STUDENT GUIDE

The *unofficial* guide to the first year of medical school – current students provide the scoop on P&S
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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.

You are joining P&S as we open our new state-of-the-art medical and graduate education building, the Roy and Diana Vagelos Education Center. The Vagelos Education Center is a 100,000-square-foot, 14-story glass tower that incorporates technologically advanced classrooms, collaboration spaces, and a modern simulation center to reflect how medicine is taught, learned, and practiced in the 21st century.

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.
Harold and Margaret Hatch Professor
Executive Vice President and Dean of the Faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine
Chief Executive, Columbia University Medical Center

YOUR OWN CURiosITy ABOUT MEDICINE Brought YOU HERE. NOW, LET THAT SAME CURiosITy GUIDE YOU TO DISCOVER ALL THAT COLUMBIA OFFERS.
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.
Samuel Rudin Professor of Psychiatry at CUMC
Senior Associate Dean for Student Affairs
Overview: Medical school is very different from college, other graduate schools, and full time jobs. However, it does have elements of all of these and it is important to know what is expected of you as you begin a lifelong journey to create your professional identity. Though this can seem very solemn and rather daunting, it is important to realize that this does not happen overnight – it is a continuous molding process that begins the moment you don your white coat for the first time. During your preclinical years this means respecting your fellow peers, faculty members, and especially the patients who share their experiences with you. Establishing a strong track record of accountability early in medical school will prepare you for the enhanced responsibility you will take on during your Major Clinical Year (MCY). Ultimately, it will be up to you to manage your schedule, so I highly recommend becoming accustomed to keeping a calendar. You’ll see quickly that between classes, assignments, small group activities, student clinic obligations, clerkships, and extracurriculars, it is difficult to keep track of everything without the help of a daily organization tool. Fortunately, all curricular activities can be easily synced to your personal electronic calendar through Oasis.

Attendance: As a general rule, lecture attendance is not required, though each course has its own set of required small group activities. A typical day in medical school consists of several hours of lecture in the mornings and afternoons followed by small group activities, depending on the course and week. If you find it difficult to “focus like a laser beam,” as Molecular Mechanisms (MM) Course Director Dr. Barasch recommends, for that much time consecutively, you will be happy to hear that almost every lecture is recorded and can be watched later at 2x speed. However, many students value the structure of scheduled class time and try to attend every class. Due to the large volume of information that we need to learn, it IS very easy to suddenly find yourself several lectures behind, so maintaining a balanced schedule is critical. Also, it is important to note that patient interviews are not included in the lecture recordings to maintain patient confidentiality, so attendance at those sessions is required. All in all, there are so many reasons to attend or not attend lecture and with a little tweaking you will find a system that works best for you. If you need to miss a required event for religious reasons or 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 days, medical school is not college and there are increasing demands to act in a professionally appropriate manner.

Your professors and faculty members will begin to treat you like peers and patients will trust you to respect their confidentiality and advocate for their rights. In your first year, that mostly means adhering to the honor code for all curricular pursuits, following HIPAA regulations, and attending all required small group sessions. While it may feel
Like no one will notice your absence from one or a few required sessions, they will absolutely take note if you handle absences proactively by communicating openly about potential conflicts. 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. 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](http://ps.columbia.edu/education/honor-code-policies/ps-guidelines-professionalism)

—Akshay Save, P&S 2019, avs2153@columbia.edu

**Pass/Fail**

If you’re a typical medical student at Columbia, you probably fit pretty well into this description: high achieving, goal-oriented, and just a little bit neurotic. You probably tried to learn as much as you possibly could in undergrad and made sure no detail slipped past you. However, medical school is different from undergrad and pass/fail is one of the methods of easing that transition. Unlike in undergrad, it is impossible to learn and retain every single detail, every tiny facet of information that you are taught, but that’s okay because you will be seeing everything again, and again, and again. Things you learn in Anatomy and Molecular Mechanisms (MM) you’ll see again in Body in Health & Disease (BHD), and this will all be reinforced during Major Clinical Year (MCY). Did we mention yet how many acronyms are used here?! Pass/Fail ensures that you don’t need to burden yourself with learning everything the first time, so relax a little and take some time to work in a free clinic, do some research, act in a play, join an interest group, spend time with family and friends, and explore NYC.

Pass/Fail is in effect for your first 1.5 years of medical school (i.e. all the way until MCY). For most courses, you have to get at least 2 standard deviations below the median grade or a 70 (65 for anatomy), whichever is lower. This is a pretty generous cutoff and most people end up doing just fine (and if you don’t do as well as you might have hoped, just read the next section). Additionally, the computer software we use to take exams allows professors to drop questions that most students get wrong. Finally, because you’re not being pitted against your classmates for a grade, this system creates a highly collaborative environment where people share their homemade study aids, form study groups, and do everything they can to make sure their classmates are turning into the best physicians they can be.

—Sean Gupta, P&S 2019, vpg2107@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 him/her. 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 Star Wars: The Force Awakens 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 match 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&S 2017, mah22492@columbia.edu

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Fourth-Year Academic Overview

The P&S curriculum is structured as three major segments: Fundamentals, Major Clinical Year, and Differentiation & Integration. Here is what your next four years will look like:

**Fundamentals Semester 1 (Aug – Dec 2016):** You begin with 3 classes: Molecular Mechanisms (MM), Clinical Gross Anatomy (CGA), and Foundations of Clinical Medicine I (FCM I). These are discussed in more detail below, but essentially you will be getting your feet wet by taking basic biochemistry and other foundational science courses, dissecting a cadaver, shadowing healthcare providers in clerkships, and discussing some of the anticipated ethical dilemmas of medicine.

**Fundamentals Semester 2 (Jan – Jun 2017):** You will have three classes again: The Body in Health and Disease (BHD), Psychiatric Medicine, and FCM II. This semester will arrive before you know it! In BHD, you will have quizzes 1-3 times per week (they are super short, relevant, team-based, and low stakes!) and mandatory small groups several times a week. This is the beginning of your systems-based education, during which you learn normal physiology, diseases, treatments, and work through clinical cases. In FCM, tutorials will be an added component separate from your weekly seminars. You will spend 3 hours a week in groups of 4 students with a preceptor who will teach you how to do a physical exam... on each other (and standardized patients)! 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. And as a special bonus, you will pick from a variety of Narrative Medicine seminars for the last 6 weeks of the semester: some of the options include weekly visits to the Met or MOMA, fiction writing instruction, or dance classes!

**Fundamentals Semester 3 (Aug – Dec 2017):** This semester continues the second half of BHD and FCM tutorials. You will hone your H&P (history and physical exam) skills in FCM, and complete the last few organ systems in BHD. Your 3rd course will be Evidence Based Medicine. 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 (MCY) (Jan – Dec 2018): The lecture hall, library, and classrooms will be replaced by time spent in the hospital, both at New York–Presbyterian and multiple 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, Primary Care) with the same group of classmates. This is when you take the time to figure out which specialty you want to pursue. Twice this year you will come 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 it is the true first step into the adventure of clinical medicine and therefore one of the most rewarding times in medical school.

The Boards (taking STEP 1!) (Jan – Feb 2019): 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 you finish the pre-clinical curriculum, you will study for and take the exam after MCY. Now with a ton of clinical experience to accompany your Fundamentals knowledge, you will have two months to study solely for the exam (and slip in a well-deserved vacation!).

Differentiation & Integration (March 2019 – May 2020): During D&I, you will do several “Sub-Internships,” which are essentially intensive MCY rotations in a specialty of your choosing, and other clinical electives (here or at an away institution) 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 physician!

