (aka STEP 1) (Jan – Feb 2018): Instead of taking the boards (a standardized exam that tests your knowledge of the organ systems you have studied in Fundamentals, often applied to clinical cases) right after Fundamentals, you will study for and take the exam after MCY. After having a ton of clinical experience to accompany your Fundamentals knowledge, you will have two months to study solely for the exam.

Differentiation & Integration (March 2018 – May 2019): During D&I, you will do several “Sub-Internships,” which are like intensive MCY rotations in a specialty of your choosing, and other clinical electives related to the areas you are considering for your specialty. You will also complete a scholarly project, take a few enrichment classes, and apply to residency! You will inevitably match in a great program and become a spectacular MD!

~Joshua Stein, P&S 2018, jss2258@columbia.edu (adapted from Alex Bercow, 2017)

Molecular Mechanism (MM) Overview

Molecular Mechanisms is a broad course that covers most biochemistry topics that will be critical for future learning in The Body: Health and Disease (BHD). For example, you will take a brief introductory pharmacology course in the fall that will help you master memorization of drug mechanisms in the spring. You will come back to the concepts taught in MM blocks over and over again in BHD and MCY; the sooner you master the concepts the better! Dr. Barasch can be an excellent resource and supportive course director who responds to emails and even takes a stroll through the library the night before your first test to see if anyone has last minute questions. Lectures are all recorded and some people choose to attend every class while others feel that watching lectures on their own (perhaps at 2X speed!) is better for their learning. Try a few different studying techniques and see what works for you. First semester is the time to figure out how to best and most efficiently manage your time, so don’t be afraid to experiment with how you learn. In the following sections, former first years describe what they found to be the most useful studying resources for each block.

~Kerry-Ann Pinard, P&S 2018, kvp2107@columbia.edu

~Alex Bercow, P&S 2017, ab3453@columbia.edu
**Biomolecules and Cells**

The first block of Molecular Mechanisms (MM) is Biomolecules and Cells. In this block, you will learn about basic cellular components and metabolic pathways, and use these ideas to understand the different inborn errors of metabolism. While some of the material may be familiar from your previous biology or biochemistry courses, this course—as well as the rest of the MM blocks—places a greater emphasis on the connections to clinical diseases and treatment.

Because this is the first MM block and features the first exam in medical school, figuring out how and what to study for this block can initially be a bit anxiety-provoking for everyone. Keep in mind that studying for medical school can be very different from studying for college or other classes you have taken in the past. Medical school courses usually pack large amounts of information into a short amount of time (“drinking from a fire hydrant,” as some would say), so it is important to focus on the big picture to avoid being lost in the sea of minute details. Experiment with new ways of studying during this block, but be sure to keep up with the course material by reviewing a bit every day.

Although things may seem a little daunting at first, have no fear! There are many people and resources here to help you learn the material for this block and make a smooth transition into medical school. First, Dr. Barasch, the section director, takes notes in class and posts these notes in addition to some practice problems for every lecture. His notes will often point out what you should focus on when studying. Be sure to work on the practice problems too, as you will see a number of those questions again on the exam. In addition, Dr. Barasch posts “cases of the week,” which appear on the exams and are worth extra credit. Starting from this block, SSN (Student Success Network) will also provide a live review session before each exam as well as helpful review sheets that condense and highlight the important details from each set of lectures. So, take a deep breath, relax, and know that there are many resources here to help you study and succeed!

~Connie Wang, P&S 2018, xw2382@columbia.edu

**Histology/Pathology**

So many pink and blue dots, AHH! This is how most of us felt at the beginning of Histo/Path. Try not to be intimidated; you are all in the same boat and you have wonderful teachers, Dr. Spitalnik and Dr. Lefkowitch, on your side. I recommend reviewing the lecture slides daily to keep up with the material. You don’t have to memorize it all to begin with, but just take a look - histo and path are all about repetition and eventual recognition. You’ll be seeing similar images over and over again in lecture and lab and eventually they will sink in. Pro-tips: 1) Go to Dr. Spitalnik’s review session. Then focus your exam studying on the review session slides (this is where most of the test images come from). 2) When you don’t see something in lab, ask for help. 3) Histo/path is an important part of your next course, Body and Health in Disease, so whether you have an interest in path or not, you might as well give this block a solid effort.

~Mytra Haerizadeh, P&S 2018, mh2703@columbia.edu

**Embryology**

By the time you get to embryo, you will be exhausted. This is the third of three weeks of back to back exams, and by the time embryo rolls around you will not even be stressed anymore, you will probably just be feeling pretty burnt out. It’s okay—everyone is feeling that way. This is a good block to really take advantage of pass-fail, and try out some cramming. Make up the weirdest mnemonics you can think of to remember the names of all the proteins, but
don’t worry if you don’t get it all: key aspects of embryology will come back throughout the year. (Horseshoe kidneys! Ectopic thyroids!) Also, it’s another block with four-hour lecture periods. I really admire anyone who can pay attention for four hours. For me, it was the first one where I stopped going to class and started watching lectures sped up. That said, the material is amazing—we all came from balls of cells! A warning though: There are a lot of pretty viscerally disturbing images of babies that are used to illustrate pathology. So steel yourselves, and make a photo of a really cute, healthy baby your desktop background to remind yourself that this stuff goes right much of the time. Finally, and this cannot be emphasized enough, make your origami embryo. Just do it.

~Jemma Benson, P&S 2018, jrb2232@columbia.edu

**Pharmacology**

Pharmacology is the fourth block of MM. In this block, you will learn about some basic classes of drugs as well as the basics of drug actions and drug metabolism. This is the first block in which you will start receiving drug lists after each group of lectures—similar to those that you will receive in the BHD blocks next semester. It is important that you learn these drugs well (including names, drug class, mechanisms of actions, indications, major side effects, at least for the drugs that are emphasized), as you will encounter many of them again in your BHD blocks and in the hospital. It is very difficult to learn these drugs last minute, so be sure to familiarize yourself with the drug lists early and review the material regularly during this block.

In terms of resources for this block, you will be provided with a very comprehensive “syllabus” that summarizes all the lectures and includes basically everything you need to know for this block. In addition, there will be several practice exams available for this block. As with most other blocks in the first-year curriculum, DO THE PRACTICE EXAMS because these questions will be similar or identical to those on your actual exams.

~Connie Wang, P&S 2018, xw2382@columbia.edu

**Genetics**

You’re near the end of the road and one semester of medical school being over is so close you can taste it but there is just one last hurdle to get over—Genetics! Fortunately, the Genetics block is run by one of Columbia’s resident superstars—Dr. Wendy Chung. Her high energy, fast-talking, and staggering resume (seriously, Google her) might be daunting at first, but you will quickly come to realize that she is an excellent lecturer and cares about you getting something from the course so feel free to talk with/email her if you ever feel lost or have questions (or just want to hear more about her amazing career and research). At this point in the semester it is easy to “lose steam” especially since the Anatomy final is so close to the Genetics final. You may be reaching your limit, but try to stay on top of this block because even though the lectures are well taught, the class consensus is that the final exam was “surprisingly difficult.” Additionally, the final exam is mainly multiple-choice but there are a few short answer questions thrown in at the end about ethics and broader topics, so they shouldn’t be very off-putting—just be aware. Pay attention to small group and go over the questions until you really feel as though you understand the concepts because they WILL be tested. Lastly, make sure you do that extra credit video assignment—you don’t want to be the guy that failed by 1 point because you didn’t take the 20 minutes to get free credit. Take a deep breath; finish the year in style, and gear up for all the fun to be had in BHD!

~Kerry-Ann Pinard, P&S 2018, kvp2107@columbia.edu
Anatomy

Anatomy is by far one of the highlights of the first year. From the very first week of orientation you’ll be in the lab learning how to dissect. Dr. Bernd is an amazing teacher and has really put a great deal of thought into every aspect of the course. The course is divided into four components: (1) biweekly lectures, (2) weekly afternoon dissection, (3) weekly non-dissecting sessions, (4) clinical correlate sessions. The dissecting sessions are really the bulk of the course. During these sessions, you have the opportunity to learn the human form in the most intimate way imaginable. You will be assigned to either Tuesday or Thursday in a group of four. There is an iBook dissector that helps guide you along each step of the way and tons of amazing physicians on hand to help you tell the difference between fascia and nerves. In the non-dissecting sessions, you will work within your group of four to work through cases and learn how to read ultrasounds, MRIs, X-rays, etc. The clinical correlates are never tested but they are incredibly interesting sessions given by surgeons and radiologists.

This class is full of information. It is easy to be overwhelmed especially if you have never taken this type of course before. I tried to sit down and flat out memorize information. After 9 hours I knew nada. I remember having a near panic attack the first week when I realized there were already 200+ things we learned the first week. I highly recommend finding a learning style that works for you as quickly as possible for this course. It might be quizzing in a group of friends or tying yourself to a table in the depths of Hammer. Go to the lab to review and really walk through the structures. The best way to approach the information is to chunk it. You will quickly learn there are “compartments”. For example, all of the muscles on the back of the arm share common nerve and blood supplies. Learn the basics then add in progressively more detail. Repetition is key for this course. I liked to further divide things into high yield/low yield categories. For example, lymphatics are complicated but rarely appear on tests so I often studied them last. As for resources, I highly recommend Netter’s Atlas, Netter’s flashcards, Paul Blackcloud’s glorious notes, SSN review (they prep you for both the lecture and the practical), Eugene Charts, and Bernd’s lecture slides (the last four of which can be found on courseworks).

As always, the course is pass/fail. The course is divided into three blocks with a written exam and practical at the end of each. You need to score an average grade of 65% on both parts of the exam to pass the course. What does that mean? You only need to “pass” 2 of the 3 of each exam component. If you have a little trouble at the beginning of the year, you have the other two exams to bring you back up. Conversely, if you do really well on the first two you can cruise through the final. The written exam consists of 50 multiple-choice questions. HIGH YEILD INFO: The test is NOT in the format of “label this”. Instead, you need to apply your knowledge to clinical situations. For example, you may be asked about a patient presenting with an ulnar claw and asked which nerve must be damaged. The best way to prepare for these is to really have a good understanding of the basic anatomy and the non-dissecting sessions. You will quite often need to identify bones and structures on MRI, CT, angiograms, etc. Dr. Bernd has great practice questions that I highly recommend using! The practical is oddly a great time. Here’s the best part, you will take this with your lab mates! The four of you will go through about 36 stations in the anatomy room. You will be expected to identify tagged structures on the cadavers, muscle attachments on bones, and structure recognition using diagnostic tools.

Take a deep breath...you are going to be okay. You are really going to start feeling like a doctor in those blue scrubs.

~KL Collins, P&S 2017, klc2173@columbia.edu
**Foundations of Clinical Medicine (FCM)**

Foundations of Clinical Medicine (FCM) is a course that focuses on the “art of medicine.” During the first semester, you will have an hour-long lecture once a week that is followed by a 1-2 hour seminar. In these lectures, you will learn about the features of effective interviews, cultural competency, and ethical concerns. Patients will at times come into the class to discuss their experiences with their illnesses and the health care system. In the seminars, you will have the opportunity to reflect on these topics and improve your interviewing skills by practicing with standardized patients. You will also complete short writing exercises that you will add to your Portfolio, which you will continue to add to throughout your time at Columbia. In addition, once a week you will have a Clerkship where you will get to shadow a healthcare provider and observe the patient-provider relationship. You will have a 3-4 hour clerkship once per week.

In the second semester, FCM shifts its focus and is comprised of two components—FCM Seminars and FCM Tutorials. In FCM Seminars, again you will have an hour-long lecture once a week that is followed by a 1-2 hour seminar. Here you will explore health systems and policy and health promotion. Towards the end of the semester, you will also participate in Narrative Medicine seminars. You can choose from classes that discuss the philosophy of death, medicine in movies, meditation, fiction-writing, graphic novels, photography, observing artwork at MOMA or the Met, among many other options. In FCM Tutorials, you will meet weekly with a group of 3 other students and a preceptor and learn how to take a history and conduct a physical exam. This is when you will really start to feel like you are becoming a doctor! Overall, this course integrates the “science of medicine” with the humanistic side of medicine, and allows us to prepare for and reflect upon our future careers in medicine.

“Jon Kawulok, P&S 2017, jdk2156@columbia.edu

“Hallie Steinfeld, P&S 2018, hcs2136@columbia.edu

**Narrative Medicine**

Were you a humanities major in college? Do you love to read or write? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then you might be interested in exploring the field of Narrative Medicine. Narrative Medicine, as defined by Dr. Rita Charon, a general internist and literary scholar at CUMC, is medicine practiced with the narrative competence to recognize, absorb, interpret, and be moved by the stories of illness. It has become a profoundly interdisciplinary field that embraces the frameworks and skills of literature and writing, as well as philosophy, art, social justice, and anthropology, among other disciplines. There are many ways to learn more about Narrative Medicine at P&S. All students take a six-week elective during their second semester of medical school, which for many is a highlight of first year: some electives take place at art museums, while others take the form of writing workshops, while still others focus on film, philosophy, or qualitative research. Additionally, on the first Wednesday evening of every month, the Program in Narrative Medicine hosts Narrative Medicine Rounds that are free and open to all; past lecturers have included Arthur Kleinman, Colm Tóibin, and Kwame Anthony Appiah. If you want to become even more involved, it’s also possible to do a scholarly project in Narrative Medicine during fourth year. And if you love the field as much as I do, you can even get a master’s degree! For more information, feel free to visit [http://www.narrativemedicine.org](http://www.narrativemedicine.org) or email me with any questions!

“Becca Tsevat, P&S 2018, rkt2112@columbia.edu
The Body: Health and Disease (BHD) Overview

Body in Health and Disease (BHD): Body in Health and Disease is the bulk of the pre-clinical curriculum and is pretty much the reason why most people come to medical school in the first place. The course runs second semester first year through the end of first semester of your second year and covers organ systems (e.g., immunology, cardiology, pulmonology) through integration of basic science and physiology with pathophysiology. The information presented in this course will return during the major clinical year and on Step 1, so it’s important to learn this information as best you can. Luckily for us, the courses are designed to build on each other so you’ll repeatedly see the most important concepts, including material from MM and anatomy.

Each block of the course features 2-3 50-minute lectures every morning where professors come to teach specific topics under the umbrella of the organ system. Many of these professors will be practicing clinicians and/or researchers who will use personal stories to deliver the material. Most blocks also involve small group breakout sessions where 25 or so students will meet in the morning after class to go through cases together guided by a preceptor who is faculty at CUMC. About once a week there will be a Team-Based Learning (TBL) exercise, which is a small group session that begins with a graded quiz. You take the quiz first as individuals and then again in your 6-7-person group. As a general note, you will get the most out of small group sessions if you review the material ahead of time so try to come to those sessions prepared and ready to learn! On days without small group there are other helpful resources including pathology and histology sessions where you can learn about, see, and physically feel healthy and diseased organs described in the lectures. Each block will culminate in a final exam; the questions for the exam are multiple-choice and written in the style of the National Board of Medical Examiners (the USMLE people), which is good practice for MCY and for the boards.

There are a ton of resources available for BHD as a whole and for specific blocks. In addition to checking out the resources you will already be familiar with (lecture slides, Eugene charts, various SSN and other review sheets), each block will have its own recommended textbooks and websites on the syllabus for that course. Dr. Garrett (course director) sends out a list of practice questions and need-to-know drugs at the beginning of each organ system. If you have to have books, most students find Costanzo’s Physiology to be helpful since it applies to most if not all blocks.

BHD is an excellent course and you’ll be surprised by how much you will learn. I think the important thing to remember is that you don’t have to like every block to be a good doctor. So long as you are trying your best, you’re still doing well. Best of luck!

~Tony Valenzuela, P&S 2018, iav2104@columbia.edu

Immunology

Immunology is the first block of BHD and is a chance for you to get comfortable with BHD-style learning. You will cover the basics of immunology (structure, function, and major players) over the span of 3 weeks; you’ll also be exposed to the clinical applications of immunology such as infections, allergies, autoimmunity, oncology, and more. The course includes all of the typical parts of a BHD class including small groups and boards-style examination. Because you will be taking this course concurrently with MID and psych, it can feel overwhelming to juggle all of the learning. The immunology block concludes in a self-assessment that is graded but is considered to be pass-pass. Don’t let that setup fool you though; many of the topics covered will come up again and again over the course of BHD, so it is very important to learn the material well the first time!
Dr. Canfield (block director) will send an email in December with recommended reading; I did the reading and found the course was much more manageable and enjoyable. In addition to practice questions and all the standard review materials, there are also several 1-4 minute videos posted on Courseworks that go over important concepts in immunology as an extra study aid.