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Joshua Stein, P&S 2018)

Molecular Mechanisms (MM) Overview

Molecular Mechanisms is a broad overview course with 5 blocks covering biochemistry, histology and pathology, embryology, pharmacology, and genetics. Everyone has their own unique path that brought them to medical school – some have PhDs in Biochemistry, others studied mathematics in college, and still others pursued a passion in the humanities. As a result, each student has had very different exposures to the fundamental science underlying clinical medicine. This course helps ease you into the rigors of medical school as well as establish a baseline understanding of key topics that will be built upon in later courses. Classes are often taught by leading researchers and clinicians in each field, so we have the opportunity to learn about cutting edge work. Lectures are recorded (except when real patients come to class to share their personal stories) and plenty of study materials circulate through the class, so students can experiment with study habits to figure out the best way to learn the material. Dr. Barasch, the course director, is an excellent resource for all things MM, ranging from explaining difficult topics to developing better study habits, and even makes rounds through the libraries in the days leading up to each exam to help answer any last minute questions! In the following sections, upperclassmen describe what they found to be the most useful studying resources for each block of MM.

~Akshay Save, P&S 2019, avs2153@columbia.edu
Block 1: Biomolecules

The first block of MM is Biomolecules and Cells. You will learn about basic cellular components and metabolic pathways, and use these ideas to understand a class of clinical diseases called 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.

Since 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 getting 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 exact 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!

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Connie Wang, P&S 2018)

Block 2: The Biochemistry and Microscopic Anatomy of Healthy and Sick Tissues

The Histology/Pathology block is the longest and most information packed block of MM. The two subjects are combined into one block because they go hand in hand — histology is the study of healthy tissues and pathology is the study of disease and diseased tissues. Though the amount of slides with pink and blue shapes you will be responsible for might seem daunting, you will luckily have great instructors like Dr. Lefkowitch and the two Drs. Spitalnik (they’re married! Awww P&S couples...) to ensure your success!

To this end, the course often repeats the most relevant information in both lectures and lab. In fact, Dr. Patrice Spitalnik shows the slides she really wants you to learn several times during her lectures. I found going to histo/path lab helpful since residents and attendings were there to answer questions and take us through an interactive pre-lab and post-lab review. Dr. Spitalnik also posts video modules reviewing the material. The gross pathology lab (where you look at real organs from deceased patients) is also a great chance to ask questions and start to understand how disease affects various organs.

Included in this block will be topics that you may be familiar with from college biology such as muscle and nerve structure and function (remember those sarcomeres from the MCAT?). Other topics are more loosely connected to pure histology/pathology, but still important in understanding how improper functioning of cell processes manifests as disease.
All in all, this is a long block and it is best not to fall behind! I would recommend keeping up with the synopses provided by Dr. Barasch and attending SSN review sessions as well as the end-of-block review sessions by Dr. Spitalnik and Dr. Lefkowitch. Some of you might not find staring at microscopic slides and diseased organs very enjoyable. But I recommend going along with the enthusiasm of the instructors and the humor of Dr. Lefkowitch (not a sixth sign of inflammation) since these subjects will build an important foundation for your clinical studies in BHD and beyond.

~Rabia Iqbal, P&S 2019, ri2176@cumc.columbia.edu

Block 3: Basic Developmental Biology: Anatomy, Biochemistry, and Molecular Mechanisms

Embryology is the last hurdle in a three week run of back-to-back exams (MM, then Anatomy, then MM again), and you may be feeling pretty burnt out. It’s okay – everyone is feeling that way. This is a good block to remind yourself that the Fundamentals curriculum is pass-fail. Try your hand at cramming, make up quirky mnemonics with your friends to remember the names of all the proteins, and don’t worry if you don’t get it all: key aspects of embryology will come back throughout the year. (Horseshoe kidneys! Ectopic thyroids!) Dr. Laufer, the director for the block, does an incredible job at organizing the information so that you can understand how all of the different lectures fit together. Finally, and this cannot be emphasized enough, make your origami embryo. Just do it.

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Jemma Benson, P&S 2018)

Block 4: Basic Pharmacology (Biochemistry of Medications)

Pharmacology is the second to last block in MM and in my opinion, one of the most helpful. You will learn the basics about how drugs are metabolized and how drugs and the body interact and affect each other, then apply this new knowledge to several important classes of drugs. This block is the first time you will be given a list of drugs to learn, so it will help you develop your methods for studying and memorizing drugs. These skills will serve you well in BHD and beyond. It is very important to learn these drugs in detail because you will see them not only on the exam, but also again in BHD and when you're in the hospital. Take the time to create an effective study method for memorizing drugs (paper or electronic flashcards, charts, or something else entirely) because doing so will prepare you well for the rest of your pre-clinical years. You won’t get Dr. Barasch's amazing synopses anymore, but you will get a “syllabus” for each lecture that's more or less the same thing – use these to help you learn the drugs you need to know and memorize important formulas. If you find yourself procrastinating heavily, this is a cram-able block, but why go through that when you can save yourself the massive headache and start memorizing drugs early? Finally, absolutely do the provided practice exams and questions, because you'll likely see many of these questions again on your real exam.

~Sean Gupta, P&S 2019, vpg2107@columbia.edu
Block 5: Basic Genetics

This is it - your last block of MM! You’ve come a long way since August when you didn’t know what DNA was (okay- you probably knew that). You’re ready to go home and party over break, I get it, but you’ve got to make it through one more block- Genetics. Luckily for you, this block is run by one of Columbia’s resident superhumans- Dr. Wendy Chung. At first, you will be afraid of her- she talks at lightning speed and fits an incredible amount of information into her lectures. You will also make the mistake of googling her resume (which is very impressive) and you will be intimidated. I promise it’ll be ok- she is actually a wonderful teacher who really cares that you get something out of the block, so feel free to talk to/email her if you feel lost or have questions (or just want to hear more about her amazing career as a researcher and physician). A word of advice- try not to get too far behind in this block (which is easy to do since the final block of anatomy is also happening), because although the lectures are very clear and well taught, the exam is challenging. Pay close attention in your small group sessions, because those concepts will be tested over and over on the exam and are really the big points to take home from the block. Finally, make sure to do the group video assignment- it’s free points. ALWAYS take the free points. I hope I didn’t make this block seem too scary- it’s really well organized and if you stay on top of it, you’ll be on break celebrating your pass in no time!

~Brian Reuland, P&S 2019, bdr2128@columbia.edu

Clinical Gross Anatomy (CGA)

Anatomy is an amazing course and one of the best things about your first semester of medical school. You get the responsibility and privilege of intimately exploring the human body by taking care of your very first “patient” – a human cadaver. Additionally, the class inundates you with information, which makes it a fantastic introduction to medical school and a great way to develop your study habits for the future. The class has three main components: one hour of lecture twice a week, a three-hour laboratory dissecting session either Tuesday or Thursday afternoon, and a non-dissecting lab session on Friday afternoon. The material is split up into three blocks over the course of the semester: 1) Chest, Back, and Limbs, 2) Head and Neck, and 3) Internal Organs and Pelvis.

The bulk of learning in this course happens in the laboratory dissections. You will be split up randomly into teams of four and assigned to one of the cadavers in the lab. You will be dissecting either Tuesday or Thursday and will be sharing your cadaver with 4 students that dissect on the alternate day. Although you are only doing half the dissections yourself you are still responsible for all the material of course, so many groups make it a point to meet once more during the week to go over the other session’s dissection. During the dissection, you’ll be accompanied by an iBook dissector created by our very own Dr. Bernd (the course director) and past P&S students, and there are always professors (surgeons and PhD anatomists) circulating around the lab waiting to help you out whenever you get stuck or can’t identify something.

Anatomy lectures are given by the phenomenal Dr. Bernd. Her lectures are always interesting and often entertaining, and her slides are extraordinarily clear, comprehensive, and organized. There are also clinical correlate lectures interspersed throughout the semester given by surgeons that are usually quite interesting, but are not directly tested on exams. Non-dissecting sessions get your lab group back together to go through clinical cases, look at radiology images, and study the skeleton and bones (they even have real human skulls for each group). Additionally, sometimes residents will come in and show you cool things like how to intubate someone or perform ultrasounds.
Like everything else, Anatomy is a pass/fail course. In order to pass the course you must pass both the individual written exams and the group lab practicals. The written exams have 50 multiple-choice questions each. These questions aren’t just “what is this body part?” – instead you will apply your knowledge about the anatomy to solve a problem, e.g. identifying the nerve that would be damaged in order to elicit a particular pathology. The anatomy practical exams are taken right after the written exams and involve rotating through 35 stations where you will have to identify a tagged anatomical structure on a cadaver, skeleton, or radiograph. However, you get to take your practical exams with your lab group of 4 – that’s right, group exams! This makes anatomy practicals extremely low-stress and even fun! Your grade for the course is based on a weighted average of each of the three blocks (for both the written and practical exams), which is nice because if you don’t do well on one, you can make it up with the other two, and if you do well on the first two, you can ease off a little on the third.

Anatomy can be overwhelming because of the sheer volume of material, but there are a lot of resources to help get you through it. First, understand that anatomy isn’t just about discrete memorization – it’s about learning relationships between structures, which can make organizing and recalling the information a lot easier. Second, use SSN’s plethora of study aids to help you, including their review sessions, Blackcloud notes, Eugene charts, and high-yield info sheets. The most important thing SSN offers are practice practical exams in the days preceding the real exams, which help get you comfortable with the testing environment and develop your ability to work with your team. Additionally, some of the most helpful anatomy professors (shout out to Dr. Erlich and Dr. Carney) hold lab review sessions every Friday afternoon to go over the dissections from the previous week. Finally, many people make use of external resources, such as an anatomy atlas (Netter’s is a popular one), anatomy flashcards (also Netter’s), the Essential Anatomy iOS/OSX app, and University of Michigan practice questions (you’ll learn about these). You’ll also have 24/7 access to the anatomy lab, so you can review structures in the cadavers themselves whenever you need to. There’s a lot to learn, but don’t worry – you’re going to be just fine!

~ Sean Gupta, P&S 2019, vpg2107@columba.edu

Foundations of Clinical Medicine (FCM)

Foundations of Clinical Medicine (FCM) focuses on the art of medicine more than the science. During the first semester, you will have an hour-long lecture once a week that is followed by a 1-2 hour discussion seminar. In these lectures you will learn about the features of an effective patient interview, cultural competency, and ethical concerns in medicine. Some weeks a patient will come into the class to discuss his or her experience with illness 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. Seminar groups include approximately 14 students with a faculty preceptor, all of whom you will grow close with as you continue meeting throughout the entirety of medical school. Every so often you will 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 2-6 hour clerkship, where you will get to shadow a healthcare provider and observe the patient-provider relationship.

In the second semester, FCM shifts its focus and is comprised of two components: FCM Seminars and FCM Tutorials. In FCM Seminars, you will continue to attend weekly hour-long lectures followed by 1-2 hours of small group discussion. Now you will explore health systems and policy (called the SLIM curriculum) and health promotion. Towards the end of the semester, you will enroll in a Narrative Medicine seminar, which will replace the weekly lecture and small group. You can choose from classes that discuss the philosophy of death, medicine in movies, meditation,
fiction writing, graphic novels, photography, observing artwork at the 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 scientific and humanistic aspects of medicine, and it allows us to prepare for and reflect upon our future careers as physicians.

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Hallie Steinfeld, P&S 2018)

The Body in Health and Disease (BHD) Overview:

Body in Health and Disease (BHD) comprises the bulk of your pre-clinical curriculum and is essentially the reason we all went to medical school in the first place. The course runs from spring semester of the first year through the fall semester of second year and covers organ systems in blocks (immunology, cardiology, pulmonology, etc.). You’ll get an introduction to each of the BHD blocks in the sections that follow. The course integrates the normal physiology of an organ system (how it’s supposed to work) with the pathophysiology (what happens when it doesn’t work) and treatment options. The information you learn here will be very important for the Major Clinical Year, Step 1, and for your future career, so you want to learn as much as you can. Fortunately, the courses are designed to build on each other so that you see the most important concepts again and again.

The schedule for BHD is nice and predictable: each day you’ll come for two or three 50-minute lectures taught by a leading clinician or researcher in the field you’re learning about. On days where you have only two lectures, you’ll have a small group session where you will either go through a case with a clinician preceptor, look at histology slides, or actually feel healthy and diseased organs in the gross pathology lab. Once or twice a week this small group session will have a Team-Based Learning (TBL) format, which begins with a graded quiz. You take an individual quiz first, then you take the same quiz again in your 6-7 person group. Please don’t stress about these quizzes; each one counts for 2-3% of your total grade, so they’re really more for to help you check your understanding of the material than anything. That being said, you’ll get the most out of these sessions if you prepare in advance, and your group will thank you for it! Each block culminates in a final exam (2-3 hours long); the questions for the exam are multiple choice and are written in the style of the National Board of Medical Examiners (the USMLE folks), which is good practice Step 1.

There are a ton of resources available for you in BHD. In addition to the resources you’re already familiar with from MM and anatomy (lecture slides, Eugene charts, SSN sheets, Karinja notes, etc.), each block will have its own recommended textbooks and websites listed on the syllabus. Dr. Garrett, the course director, will send out practice questions and need-to-know drugs at the beginning of each block. Pro tip: you definitely don’t need to buy any textbooks, but one that students from previous years have found helpful is Costanzo’s Physiology, because it applies to most if not all of the blocks.

BHD is a great course where you will work really hard but learn a ton. Remember, this is information you will use as a physician, so stay strong and stay motivated. On the other hand though, it’s important to remember that you don’t have to excel in every block to become a great physician. Find what you love, do your best, and good luck!

~Brian Reuland, P&S 2019, bdr2128@columbia.edu
Block 1: Immunology

BHD is here at last. Immunology is the first block in BHD and a great chance to fine-tune your habits and get used to BHD-style learning. Dr. Canfield, the course director, takes 3 weeks to cover the basics of immunology as well as various clinical applications (allergies, autoimmunity, tumor immunology, etc.). You finally get to start working with clinician preceptors in small groups and TBL sessions, which meet roughly once a week to thoroughly cover more dense clinical scenarios. Though not required, it’s a good idea to do the assigned pre-block reading for immunology, especially if you’ve never taken any immuno before. This class is run concurrently with Psychiatry (a semester-long course we’ll talk more about later) and Microbiology & Infectious Diseases (another BHD block), which can feel overwhelming at times. Obviously everyone has a different strategy for balancing their work, so take the time to reflect on what works best for you. Test new strategies, work with friends, and above all try to enjoy yourself!

~Andrew Garton, P&S 2019, andrew.garton@columbia.edu

Blocks 2 and 3: Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (MID)

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. The amazing resources they provide such as online modules, interactive learning sessions, and quizzes will give you a FUN (yes, you heard me) way to learn the material. In this block you’ll learn all about bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites (yuck), and the infectious diseases these organisms cause. Get ready to learn A LOT of diseases and drugs! But rest assured that this block is very 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 and you might become a hypochondriac for a while…or forever). Of note is that this is the first block where you start to see USMLE-style exam 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 these blocks, DO NOT WAIT TO CRAM!!! There is a ton of information to learn and often memorize (many bugs, 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 materials contain most of what you need to know, and there are online modules that will really help to hit home some points. Some classmates used Sketchy Micro (now called Sketchy Medical), which is an online resource that has saved many a medical student. Another good resource is the book Clinical Microbiology Made Ridiculously Simple, and some students used First Aid (USMLE Prep Book) to study. I studied by making my own notes for Dr. Gordon’s flipped classroom videos and making charts of all of the diseases (organized by type) and medications with important information about each – that’s really the way to go. Just remember to ENJOY! This one’s a fun one. Also prepare yourself for the videos and photos of all of the intestinal worms...