~Tony Valenzuela, P&S 2018, iav2104@columbia.edu

Infectious Disease

This was one of my favorite blocks of BHD – Dr. Gordon and Dr. Coyle are absolutely phenomenal teachers, and they will make all your infectious disease dreams come true. The two of them together are wonderful, funny, entertaining, and organized – and they made learning MID one of the best academic parts of the year. In this block you’ll learn all about bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites (yuck), and the basics of infectious disease. Get ready to learn A LOT of diseases! But rest assured that this block is organized and the expectations are clear; it’s also broken up into two exams to cut it into smaller, more palatable chunks (not that MID is palatable. It’s actually pretty gross). Of note is that this is the first block where you start to see USMLE-style questions with clinical scenarios – they’re much more interesting! You’ll learn all about how to approach these problems in your small groups and will receive lots of guidance along the way.

For this block, DO NOT CRAM!!! There is a ton of information to learn (many drugs, many diseases) so stay on top of it from the beginning to make sure you have time to absorb, because you literally can’t do this one in a short amount of time. The slides and lecture material contain most of what you need to know, and I HIGHLY recommend using Sketchy Micro (now called Sketchy Medical), which is an online resource that totally saved me. Another good resource is “Clinical Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple,” and some students used First Aid (USMLE Prep Book) – but I personally would recommend at least trying Sketchy Medical to see if it’s your style – I still remember details about bacteria that I would have otherwise forgotten years ago. I studied by making my own charts of all of the diseases (organized by type) and medications with important information about each – that’s the way to go. Just remember to ENJOY! This one’s a fun one. Also get ready for the videos and photos of all the GI worms.

~Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188@columbia.edu

Cardiology

The cardiology block, lead by Dr. Carol Waksmonski, is the first organ system that you will study in The Body: in Health and Disease. The course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of cardiovascular physiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatment, and utilizes different modes of learning, from lectures and small groups to online modules and review articles. There is a lot to study and some of the concepts may prove difficult to grasp, but the direct clinical relevance of the material makes it all worthwhile. You will learn to read EKGs and echocardiograms and be able to differentiate aortic regurgitation from mitral stenosis based on heart sounds heart during the physical exam. Really taking the time to learn the normal physiology and anatomy is key to understating the pathophysiology and treatments. Lilly’s Pathophysiology of Heart Disease and Dubin’s Rapid Interpretation of EKGs are two textbooks that our class found particularly helpful in elucidating these difficult concepts. A solid understanding of this block will be immensely helpful, as you will quickly learn that the cardiovascular system is implicated in many other organ system pathologies as well.

~Paula Rambarat, P&S 2018, pkr2109@columbia.edu
**Pulmonology**

The pulmonology block, lead by Dr. Amy Atkeson and Dr. William Bulman, provides an overview of the healthy respiratory system and its pathophysiological states. Like most blocks, you will start by learning the normal physiology of the pulmonary system. Costanzo’s Physiology chapter on the pulmonary system is a great textbook resource for understanding the normal physiology. You will then jump straight into pathophysiology with the causes and treatments of many common respiratory ailments such as asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis and interstitial lung disease. An understanding of the pathological appearance of the lungs on gross and microscopic inspection is important and will help you do well on the exam. Overall, our class found this short block to be well organized and coherent.

~Paula “The Pulmonologist” Rambarat, P&S 2018, pkr2109@columbia.edu

**Hematology**

Hematology is one of the shortest blocks. It ends up being five days of lecture for a total of ten lectures, many of which are given by Dr. Eisenberger, the course director. He is great, as are his lectures, and he really cares about the block and makes an effort to ensure it is well organized and well taught. The good news/bad news with heme is that the clotting cascade is back! (hooray) Dr. Diugood teaches it as well as a few other bleeding lectures; however, never fear; it is definitely easier this time around. A quick review before the lecture won’t hurt though. Also, small group for this block is different, as in it doesn’t exist; instead, Dr. Eisenberger holds ARS sessions in 401 each day at 11 with case based questions that are usually based on the previous day’s lectures. These are a really helpful way to pull together the material (maybe review it a bit to get more out of it), and a nice change of pace from small group (also this stuff, along with Dr. Garrett’s practice questions, definitely shows up on the test). Other things to look out for: learning the different classes of anemia and the determining features of each class really helps; the anticoag/antiplatelet lecture on the day before the exam is a big ol’ list of drugs and not much else (no helpful clinical vignettes to help you learn them). Finally, the transfusion medicine lecture (last lecture) is disproportionately emphasized on the exam, it seems light on testable information, but trust me, it is not.

~Will Simmons, P&S 2018, ws2352@columbia.edu

**Renal**

Renal: How to study? Same deal, read the SSN sheets and related First Aid Step 1 pages before each class and make flashcards out of the concepts you find difficult. Ideally you would know the flashcards before each lecture but I know how life is, at least have them done before each lecture. I did not go to class since I learn better from watching the lectures on my own time and being able to pause and rewind if I didn’t catch a specific phrase, but either works. It is a good idea to take notes on the slides while you are watching the lectures and then review the annotated slides along with the SSN notes and the flashcards before the exam. Also, go to the small group sessions! Those are very useful in consolidating the information, ideally prepare for those as well. For the exam focus on the dialysis lectures (as well as everything else) those are the last few lectures and seem unimportant but tons of dialysis related questions come up on the test later. In sum, I did the best when I studied my flashcards well. This meant studying at least 20 of them a day and really knowing everything on them. I used ankiweb but there are many other websites you can use. If you have any other questions email me. Best of luck!

~Cristel Oropesa, P&S 2018, co2356@columbia.edu
**Endocrine**

Congrats on embarking on the final block of the year: Endocrine! This block is a nice end, as it encompasses a variety of topics previously seen in integration. But the not-so-nice side is that it is in the midst of other ends: namely psychiatry and FCM exams. You’ll find that Endocrine is pleasantly easy to chunk into sections (growth vs. reproduction vs. bone vs. diabetes, etc.), and exciting because it involves a variety of organ systems. The small group cases are in a slightly different format: you’re given one or two long, detailed cases to work through, and though the sessions are longer (11 am - 12:50 pm), they are valuable in bringing out important concepts. Resource-wise, most of the class relied on slides and the all-around-useful Karinja notes. For the textbook folk, there’s good old Costanzo’s Physiology and Niewoehner’s Endocrine Pathophysiology. Endocrine is a well-balanced block: solid lectures and pacing, but it requires balance (or shall I say, homeostasis?) with other end-of-year events, so stay energized. Think about how far you’ve come and fuel yourself toward the fast-approaching summer days!

~Erica Cao, P&S 2018, ec3053@columbia.edu

**Psychiatry**

Psychiatry is spread out over the entire spring semester, so compared with BHD it has a slow and steady pace. The course consists of lectures and small-group sessions. The lectures have videos of patients that are excluded from lecture recordings because of patient confidentiality, so it is recommended to attend lecture – lectures are relatively light in terms of facts, and the videos help reinforce concepts and reduce studying later. A preceptor leads each small group, and each group has a different weekly schedule. The main component of these sessions is the patient interviews, in which two students interview a psychiatric patient in front of the class. It is a great way to get practice and feedback with patient interviews. There are also two write-ups based on these interviews, and a variety of other activities.

Dr. Cutler (the course director) and the other lecturers include information on psychiatric diagnoses, including DSM criteria and statistics on prevalence, and on patient approach and interview techniques. There is a midterm on the first half of the material; the final exam has multiple-choice questions on the second half of the semester, and a case write-up of a videoed patient interview based on diagnostic information from the whole course. Do the practice questions to get a sense of the detail you should know. Enjoy, and good luck!

~Dana Neugut, P&S 2018, ydn2101@columbia.edu
Studying

Textbooks

You’ll find that you won’t need any textbooks to survive your first semester. Even if you were an avid textbook reader before, these courses move quickly and you really won’t have the time to get lost in paragraphs of details. Lecture slides are comprehensive, and students from past years have provided tons of resources that summarize and break down information. If you do need supplemental resources, it’s easier to google a concept and find a Youtube video or scientific paper that explains it in a different way than to sift through a textbook.

For Molecular Mechanisms, I predominately relied on lecture slides, practice questions, small group material, and SSN. Some students bought an Embryology textbook, but the block is only two weeks long, and exams will focus on material in lecture. For Anatomy, it was helpful to have an anatomy atlas (I bought Netter’s, but they’re all pretty similar) to visualize and draw out body structures. I bought Essential Clinical Anatomy to read through clinical cases and descriptions of how the body works, but rarely used it and instead relied on Dr. Bernd’s slides. I also studied the dissector, non-dissecting session worksheets, and SSN. For second semester, I used Constanzo’s Physiology, First Aid and a few recommended block-specific books when I had trouble understanding the big picture of an organ system. First Aid also includes some great mnemonics!

Check out the "Academic Resources" Appendix and the "Resource Guide" that you’ll be emailed on our recommendations for every block, and don’t be afraid to try out new things as you determine what works best for you. The best part about textbooks if you choose to buy them is that older students sell them at a Used Book Sale in the beginning of the semester for $5-$40. Finally, you can use all that money you saved on apps! My class found Essential Anatomy (a virtual dissectible body), Anki (spaced repetition flashcards), and Notability (note-taking app) especially helpful.

~Rachel Webster, P&S 2018, rsw2140@columbia.edu

Library/Study Spaces

Hammer Health Sciences Building (a.k.a. Hammer): Hammer is a great place to study on campus! The building is open 24/7.

- Floor 1:
  - **Computer lab**: Room with computers, printers, (B&W and color) and a few tables. Go into the inner study room if you’re looking for a quieter space.
  - **Library**: Entrance to the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library is on this floor. There are several areas where you can study in the library. (The library is not open 24/7. Check the website or posted times for library hours.)

- Floor 2:
  - **Reading/Study Area**: There is a large study area by the computer classrooms on this floor. To get to this floor, go up the stairs or elevator on the library side of the building.

- LL1:
  - **LL1 Lounge ("The Fishbowl")**: Large space with tables and chairs for group or self-study
  - **LL1 Reading Room ("The Silent Fishbowl")**: Large space with tables and chairs for quiet study
Group Study Rooms – Group study rooms with white boards and table/chairs. Book these rooms through the library’s webpage (library.cumc.columbia.edu).

- Classrooms on LL1, LL2, 3rd and 4th floors are open for use when classes and events are not scheduled. There are also tables and chairs scattered on the LL1 and LL2 floors.

**Bard Hall**

- **11th Floor Lounge:** A nice place to study and get a view of the surroundings (medical education building under construction, river, rooftops).
- **1st Floor Lounge:** Large, well-lit room with a nice view of the Hudson River.
- **1st Floor Recovery Room:** Quiet study space adjacent to the 1st floor lounge.
- **Bard Ballroom:** Located on the basement level of Bard Hall. You can study here after dinner ends on meal plan days and when there are no other events going on.

**Columbia Morningside Campus**

- There are many other Columbia libraries on or near the Morningside campus. Butler Library is the main library and is a popular place to study. Check the Columbia libraries website for locations and hours. To get to Morningside from CUMC, take the free Intercampus Shuttle (check schedule online) or take the 1 train to 116th St.

**New York Public Libraries**

- NYC has a phenomenal public library system with a number of library locations around the city. The library at Bryant Park is large and relatively easy to get to, but there are many other library locations if you’re in the mood to explore.

**Cafes and Coffee Shops**

- If you like to work (or people-watch) in cafés, there is a café in the CUMC bookstore next to Hammer has several nice seating areas. There are also lots of other cafés in the city—ranging from local coffee shops to your Starbucks or Pret a Manger chains – where you can work if you’re looking to get off campus.

~Connie Wang, P&S 2018, xw2382@columbia.edu
Student Life
Advising & Support

Wellness
The Center for Student Wellness (CSW) is the branch of the administration that is entirely devoted to your well-being. Jane Bogart, the director of CSW will be your greatest ally and new substitute mother throughout your four years at P&S. Jane and her assistants Justin Laird and Meagan Costello, will brighten your day with yummy snacks, liven your weeks with yoga and pilates classes (taught by professional instructors), mindfulness-meditation sessions "wellness activities" such as pet therapy, plant-potting, and "crafternoons", and help you plan all kinds of events from movie-nights to picnics in the park and hiking trips.

Jane, Justin, and Meagan are also available for one-on-one appointments with students (either as drop-ins or scheduled) to talk about any problems or stresses that come up. They have extensive training and experience (Jane and Justin both have PhDs and Jane - nationally recognized as a "sexpert" wrote a book called Sexploration.) Students use these appointments for anything from debriefing a difficult patient encounter, to troubleshooting a problem with a romantic partner (the CSW is a completely confidential resource), to gaining the necessary skills to fix a specific problem (e.g. "I don't know how to order healthy food on-line").

Jane's, Justin's, and Meagan's offices are all located on the first floor of Bard Hall and are the go-to place to pick up a snack, any number of little goodies (pens, post-its, crayons) or restock on a variety condoms, lubes and other safe sex supplies.

In addition to Jane, Justin, and Meagan, each P&S class elects four wellness representatives to the Class Council who are dedicated to improving the well-being of their classmates. You can go to them with complaints or problems. They'll get bagels and coffee for you before your exams, and organize lots of fun activities throughout the year!

~Samuel Cohen-Tanugi, P&S 2018, sc3822@columbia.edu

Advisory Dean Program
Get excited! The advisory dean (AD) program is a wonderful part of P&S. You will have the same advisory dean from your first days on campus until your graduation. The program itself consists of bi-weekly lunches (free food, NOMS!) with your advisory dean and advisory group. I found the lunches to be a nice way to de-stress and get to know different people within my class. Every AD lunch meeting features a different topic and/or special guest. My advisory dean hosted lunches focused on various subjects, including meditation, how to create a CV, summer opportunities, and choosing a specialty. These sessions were all very interesting and fun, but there is much more to the AD program than just free sandwiches. Your AD serves as your mentor and supporter. When you have a question or a problem, you have someone at P&S to talk to, in addition to your professors and administrators. Your AD will become an invaluable resource to you.

~Mytra Haerizadeh, P&S 2018, mh2703@columbia.edu

Reporting Abuse
"Abuse" in the setting of hospitals refers to any type of misconduct from authority figures towards you. It can mean very clear-cut verbal harassment (derogatory language, ad hominem insults), it can mean being sent to do personal errands for an attending physician, or it can mean any number of things. The bottom line here is this: if you ever feel uncomfortable or negative in your upcoming interactions with physicians or other authority figures, talk to
someone. Jane Bogart in Wellness is a wonderful resource, and is completely confidential – so your conversations with her stay absolutely private unless you decide you want otherwise. Dean Amiel is also a wonderful and warm source of advice, although he is not confidential. The Ombuds office can provide more legal advice, again confidentially. And please reach out to other students (including to me! I’m always available, UNI below) if you’re ever unsure; we all need to support each other here.

~Caleb McEntire, P&S 2016, and Gabrielle Bromberg, P&S 2017, gb2300@columbia.edu

Alumni Office

Lost your P&S white coat pin or patch? Trying to get in contact with a P&S alumnus? Want to meet some of the friendliest people in the city? Then stop by the P&S Alumni Office in Black Building for never-ending pins, patches, pens and smiles. The women who work in the office are great and can provide you with any information you need regarding alumni relations. There are also various alumni events (i.e. nice dinners) throughout the year that they need volunteers for and getting to know the office may put your name on the top of that list!

~Paula Rambarat, P&S 2018, pkr2109@columbia.edu

Student Success Network (SSN)

SSN is awesome!! With the privilege of treating others comes the responsibility of acquiring vast amounts of knowledge, and it can be hard to process all the information on ones own; SSN tries to make it all a little more manageable and a lot more fun. Second years will hold review sessions a few days prior to fall exams, and fourth years (with their ample clinical experience) will take over in the spring semester for BHD. The review sessions focus on the most important points of each lecture, difficult mechanisms, clinical correlations, and high-yield facts. Students can follow along with digestible one-page review sheets and practice questions, which are uploaded to CourseWorks within the week preceding the exam. SSN also provides one-on-one tutoring for students who want extra support and guidance. Regardless of how you end up utilizing all of SSN’s vast resources, come to the first review session for the candy and mnemonics, and bask in the energy and enthusiasm of stellar second year teachers who got a lot out of SSN just last year when we had no idea what was going on. And no matter what, remember: SSN has got your back.