~Neda Bionghi, P&S 2019, nb2737@columbia.edu
Block 4: Cardiology

The cardiology block provides a comprehensive introduction to basic cardiovascular physiology and disease processes as well as diagnosis and treatment. Understanding the anatomy of the entire cardiovascular system — from blood vessels to ventricles — is incredibly important when it comes to learning the pathophysiology later in the block. Give yourself time to master the various equations (cardiac output, blood pressure, Law of Laplace, etc.) and their underlying physiologic principles, as this will enable you to reason through the major disease processes without having to memorize every last detail. This block involves a lot more thinking and understanding than many of the blocks that have come before it when memorizing could pull you through. Many of you will find this to be a good thing as long as you start locking in the normal physiology of the cardiovascular system early in the block! You will also be asked, especially in small groups and on the exam, to integrate information from various sources, including the physical exam, auscultation, EKG, blood labs, imaging studies, etc. into a cohesive diagnosis. Therefore, try to predict what each cardiovascular disease will “look like” from each of these perspectives (i.e. Can you hear an S3 gallop? What should the EKG show?). Most of our class found two resources to be very helpful in this regard: Lilly’s Pathophysiology of Heart Disease and Dubin’s Rapid Interpretation of EKG’s. I would highly recommend both. Lastly, there are a TON of drugs to know for this block and you will be expected to not only understand their mechanisms of action and indications but also their numerous side effects. Don’t wait until the last minute to study the drugs! A solid understanding of the major themes from this block will be a huge help as you progress further through BHD and eventually in MCY.

~Jonah Zuflacht, P&S 2017, jpz2109@cumc.columbia.edu

Block 5: Pulmonology

Pulmonology is a block led by Dr. Bulman and Dr. Atkeson. Most of our classmates agree that these lectures were a breath of fresh air (HAI!) as the material is laid out in a very methodical way. The block starts with the course directors themselves walking through the physiology of pulmonology, and since the block is short (2 weeks) it is really important to keep up with these first few lectures! You jump right into the pathophysiology and the difference between sick lungs and healthy lungs is made clear immediately. I think that my classmates who did well on the block exam had an understanding of the different pathological appearances of diseased lungs both on gross and histological levels as well as knowing the typical buzzwords that go along with each type of disease. Also, as there are relatively few new drugs to learn in this block, be sure to know them cold! Rest assured that if you keep up that you’ll be able to breathe easy (ZING!) during post exam shenanigans. Good luck!

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

Block 6: Hematology

The Hematology block is the shortest in BHD I with only 5 days of lecture. The course material focuses on blood cell disorders including anemia, bleeding disorders, and clotting disorders. The course director, Dr. Eisenberger, gives about half of the lectures and does a solid job. He’s quite a funny one. Of importance in the Hematology block is, of course, the clotting cascade. You learned it before in Molecular Mechanisms and likely forgot it. However, I think that it is definitely easier to learn the second time. You will also have seen many of the medications in this block previously, so learning the drugs will not be as much of a challenge. In addition, blood transfusions are covered in one lecture towards the end of the block, and this material is emphasized on the exam.
The test for Hematology is one that usually has a very low class average score. In the past, students have not done as well for a variety of reasons. First off, the test is written to be quite difficult, and many of the questions focus on fine details from lecture. Second, the test is only an hour and a half long and about 40 questions, so missing each question makes more of a difference on this test than on others. Of course, very few students will fail any given exam (this one included) and if you do, you will have the support you need to retake it successfully the next time. I recommend doing the practice questions that Dr. Garrett sends out for this and all other exams. You may see very similar questions on the test.

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

Block 7: Renal

Get excited — Renal is the best block of BHD!! For one thing, Dr. Barasch makes a reappearance. Renal rounds – where you shadow a nephrologist for a morning or afternoon – are a great opportunity to apply what you are learning in the classroom and to get a taste of what MCY will be all about. The course is very well organized and the faculty are great. Plus, it’s the kidney!

That being said, it is important to know how to maximize your learning in this block. It is packed with information and new concepts, and it is easy to go astray. Small group sessions are extremely important and held almost every day this block, and you should find a small group leader that you click with. It makes a big difference. Come prepared and be vocal in these sessions to get the most out of them. Don’t skip out on pathology lab, which is especially important during this block. Likewise, go to the scholarly topics sessions as they turn out to be really great review for the exam. Participate as much as you can. The professors are quite receptive to this and it will help you develop skills to reason through complicated situations.

~Elizabeth Balough, P&S 2017, emb2162@columbia.edu

Block 8: Endocrine

This is the last block of the semester and it is a truly wonderful one. After the tough physiology-heavy renal block, Endocrine will have a bit slower pace. There are many mechanisms and feedback systems you’ll need to learn, though, so stay on top of lecture material. The lecturers are all wonderful and clear, but Costanzo’s physiology is a nice way to reinforce what you learned. Also, go to small group!!! You will work through cases with your preceptor, which you should read beforehand to stay prepared, and these will encompass a lot of different concepts from recent lectures.

Depending on the new SSN leadership, you may or may not have an SSN review session for this block because first years (that’s you!) will be taking over. Either way, past years’ review sheets are great and an excellent review of each lecture. Another heads up, you will feel pretty burnt out by this time and will have exams in tutorials and psychiatric medicine right before this, but it is important to stay on top of your work. I think this is best done by going to all of the small group sessions and engaging with your preceptor as much as possible.

Alex Bercow, P&S 2017, ab3453@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 weekly 1 hour lecture and 2-3 hour small group. The lectures have videos of patients that are removed from lecture recordings for 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. These clips are used on exams with free-response questions, so exams are much less stressful if you see the clips beforehand. If you have to miss a class for any reason, Dr. Cutler is pretty good about setting up a time for you to go watch the videos in her office. In addition to lectures, a preceptor (usually a psychiatry resident or fellow) leads each small group, and each group has a different weekly schedule (all meet Tuesdays after lecture, but each group has a different activity). 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 on patient interviews. This is one of the first “real-patient” (i.e. not standardized patient) experiences you will get! They are low-pressure and really help solidify class concepts. There are also two write-ups based on these interviews, and a variety of other activities (such as discussions with family members of patients, peer counselors, a visit to the Living Museum at Creedmoor, etc.).

Just FYI- the course is a bit front-loaded, with two lectures per week (Tuesday and Thursday) for the first 5 or so weeks and a midterm in early February that comes right in the middle of the two MID exams. It really is manageable, but you will thank yourself later for going to lecture and not having to learn all of psych in one weekend (protip: trust her when she says she wants you to know the epidemiology/prevalence of different psych disorders!). After the midterm, there are no longer Thursday lectures and you do not have another written exam until the end of the semester. The final exam has multiple-choice questions on the material from the second half of the semester, and an in-class 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 level of detail you should know. Enjoy this super well-organized course, and good luck!

~Allie Levin, P&S 2019, apl2124@columbia.edu (adapted from Dana Neugut, P&S 2018)
STUDYING

Textbooks

You’ll likely find you don’t need any textbooks to survive your first semester. For both Anatomy and Molecular Mechanisms, almost all exam questions are based on lecture slides. Students from the past and your fellow classmates will also provide plenty of extra resources to summarize and break down information, often through your class Facebook group. Even if you were an avid textbook reader before, these courses move quickly and you really won’t have time to get lost in paragraphs of details. If you do need supplemental resources, it may be 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 Anatomy, Dr. Bernd’s slides are comprehensive, clear, and amazing. You will understand the content just based on slides even if you don’t attend or watch the lectures. I personally chose to attend anatomy lectures because they offered one more pass through the material. If you want supplementary materials, Netter’s flashcards are great. You can purchase them on Amazon, from an upperclassman on the P&S Flea Market, or you can get them for free by joining the AMA - you’ll get more info on this option at the beginning of school. Don’t forget to study the iPad dissector and non-dissecting session worksheets for exams! For Molecular Mechanisms, I predominately relied on lecture slides, problem sets, Dr. Barasch’s synopses, small group materials, and SSN for exam prep. I do not recommend buying any books. Some students do use the course’s recommended textbook, Molecular Biology of the Cell. Dr. Barasch usually scans the pages needed and uploads them onto Courseworks.