~Joshua Stein, P&S 2018, jss2258@columbia.edu (adapted from Jennifer Ding, 2017)
Clinical Opportunities

**Columbia Student Medical Outreach (CoSMO)**

CoSMO is in its 11th year of primary care service to the uninsured population of Washington Heights. For a decade, volunteers from five CUMC schools — Medicine, Nursing, Public Health, Physical Therapy, and Nutrition — have been offering high-quality, accessible healthcare to our patients. We aim to instill in P&S students a lifelong commitment to the service of all who are in need, as well as sensitivity to health disparities and the challenging barriers involved in healthcare delivery.

In only 10 years, we have become a staple of not only the five CUMC schools but also the Washington Heights community. Under the guidance of an advisory board of CUMC deans, New York Presbyterian (NYP) Hospital administrative officers, and dedicated attending physicians, we can proudly say that our clinic offers quality primary care of the highest standards to our patients while providing a rich learning experience for CUMC students.

CoSMO is funded by money raised by the students, and it all goes directly to providing free patient care and medication. You can score five or six bucks in cash for CoSMO (at no cost to you!) by purchasing your first year book list through this preloaded referral link: http://tinyurl.com/cosmo-books. Every book you buy through this link will fund over a month of medications for our patients. And again, it is at no extra cost to you!

Email hr@cosmoprimarycare.org, or visit CoSMOprimarycare.org

For amazon link questions, contact Alex Bercow, ab3453@columbia.edu

~ Alex Bercow, P&S 2017, ab3453@columbia.edu

**Columbia-Harlem Homeless Medical Partnership (CHHMP)**

CHHMP is a student-run clinic that provides free health services to the homeless and underserved communities of Upper Manhattan. The clinic was established in May 2007 through collaboration between P&S students and the Center for Family and Community Medicine. Every Tuesday evening throughout the year, CHHMP operates out of the basement of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church on 126th Street and Old Broadway in the heart of West Harlem. The clinic provides quality health services and basic medical care, along with dental care, occupational therapy, psychiatric support, diabetes education, and social resources, to the homeless and uninsured of the local community.

To build continuity in patient care and student education, a small team of preclinical and clinical medical students sees patients every week, under the supervision of Medical Directors, Dr. James Spears and Dr. Urmi Desai. These students remain involved in the clinic for their entire four (or more) years at P&S, enabling them to know their patients, mentors, and inter-class, interdisciplinary CHHMP family well. Preclinical students work with patients and clinical students to collect extensive histories, perform physical exams, and design medical plans. In addition, each preclinical student assumes a leadership role (finance, outreach, partnerships, etc.) to maintain clinic operations. As students enter clinical rotations, they transition into teachers and mentors for incoming preclinical students and continue to ensure quality care for patients.

Students who work at CHHMP have a unique hands-on opportunity to work with underserved patients each week during pre-clinical years. They also gain exposure and practical knowledge about running a medical institution and non-profit, while becoming part of a uniquely interdisciplinary and tightly knit P&S family. Contact: chhmppartnership@gmail.com.

Website: chhmp.org

~ Jocelyn Lo, P&S 2018, jrl2129@columbia.edu

~ Emma Gilmore, P&S 2017, evg2107@columbia.edu
**Columbia University Harm Reduction Outreach Network (CUHRON)**

CUHRON Clinic is a student-run clinic that provides free healthcare to participants at the Washington Heights CORNER Project (WHCP), a non-profit syringe exchange and educational outreach center at 181st and St. Nicholas. Both WHCP and CUHRON are founded on the Harm Reduction philosophy, which accepts that drug use is part of our world and works to minimize its harmful effects rather than ignoring or condemning them. Participating in CUHRON enables P&S students to build a connection to the IV drug user and sex worker population in Washington Heights while working in close partnership with a phenomenal community organization.

Students provide free medical care during biweekly clinics hosted at WHCP, go on outreach shifts with WHCP's staff to meet participants on the street and distribute condoms and other supplies, and hold health promotion events every month for patients. The same students participate week to week, which has helped make CUHRON a trusted and safe space for our patients.

Volunteering with CUHRON is an amazing opportunity to get to know the Washington Heights community and learn about how to meet the health needs of a deeply underserved community. It's also a great chance for students to start developing history and physical skills in their first semester. The community of CUHRON students is supportive and close-knit, and allows first-years and upperclassmen to work alongside each other. CUHRON also works in partnership with other student groups to build awareness around substance use, harm reduction principles, and models of care founded on acceptance and compassion.

~Mary Davies, P&S 2018, md3336@columbia.edu

**Human Rights Initiative – Asylum Clinic**

Human Rights Initiative Asylum Clinic: The Columbia P&S Human Rights Initiative (HRI) is an organization of students and faculty committed to developing a human rights-based approach to the practice of medicine. Columbia HRI specifically advocates for the use of medicine to identify, document, and alleviate human rights abuses. Through inter-campus events, physician education, and the student-run Asylum Clinic, the organization raises awareness of and challenges the current dialogue around human rights.

Through collaboration with Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and Columbia Law, the HRI Asylum Clinic links volunteer physicians and students to individuals seeking asylum in the United States. Volunteers provide medical evaluations that become a vital piece of the applicant’s legal defense. Asylum seekers seen in the clinic have included individuals fleeing persecution due to LGBTQ status, domestic abuse, torture, and other forms of discrimination. Students are involved in all aspects of the Asylum Clinic, from physician recruitment to clinic administration. When operating the clinic, students work with attending physicians who have been trained in the medical evaluation process. Students assist in conducting the evaluation and writing the affidavit; they may also travel to court to see the outcome of their work.

Website: http://psclub.columbia.edu/clubs-organizations/human-rights-initiative
Contact: Vanessa Nieto, P&S 2018, vln2107@columbia.edu or Tony Valenzuela, P&S 2018, iav2104@columbia.edu

**Interest Groups**

So you have some exposure to _________ (fill in the blank here with your pre-med school research area: neuro/optho/derm/psych/ENT/obgyn), but is that what you actually want to do for FOREVER? You actually don’t have to decide for a while, and I am just freaking you out. Good news: the interest groups are a good way to either continue exploring fields you already
may be somewhat familiar with – AND/OR – you can use their events and shadowing opportunities as a way to check out new specialties. Most events are panel-like discussions with residents or fourth-years, who discuss why they chose a specific field and what their lifestyles look like. Yes, there is usually free food, and I have honestly attended some events solely for free Thai and was pleasantly surprised by how much I enjoyed the talk itself as an afterthought. Also, several clubs have great shadowing opportunities set-up for you (e.g. the transplant pager, MI Pager, ENT shadowing, labor and delivery, pediatric ER, etc) – take advantage of them!

~Steph Colello, P&S 2018, ssc2183@columbia.edu

Pager Programs

I’ve always considered the pager a symbol of true doctorhood. Luckily for all of us, we have two pager programs, the MI Pager and the Transplant Pager, which enable us to try out this whole pager-true-doctor thing before MCY. The MI Pager is more reliable; if you have it, chances are you’ll have the opportunity to visit the Cath Lab and watch as hearts are unclogged. The Transplant Pager offers more rare opportunities (~5 runs per semester), but it is quite near and dear to my own heart. Who doesn’t love a nice trip to Puerto Rico, or Florida, or upstate New York, on a private jet? Even if you don’t get the full jet experience (I went on a run to Mt. Sinai…), the actual transplant procurement is absolutely magical. It’s an opportunity to learn surgical skills, apply your anatomy studies, and bring back an organ to save someone’s life. When they bring you, it’s not to watch, they have a limited number of spots, and so if they bring a medical student, you’re expected to assist in the surgery (they’ll teach you how!). There should also be a stroke pager coming-stay tuned for news from the Neurology SIG!

~Caroline Bank, P&S 2018, tcb2125@columbia.edu

Shadowing

Shadowing at P&S is very easy. Are classes becoming boring? See a lecture you knew nothing about previously but now want to see it in action? Simply want to try something out? Shadowing can be a great way to experience new things, new specialties, and meet physicians currently practicing in fields you have an interest. There are numerous opportunities including Whipple transplant pager, the MI pager, labor and delivery, Peds ED shadowing, and many more. Is there not an official group or program for what you want to do? Just email the attending. One of the best things about being here at Columbia is that the physicians really want to teach. Usually within a day or two of an email, you’ll have a positive response. This really is a great chance to learn outside of the classroom, and is something available to any student with any interests.

~Chris Grubb P&S 2018 csg2140@columbia.edu
P&S Club

Overview
The P&S Club is our fancy name for our student activities office: It is the umbrella organization that oversees over seventy student clubs and special interest groups at P&S – it is the core of extracurricular life during medical school. Rosemarie Scilipoti is the Director of Student Activities and works daily in the P&S Club office; she will be a wonderful resource for you throughout your time at P&S. Each class has two P&S Club Representatives that work alongside Rosemarie and her assistant Rochel to help with approving new clubs, planning med school prom and new student orientation, training club leaders, communicating with clubs, and much more.

During the first few weeks at P&S you will sign up for any and all groups that pique your interest, from P&S Roadrunners for all you joggers out there, to the Global Health Organization – or maybe the Symphony Orchestra and the OB-GYN Interest group are your jam. The beautiful thing about the P&S Club is that there is something for everyone, and if not, then you have the ability to make it happen. This past year, for example, students in our class started Chorda Tympani (the choir), the Tennis Club, and the Sexuality and Medicine group. Some students also reactivated the soccer club! These clubs are a wonderful way to enrich your life during medical school and to give you a much-needed break from the daily grind of studying. And of course, this description wouldn’t be complete if I didn’t guarantee that you will make many long lasting friendships not only in the medical school, but in the dental, nursing, public health schools, and GSAS.

~Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188@columbia.edu

Class Council
Ever wonder how the administrators here decided on the curriculum you’ll go through first year? Want to know how the housing lottery decides where you’ll be living next year? Think you can plan class wide parties like no one’s business? Check out class council! We have positions that will get you involved with any aspect of the school that interests you – and that don’t necessarily put a huge burden on your schedule. Come check out class council positions if you want to give back a little bit to the rockin’ class you’re a part of. Take a look at the specific positions (with our contact info) at http://goo.gl/GcYqZF, and reach out to us with any and all questions; we’d love to answer them!

~Caleb McEntire, P&S 2016, and Gabrielle Bromberg, P&S 2017, gb2300@columbia.edu

Big Sibs Program
Every incoming student is matched into a Big Sib Family with classmates and upperclassmen from every year. We’ll kick off the semester with a rooftop dinner where you’ll meet your family – so keep an eye out for that email! Throughout the year, your big sibs will plan relaxing events, like Insomnia cookie study breaks, picnics in the park, and potluck brunches. Your family is here to offer you friendship and support you throughout your first year of medical school. Ask your big sibs anything and use them as a resource for advice and guidance. Whether you have questions about Columbia or life in general, your big sibs are there for you!

~Emily Webster, P&S 2018, ew2485@columbia.edu
**Bard Hall Players**

Bard Hall Players (BHP) has been putting on shows for almost 50 years at CUMC, and is the most active theater group you’ll find at any med school in the US. We do three high quality shows a year, and our members come from every school at CUMC – so this is a great way to meet people from other classes or schools! We’re student directed, produced, built, accompanied, and performed, so there are roles for you no matter how much or little experience you have! Taking on a lead role can be a lot of fun, but there’s a place for those of you who just want to be on stage and not say anything (which isn’t as much of a time commitment). If you’d like, though, BHP can take up as much of your time as you like, if you decide that you really want to spend time building an Iowan town for The Music Man instead of studying. The pass/fail system here GIVES you that flexibility, so enjoy it! Plus residencies love to hear you talk about something like BHP that is unique to Columbia. So come join our BHP family – we ARE known for our epic legacy of cast bonding adventures.

~Julia Ritchie, P&S 2018, jr3491@columbia.edu

**P&S For the Arts**

This is a club with low-key membership criteria: all you have to do is attend whichever events spark your fancy! From visits to the Met to discounted Broadway tickets and an annual Christmas-time Nutcracker Ballet show at Lincoln Center, our goal at P&S for the Arts is to give you every excuse possible to leave your books and explore the art around you!

The P&S Arts board members will arrange for group ticket discounts or accompanying workshops for various museum/theatre/concert hall outings around Manhattan and other boroughs. This is the best way to experience art in the rich cultural community that is New York City, with your fellow CUMC peers! Yes, that’s right, P&S for the Arts is actually open to all CUMC students, so you get to meet students from other schools, as well (though P&S students definitely tend to form the majority).

Finally, every spring, P&S for the Arts helps to host the annual CUMC Fine Arts Exhibition with sponsoring P&S faculty. The Best-of-Show items from the previous year’s exhibition remain hanging for a year in Hammer Library. Look out for the 2015 show, and be sure to submit any artwork you may have!

~ Nikita Consul, P&S 2017, nc2582@columbia.edu

**Dance Haven**

Dance Haven is a student-run community of new and experienced dancers from all across CUMC. Dance Haven is open to tons of dance styles - including jazz, hip hop, Bollywood, tap, musical theater, modern and more. Auditions are at the beginning of each semester, and you can choose to audition at either a beginner or intermediate/advanced level - you can also choreograph your own pieces! DH commitment is what you make it, you can perform in one dance or several. There is a showcase each fall, and Dance Haven performs at Coffeehouse throughout the spring. DH also offers free dance classes in various styles throughout the year to its members. DH is a great way to stay active, meet students from other schools, and show off your creativity to your new friends!

~Rachel Webster, P&S 2018, rsw2140@columbia.edu

**CoffeeHouse**

CoffeeHouse is always an incredibly special night for the CUMC community. Once a month, we set up sound equipment, chairs and free pizza/beverages in Bard Lounge to share a night of music, comedy and art together. The “Coffee” half of the evening is a little quieter,
resembling an open mic night starring all your friends. People play acoustic covers, share original music, do stand-up comedy, tell stories, perform ridiculous skits, and there’s always a dance or two choreographed by our talented classmates. Once we hit the “House” part of the evening, the lights come down, the chairs clear to the sides, and a series of cover bands play, turning the rest of the night into a loud and high-energy dance party! Traditionally, each class has at least one band, so if you play an instrument and want to have the funnest first year you can imagine, form a band and come join the line-up! Grab a Music Room A membership in order to rehearse your acts. All levels of experience are welcome and ENCOURAGED to perform. It’s a safe and supportive fun space to share yourself with your community. I personally never leave a CoffeeHouse without feeling an overwhelming sense of both awe and affection for my fellow classmates. It’s a night where we all celebrate each other.

~Mikey Montalbano, P&S 2018, mbm2182@columbia.edu

Musician’s Guild

The P&S Musicians’ Guild is the umbrella organization for musical events and performers at the CUMC campus. With over 250 members from various CUMC schools and health care professionals, we have monthly “Musical Mondays” concerts, bi-annual orchestra concerts, and monthly Artreach concerts at local hospitals. We also provide students access to our 3 practice rooms at Bard, which students can sign up for in the P&S Club Office. Every month, Bard Hall Lounge is rearranged into a cozy musical venue to give members of the CUMC community the opportunity to perform classical (and Broadway!) music in a relaxed, informal setting. Musical Mondays typically include performances by chamber ensembles, the choir, instrumentalists, and vocalists, and you can use our MG Directory to form your own ensembles. These concerts are well attended by students, faculty, staff, and deans, and there are refreshments after each concert! The CUMC Symphony Orchestra is open to all members of the CUMC community and it gives students, faculty, and staff the opportunity to collaborate and play music together.

Last year we had two orchestra concerts, and Chorda Tympani (the CUMC Choir), performed at Musical Mondays and went Christmas caroling around campus. Additionally, the orchestra and choir joined together in December to perform Handel’s Messiah with our incredible student soloists. Lastly, MG has set up monthly performances at Milstein Hospital for patients at the Rehab Unit! If you love playing an instrument, singing, monologuing, dancing, or telling stories, it's a great opportunity to interact with patients on a different level and give them a nice break from the hospital. We look forward to having musicians from the P&S Class of 2019 join the CUMC Choir and Symphony Orchestra, and perform in our Musical Monday and Artreach concerts! If you haven't yet read it, I highly recommend checking out the article from Columbia Magazine (Spring 2015 edition -- it's online) describing our incredible musical community and the role of music in the lives of physicians.