You might want to consider buying a copy of First Aid for USMLE Step 1 especially once you get to the organ system blocks in BHD. You probably won’t use it much during the first semester, so it may be worth waiting until 2017 to buy the new version that comes out in January. In the first semester, you can always find electronic versions of the book to look things up.

Check out the “Academic Resources” Appendix and “Resource Guide” that will be emailed to you for our recommendations for every block, and don’t be afraid to try out new things as you determine what works best for you! If you do want to buy textbooks, remember that older students are selling a lot of them at the Used Book Sale in the beginning of the semester for $5-$40. You can use all the money you saved on mobile apps! My class found Essential Anatomy (a virtual dissectible body), Anki (spaced repetition flashcards), and Notability (note-taking app) especially helpful.

~Merry Ruan, P&S2019, zr2187@columbia.edu

Library/Study Spaces

Open 24/7, you really can’t go wrong with the various study spaces in Hammer. There is no restriction on carrying in food and drink except in the brand new Knowledge Center. The KC is a traditional library space with modern vibes, filled with bookshelves, computers, and printers in addition to a mix of tables for individual or group studying. Next to the KC on the 1st floor of Hammer is a silent study space with large tables, and another non-silent space with more computers, printers, and tables. If you go up one floor, there is a large computer lab, while one floor down, you find the Fishbowl, which is perfect for more social studying, and the Shark Tank,
which is super silent. If you have a group project or want access to white boards for studying with friends, there are a handful of small group study rooms on level LL1 which can be reserved by searching “Augustus Long Library room reservation” on Google. Of course, there are many, many classrooms throughout the building, all open 24/7, which can be reserved in advance if you’d like. Pro tip - there are vending machines on the 3rd floor which you’ll want to check out when the 1st floor cafe is closed. You can literally always find somewhere to study in Hammer. Hammer Library is the best!

Sometimes, you’re wearing PJs, and don’t feel like leaving Bard (especially if you already live there). In that case, the 11th floor is a great group study location, in addition to the first floor lounge and Recovery Room next to it. After dinnertime, the tables in the Ballroom (a floor below the lobby) are fair game for studying use as well.

Other times you just want to get out of CUMC. Well, you can always go to the Morningside campus via the free Columbia shuttle or the 1 train (to 116th St). Butler Library tends to be a favorite, with its “real collegiate library” feel. Food isn’t really allowed, but this way you’re forced to get out of the library and grab food at one of the amazing eateries there. Some people visit the Teacher’s College, Business School, or Law School libraries on the Morningside campus as well. There’s a lot to explore between all the many schools within the university (plus Barnard and other affiliated schools)!

If you’re trying to get out of Columbia University as a whole, you can work at pretty much any Starbucks or Pret a Manger in the city (there are so many, especially once you hit Midtown); no restrictions on food or drink at those places! If you’re a café-type of person, the Chipped Cup on Broadway and 148th is a not-too-far-away option with wifi, and the Hungarian Pastry Shop down near the Morningside campus is a great one. A personal favorite study space of mine is the New York Public Library down by Bryant Park (food/drink not allowed). We also have access to some of the NYU libraries if you prefer working downtown – something to look into!

Last but not least, starting this July we will have a brand new set of study and hangout spaces in the new P&S building on Haven! We’re all very excited to see what kinds of additional options this will add for medical students. I have a feeling a lot of the studying that currently takes place in Hammer might move over to the new building… TBD!

~Nikita Consul, P&S 2017, nc2582@columbia.edu (updates from Tessa Kaplan, P&S 2019, tmk2136@columbia.edu)
STUDENT LIFE
Wellness

The Center for Student Wellness (CSW) has one primary purpose: to make your time at CUMC as personally and professionally rewarding as possible. You will soon know and love Jane Bogart, the director of CSW and one of the medical students’ greatest allies/substitute mothers. Jane and her assistants Justin Laird and Meagan Costello provide scheduled one-on-one appointments with students to talk about problems or stressors, no matter how small or specific. They are confidential, non-judgmental, and extremely knowledgeable (Jane and Justin have PhDs and Jane is a nationally recognized “sexpert” with a book called Sexploration). Their offices are located on the first floor of Bard Hall and are the go-to place to pick up free snacks, little goodies (pens, post-its, crayons) or restock on condoms, lube, and other safe sex supplies.

Outside of counseling, the CSW runs a host of other projects to improve your mental wellbeing. There are weekly yoga and pilates classes (taught by professional instructors), mindfulness-meditation sessions, acupuncture services, and “wellness activities” such as pet therapy, plant-potting, and crafternoons. Apart from Jane, Justin, and Meagan, each P&S class elects four wellness representatives (one female, one male, one from the MD/PhD program, and one from Bassett) to the Class Council who are dedicated to improving the wellbeing of their classmates across their entire time at P&S. These representatives will host movie nights, organize class trips, and occasionally surprise the class with free bagels/coffee before exams. Seek them out if you have complaints or problems that you want drawn to the administration’s attention. If you are interested in mental health or want to promote the wellbeing of your fellow students, you should strongly consider applying to serve as a wellness representative for the P&S class of 2020!

~Lara Boyle, P&S MD/PhD, lm2265@columbia.edu
Advisory Dean Program

Did someone ask for a mentor? The advisory dean (AD) program is an incredible and unique part of the P&S experience. Everyone is assigned their own AD - you will have the same dean from your first day on campus until graduation. The program itself consists of regular lunches (free food hollaa) with your AD and advisory group. These are a nice way to de-stress with friends and get to know different people within your class. Most AD lunch meetings feature a different topic and/or special guest, helping to increase your exposure to different fields/ideas (e.g. specialties like palliative care or infectious diseases but also other cool things like meditation, tips on creating a CV, and summer opportunities). Above all that, your AD serves as your mentor and supporter. When you have a question or a problem, you will always have someone at P&S to talk to, in addition to your professors and administrators.

~Andrew Garton, P&S 2019, andrew.garton@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 the Black Building on 168th 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, including finding mentors, extending your network, or creating a home away from home with an alumnus. There are also various alumni events including alumni council dinners at the Faculty Club and specialty lunches throughout the year for which volunteers are needed! Getting to know the office may put your name on the top of that list.

~JJ Diah, P&S 2019, jd2754@cumc.columbia.edu

Student Success Network (SSN)

SSN is awesome! The transition to medical school, especially learning how to handle the vast amount of information we’re given, can be difficult for any first year student. SSN is here to make sure that everyone feels supported and can even have some fun along the way. One of the biggest ways they do this is through high-yield, student-led review sessions a few days prior to each exam; for longer units, they sometimes hold an extra session midway through the block. During these reviews, SSN teachers present super condensed and lively versions of all lectures covered on the exam, and they discuss the most important facts, difficult concepts, fun memorization tricks, and clinical correlates you should know. Single page review sheets for each lecture and practice questions are also made available through CourseWorks. During the fall, reviews are run by second years (who still have first year courses fresh in their mind!) and in the spring, fourth years take over with their vast clinical experience. I highly recommend going to at least the first review session just to see what it’s like, meet some of the awesome second year teachers, and of course, get free candy. If you’re looking for a little extra support, SSN also provides free one-on-one tutoring with their wonderful tutors, and you are welcome to contact them any time. You can utilize SSN however you’d like - go to reviews in person, watch recorded sessions at a later time while curled up in bed, get more individualized help, or just read the review sheets for some last-minute cramming. SSN is always here to remind you that you are not alone in your studies, and that together we can conquer this thing called medical school!

~Nicole Kelly, P&S 2019, nek2124@columbia.edu
CLINICAL OPPORTUNITIES

Columbia-Harlem Homeless Medical Partnership (CHHMP)

The first month of medical school can be a whirlwind, but one important decision you can make during this time is to join a student-run clinic. The clinics all have different personalities, structures and expectations as you’ll soon learn at the joint-clinic info session early in the fall. Since CHHMP recruits a small, stable core group, membership involves a greater time commitment compared to some other clinic opportunities. CHHMPers will argue that these hours translate into one of the most educational and rewarding experiences to be had during medical school.

Following a longitudinal model of care, students commit for their entire four (or more) years at P&S, enabling them to get to know their patients, mentors, and interdisciplinary CHHMP family well. Each preclinical student assumes a leadership role (finance, outreach, partnerships, etc.) to maintain clinic operations. As a first-year, you will learn to collect extensive histories, perform physical exams, and design medical plans under the extremely supportive guidance of upperclassmen. Some individuals turn solely to CHHMP for their ongoing primary care needs, which provides an opportunity to form deep and meaningful relationships with “your” patients. Upon entering clinical rotations, you’ll transition into being teachers and mentors for incoming preclinical students and continue to ensure quality care for clinic patients.

CHHMP operates every Tuesday evening from the basement of St. Mary’s Episcopal Church on 126th Street and Old Broadway. By collaborating with counterparts from other CUMC schools, we are able to offer basic medical services along with dental care, occupational therapy, psychiatric support, diabetes education, and social resources to the homeless and uninsured.

Students who work at CHHMP have a unique and truly hands-on opportunity to work with underserved patients each week, gain practical knowledge about running a medical clinic, and become part of a uniquely interdisciplinary and tightly knit P&S family. Join us!

Contact: chhmpartnership@gmail.com. Website: chhmp.org
Nina Yoh, P&S 2019, ny2219@columbia.edu & The CHHMP Class of 2019

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.

~Andrew Garton, P&S 2019, andrew.garton@columbia.edu

**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 (such as film screenings and speaker series), physician and student 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 School, the HRI Asylum Clinic links volunteer physicians and students to individuals seeking asylum in the United States. Volunteers provide pro bono medical evaluations that become a vital piece of the asylum seeker’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. Being a part of these cases is a very powerful and interesting experience, and allows one to see one of the many unique ways that a physician can make a difference outside of the hospital or clinic. This particular student-run clinic experience is pretty unique to P&S and I highly recommend you sign up for a training session so you have the option to volunteer for cases when you have time!


~Rashmi Jain, P&S 2019, rj2455@columbia.edu

**Q-Clinic**

The Q-Clinic is P&S’s newest student-run free clinic, dedicated to serving homeless lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) youth. We are the first student-run free clinic in New York City to serve this demographic.

While LGBTQI youths are at an especially high risk for a variety of medical and psychiatric problems, studies have shown that they are hesitant to seek healthcare out of fear of discrimination. Providers themselves often don’t feel prepared or trained to address the specific needs of this group, and many medical programs lack dedicated time to addressing specific LGB and transgender health issues. Our mission is to provide free, LGBTQI-friendly medical care to this drastically underserved and vulnerable population, while teaching future doctors to practice medicine in a humanistic and sensitive way.
At Q-Clinic, students are trained in the specific health needs of the LGBTQI population. Under the supervision of attending physicians Dr. James Spears and Dr. Marcia Wong, students at the preclinical and clinical stages of medical education work in pairs to take histories, perform physical exams, and generate assessments and treatment plans for their patients, including prescriptions and referrals. Q-Clinic also takes an active interest in promoting awareness of LGBTQI issues on campus, in activities and panels, and in conducting sensitive research with this population.

Clinic operates Wednesday evenings in downtown Manhattan out of the Metropolitan Community Church of New York.
~ Aaron Kaplan, P&S 2019, adk2137@columbia.edu

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

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, 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?! These are some of the locations P&S students have flown to with the transplant team to procure donor organs. Even if you don’t get the full jet experience, the actual transplant procurement is absolutely magical. It’s an opportunity to learn some surgical skills, apply your anatomy studies, and bring back an organ to save someone’s life. When the transplant team brings you, it’s not just to watch - they have a limited number of spots, so when they bring a medical student you are expected to assist in the surgery (they’ll teach you how!). The chance to go on a transplant run and assist in a surgery is an absolutely incredible experience.

~Rashmi Jain, P&S 2019, rj2455@columbia.edu
Shadowing in General

So you have some exposure to _________ (fill in the blank here with your pre-med school research area: neuro/ophtho/derm/psych/ENT/obgyn), but is that what you actually want to do for FOREVER? Good news is, you don’t have to decide for a while, and I am just freaking you out. Better news is that the interest groups are a good way to continue exploring fields you already may be somewhat familiar with – AND/OR – use their events and shadowing opportunities as a way to check out new specialties. Shadowing through these groups is super easy - most groups have spreadsheets with sign-up slots on them, and all you have to do is show up. If you’re looking to shadow someone more specific, all you have to do is send them an email! They’ll likely refer you to their secretary to set something up, and they may be a little less flexible than a spreadsheet, but that’s always an option!

~Andrew Garton, P&S 2019, andrew.garton@columbia.edu

P&S CLUB

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, student run clinics, 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 medical school prom and new student orientation, training club leaders, communicating with clubs, and more.

During the first few weeks at P&S, you will sign up for any and all groups that pique your interest, from Bard Hard Players to the rugby team – or maybe the CUMC Symphony Orchestra and the Emergency Medicine Interest group are your jam. The amazing thing about the P&S Club is that there is something for everyone – and if not, you have the ability to start it.

These clubs are a wonderful way to enrich your life during medical school, meet other students, 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 also in the other graduate schools sharing our CUMC campus!

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Jessica Buesing, 2018)

Class Council

You should join Class Council! As a member, you get to represent your class and provide direct input to an administration that loves working with us. Whether you’re passionate about the medical school curriculum, you want to work on housing issues, or you like putting together social events, Class Council is a great way to get involved in the nuts and bolts of our school. You’ll be able to work directly with our Deans to make sure P&S is continually improving. And because
of the diversity of roles within the council, time commitment can be as little or as much as you want. See below for a list of available positions, and please contact us if we can help answer any questions!

The list of positions includes: President (1), Vice President (1), Admissions Representative (1), Addition Illness: Management Solutions Representative (2), Alumni Association Representative (2), Association of American Medical Colleges Representative (1), Curriculum Representative (3), Dean’s Advisory Committee Representative (3), Eco Representative (1), Ethics Representative (1), Financial Aid Representative (2), Housing Representative (2), P&S Club Representative (2), Student Health Services Representative (1), Webmaster (1), Wellness Committee Representative (4), Yearbook Representative (2).

~Cyrus Attia (caa2156) and Delia O’Shea (dmo2131), P&S Class of 2019

P-SOOP

P-SOOP (P&S Outdoor Orientation Program) is an optional pre-Orientation program where you get to spend 3 awesome days hiking and camping in the Catskill Mountains with some of your fellow classmates. You will be led by a small group of fearless 2019 students who are psyched to hang out with you before you even get to campus. There are different difficulty levels for the hiking trips, so any skill level is welcome - you don't need any prior experience! It's a great opportunity to make some friends and have some familiar faces before coming into Orientation, and to adventure in the surrounding area and appreciate some beautiful wilderness before you start to explore NYC! You'll be hearing from me this summer with information to sign up if you're interested, but feel free to check out our website (http://tinyurl.com/psoopinfo) or email me if you have any questions!