~Stephanie Chen, P&S 2017, syc2119@columbia.edu, and Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188

Ultrasounds

The Ultrasounds is the CUMC a Capella group. The group rehearses once a week, and is open to anyone who wishes to participate. At the beginning of the semester there will be auditions, but absolutely anyone can sing. (Auditions are really just to get a feel for the individuals we have. Nobody gets turned away or told they can’t sing with the group!) Whether you are a four year a Capella pro from undergrad or just like singing in the shower, the Ultrasounds want you to come have fun! The group performs at every Coffeehouse and various other events.

~Chris Grubb, P&S 2018, csg2140@columbia.edu
**Chorda Tympani (CUMC Choir)**

Chorda Tympani has been one of the absolute highlights of my time at P&S. I started the choir when I came here because I knew it was a big part of what was missing from the musical community, and I also knew what incredibly talented musicians we have in the medical school. We started with maybe ten or fifteen members but quickly grew, and we currently have 45 students on our listerv. We practice for one to two hours a week and perform at Musical Mondays. We also went caroling around campus last year and sang to all the different administrative offices! With students from P&S, the School of Nursing, Public Health, GSAS, exchange students, CUMC staff members, and a few stragglers from other Columbia schools, we had a wonderfully interesting group of participants. This year, we’re hoping to hold a choir concert and to sing at CHONY (Children’s Hospital), and we are thrilled to welcome new members from the class of 2019!

~Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188@columbia.edu

**Bacchus**

Do you like wine? Do you like friends? Do you like merriment? If so, then Bacchus will be part of your life here at P&S. Those three wonderful nouns combine several times each semester as we don fancy attire and gather in Bard to socialize and imbibe interesting wines hand-selected by Bacchus Leadership. These events have been known to feature impassioned speeches, inventive dancing, and singular style. This past year, we also hosted a Last-day-of-Class brunch that immediately followed our final exam, and this coming year we hope to offer wine tastings at local wine shops.

~Justin Spring, P&S 2018, jds2249@cumc.columbia.edu

**Free Weight Club**

Nothing beats the serene, panoramic views of the Hudson River. If you time things just right, you may even catch the sun descending over NYC casting its elegant shadow over the George Washington Bridge. Though instinctively most assume this scene is cast from Bard Roof, it is not. The Free Weight Club offers its members an astounding aesthetic backdrop to fitness among its wonderful amenities. No other views on campus are accompanied by the surround sound stereo system playing good vibes from the 90s, grunge, pop, or old rock music, and the soft grunting of lifters coming out of their deep squats.

The Free Weight Club boasts the largest membership of any P&S Club and is conveniently located in Bard Hall adjacent to the ballroom. Following recent total gym renovations, the FWC is filled with fresh weight-training and cardiovascular equipment. It is the ideal place to enhance your physique while blowing off the stress of Anatomy Lab and the wards. With 24-hour access through our password-protected system, an evening lift may be the catalyst to inspire the extra several hours needed studying the muscle groups you were destroying all night.

The Free Weight Club is outfitted with:

- Full set of dumbbells (5lbs – 140lbs)
- Two new squat racks with 12ft, custom-designed Olympic platforms
- Treadmill
- Two stationary cycling bikes
- Three designated bench presses (two flat bench, one incline bench)
- Cable machine with extensions (horizontal row, lat pull down, ab chair)
- Leg press
• Seated calf raise
• Seated preacher curl
• Flat screen TV
• Stereo system
• Password-protected entry system with 24-hour access

We hope to see you in the Free Weight Club exuberantly training a body that would make Frank Netter proud.

Disclaimer: this facility is reserved for paying members of Columbia University only; it is not open to the public. Membership fees are nominal compared to other NYC fitness clubs, and all funds are directed toward purchasing new equipment and making improvements to the gym.

~Stephen Maier, P&S 2018, spm2156@columbia.edu

P&S Rugby

Whether you are a superstar ex-jock looking for one last fleeting moment of glory or someone in search of a new activity with a fun group of guys, the P&S Rugby Club is ready to welcome you to our ranks. Gargantuan size and aggressive demeanor are not necessary—only a willingness to learn. There are positions on the “pitch” for people of all sizes. You will be amazed at how quickly you pick up the game and begin winning.

By joining the P&S Rugby Club, you will become part of a long winning tradition. As the only intercollegiate team at P&S, rugby receives tremendous support from the medical center community. Our opponents include business schools as well as various club teams around the city (including the NYPD!). In addition, each fall we travel to Philadelphia for the Wharton Business School tournament (with a very fun post tourney party) and host the John Wood Memorial Tournament, an event that undoubtedly will attract a sizable chunk of your envious classmates.

Most importantly, you will enjoy a unique camaraderie and social tradition. Playing rugby is a fantastic way to make new friends and each match is followed by a social at a local bar. This is a great chance to get to know your colleagues from all P&S classes in a less than academic setting.

Practices are generally low key and instructional and do not conflict with academic responsibilities. Games occur on scattered Saturday afternoons in the fall and spring and there are no tryouts. Everyone who comes out to join the team will get to play. The more experienced members of the team provide coaching. If you read this far, you are interested. Come out and give it a shot, no commitment required. Look for signs posted in August.

~Clark Judge, P&S 2017, cej2126@columbia.edu

International Health Organization

The International Health Organization is a student-run interest group focused on providing CUMC students with opportunities to engage in discussions and activities on topics in international health. Our leadership is made up of students from P&S, The College of Nursing, Mailman School of Public Health, and The College of Dental Medicine, so IHO is a great way to collaborate with students from several different disciplines. We organize journal clubs, networking events, and lectures to broaden awareness of global health issues, careers in global health, and international experiences available at CUMC. Depending on how involved you want to be, you can join the organizational board of IHO to help us with planning throughout the year, or you can just show up to our events to interact with students and faculty who share similar interests. We look forward to seeing you at our events this coming year!

~Zoe Lawrence, P&S 2017, zel2107@columbia.edu
**Sexuality & Medicine Group**
Did you know that medical students in the U.S. receive a mean of 5 hours of education around sexuality during their time at school? That’s education around LGBT populations, caretaking for sexual assault survivors, how to take a sexual history, and much more. Sex & Med works to provide more education on all these issues: last semester we held workshops on aging and sexuality, on being a healthcare provider to kinky patients (how do I tell if those bruises are from domestic abuse versus a consensual relationship?), and on empowering survivors of domestic violence, among other topics. Keep an eye out for our events this semester!
~Caleb McEntire, P&S 2016, and Gabrielle Bromberg, P&S 2017, gb2300@columbia.edu

**Lang Youth**
Lang Youth Medical Program is a six-year medical science enrichment program offering hands-on curriculum and college preparation to a group of middle and high school students from our local Washington Heights and Inwood communities. The competitive application process and intensive time commitment (including after-school, Saturday and Summer programs) self-selects for a group of driven, passionate and intellectual scholars. As a P&S student, you can become involved with Lang Youth in many different capacities. If you are looking for a weekly commitment, become a coach at Academic Success, an after-school study hall held in Hammer. For greater flexibility and a one-on-one setting, you can tutor scholars across a variety of subjects. There are plenty of opportunities for you to hone your teaching skills by volunteering at one of the Saturday workshops throughout the year. This could mean leading a group of middle school students through their first dissection or demonstrating how to measure vital signs and discussing their relevance in patient care. If mentorship is what you are looking for, be sure to sign up for Boys and Girls Club, where you plan and participate in monthly recreational activities for the 8th and 9th grade scholars. This past year, highlights included an ice skating outing to Riverbank State Park and a picnic next to the Hudson. Lang Youth is an incredibly rewarding way to learn more about our local community while empowering a future generation of bright medical minds!
~Brooke Pfister, P&S 2018, bkp2112@cumc.columbia.edu

**Asia Pacific & American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)**
APAMSA is an incredible organization composed of both Asian and non-Asian students from across all four years of P&S. It even spans the other CUMC schools. Beyond being just a social group where you can get your fill of hot, steamy dumplings, crazy karaoke nights in K-Town, and low-key potluck bonding events, APAMSA works to celebrate the diversity of Asian cultures, to foster awareness of health issues in the Asian-American community, and to support and promote the career interests of our members. Some of our signature events include a Lunar New Year and Mid-Autumn Festival Celebration, a lecture series on issues in Asian-American healthcare, and of course, food events such as an All-You-Can-Eat Dumpling Night! Our community service arm extends down to Chinatown, where we help with patient intake and translation for Community Wellness Days and Hepatitis Screening Fairs at the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center. You can also look forward to attending regional conferences that gather APAMSA chapters from medical schools across the North East and local Chinese American Medical Society professional summits where you can mingle with physicians and find mentors. Regardless of your ethnicity, I encourage you to join our group and attend our events. I found a great community here and I know you will too!
~Averill Guo, P&S 2018, adg2183@columbia.edu
~Vivian Ho, P&S 2017, vh2234@columbia.edu
Black and Latino Student Organization (BALSO)

Whereas some schools have their Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) and Student National Medical Association (SNMA) as separate entities, at P&S we have combined these groups to form the Black and Latino Student Organization (BALSO). At BALSO we are committed to (1) creating community for students of color, (2) fostering academic and social support to students who identify as underrepresented in medicine and (3) increasing diversity in medicine. We host monthly meetings, put on special events for the P&S and CUMC community, and also volunteer as mentors to other students who may be interested in following in our footsteps! Our events include discussions of community specific issues like faith and medicine, barriers to care, and dealing with microaggressions, to Anatomy practice practicals (with brunch served afterward!) for our first year members in the fall semester, to the highly anticipated annual Jazz Mixer which celebrates music and culture. Our Young Docs and Big Sibs mentoring programs allow us to reach out to the next generation of physicians and scientists, to inspire elementary, high school and college age students. This fall in particular we will be working to establish a network of interns, residents and attendings who can serve as "point people" during MCY for BALSO students: come to our meetings (held at 6pm in Hammer LL-110 on the first Wednesday of every month) to learn more!

~Ashley White-Stern P&S 2018 apw2130@columbia.edu

BALSO Young Doctors

Young Docs has been one of my favorite parts of P&S! Jump on the chance to join us. Working under the Black and Latino Student Organization we try to introduce students from groups underrepresented in the medical field to medicine and the human body. We work with kids from elementary school to high school.

The most popular part of Young Docs is our elementary school visits. Once per month we carry two skeletons, our stethoscopes, reflex hammers and penlights as well as OJ and crackers to a classroom nearby. Med school students then teach the elementary school students about doctors and the body. We try to dispel myths and encourage them to think of doctors (and biology) as approachable and fun. You could teach these kids about medicine, you could spark their interest and you could motivate a new generation of doctors.

We have recently started a year long high school mentoring program. Students spend the spring semester learning about college applications, interviews and general important life skills. They will spend the fall semester learning more about medicine, the cardiovascular system and the nervous system. We also invite high school students to P&S for a high school visit. They get to see gross organs, learn how the cardiovascular system works and how to take blood pressures. They also get to ask questions about how we (as med students) got to where we are. You, dear med student, can also be involved here. You can teach them about the heart, gross organs or life in general.

The final piece of young docs is an annual science fair. We invite middle to high school students from anywhere in NYC to compete in our science fair. They make 3D models of a biological system and present a poster about a disease related to that system. We invite you, med students, to come ooh and aah at their efforts (not sarcastic, the projects are incredible). You’ll leave knowing future generations are just as smart, if not smarter, than we are.

Young Docs is something that really inspires change. Hearing that students were amazed at their bodies, at organs, at seeing female doctors really makes me think we are doing good. We are an incredibly low time commitment. You can come to one or more of our activities. If you think Young Docs might be fun or interesting, or if you just love medicine, come share your
joy with kids and high schoolers. You’ll be surprised at how much they know and how much it means to them. We’ll send out emails asking for volunteers soon so look out for them!

~Shaliesha K. Hinds, P&S 2018, skh2139@columbia.edu

South Asian Health Sciences Association

The South Asian Health Students’ Association (SAHSA) is P&S’s South Asian cultural group. SAHSA aims to educate the CUMC community about South Asian culture, explore South Asian health issues, and most importantly, we aim to bring samosas and other South Asian deliciousness to P&S students. If you like samosas, join SAHSA. If you don’t like samosas, or don’t know what a samosa is, that’s chill too. Be sure to check out our annual Diwali celebration in October, and our spring Holi festival for South Asian food, cultural crafts, and because they’re fun and it’s bad karma to not go.

~Eshan Vasudeva, P&S 2017, ev2320@columbia.edu

Fun in Med School?

Overview

Congratulations, you live and go to medical school in the Fun Capital of the World! Just because you are in medical school does not mean you have to live up to the stereotype of the hermit medical student—while you might have to sacrifice some of your free time to stay current with the material, you will be able to do at least one fun thing every week. Take advantage of the P/F curriculum to take care of yourself and reward yourself. Do you like art? Make sure to get a Columbia student sticker on your ID, which gives you free access to pretty much any museum you could want to attend. How about theatre? Broadway shows are...right down Broadway. Like sports? Unsure which NY team to make your own? Good thing NY has TWO Baseball, TWO Basketball, TWO Football, and TWO hockey teams for you to choose between, not to mention the US Open at Arthur Ashe Stadium. Like playing sports? Sign up for intramural basketball, the Rugby Football Club, or join your classmates in dominating a race of any distance. Are you a foodie? Be sure to check out Smorgasburg in Brooklyn during the fall and all of the interesting restaurants between there and Wash Heights. Like to get weird on the weekends? NYC has some of the best nightlife in the world (and on select Thursday nights, Bacchus and Coffeehouse get pretty raucous in your own dorm). Off the top of my head, here as some cool things members of the Class of 2017 did in and around NYC: Took over a sake bar. Attended the NY Phil’s rendition of Zelda themed songs. Gone hiking in Harriman State Park. Rolled 100 deep to a Yankee game. Took in a Medieval Fair in Fort Tryon Park. Kicked butt in a Tough Mudder race. Celebrated post-Rugby victories. Enjoyed countless Broadway shows, theatrical performances, and stand up comedy nights. I have to admit, though, some of the most fun nights will happen right under your nose in Bard Hall. Enjoy!

~Dylan Marshall, P&S 2017, dpm2129@columbia.edu

Ski Trip

Ski trip is a phenomenal first year tradition that takes place in February when all head to the mountains for a wintry getaway. This past year we had 102 students from the class of 2018 hop in busses and vans together and venture up to Hunter Mountain in New York’s Catskills for a fantastic weekend of food, drinks, laughter, games, music, and hitting the slopes (but for those of you who want to stay in and drink cocoa, there was PLENTY of that too!) Your P&S Clubs will
plan the details, but we stayed all together in the most incredible house (yes, all of us in one house), and had an excellent time bonding with those we already knew and getting to know those that we didn’t. All are welcome and it’s highly recommended that you go – I may be biased, but I can say with confidence that it was widely regarded as one of the most fun parts of first year.
~Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188@columbia.edu

Leonides
Leonides is P&S’s “Med School Prom” that happens every year usually in the beginning of second semester (back in the day, it used to be in November around the time of the Leonids meteor shower, hence the name). All four classes are invited, and the first-year P&S Club Reps are in charge of picking a theme, decorations, food etc. This past year, we held “Midnight in Paris” at Chelsea Piers with delicious food, drink, dessert, a DJ, and A PHOTOBOOTH!!! The tickets are subsidized, so it’s a great opportunity to dress up and go out in NYC with your fellow classmates. Lots of people bring their SOs and close friends as well, and everyone always has a blast (the photobooth pictures are proof)!
~Nicole Curatola, P&S 2018, ncc2114@columbia.edu

Post-Exam Parties
Med students at pretty much any med school in the country have to take regular tests; the difference between us and them is that after the test we still live in New York City! After almost every exam, your class P&S Club Reps (aka Social Chairs) will plan a party somewhere around Washington Heights, the Upper West Side, West Village, etc. These have ranged from low-key drink specials at Coogan’s to a pool party in Times Square! The few students who have missed out on one of these have described feeling “crippling regret,” often with associated physical symptoms like shaking chills; don’t let this be you! There’s simply too much fun to be had in this city to miss out!
~Ben French, P&S 2017, bhf2113@columbia.edu

Daily Life

MTA Buses
While the subway is usually your best bet to get you places, sometimes the bus will be more useful (generally when trying to go crosstown, i.e. from the west to east sides of Manhattan). Luckily, crosstown buses are usually named after the street they travel on so you know one when you see it. For example, two buses you can take to get from the Upper West to Upper East Side are the M96 at 96th street or the M86 at 86th street. Buses, however, are at the mercy of NYC traffic, so always consider if the subway and/or walking will be a faster way to get where you’re going. If you want to figure out if you should wait for a bus or not, you can get real-time data on how far away a bus is from your stop by going to mta.info/bustime.
Intercity Buses

Buses are a cheap way to get to nearby cities such as Boston, DC, and Philly. Bolt Bus, Megabus, Greyhound Express, Go Bus, Yo Bus, and Lucky Star are all popular options with $10-30 one-way tickets depending on the demand for tickets. Greyhound, which leaves from Port Authority at 42nd street, is the most convenient to get to from Washington Heights, but is sometimes a bit more expensive than the other companies. Bolt Bus is the nicest, but both Bolt and Megabus leave from the Jacob Javits Center area (34th street btwn 11th and 12th ave), three avenues away from the nearest subway stop. Go Bus leaves from the Penn Station area. Yo Bus and Lucky Star both leave from Chinatown, which is the farthest away from Washington Heights, but often have the cheapest tickets. All of these buses have wi-fi and power outlets, but how reliably they work depends on the company.