~Delia O’Shea, P&S 2019, dmo2131@columbia.edu

Big Sibs Program

Every incoming student is matched with an upperclassman who will serve as a Big Sib, and this will place you into a Big Sib Family with classmates and upperclassmen from every year. We’ll kick off the semester with a rooftop event 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 to support you throughout your first year (and beyond!) 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!

~Neda Bionghi, P&S 2019, nb2737@columbia.edu (adapted from Emily Webster, 2018)

Bard Hall Players

Bard Hall Players is thrilled to celebrate its 50th anniversary this fall! With a student body capable of producing anything from Urinetown to Shakespeare, BHP has expanded into the most active theater group of any medical school in country! Each year we put on three high quality shows, drawing our cast and crew from all schools in the CUMC community. BHP’s guiding principle is to provide an outlet for students to produce and perform on stage when they otherwise not have those opportunities. Participating in BHP show is a surefire way to make friends with your peers in CDM, Nursing, PT, Mailman, and P&S, all while working together to create a production worthy of being “off-Broadway”!
A society run by students, for students - we have a spot for you no matter how much or how little experience you have in theater. Taking on a lead role can be a lot of fun, but we welcome those of you who would rather be in the ensemble, dance, play in the pit, or work behind the scenes in set design or tech.

Bard Hall Players is as much of a time commitment as you make it. The Pass/Fail system here at P&S gives you the flexibility to become super involved in one show and step back for the next as you see fit. If you would rather get bedazzled in 80s formalwear for The Wedding Singer than study CD8 T-Cell Activation…you just might find a couple of us joining you. And cramming for the exam in the library later that night. So grab your audition slot and join our wonderful Bard Hall Players family!

~Sean Marinelli, P&S 2019, sm4091@cumc.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 completely student-run group that draws new and experienced dancers from all the various schools of CUMC. Emphasis should be placed on new – many of the people who join Dance Haven had never danced before coming to CUMC. Dance Haven performs many different styles of dance, including hip hop, jazz, Bollywood, modern/contemporary, and tap. Don’t see your style listed here? No worries, just sign up to choreograph your own piece! You can participate in as few or as many dances as you want each semester. Dance Haven puts on a showcase in the fall and performs at various Coffeehouse events in the spring. It’s a great way to stay active, while meeting new people from the different schools of CUMC!

~Chung-Jen Chen, P&S 2019, czc2105@columbia.edu

CoffeeHouse

Do you have a hidden talent, or perhaps love watching classmates show their talents? CoffeeHouse is perhaps the largest, pan-CUMC event at P&S. It’s an open mic night held once a month, when students from all the different health schools (P&S, Dental, Public Health, OT, PT, graduate, etc.) gather over free beer and pizza to watch their talented classmates perform. Acts include acoustic covers, original music, stand-up comedy, dance performances and way more! The night eventually progresses into a giant dance party, where cover bands from different
schools play for the crowd. There's really nothing else like CoffeeHouse! You’ll make new friends from other schools, get inspired by wonderful talent, and perhaps share some of your own hidden talents too! Medicine’s an inter-disciplinary, team-based field, and CoffeeHouse certainly embodies this community spirit!

~Alex Vu, P&S 2019, ahv2114@cumc.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 departments, we have monthly “Musical Mondays” concerts, bi-annual orchestra concerts, and monthly Artreach concerts at local hospitals. We also provide students access to our three 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) sang Christmas carols around campus. Lastly, MG has set up monthly performances at Milstein Hospital for patients in the Rehabilitation Unit. If you love playing an instrument, singing, monologuing, dancing, or telling stories, it's a great opportunity to interact with patients in a different capacity and give them a nice break from the hospital. We look forward to having all you musicians join us!

~Deborah Boyett, P&S 2019, dmb2245@columbia.edu (adapted from Stephanie Chen, 2017, and Jessica Buesing, 2018)

Ultrasounds

The Ultrasounds is the CUMC a cappella group. Whether you are a four-year a cappella star from undergrad or just like to sing in the shower, this group is open to anyone who wishes to participate and have fun with us! (There will be auditions at the beginning of the semester, but this is just to get a feel for the interested individuals and their voice parts - nobody gets turned away or told they can’t sing with the group!) We sing a lot of really fun songs, and it’s also a great chance to meet students from the other CUMC schools. The group rehearses once a week, and performs at every Coffeehouse and various other events.

~Delia O’Shea, P&S 2019, dmo2131@columbia.edu (adapted from Chris Grubb, 2018)

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 practice for one to two hours a week and perform at Musical Mondays. Last year, we also sang holiday carols to all the different administrative offices on campus! 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 have a wonderfully interesting group of participants. We are thrilled to welcome new members from the class of 2020!

~Jessica Buesing, P&S 2018, jlk2188@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: a 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, and 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.

~Jack Berger, P&S 2019, jrb2244@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 brotherhood. 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 also host our own John Wood Memorial Tournament in NYC, an event that will undoubtedly 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 out for emails coming in August.

~Matt White, P&S 2019, msw2164@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 get involved in several components of this program, all with varying levels of commitment. Like tutoring and mentorship? Get involved with the weekly Academic Success sessions (during which scholars are given the opportunity to ask medical students for help with homework) or tutor a Lang Youth scholar one-on-one. Like playing with children or want something with less commitment? Volunteer with Lang Youth’s Boys and Girls Club (a time for scholars to participate in recreational activities ranging from a Q&A session about high school to a Super Smash Brothers tournament) or teach 7th grade scholars some anatomy through Saturday workshops held throughout the year. Lang Youth is a great way to learn more about our local community while empowering a future generation of bright medical minds!

~Chung-Jen Chen, P&S 2019, czc2105@columbia.edu (adapted from Brooke Pfister, 2018)

Asian Pacific & American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)

APAMSA is a place where community among Asian and Pacific American students is built and Asian and Pacific culture is shared and celebrated at P&S. We do many different things, whether it’s putting on a Lunar New Year Festival, potluck for the Mid-Autumn festival, or just traveling to K-town or Chinatown to hang out. We are also involved in community outreach through hepatitis B education. Something new that we are trying out this year is discussions about Asian Americans in health care and health issues that disproportionately affect Asian Americans. We have lots of fun, food, and bonding.

~Ingold Huang, P&S 2019, ih2294@columbia.edu
Black and Latino Student Organization (BALSO)

Whereas some schools might have their Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) and their Student National Medical Association (SNMA) as separate entities, at P&S we have combined the two groups to form the Black and Latino Student Organization (BALSO). BALSO is committed to establishing a community for students of color, providing both academic and social support, and increasing diversity among physicians. We offer crash courses in the weeks leading up to the start of medical school to give students a sneak peek of what they’ll see in the first semester, and hold practice practicals before each Anatomy exam (with brunch served afterward!). In addition, BALSO is committed to helping its members build their professional network and identify potential mentors in medicine. Each monthly general body meeting features a physician of color who offers advice and answers questions about just about anything! Additionally, to ease the transition from the classroom to the wards, we’ve established a network of interns, residents, and attending physicians who identify as underrepresented minorities and can serve as “point people” during the Major Clinical Year for BALSO students. As we move ahead in our medical careers, BALSO students are also committed to building the next generation of young physicians. We serve as mentors for minorities interested in medicine through our Young Docs and Big Sibs programs, and we’re currently strengthening our mentoring program with Columbia’s undergraduate minority pre-medical group.

We work hard, but BALSO knows how to have fun too! We host many social events throughout the year, including potlucks after exams, game nights, our annual Tasting the Latino World Event and Jazz Mixer. We’re also currently working on establishing connections with other minority student groups throughout the Columbia graduate schools, so look out for those collaborations in the fall! If you want to learn more about us, reach out to any of the BALSO members or come to our meetings held on the first Wednesday of every month! Ultimately, BALSO is a family that stands with you as you embark on the incredible physical, mental and emotional experience that is medical school.