~Janelle Lambert, P&S 2017, jsl2232@columbia.edu

Taxis

Most of you probably know about the famous yellow New York taxicabs that run rampant around most of the city. What some of you might not know about is the relatively new green taxis (or “Boro Taxis”) that run around the outer boroughs and more far out Manhattan neighborhoods like our good old Washington Heights. They’re pretty much just like the yellow taxis in fact—all of them come with a meter, take credit cards, and can be hailed off the street, at least around here. The main difference is that they’re not allowed to stop for hails below 110th street on the West Side and 96th on the East. Which is good news for us because it means more metered cabs around here!

The basics of hailing a cab: go out on the street and look for a green or yellow cab with its roof light on. If the numbers on top of the cab are lit, stick your hand out and wave it down. Get in the car first and then tell the cabbie where you want to go. They are required to have a map available while on duty and should have no problem getting to an address even if you don’t know where it is. It’s pretty much that easy… unless you’re downtown during rush hour. Between 4 and 6 pm, cabbies will switch shifts and go ‘off duty’ while they ride back to their dispatcher. They’ll try and pick up fares along the way, but will likely turn you down if you’re not on their way home. FYI, it’s actually illegal for cabbies to refuse to drive you anywhere within the 5 boroughs, and they can be fined for doing so. Unfortunately that doesn’t always mean they won’t do it, but it’s good to know.

A cab to JFK International Airport has a flat rate of $52 + tolls and tips to and from Manhattan only. There is no flat rate to LaGuardia Airport from any destination, but from Washington Heights it usually comes out to ~$35 with tolls and tip. You can estimate almost any other trip on taxifarefinder.com, and I’ve found it to be pretty accurate.

Another few tips: there’s another type of car around: the gypsy/livery cab. These are unmarked black cars that ride around the city, and especially in areas like Washington Heights, looking to pick up a fare. You’ll see them hanging out in front of the hospital a lot. They usually don’t accept credit cards, and they don’t have a meter, so you have to settle on a fee for where you’re going before you get in the car. Beware though, I’ve found that a lot of these cars, especially downtown, tend to mark up their prices trying to catch unknowing tourists off guard. Usually the yellow/green metered cabs will be cheaper to almost any destination, but these cars can save you in a pinch if you can’t find another option. Just make sure you know what you should be paying for.
And finally, for those times where you know you’re going to need a cab (or several) — download Uber. Useful in a lot of cities to find a cab, and now available in New York City to request metered cabs through ‘uberT.’ You’ll have to enter your credit card info beforehand, but it will tell you how long it’ll take you to get a cab and allow you to pay through the app.

~Rita Morales, P&S 2017, rem2134@columbia.edu

Subway

If you are like most Americans, you have depended on a car as the mainstay of your transportation needs for your entire life. I suggest you keep that car as far away from NYC as you can. New York’s public transportation has you covered, and its convenience is second to none. The subway system, in conjunction with buses will drop you off within a block or two of just about any street corner you could imagine, and all major airports, train stations, and bus ports, all for the attractive price of $2.50. Of course, navigating this vast system and its intricacies will take some getting used to. Bear with me as I do my best to simplify it for you here:

Getting Started: To enter the subway system you must have a metro card. You can purchase one for $1.00 at any station from the handy kiosks located therein. These are the same places you can refill your card when its balance runs low. For those who like to put their finances on auto-pilot, the MTA website allows you to order a “Easy Pay” card that is linked to your debit/credit card and will automatically add new funds to your card once it dips below a certain balance. Purchasing or refilling your card comes in two flavors: value or time. Value allows you to add a dollar amount to your card balance. Time allows you to purchase a card that grants you unlimited rides for either a week or a month.

Beginners: The most basic rule of thumb to know is uptown = north, downtown = south while traveling in Manhattan. This is important because certain stations only allow access to one or the other depending what side of the street you enter from. Similarly, some trains go by Brooklyn or Queens-bound vs. Manhattan-bound instead of the traditional uptown vs. downtown. Take-home point: be aware of the direction you wish to go or risk going the wrong way or wasting a swipe. Finally, be aware of the distinction between local and express trains. Local trains will make every stop on a particular line (like the C or the 1 going downtown from 168) while express trains will skip several stops along the way (like the A heading downtown from 168 prior to 11p). If you have a smart phone, download Google Maps as it offers detailed instructions on how to get to your destination via public transportation. It will also give you accurate estimates of the time, account for tunnel construction/route abnormalities, and walk you through any transfers. Even if you don’t have a smart phone, it is worth using these tools on your computer to plan your trip ahead of time. Always check the boards displaying construction delays and route alternatives prior to entering the station so you don’t skip your stop or wait for a train that isn’t coming!

Intermediates: If you follow the steps above and have a smart phone, you are going to get where you need to go. The following tips are useful once you become comfortable navigating the system. The obvious advantage of express trains is that by skipping stops you don’t need to get off at, they save you transit time. The problem is that express trains don’t always arrive first or at the same time as local trains to pick you up (otherwise it is a no brainer). Recently MTA has begun installing reader boards at station platforms that display the ETA of the various trains to the station. This information can be valuable in making the decision of whether to hop on the
now departing local train or wait it out for the express. During peak hours, when trains run more frequently, it may tilt the balance in favor of waiting since you can be more sure the express train will arrive shortly, even if there are no reader boards with ETAs for the express trains.

Advanced: If you are like most broke med students, you are always looking to save a buck, so here are some tips on getting the most travel for your money on MTA. If you know you are going to take more than 12 trips/week or 45/month (e.g. you live off-campus), buy an unlimited (one week is $30, one month is $112). You can even share these with friends if one of you is willing to wait 18 minutes to enter the same station, or will hoof it to the next closest stop. A second money-saver is that MTA allows you a free subway-bus transfer within two hours of the first subway swipe. If you need to run an errand that is less than two hours you can save the return fare by taking the bus (keep in mind it is much, much slower than the train, so plan accordingly).

~Griff Curtis, P&S 2017, gmc2125@columbia.edu

Air Travel

The three closest airports are John F. Kennedy (JFK), LaGuardia (LGA), and Newark (EWR), and all are easily accessible. JFK and LGA are both in Queens, while Newark is in New Jersey. LaGuardia has the quickest commute (which is nice for coming back to Washington Heights after a long day of travel), but I have had more enjoyable flying experiences with Newark and JFK. All three can be reached fairly cheaply, if you’re willing to spare the time.

Washington Heights to JFK
Option 1: Subway + LIRR + Airtrain: Take the A train from 168th street to Penn Station (34th Street). Switch to the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) and take it to JFK’s Jamaica Station. From there, take the Airtrain JFK to the airport and get off at your terminal. Cost: $20. Travel Time: ~60-75 min.
Option 2: Subway + Airtrain: Take the A train downtown from 168th Street. Get off at the Howard beach Station and transfer to the AirTrain to JFK. Make sure you get on the A line that is headed to Far Rockaway/Rockaway Park and NOT the one that goes to Lefferts Blvd. Cost: $7.50. Travel Time: ~90-120 min.
Option 3: Bus: Take the NYC Airporter bus ($12 one-way with student ID) or the NY Airport Service bus ($16 one way) to/from the Port Authority Bus Terminal (42nd Street), Penn Station (33rd Street) or Grand Central Terminal (41st Street). Both busses are express and come every 30 minutes. Plus they come with free WiFi. Cost: ~$15-17. Travel Time: 60-75 mins.
Option 4 Cab: Yellow taxi. Cost: $52 flat charge + tolls and tips. Travel Time: 30-60 min depending on traffic. Alternative is a Gypsy cab but it will be “cash only” and more expensive than a yellow cab.

Washington Heights to LaGuardia
(Brand new Delta terminal chock full of iPads and charging stations!)
Option 1: Subway + Bus: Take the A train downtown to 125th Street. Transfer (for free if you use the same metrocard) to the M60 bus heading EAST to LaGuardia Airport. Cost: $2.50. Travel Time: 60-90 minutes.
**Washington Heights to Newark**

Option 1: Subway + NJ Transit or Amtrak + AirTrain: The easiest and fastest commute. Take the A train from 168th Street to Penn Station (34th Street). Transfer to the NJ Transit or Amtrak train and take either train to the Newark Airport stop. Take the AirTrain to the airport. Cost: $17.50. Travel time: 90-120 minutes.

Option 2: Subway + Bus: Take the A train to 42nd Street to the Port Authority Bus terminal. Get on the Newark Airport Express bus on 42nd Street between 8th and 9th Avenues. It comes every 15 minutes and goes directly to all three terminals at Newark Airport. Cost: $18.50. Travel Time: 90-120 minutes.


**NOTE:** To get to all 3 airports, you can also book a ride with Super Shuttle (~$25+) or a private care service.

~Jon Kawulok, P&S 2017, jdk2156@columbia.edu

**Fitness**

While medical school can be a busy time and “fitness paradise” may not be the first thought that comes to mind when thinking of NYC, P&S students find many ways to stay fit. The most popular and pleasant place to get your sweat on is the Bard Athletic Center (BAC), which is free for all full-time students. There are ellipticals and treadmills that you can plug your iPod in and watch Netflix on, stationary bikes that have video-game like simulations of bike courses, basketball court, squash court, pool, weight machines, and balance and stretching equipment. The BAC also offers personal training and workout classes like yoga, spin, and interval training, can be bought in a class-by-class or monthly basis. The BAC’s hours are Monday-Thursday 6AM-10 PM, Friday 7 AM-8 PM, Saturday 10 AM-5 PM, and Sunday 12 PM-8 PM.

For those who prefer to workout whenever the mood strikes or desire more heavy lifting, the Free Weight Club (FWC) is a great alternative to the BAC. Also located in Bard, the FWC is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for all members. For $80/year, members have personal-password access to an air-conditioned exercise haven with a treadmill, bike, and all sizes of free and controlled weight machines. Every year, the FWC also hosts a Lift-Off for prostate cancer research; winners get their name on the wall and free membership for the following year. Contact freeweightsclub@gmail.com with any questions.

**Outdoor Running:**

1) George Washington Bridge - Run north on Haven until you see a small playground on your left. Round the curve and you’ll see a pedestrian/bike entrance to the bridge. The bridge is 1.3 long so a run straight across and back to Bard is about 3 miles. You can make the run longer if you go to the end of the bridge and turn into the Palisades park, which has some little trails (and key mid-run bathrooms and water fountains).
2) Riverbank Loop - Run south on Haven until it ends at Fort Washington, right turn until 165th, then left turn on Riverside Drive. Run 1.3 miles along Riverside to the entrance of Riverbank park (on the right), which includes a large athletic complex with an indoor and outdoor track.
3) Hudson River - Run down to Riverside Drive as above, then after making a left you’ll approach an overpass 2 blocks down on your right. Run down some steps (don’t worry if you miss them – there are several ways to get down to the path) and follow the path until you hit the river path. The river is a beautiful 8-9 mile path; you can turn around at any point, or you can follow the path all the way down to Battery Park.
4) Cloisters Loop - run north on Fort Washington for a mile until you see signs for Fort Tyron as you come up over a steady hill. Go into the park to lengthen your run before turning back and to enjoy some great scenery, flowers, trees, and even a medieval castle – you’ll forget that you’re in the city!
5) Central Park - Take the C down to 110th or run down along Riverside for a 14 mile loop. The Central Park loop itself is 6 miles long with good scenery, people-watching, and a decent hill. P&S Roadrunners have the scoop on information about races and running in general, and they often coordinate group runs to run for fun (ice cream runs!). Contact ps-roadrunners@googlegroups.com or join their Facebook group.

**Biking:** A bike is a great way to get around the city and to get a workout! Central Park is closed to traffic daily from 6am-8am so you can safely ride without worrying about cars or lights.

**Swimming:** The BAC has a 15-yard pool, with hours that can be found on the BAC website. For those willing to leave Bard to get in a workout, the Olympic sized pool at Riverbank Park on 145th is probably a bigger and better alternative. The pool is open 6:15-8:15 AM for lap swim, year round, and each session costs just $3.

**Others:** At P&S, Dance Haven offers classes throughout the year and there are yoga and pilates classes through Wellness (at CUMC) or the Art of Living Club (on Morningside campus). Students also frequently get together to play squash, do Insanity/P90X, etc workouts, or form teams for intramural basketball or rugby. For those looking for a nature fix, the Wilderness Medicine club offers regular hiking and backpacking trips, and you can even proudly sport a P&S singlet while completing your next triathlon with the P&S Tri Club!

~~Jessie Calihan, P&S 2017, jbc2169@columbia.edu~~

**Shopping**

- New Columbia Bookstore by Hammer! It carries the basic, overpriced Columbia Medgear like every Barnes & Noble based college bookstore, but also has a large selection of school supplies and textbooks for those last second needs. They even carry scrubs!
- RiteAid: On 171st and Broadway, RiteAid is your typical drug store (a la Walgreens, Duane Reade, CVS, etc.). It’s a great place to go for prescriptions, household and health needs – also for random gifts or grocery-type items!
- J.L.M. Variety: On 174th and St. Nicholas, this is a great little shop to buy cheap scrubs.
- Sastreria Garcia: On 165th St. between Broadway and St. Nicholas, this is a great local tailor shop. Everything costs $5.
- Target: There are two Super Targets in the Bronx. For one, take the 1 to 225th and you’ll see it. For the other, take the A to 145th, the D to 161st, and the 4 to 149th, then walk west (this one is harder to get to but it is located in a huge mall complex with a Best Buy, Bed Bath and Beyond, Home Depot, Staples, and other stores).
- Ikea: There is an Ikea in both Brooklyn and Paramus, NJ. Though the bus to Paramus costs a bit more and takes a bit longer, the selection is much nicer. Plus, it’s right next to an outlet mall!

**Amazon.com:** If you are going to buy textbooks from Amazon.com, please buy them by clicking on these direct links set up by the CoSMO student-run free clinic! Also HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that you sign up for an Amazon Prime Student Membership if you haven’t already! Membership offers free two-day shipping. You’ll soon come to realize that Amazon is a goldmine for anything you might need, both med school and home-related.

- Soap.com: Next day delivery of household goods. Free shipping over $35
- Fresh Direct: Delivers groceries to your doorstep. Enough said.
Buffalo Exchange: This hidden gem is basically a high-end thrift shop (didn’t know those existed, huh?). There are multiple locations, but the best one by far is on 26th St. between 6th and 7th avenues. It’s got a fantastic selection of both men and women’s designer clothing, shoes, and accessories that are sold to the store in near new, if not new, condition. These are then resold for REALLY cheap. Where else can you buy something from Topshop for $20? Seriously, give this place a try. You won’t regret it. Uniqlo: Located down in SoHo on Broadway between Prince and Spring Street, this is a great, big store to find all your clothing needs at a reasonable price. 4.3/5 stars on Yelp- check it out.

~Plicy Perez, P&S 2017, pp2489@columbia.edu
Food
**Food in NYC**

So you’ve found yourself in the strange, new land that is Washington Heights, and you might not be able to read some of the signs in storefronts, but fear not! Stick to the advice in this guide, my friends, and you will eat quite well and discover some of the fantastic fare and culture that this neighborhood holds. First, see below for some great advice on cooking in the illustrious Bard Hall (or Bard Mansion as we like to call it). To figure out where to get the ingredients for your cooking adventures, check out the appendices of this guide and you’ll find a list of methods for acquiring groceries, many of which you probably shouldn’t have considered previously, but hey, now you live in a metropolis where anything is possible. Lastly, dive deeper into those appendices for a list of awesome restaurants right around you in Washington Heights along with some of our favorites scattered around this big (tasty) apple. Enjoy!

“Logan Mauney, P&S 2018, lcm2170@columbia.edu

**Cooking in Bard**

The first thing you need to become a successful Bard Hall chef is an attitude adjustment. That is to say, you should pretend that you are camping. Once you renounce your attachment to things like “counters,” “tables,” and “dignity,” you will be ready to reach nirvana/make some great meals in your room. Sure, there is a kitchen on the 11th floor, which is especially free in the afternoons, and you can get a small locker up there (stay tuned for the email that housing will send out — the lockers go fast!) but you will want to get a big box to bring your other kitchen accouterments to and fro.

Once you’re equipped with your mini-fridge and microwave, I also found the following cooking gadgets to be pretty terrific and helpful: a microwave omelet maker for greatly expanded breakfast options, nutribullet for portable smoothies, and a crockpot for making massive amounts of chili. Other classmates got creative with rice makers, French Presses, and (shh don’t tell) toaster ovens. Once you figure out your right blend (ha!) of kitchen tools and easy meals, you will be like, “Man, this is the nicest campsite ever!” and you will avoid becoming another pawn in the Chipotle-Ju Ju-Starbucks-Industrial complex.

“Erin Elbel, P&S 2017, eee2117@columbia.edu

**Food for Thought**

Food for Thought is a group in the P&S club that is working to better integrate food into students’ personal and professional lives. Through hands-on events (we’re talking cooking and eating, folks) we explore sustainable eating habits, healthy lifestyles, and how to incorporate them into medicine and medical education. Last year, we hosted Ovenside Chats where a group of students from multiple health science schools came together with an esteemed guest to cook a meal and discuss the guest’s area of activism or research. We also started a group of supper clubs where students took turns with the duties of preparing a healthy, home-cooked meal so that we could eat together throughout the week without having to put in all of the work! We’ll be bringing those back this year by connecting you all with second years (with beautiful kitchens..) to prepare a tasty meal and ask any questions you might have at the beginning of med school.

Whatever your fascination with food, we’d love for you to join us! Keep your eyes peeled for some hot ‘n fresh info on a free dinner on September 3rd in Columbia’s Faculty Club and a healthy helping of more delectable events to come.

“Logan Mauney, P&S 2018, lcm2170@columbia.edu
Meal Plan
For some people, food carries great importance. I am one of those people. In fact, I actually wrote about food in my medical school personal statement (before it was promptly removed by a loving reviewer for the sake of focusing on what is more important to admissions committees). The Bard Meal Plan was one of several features during the application process that caught my eye at P&S. It is conveniently located on the basement level of Bard Hall (Bard Ballroom), so you may dress in whatever allows you the greatest range of motion for a comfortable dine. Meals are served thrice weekly, on the evenings of Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday between the hours of 5pm and 7:15pm. While this seems like a simplistic model, the amenity of taking food home in a “to-go” container allows a crafty meal plan connoisseur to survive the week without preparing his/her own food. Disclaimer: this applies to those who salivate over leftovers (or those who can tolerate some monotony in their diets). Meal plan rules limit diners to take the following: salad bar, protein, starch, vegetables, 2 soups, 1 dessert, 2 pieces of fruit, and 2 canned/bottled beverages. A table with bread, breakfast pastries, peanut butter, jelly, and Nutella is available without restrictions; dispensable water, iced tea, lemonade, and coffee are also available without restrictions.

Meals are available in packages of one, two, or three meals per week, but can be used indiscriminately throughout the semester once a specific plan is purchased. In other words, if one were to purchase a one meal/week plan, that person is not forced to use one meal each week. If there are two meals the next week that look appetizing, he/she can use two then. The price per meal is fixed at slightly less than $10 per meal, which is a steal considering the chance to divide that into three separate meals. The aforementioned “to go” container is purchased separately for $6 (one time cost). After 7:15pm, those interested in making a second pass through the line may clean up the remaining food. The highlighted meals of the semester include salmon, “breakfast for dinner,” Washington Heights night, and other theme meals. Sharing a meal with a guest is also permissible (i.e. using a second purchased meal to bring a friend/sibling/significant other).

The most remarkable feature of Meal Plan, however, is the social atmosphere. It is a great place to learn about your classmates, toss around your newly learned medical vocabulary, and meet peers from the various schools on campus. Everyone is welcome to sit at the tables downstairs, even those who are not enrolled in the meal plan. Considering the time crunches and stresses of your academic and extra-curricular schedules, I would advise giving the meal plan a shot (even if it is a one meal/week plan).

Mangia!
~Stephen Maier, P&S 2018, spm2156@columbia.edu

Dietician
Whether you’re wondering exactly how much pasta you should eat before that marathon you’re running, concerned about how many Wellness office snacks you’re consuming instead of meals, suddenly realizing what “triggering” really feels like after interviewing a patient with an eating disorder in psych, all of the above, or none of the above, Colby, our registered dietician, is here to answer all of your nutrition-related questions and concerns! Appointments with Colby are local (in Tower 1), completely free (no matter whether you have school insurance plan or not) and unlimited. She will work with you to set goals, create meal plans, and develop a healthy, happy approach to food. She is very smart, easy to confide in, and extremely knowledgeable. To set up an appointment, call 212-305-3400, prompt 1.
~ Caroline Bank, P&S 2018, tcb2125@columbia.edu
Groceries

Your guide to grocery shopping in Washington Heights and beyond, compiled by your friends from P&S 2018.

Skip to the appendix for a helpful list of all the different ways you can acquire groceries in NYC (and there are multiple). First, your standard brick and mortar grocery stores. One of the wonders of NYC is that you can order groceries online and have it delivered without having to step a foot outside your door – or Bard lobby – which is especially useful during the winter wonderland months. So next up is a list of these wondrous options, and most of these services offer free trials, so you can try them out before paying for a longer membership. Enjoy!

~Connie Wang, P&S 2018, xw2382@columbia.edu
Identity
**LGBTQ**

You have decided to go to medical school in New York City! There is so much here for you! Downtown, there are resources like The Center (https://gaycenter.org) which can connect you to local entertainment, cultural and wellness services, or Callen Lorde (http://callenlorde.org) which provides health care services for the LGBT community, a great opportunity to get involved and find out what’s going on in the LGBT health landscape. Socially, there are tons of bars all over the city, including Flaming Saddles (Hell’s Kitchen), Suite (Morningside Heights), the historic Stonewall Inn (West Village) and Cubby Hole (also West Village). Up at CUMC, your hub for LGBT events will be Lambda Health Alliance. We host parties & mixers, lectures/panels on LGBT health issues, bar crawls, movie nights, interactive workshops on power/privilege, and much more. There are efforts currently underway to organize LGBT homeless outreach in the form of a new clinic, and beyond (look out for these opportunities in the Fall semester!) We also team up with BALSO every May to organize a AIDS walk team. Dr. Jonathan Amiel, our Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs, also doubles as the faculty liaison for LGBT students. He’s a fantastic source of support and direction. If you’re questioning and want to talk, Jane, Justin and Meg at the Wellness Center in Bard are open, supportive, and a delight to talk to. Lambda (along with the rest of CUMC) is here to support you and your identity, whatever form it might take.

~Mikey Montalbano, P&S 2018, mbm2182@columbia.edu

**Black**

Here at P&S, we have really high diversity rates, so hopefully there will be someone who you feel you can relate to at every step of the way. Student groups like the Black and Latino Student Organization are here to help you feel connected -- not just to other medical students, but to residents and attendings at CUMC (see BALSO entry). Off campus, New York City is-- thankfully--full of Black people! As a Black woman, I have sought refuge in Harlem, going shopping on 125th street (food and clothes! And everyone will tell you how fly you look), and enjoying the restaurant scene that populates Frederick Douglass Blvd (check out Madiba Harlem Food and Wine Bar). In Brooklyn, neighborhoods like Fort Greene are less monolithically Black these days than they were in decades past, but if you take the C to Lafayette you will still be around plenty of people of color. While you’re there make sure to duck into the Museum of Contemporary African Diasporan Arts (MoCADA) one of the coolest galleries/museums in NYC and has exhibitions, film screenings and great community events. For music, the historic Apollo Theater on 125th between Adam Clayton Powell and Frederick Douglass still has some of the best line ups of musicians and shows, from funk, to soul, to modern. In Brooklyn, check the music listings for the Brooklyn Academy of Music (lovingly referred to as BAM) for R&B, doo-wop, juju, and many more genres. One of my yearly highlights is Afropunk which is put on right at the start of the year in August at Commodore Barry Park -- I've seen Body Count, Lianne La Havas, and Valerie June there.

Hit me up if you need more suggestions!

~Ashley White-Stern P&S 2018, apw2130@columbia.edu

**Hispanic**

Well, not only is this one of the most diverse medical schools in the country, but Columbia is also smack-dab in the middle of the colorful Dominican neighborhood of Washington Heights. There are opportunities in every corner to practice your Spanish and also to connect with people who share a Hispanic heritage. During my first year, I have been able to talk to patients and observe the dynamics of patient care, especially with Spanish-speaking patients, through Cosmo, first semester clerkships, and shadowing in the Peds ED. The Office of
Diversity is probably one of the most welcoming and supportive networks here on campus AND you can find comfort food at countless hole-in-the-wall restaurants like Margot, Las Palmas, and Empanadas Monumental just to name a few of my personal favorites.
~Alejandra Perez, P&S 2017, ap3227@columbia.edu

**Asian**

There are few better places to experience Asian culture and cuisine in the US than New York City. While the Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA) will be your best hook up in the immediate Washington Heights area for all things Asian, you’re only a subway ride away from Chinatown, Koreatown, and if you’re really adventurous, Flushing. Whether you’re looking for groceries to make a dinner that tastes like home, a karaoke place to jam out with your friends, or a top-notch restaurant to impress a date, you can find it here. Chinatown, with its Asian bakeries, dim sum restaurants, and cheap hair salons, can be reached at the Grand Street station on the B/D line. Taking the A train to around 34th Street and 5th Avenue will land you in Koreatown where you’ll find food (Korean BBQ, Bon Chon), drinks, and karaoke. Flushing is a bit further away and you’ll have to take the 7 train at Times Square to the end of the line in Queens. The incredibly authentic food makes it well worth the effort. If you want to get away from the city, Fort Lee, NJ also offers some great restaurants, and it’s right on the other side of the George Washington Bridge (~40min walk, or take the bus from 178th and Broadway). Finally, if you’re in need of a late night study break, Tea Magic at the undergraduate campus (open until 11:30pm) has you covered with some oh-so-satisfying bubble tea.
~Averill Guo, P&S 2018, adg2183@columbia.edu
~Gary Peng, P&S 2015, gp2376@columbia.edu

**Muslim**

Welcome and Salam! We are a small but stalwart community here at P&S. There is a joint health student MSA at CUMC--look out for our events throughout the school year. Be sure to contact sj2524@columbia.edu or elabdul@gmail.com to join the CUMC Muslims e-mail list. If you’re looking to catch Jumuah, there’s a weekly service on the second floor of Milstein Hospital near the cafeteria at 1:15. There’s also a small masjid at 175th and Broadway. Another excellent alternative is the weekly service at the undergraduate campus. Feel free to contact us if you’re trying to snag a corner to pray or want some Muslim company...we’d love to meet you! Finally, aside from the usual halal carts, Washington Heights a little sparse when it comes to halal options—that said, the City is full of them!
~Sarah Jukaku, P&S 2015, sj2524@columbia.edu

**Christian**

As a Christian student it can be difficult initially to find a new worship community in New York, but there are several churches in Washington Heights, at the Morningside Heights campus, and elsewhere in the city. I am Catholic, so I can speak more about Catholic services. First there is Catholic mass in the NYP Hospital Chapel. To find the chapel, it’s easiest to enter the Vanderbilt Clinic building on 168th street at the U-shaped driveway and ask at the desk for the chapel. They have a quick Catholic mass at 5:15 PM on Saturday and at 8:30 AM on Sunday. Other Catholic churches in the neighborhood include the Church of the Incarnation (Sunday mass at 8:00, 10:30 AM and 1:30 PM) on Saint Nicholas Avenue between 174th and 175th, and the Church of St. Rose of Lima on 165th Street. There are also church services at St. Paul’s Chapel on the Columbia main campus and at other churches in the Morningside area. In addition there is a Columbia Catholic Grads weekly email that is sent out with information about church
services, meetings, events, and dinners, mostly at the Morningside campus. There is also a St. Luke’s Society for Catholics at the medical campus, although it is not as active of an organization as it could be.

I do not know as much about services for other Christian denominations, but there is a group called the Columbia Christian Fellowship. If you get in contact with them, I am sure that they would have more information for you.

~Thomas Graf, P&S 2017, trg2121@columbia.edu

**Jewish**

First of all, Mazel Tov on being in the greatest med school mishpucha you could want! Columbia offers a lot in terms of Jewish life, both up by the Medical Campus and down by the undergraduate campus at their fantastic Hillel. The MCJA is the Jewish student organization for the Medical Center community, and they host Jewish religious and cultural events for said community. This past year, for example, we had a huge Shabbat dinner with about 100 attendees, a Challah baking event, and a Purim Hamentaschen study break. Having students from across the CUMC schools also makes MCJA a great way to meet people from across the community. The MCJA also has a close relationship with Columbia Hillel, and medical students are always welcome to go there for services and holiday events. It's just a couple stops away on the 1 train, so it's really convenient!

If you keep Kosher, Washington Heights has some great markets nearby like Key Foods and Just Kosher. There are also awesome kosher restaurants like Grandma's pizza, Lake Como, Golan Heights (amazing schwarma and falafel, and trust me I’m really picky), and Chop Chop just a few blocks uptown. The upper west side also offers a host of kosher markets and restaurants.

Also if you observe Shabbat, class usually ends early on Fridays, so you'll have plenty of time to prepare! And if you have to miss a small group, a lab, or even an exam, professors are extremely accommodating and, with some notice, will offer make-ups and make sure that you don't fall behind. Just about all classes are recorded, which also makes catching up on missed lectures a snap.

Finally, as you, the first years, enter this amazing place, you will likely take the reins of the MCJA from the old second years. Know that if we don't currently offer something you’d like to see, you can make it happen! The MCJA can be whatever you want it to be, and we have great support from the P&S Club and from Columbia Hillel.


Minor edits by Geoff Rosen, P & S 2018, ghr2111@columbia.edu

**International Student**

NYC is a great city to attend medical school as an international student. Whether you are from Canada (eh?) or opposite side of the world, there is always something to do in NYC. Take advantage of the 24/7 subway system and explore as much as you can during the preclinical years. To get you started, check out the ethnic neighborhoods in Manhattan: Murray (aka Curry) Hill, Little Italy, Chinatown, Koreatown, Harlem, Washington Heights, and the list goes on. If you are brave enough, go on an adventure to other boroughs or Fort Lee, NJ. Try the restaurants, bars, shops, etc. - you will never get bored!

If you have any questions about visas, contact Ms. Bonnie Garner (blg12@columbia.edu) at the International Affairs Office (IAO) or drop by during walk-in hours. Also, if you ever run into issues as an international student (such as getting funded for research), do not hesitate to reach out to your advisory dean or P&S administrators. They are more than happy to guide you.

Welcome to P&S and enjoy the city that never sleeps!

~Jiho Han, P&S 2017, jh3023@columbia.edu
From the South

First things first: congrats on choosing P&S! You made the right choice. Now let us remind you why. You wanted to go to a school with friendly people, good food, live music, and plenty of sunshine. Well three out of four ain’t so bad! There are going to be times when New York City feels crowded and hectic. Overwhelmed at the thought of taking a crowded subway ride downtown? Reasonable. Is someone going to be completely rude to you for absolutely no reason? Probably. Worried that strangers don’t talk to each other? They don’t… but you should! You need a bit of that southern charm here to survive, and New York will be the better for it.

So come September when need your southern food fix, check out Sylvia’s, Dinosaur BBQ, or Jacob’s Pickles, just to name a few. Harlem is right next-door and they have some great southern food and hospitality too. We’ll be honest—your loafers and boat shoes aren’t going to last the winter (usually October to May). But don’t worry, because come May, you can and will revive them. Invest in some waterproof boots, a puffy coat, and a solid umbrella, and you’ll be just fine. Also, buy a sunlamp. And get out and enjoy the city! Take a walk through Fort Tryon Park, catch some blue grass at Mona’s, and grab a gospel brunch (really – look it up). And try out fishing on the Hudson (but don’t eat it – who knows what those fish are made of). Trust us, we love it and you will too! You’ll have such great stories to tell all your friends and family back at home.

~Hannah Ware, P&S 2017, hmw2131@columbia.edu, and Dan Arteaga, P&S 2017, dna21102@columbia.edu

From the West Coast

I hope you’re ready to ditch the flip-flops, organic kale smoothies, and abbreviated words. The east coast is, like, “hella” different from the west. Luckily, most of the best parts of our beloved coast are represented here on the east. You’ll get your fix of hipsters, farm-to-table dining, coffee, and fashion. Unfortunately, you’ll be losing out on open space, 24/7 sunshine, decent Hass avocados, and In-N-Out (don’t fall for the Shake Shack hype!) The best part is that you also gain access to everything that makes the east coast amazing. From the historic buildings to Broadway to 4am nightlife, you’ll love living here. The public transportation is actually functional and expansive. No more sitting in traffic until the end of time. Make the most of every moment you have here. Enjoy NYC! Your friends will actually want to come visit you, too.

I was personally worried about east coast culture. West coasters are laidback, we smile, we’re annoyingly faux polite. While everyone here is very upfront and honest, they aren’t as rude as you’ve heard. You’ll be okay if you learn how to walk fast and get to the point when talking. Weather is by far the biggest adjustment. There are these things called seasons. The humidity and smells of subway in the summer will catch you by surprise. Winter will come out of nowhere and the heaters in Bard don’t kick in until it’s 50deg outside. Most of the bad weather this year was from October to March. Despite needing to layer up or hide inside, the seasons are truly beautiful.

Missing open space? You can literally run to New Jersey or hop on a bus to Boston/Philly/DC. There are great places to bike, run and hike nearby. Need your Mexican fix? Head over to Taqueria San Pedro for tacos, Paquitos for mole, Café Habana for elote, and bribe Oz to make you guac. Want to catch that Pac12 game? Finnerty on 12th and 2nd Ave. Want to stroke a hipster’s beard while sipping on a cask beer? Take the L over to Williamsburg. Time to caffeinate? The Roasting Plant and Bourbon Coffee will do the trick. If you need to remind yourself what sunshine feels like, JetBlue and Virgin Airlines have pretty cheap ticket deals (~$300). Travel Tip: Buy tickets for holidays and summer as early as possible as the prices only
go up after April. If you can’t make it home for Thanksgiving, Dean Nicolas will invite you to his house.

~KL “WestCoast/BestCoast” Collins, P&S 2017, klc2173@columbia.edu

From the Midwest

Congratulations and welcome to P&S! If you’re from the Midwest, you may be feeling a bit overwhelmed right about now. Perhaps you find the subway maps confusing and the crowds unnerving. Perhaps you’re craving green space and giant grocery stores. Perhaps you’re perplexed by how quickly people walk here. Perhaps you miss the friendly Midwestern charm of nearly everyone you encounter. If any of these feelings ring true for you, you’re not alone—I certainly experienced them upon my arrival in New York City. And three years later, I sometimes still do. Though the east coast (and NYC in particular) takes some getting used to, you’re in for a treat. As you’ve likely gathered, this city has so much to offer—from Broadway plays to museums to opera, the culture here is unparalleled. Take advantage of your free time to explore the different boroughs and neighborhoods, and keep an eye and an ear out for events that might interest you. I guarantee you won’t ever run out of things to do. And if you ever find yourself in need of an escape from the hustle and bustle, my best piece of advice is to take a walk or go for a run in a nearby park—Riverside Park, Central Park, and Prospect Park are my favorites, but there are a myriad of other options around the city. And if you’re a native Cincinnatian like me, apparently you can still get your fix of Skyline Chili and the Bengals at Phebe’s Tavern and Grill in the East Village. I’ve never been, but I’m sure it would be well worth the trip. After all, there’s no place like home!

~Becca Tsevat, P&S 2018, rkt2112@columbia.edu

Not a science major

You’re at the right medical school. There is an incredible arts and humanities scene (see Coffehouse, Reflexions, BHP, Narrative Medicine), as well as attention to political science and economics through the SLIM curriculum. First semester, many of us even took an anatomy drawing course led by one of the fourth years! That said, it can also feel really overwhelming at the beginning. I found this to be particularly true when lectures in MM discussed different research methods and techniques that many of my classmates had actually done before, whereas I still have no idea what it actually looks like when you PCR something. But here’s the thing: Everyone feels completely overwhelmed in the first few months, no matter their college major. Some people may be more comfortable with the language, but it’s a steep learning curve for everyone and there are plenty of resources, from SSN to your classmates to your advisory deans.

More importantly, though, I think you’ll find your non-science background to be a real asset in surprising ways as you progress through your first year. A secret is that much of medicine is literary description; you’ll soon encounter a smattering of strange and vibrant metaphors to describe the body. Once you move to second semester, doing patient write-ups is a lot like writing a critical essay, in which you argue for a diagnosis by providing compelling evidence. Much of first year is just about learning a new language, so your foreign language abilities may be helpful. You may use your social science background to critically analyze embedded messages about culture in lectures and test questions. Creative writing will come in handy as you develop elaborate narrative mnemonics to memorize pathways. Don’t underestimate these skills! I still don’t know what a Western blot is, and they haven’t kicked me out yet.
One more reassuring thing: while in MM many students have a strong background in the material, once you move to BHD, literally no one knows what’s happening. BHD is the great equalizer—hang in there until January. And in the meantime, feel free to reach out to second years with any questions— we are here for you!

~Jemma Benson, P&S 2018, jrb2232@columbia.edu
Living and Loving
**Living at Bard Hall**

Welcome to Bard Hall! It’s an experience you won’t forget. Take advantage of the following while living in your medical school dorm! Head upstairs to the 11th floor to check out the three rooftops available to hang out and relax. They offer great views of the city, Hudson River, and George Washington Bridge. While you’re on the floor, also explore the common kitchen where you can cook alongside your classmates. Be on the lookout for locker reservations which take place in the fall.

The laundry room is on the second floor. Buy a laundry card at the machine in the laundry room to get started. Just a floor below is the Bard Hall Lounge. It is a cozy room perfect for studying, hanging out, or taking a quick nap between classes. Hudson Riverview Room is right next door and provides quiet study space. Pro tip: Watch out for leftover food from special events held in Bard Lounge throughout the year.

The Bard Athletic Center is located in the basement of Bard Hall. It has weights, machines, cardio equipment, a pool, and squash and basketball courts. See the fitness section of the orientation guide for more information.

~John Nemer, P&S 2018, jsn2130@columbia.edu
~Andrew Moss, P&S 2018, am4261@columbia.edu

**Moving off-campus (apartment hunting in NYC)**

Moving off-campus with four first-year friends half-way through the year was the best thing I did to improve my quality of life, and whether you do it in December or during the summer, it is a perfectly do-able endeavor.

Let’s start by debunking a few myths:

1. Off-campus housing is way more expensive than Bard or the Towers. **False.** Washington Heights remains a very affordable neighborhood in Manhattan, many upperclassmen (including myself) live in beautiful apartments for anywhere from $700/mo.

2. I signed a year-long lease to live in Bard. **False.** Leases in Bard are for the semester and you can move out in December without paying any fees. You are also free to move out at any other time, but you will have to pay a fee to break your lease.

3. If I live in Bard as a first year, I am guaranteed a spot an apartment in the Towers through the housing lottery. **False.** There are not enough empty apartments in the Towers each year to accommodate all first years who enter the lottery.

4. Navigating the NYC real estate is terrifying and you have to be a superhuman or take a month off to find an apartment. **False.** Although NYC real estate has its complications, Washington Heights is probably one of the best neighborhoods to find an apartment in. The market is great, there are always multiple apartments available and the search for apartments is much less stressful than in other neighborhoods. My roommates and I scheduled several viewings in one afternoon and fell in love with the last one we saw that day.

**How to find an apartment:**

First, let me define a term: the broker’s fee. Having never lived in NY, I had never heard of the broker nor his/her fee. The broker is a person who coordinates the contract between landlord and tenant. With a broker, the landlord will never have to advertise the apartment, meet and pick the tenants, coordinate the contract etc. In many NY apartments, instead of being paid by
the landlord, the broker’s fee is pushed onto the tenants! Why? Because landlords have power and they can get away with it. Some real estate agencies manage to push the cost onto the landlord, but it’s not the norm. The odds are, you’ll have to pay a broker's fee. It’s usually 1 month’s rent. However, there are "no [broker's] fee apartments" out there.

With the broker's fee out of the way, here are some good places to start:

1) **http://bohemiarealtygroup.com/** - website is clear and easy to use, a lot of apartments are no [broker] fee

2) **https://www.halstead.com/rentals/new-york/** - although they have fewer "no fee apartments", I found my apartment through a Halstead broker, Stephen Rosario (SRosario@halstead.com).

3) Naked Apartments (**www.nakedapartments.com**) and Street Easy (**http://streeteasy.com/**) are two more good websites to find apartments.

4) Craigslist is a good place to find no fee apartments, but I would not recommend relying exclusively on craigslist, because you run the risk of scams and complications. A smart way to use craigslist is to first find some apartments you’re interested in on the easy-to-use website of realtors, and then try to find the same apartment listed as a no-fee apartment on craigslist.

5) Finally, word of mouth. Talk to upperclassmen, let people what you're looking for, and when fourth years move out at the end of the year, you can get in touch with them to take over their lease. Among the P&S Community, some fabulous apartments have been handed down over the years!

~Samuel, Cohen-Tanugi, sc3822@columbia.edu

**Living off-campus**

Congratulations! Living off-campus is wonderful – you have a kitchen, your own private space away from medical school, and the freedom to choose where you call home. Most people who live off-campus have chosen to live around the Washington Heights area, but there are also many people who live further downtown in Harlem, Morningside, the Upper West Side, Midtown, Chelsea, and even Brooklyn. Every neighborhood has it’s own specific benefits (Central Park, proximity to cool bars and restaurants, ability to have pets, etc.), but all will make you feel more like a part of New York than living on-campus. The biggest trade-off for living off-campus is the commute, but it is very manageable. During the first 1.5 preclinical years, your schedule is very flexible and on lecture-only days you often won’t need to come to campus at all. When coming to campus, you will take the subway uptown when traffic is going downtown and vice versa, so it’s easy to get a seat and review flashcards, watch lectures, or read a book. I live on the Upper West Side with a 30-minute commute and I think the commute is absolutely worth it. Often questions/concerns about living off-campus are very neighborhood or situation specific, so please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions!

*One thing anyone off-campus will want is a locker – they are provided free of charge in Hammer on a first come basis. Log on to https://locker.cumc.columbia.edu/ while on campus or using a VPN to register.*

~Heather Lee, P&S 2018, hml2132@columbia.edu
In a long distance relationship

You can do it! There will be lots of times you'll hear people say it's too hard to balance distance and med school, and sometimes you might also start thinking it's too hard, but there are definitely ways to make it work!

General advice: communicate! Med school is this weirdly specific experience, and it can be a challenge when your SO hasn't been there/done that like you. The challenges and triumphs you face in med school can seem pretty big - from first exam jitters to the general stress of transitioning to what it feels like when you interview your first real patient during tutorials - and it can be really hard for a big part of your support system to be far away doing their own thing during all those ups and downs. So talk about what's going on, and what's hard, and what you're feeling, and what you think you need from your significant other. Tell them when you're feeling a little crazy with work and just can't make time to talk much, or when you need to make time to hang out with med school friends and build community here. Talking openly helps them try to be the best partner that they can, and build all the trust and patience that has to be there to hang tight when things are tough. The reality is that sometimes you might feel like you're swimming alone more than you wish you were, or that you both have to miss out on important moments for each other, or that you just don't quite get what each other is going through, and you'll have to navigate through that too.

Concrete advice: They release exam schedules even before the semester starts - start planning your visits then, friend. The tickets will be cheaper and you will be SO MUCH LESS stressed out by just how expensive Megabus/Amtrak/flights get when you buy them five hours before you leave. And then you'll get to look forward to them all semester! Figure out what works for you when it comes to all that travel time. If you get car sick and vom on buses, don't get discouraged when you don't end up looking at those anatomy flashcards. Pro tip: saving up lectures to watch can - almost - feel like you're watching a movie. Alternatively, catch up on sleep! Try to set up expectations for how often you're going to see each other, thinking about how much the trip costs and how much time you're willing to be away from campus and whether you're alternating trips or your SO is willing to take the brunt. It can be hard being away a lot of weekends, especially when you're just starting to get to know people, so you might find that it's helpful to bridge the gap and introduce your SO to med school friends and try to hang out with both sometimes.

For when you are away from each other - i.e. most of the time - spend the first couple of months figuring out the routine that helps you both feel loved and supported. All relationships - whether with your SO or with med school - will have their good days and bad, and just try to be open with yourself and each other about how it's going. And know that Justin and Jane are always here when you need to vent!

~Mary Davies, P&S 2018, md3336@columbia.edu

Dating in Med School

Dating in med school is, it turns out, an entirely doable thing! Especially during your first year you’ll have plenty of work, sure, but you’ll also have free time if you give yourself space for that – and we very much encourage you to! Work hard, but give yourself time to relax. Dating apps in general are very common in NYC; whether it’s OKCupid, Hinge, Tinder, Grindr, leaving love letters in bottles on the street, or others, you can definitely find people in the city if that’s your thing. There are also PLENTY of libraries, bars, coffee shops, and more in which to meet
people. The bottom line here is that you should not be discouraged about your love life in med school! Ask NY natives or second years about good date spots if you’re curious, and most of all don’t psych yourself out about the workload here too much. You DO have time to date if you want to!

~Caleb McEntire, P&S 2016, and Gabrielle Bromberg, P&S 2017, gb2300@columbia.edu

Pregnant in Med School

First of all, congratulations! You aren’t just learning about how to save lives, you’re in the process of making one. Preparing for parenthood is an exhilarating and challenging time no matter what your circumstances, but during medical school it can be a particularly emotional experience. I’ve found contemplating embryology, genetics, infectious disease, and congenital abnormalities while pregnant to be rather anxiety-provoking at times, but it has also provided a very tangible and unique context to my education.

Deciding when to disclose your big news is a personal one, but once you are ready to share, email your advisory dean and schedule an appointment with Dean Mellman. They both can help orient you to policies concerning missed work or rotations and put you in touch with other students who have had children at various stages in their education. Generally, I’ve found the faculty to be encouraging and graciously accommodating. Missing lectures for prenatal visits and sonograms is not an issue since nearly all lectures are recorded. This is something you’ll also appreciate during the early days of your pregnancy when morning sickness and exhaustion conquer your intrinsic motivation for studying. Also, take advantage of extracurricular opportunities in obstetrics when you are feeling up to it. In my opinion, there’s no better way to prepare for childbirth than spending a few evenings shadowing obstetricians or midwives in labor and delivery. Finally, reach out to students like myself who have already explored some of the resources available to new parents. Or, if you’re still in the planning stages, feel free to ask us about timing your pregnancy with the various demands of medical school. Best of luck!

~Giselle Doepker, P&S 2017, cgd2116@columbia.edu

A Parent

The good news is that it’s entirely possible to have a successful medical school experience and to be a great parent at the same time! After all, you’re approaching school with a great deal of real world experience, as well as a more mature perspective than many of your classmates. You’ll have your schedule well in advance so you can plan your childcare, and you’ll find that students (as well as faculty) show you a lot of respect for the amount of “real life” that you’re tackling all at once. The lectures are recorded, which gives you options for working from home. The not-so-good news is that being a good student-parent will require excellent time management and planning, and a certain amount of sacrifice both at home and at school. Very, very few students are parents, so at times you may feel alone in this journey! As far as extracurriculars, you’ll certainly have time to focus on one or two endeavors that mean a lot to you, though perhaps you may have to forego the Kickball Team. It all comes down to setting priorities and hanging tough. Cancel the Netflix. Say goodbye to all but 2-3 friends. Practice sleeping 6 hours per night (which you do anyway because you’re a parent). Study almost every second that you’re not with your family. Literally. And then you’ll be okay. It isn’t easy at all but it’s doable and incredibly satisfying!

~Matt Garrett, P&S 2018, mdg2157@columbia.edu
Married

Although the majority of P&S students will be single, you will be surprised at how many of your classmates are either married, in domestic partnerships, or have long-term significant others. Married people like to have fun too, and you will have no trouble finding fun couples activities in the city and within the school-planned events. In fact, there is a formal prom-like ball put on every year, and you don’t even have to worry about who you are going to ask! Also, don’t limit yourself to just hanging out with couples—some of my wife’s best friends and mine are single folk.

Managing medical school and a marriage may seem scary, but I have found marriage to be much to my advantage as a medical student. Note that married people always have someone to “go home to”, they always have a “patient” on whom they can practice, and there will always be someone who loves you after a long day. It is also important to remember (especially during medical school) that marriage is not always roses and sunshine, so keep in mind that Student Health and the Wellness people (Jane and Justin) are a great resource for making sure that your relationship stays happy and healthy during the difficult times that lay ahead.

~Matt Shirley, P&S 2018, mbs2216@columbia.edu
Appendices
Academic Resources

- SSN!!!
- Lilly - Cardio Block
- Sketchy Medical
- Pathoma
- Picmonic
- Costanzo Physiology for Renal
- FIRST AID (for the USMLE Step 1)
- Karinja notes
- Eugene charts
- Khan Academy videos
- SketchyMicro - MID block

Library/Study Spaces

*Hammer Health Sciences Building* (a.k.a. Hammer): Hammer is a great place to study on campus! The building is open 24/7.

- **Floor 1:**
  - Computer lab: Room with computers, printers, (B&W and color) and a few tables. Go into the inner study room if you’re looking for a quieter space.
  - Library: Entrance to the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library is on this floor. There are several areas where you can study in the library. (The library is not open 24/7. Check the website or posted times for library hours.)

- **Floor 2:**
  - Reading/Study Area: There is a large study area by the computer classrooms on this floor. To get to this floor, go up the stairs or elevator on the library side of the building.

- **LL1:**
  - LL1 Lounge (“The Fishbowl”) – Large space with tables and chairs for group or self-study
  - LL1 Reading Room (“The Silent Fishbowl”) – Large space with tables and chairs for quiet study
  - Group Study Rooms – Group study rooms with white boards and table/chairs. Book these rooms through the library’s webpage (library.cumc.columbia.edu).

- **Classrooms** on LL1, LL2, 3rd and 4th floors are open for use when classes and events are not scheduled. There are also tables and chairs scattered on the LL1 and LL2 floors.

*Bard Hall*

- **11th Floor Lounge:** A nice place to study and get a view of the surroundings (medical education building under construction, river, rooftops).
- **1st Floor Lounge:** Large, well-lit room with a nice view of the Hudson River.
- **1st Floor Recovery Room:** Quiet study space adjacent to the 1st floor lounge.
- **Bard Ballroom:** Located on the basement level of Bard Hall. You can study here after dinner ends on meal plan days and when there are no other events going on.
**Columbia Morningside Campus**

- There are many other Columbia libraries on or near the Morningside campus. Butler Library is the main library and is a popular place to study. Check the Columbia libraries website for locations and hours. To get to Morningside from CUMC, take the free Intercampus Shuttle (check schedule online) or take the 1 train to 116th St.

**New York Public Libraries**

- NYC has a phenomenal public library system with a number of library locations around the city. The library at Bryant Park is large and relatively easy to get to, but there are many other library locations if you’re in the mood to explore.

**Cafes and Coffee Shops**

- If you like to work (or people-watch) in cafés, there is a café in the CUMC bookstore next to Hammer has several nice seating areas. There are also lots of other cafés in the city—ranging from local coffee shops to your Starbucks or Pret a Manger chains – where you can work if you’re looking to get off campus.

**Groceries**

**Within walking distance from the CUMC campus:**

- **Gristedes** (4037 Broadway): Medium-sized grocery store offering standard groceries. Located close to campus but items are generally very overpriced. 10% CUMC student discount on Thursdays.
- **Key Foods Supermarket** (1239 Saint Nicholas Ave): about a block further from campus than Gristedes. The selection is a wee bit more limited, but prices are much lower.
- **Bravo Supermarket** (4138 Broadway) - “Way better quality than Key Foods”*
- **Associated Supermarkets** (3871 Broadway) – “Cheaper than Gristedes or Bravo, better quality than Key Foods”*
- **C-Town** (1016 Saint Nicholas Ave and 1314 Saint Nicholas Ave): “Sneaky grocery store with 2 locations – 161 and St. Nicholas, and 176 and St. Nicholas. Crazy good sales on certain items.”*
- **La Rosa Foods** (4161 Broadway) Very small grocery store with a limited selection (perishables and nonperishables) but cheaper prices.

**Not within walking distance of the CUMC campus:**

- **Fairway Market** (2328 12th Ave): Huge grocery store and good prices. If you want to get some physical exercise with your grocery experience, you can run/hop/skip/walk the 1.8 miles down to the store and take the 1 Train back.
- **Target** (40 W 225th St, Bronx): This Target has a fresh groceries department in addition to all the other stuff that Target usually sells. Take the 1 Train to 225th St.; Target is conveniently located next to the station.
- **Trader Joe’s** (2073 Broadway) Trader Joe’s in NYC is pretty much like Trader Joe’s elsewhere. Great prices, and a good selection of standard groceries as well as the Trader Joe’s eclectic stuff. Very crowded on weekends and other peak times. Closest location is at 72nd St. and Broadway. You can get there by the 1 Train or C Train or running down (~5mi) and training back!
• **Whole Foods Market**: (808 Columbus Ave and 10 Columbus Cir) Whole Foods in NYC is also pretty much like Whole Foods elsewhere. Prices are high but no more so than other Whole Foods stores. Two locations can be conveniently reached from campus. Take the C Train for the 97th St/Columbus Ave location or the A Train (express) for the Columbus Circle location.

Other great neighborhood options:
• **Fruit and Veggie Stands/Grocery Stores**: There are several smaller local grocery stores and usually a number of fruit and produce stands along Broadway during the warmer months. Limited selection but prices are generally cheaper.
• **Fort Washington Greenmarket**: There is a farmer’s market on Fort Washington (in front of Hammer) every Tuesday from June – November. The stands sell a variety of produce, fruits, honey, and baked goods depending on the season.
• **175th St. Greenmarket**: Every Saturday (July – November) there’s a large farmers market on 175th St between Wadsworth and St. Nicholas.

Online grocery shopping:
• **Freshdirect**: Sells a wide range of frozen items, perishables, and non-perishables and the website is fairly user-friendly. Orders are delivered in cardboard boxes during a 2-hour time slot of your choosing. Delivery fees ~ $6 per order or ~ $120/year for unlimited deliveries, $30 minimum per order.
• **Google Express**: Google’s take on the grocery delivery business. Sells non-perishable food items as well as a bunch of other stuff. Orders are fulfilled from a list of nearby stores (including Costco if you’re looking to buy things in bulk). Delivery fees are ~$5 per order or free with $95/year membership. $15 minimum per order 4 hour delivery windows.
• **Amazon**
  o **Amazon.com**: You can buy a lot of non-perishable foods from Amazon and get free 2-day delivery with Amazon Prime Student membership.
  o **Amazon Prime Now**: You can buy nonperishables and some frozen items for same-day delivery. Free delivery with Amazon Prime membership for a 2-hour delivery window, ~$8 for 1-hour delivery.
  o **Amazon Fresh**: Amazon’s take on the fresh grocery delivery business. Sells frozen items, perishables and non-perishables. There is an additional membership fee, which is currently $299 per year. $50 minimum per order and 1-hour or 3-hour delivery windows.
• **Peapod**: Grocery service similar to Freshdirect or Amazon Fresh. Delivery fees ~$7 or ~$10 depending on order total. $60 minimum per order and 2-hour delivery windows.

*Information provided by classmates. (Thanks, guys!)*

~Connie Wang, P&S 2018, xw2382@columbia.edu
NYC Restaurants

Near Campus

- **Jou Jou**: One of the best (if slightly pricy) salad places in the area. You can get pretty comprehensive salads, a couple selections of Hale and Hearty soups, sandwiches, and some other pre-made meals.
- **Mike’s Bagels**: Best place for bagels in the area, hands down. They have an excellent selection of cream cheeses, deli meats, and overall breakfast and lunch sandwich material. Definitely a go-to for a quick and easy meal.
- **University Deli**: This place is not necessarily a must-visit, but it has the advantage of being open 24/7 for your convenience. They have sandwiches, hot and cold buffet, and general convenience store items like candy and snacks.
- **Tasty Deli**: Definitely one of the best (but not the healthiest) sandwich places in the area. Store sandwich recommendation – the Hot Mess.
- **Floridita Bakery**: I know it says bakery, but this place is well-known for its Cuban sandwiches. Your choice of meats on fresh-baked bread, all for the always appreciated low price of $3. Sandwiches aside, this place also has some good desserts to offer.
- **Heights Tavern**: Another new addition to the area – decent (but slightly pricy) group dinner/drinks and/or burger place.
- **Tung Thong Thai**: Really delicious curries, noodles, fried ice cream, and everything else on the menu. $9 (or less) lunch specials with lots of food (great for post-exam nomming).
- **Empire Szechuan**: Just your average, very reasonable Chinese food fix. Lunch specials are $7 for an entrée, rice, and one more thing (egg roll, soup, soda).
- **Go Go Gi**: A slight walk, but the only place in the Heights for Korean BBQ at this point in time. You can get boxed lunches, ramen, bibimbap, and other yummy specialties.
- **Las Palmas**: Really great authentic, cheap Mexican food. Also, you can’t really beat $7 for 3 tacos, a burrito or a massive huarache.
- **Malecon**: From your essential rice and beans to fried plantains, classic Malecon chicken, mofongo (shredded plantains +/- meat of choice), stews, and much more.
- **Marcha Cocina**: On Broadway, mmmmm tapas. And amazing brunch!
- **Margot**: They have $8 “lunch” specials, which are in reality not at all limited to lunch. Some claim that their chicken is even better than Malecon.
- **El Presidente**: You can get a half chicken with rice and beans for $7 during lunch. They also have rotating daily lunch specials.
- **Reme’s**: The best (and only) diner-style place in the area, 100% worth going to. Classic pancakes, burgers, breakfast, and meatloaf special.
- **Antika’s**: Really classy Italian restaurant that’s a short walk from campus. Their gourmet pizza is amazing – thin-crust, Italian-style deliciousness. They also have a selection of salads and pastas, and I hear their calamari is pretty top-notch.
- **Famiglia**: Not bad, for a chain. They have a variety of pizzas with a plethora of veggies and meats to choose from. With daily special pies, eggplant or chicken parm subs, and mouth-watering garlic knots, this is a great general pizza place to check out.
• **Como Pizzeria**: Generally considered one of the more authentic NYC pizza places around campus. It’s a tiny, hole-in-the-wall pizzeria that packs a flavorful, crispy, saucy surprise in their pies.

• **Carrot Top**: This is a delicious bakery that supplies everything from carrot cake to pastries, and more. If you’re looking for some birthday cakes, or just something to satisfy your sweet tooth, this is definitely a place to go. They also sell sandwiches and soups.

• **Strokos**: deli style American sandwiches, soups, salads, juices and desserts

• **Hammer Café**: Coffee and pastries

• **Coogan’s**: American pub food (and Wednesday night trivia!)

• **Dallas BBQ** (for frozen margaritas)

**Washington Heights/Inwood**

• Las Tapas

• Bistro 209

• Le Cheile

• Rain II (Thai) – best Thai that delivers to campus, tested and verified

• **Manolo Tapas**: They also have lunch specials on weekdays from 12-4 on soups, salads, and some of their mains for $12 or less.

• **Saggio**: These guys have a selection of delicious salads that make even the worst of us veggie-haters go green for a meal. Another great place to bring the family, or have a lovely date night. Definitely nominated as another class favorite.

• **Cachapas y Más**: They have everything from cachapas (sweet corn cakes with your choice of cheese and meats) to yoyos (sweet plantain sandwiches), and más.

• **Refried Beans**: They’ve got nachos, salads, mains, tacos, and burritos, and a vegetarian selection for the non-meat-inclined.

• **Happy World**: Another reasonable Chinese food place in the area. Some have proclaimed its superiority over Empire Szechuan.

• **Empanadas Monumental**

• **Tryon Public House**

• **Pick and Eat** - healthy option for delivery

**Harlem/Morningside**

• **The Park 112** (awesome for brunch)

• **Lido** (for when your parents are in town)

• **Orange 67** (best underground cocktail bar for when you want to feel like a philosophy grad student instead of a medical student)

• **Harlem Food Bar** (awesome burgers!!)

• **Harlem Shake**

• **Zoma** (Ethiopian!!!!)

Also if you like Ethiopian I suggest **Aritzia**...

• **The Ellington**

• **Harlem Tavern**

• **Bier** (for beer obvi)

• **Dinosaur BBQ**

• **Pisticci**
• Red Rooster  
• Max Soha (really good Italian, lots of fresh/homemade pastas)  
• Mel’s Burger Bar  
• Community Food & Juice

Around town
• Coffee Shops: If you dig the coffee shop vibe, head down Broadway to The Chipped Cup (@149th) or Taszo (@157th) for a place with a little more personality. Or venture up to Inwood to the Indian Road Café or Darling Cafe (~210th street) if you’re looking to break away from campus.
• Smorgasburg: Foodie heaven. Take the trip down to Brooklyn on a nice day and sample all things trendy - from Japanese tacos to Peruvian street corn to Vermont-made butternut squash donuts. (Brooklyn)  
• Levain: These cookies may weigh as much as a small child, but the trip to this popular tourist destination for a loaded chocolate chip cookie is a must. (Harlem, UWS)  
• Sushi/Sake: Unlimited sushi and sake in a two hour block. Enough said. Try Kumo Sushi (West Village) or New Ashiya (LES).  
• S’mac: Mix in everything from buffalo chicken to kalamata olives into your gourmet macaroni & cheese. (Various locations)  
• Jin Ramen: Right off the 125th 1-train station, enjoy a piping hot bowl of fancy Ramen noodles on the cheap. Or visit the new sister restaurant Kissaten Jin next door for an exotic Asian rice bowl. (Harlem)  
• Sweet Revenge: Cupcake & wine pairings. Perfect girl’s night out. (West Village)  
• Sylvia’s: Go on a Sunday and you’ll find the live gospel music is a perfect accompaniment to your plate of fried chicken & waffles. (Harlem)  
• Restaurant Week: If you haven’t been enjoying foie gras and lobster tail on the reg, Restaurant Week is your chance to justify going gourmet on a med student’s budget. $38 for dinner and $25 for lunch will get you a Prix Fixe 3-course meal at a long list of NYC restaurants which usually have four “$”s next to their names on Yelp. Usually runs for three weeks in February/March.
• The Grange Bar  
• Ayurveda Cafe (Amsterdam between 94th and 95th)  
• Candle Cafe (89th and Broadway)  
• Jacob’s Pickles (Amsterdam between 84th and 85th)  
• Regional (Broadway between 98th and 99th)  
• Gabriela’s (Columbus between 94th and 95th)  
• Cafe Lalo (83rd between Broadway and Amsterdam)  
• Calle Ocho (81st between Columbus and Central Park West)  
• Kefi  
• Momoya  
• Peacefood Cafe (vegetarian/vegan)  
• Polpette (83rd and Amsterdam, “The Best Meatballs in all Five Boroughs”)  
• Land thai

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~ Ashwini Dhokte, P&S 2017, aud2101@columbia.edu  
~ P&S Class of 2018
Basic Supply Shopping

- Rite-Aid - Between Broadway and St. Nicholas on 171st!
- Google Express (Target, Costco, Fairway, etc.): Same day shipping, $10 per month or $5 per order.
- Dollar store across from Rite Aid on St. Nicholas
- So many dollar stores (the bigger dollar store across from Popeyes is cheaper/BIGGER)
- **The easiest Target to get to is off of the 1 train at 40 W 225th St, Bronx, NY 10463
- Amazon Prime Now (similar to Google Express)

~P&S Class of 2018
Compiled and curated with love by your 2018 Dean’s Advisory Committee (DAC) Representatives!

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