~Kimberly Laughman, P&S 2019, kbl2112@cumc.columbia.edu and Naralys Batista, P&S 2019, nb2738@columbia.edu

Young Docs

Young Docs is one of my favorite parts of P&S! As a branch of the Black and Latino Student Organization, we work with students from groups that are traditionally underrepresented in medicine and introduce them to what it means to pursue careers in medicine. One element of Young Docs is our elementary school visits. Once a month we carry (model) skeletons, stethoscopes, reflex hammers and penlights as well as snacks to a classroom nearby. Medical students then teach elementary school students about doctors’ instruments and the human body. We encourage them to think of doctors (and biology) as approachable and fun. Teaching these kids about medicine really makes an impact and plays a role in motivating a new generation of physicians.

Young Docs also includes a year-long high school mentoring program. Students spend the spring semester learning about the college application process and general life skills, such as time management. In the fall, they will learn more about medicine and the human organ systems. We also invite high school students to P&S for a day visit. During this time, they will have the opportunity to view gross organs, learn how the cardiovascular system works and how to take blood pressures. They also have a chance to ask questions about our paths to medical school. The final piece of Young Docs is the annual science fair. We invite middle to high school students from anywhere in NYC to compete in our science fair. They create 3D models of a biological system and present a poster about a related disease. We invite you to come see their projects and applaud their hard work.
Young Docs really inspires change. Past student participants were amazed at how much they learned about the human body, and were excited to talk to medical students that were once in their shoes. Although Young Docs is a low time commitment, the impact on the students is huge. Look out for our emails asking for volunteers!

~Koryalys Edwards, P&S 2019, ke2224@columbia.edu (adapted from Shaliesha K. Hinds, 2018)

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 MEDICAL SCHOOL

Class Ski Trip
Ski trip is a phenomenal first year tradition when we all head to the mountains for a wintry getaway as a class. This past year we had 92 students from the class of 2019 hop on coach buses and venture up to Hunter Mountain in the 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 Club Reps 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 know as well yet. 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.

~John Henry Ignatiev, P&S 2019, jsi2105@columbia.edu

Leonides Ball
Leonides is the P&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, and food. This past year, we danced like we had “Saturday Night Fever” 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 significant others, and close friends as well, and everyone always has a blast - the photobooth pictures are proof!

-John Henry Ignatiev, P&S 2019, jsi2105@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 and Open Bars at the Gin Mill 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 fever and chills; don’t let this be you! There’s simply too much fun to be had in this city to miss out!

~John Henry Ignatiev, P&S 2019, jsi2105@columbia.edu

Club Soccer

A fair amount of P&S students are soccer players or soccer fanatics so we created a soccer club. We have a Facebook group (cleverly named P&S club soccer) where we post when we are playing pick-up soccer over at the field on 145th St. Pick-up tends to be on Friday afternoons and we open it to all schools in CUMC. Talent ranges from college soccer players to first-timers so all are welcome. For the more competitive players, a few of us have been playing in a league. Shoot me in an email if you’re interested in joining the league or else you can just join the Facebook group! We accept all Premier League followers (unless you like Chelsea) as well as all Barcelona fans.

~Sophie Mayeux, P&S 2019, sm3104@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/bus time.

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. Greyhound, which leaves from Port Authority at 42nd street, is the most convenient to get to and from Washington Heights, but is sometimes a bit more expensive than the other companies. Bolt Bus and Megabus are cheaper options. The Bolt Bus and Megabus pick-up point is near the Jacob Javits Convention Center area (34th street between 11th and 12th Ave.). You can ride the 7 to 34 St-Hudson Yards to get there! 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. However, some of the cheaper bus systems come with the very real risk of bus breakdowns. All of these buses have wi-fi and power outlets, but how reliably they work depends on the company.

~Rhyian Goldman, P&S 2019, rrg2149@columbia.edu (adapted from Janelle Lambert, 2017)

**Taxis**

Most of you probably know about the famous yellow New York taxicabs that run rampant around 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 Manhattan neighborhoods like Washington Heights. They’re pretty much just like the yellow taxis - all of them come with a meter, take credit cards, and can be hailed off the street. 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!

Here are 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. 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.

There’s another type of car around: the gypsy/livery cab. These are unmarked black cars that ride around the city 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 markup 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.

Finally, for those times where you know you’re going to need a cab (or you are coming back from a night out and want to just get home easy) — download Uber. Uber is available in New York City to request metered cabs, cabs with baby seats, and extra large cabs for lots of people. Uberpool is also available in well-populated areas. 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.

~Rhyian Goldman, P&S 2019, rrg2149@columbia.edu (adapted from Rita Morales, 2017)
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 (besides, parking in the city can be murder). 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, in addition to all major airports, train stations, and bus ports - all for the attractive price of $2.75. 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. You can also refill your card at these kiosks 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 (this can be incredible when running for a train). 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 (12 trips/week or 45/month makes it worth it).

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 (e.g. 50th). 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 and 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 168th) while express trains will skip several stops along the way (like the A heading downtown from 168th prior to 11pm). Sadly, this all gets turned upside down on weekends, when subways can be a venerable express/local free-for-all. In this case, make sure to pay attention to the conductor on the loudspeaker, especially at important express stops like 125th and 59th. Trains have been known to switch mid-ride, so on weekends, pay attention!

Note: 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 you can save transit time by skipping stops. 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 use it enough (>12 trips/week or >45/month), 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 slower than the train, so plan accordingly).

~Rhyán Goldman, P&S 2019, rrg2149@columbia.edu (adapted from Griff Curtis, 2017)

Fitness

Medical school can be a little stressful at times, but many students find that a great workout can do wonders for both their mental and physical health. No matter how you like to get your sweat on, P&S students stay fit in a variety of ways. The most popular and convenient option is the Bard Athletic Center (BAC) which is located on the lower floors of Bard Hall and is free for all full-time students. On the second floor, there are multiple ellipticals, treadmills, and stationary bikes with display screens to watch shows or movies from your smart devices. On the first floor, there are dumbbell sets and benches, numerous weight machines, and a rowing machine. There is also a 15-yard swimming pool, squash court, basketball court, and aerobic/yoga classes offered in a multi-purpose room that can otherwise be used for floor exercises. The BAC is open M-Th 6AM-10PM, F 7AM-8PM, Sat 10AM-5PM, and Sun 12PM-8PM, and more info is available on the BAC website page. For those who prefer a more flexible schedule and more heavy lifting options, the Free Weight Club (FWC) is a great alternative. The FWC is also located in Bard, but it is open 7 days a week 24 hours a day. For $80/year, members have personal access to all sizes of free and controlled weight machines, a treadmill, and stationary bike. See the Free Weight Club entry in this guide or contact freeweightsclub@gmail.com for more info!

For all you runners out there, P&S Roadrunners have the scoop on information about good routes, races, and running in general, and they often coordinate group runs for fun on the weekends (ice cream runs!). Contact ps-roadrunners@googlegroups.com or join their Facebook group. For solo running, check out some options below. Remember, if running at night, try to stay in well-lit active areas or take a buddy!

George Washington Bridge – Run north on Haven until you reach the end, and then turn right on W177th. You will see a small playground on your left, at which you should turn left down a small side street. Round the curve to the left and you’ll see a small pedestrian/bike entrance to the bridge. The bridge is 1.3 long so a run straight across and back to Bard is a little over 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).

Riverbank Loop – Run south on Haven and turn right on Fort Washington. Turn right again on 165th, then turn left at the end onto 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.

Hudson River – Run down to Riverside Drive as above. 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 it down all the way to Battery Park.
Cloisters Loop – Run south on Haven Avenue, make a left on Fort Washington, and run north 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 along the way enjoy some great scenery, flowers, trees, or a medieval castle- you’ll forget that you’re in the city!

Central Park – Take the C downtown to 110th or run along Riverside for a 14 mile loop. The Central Park path itself is 6 miles long with good scenery, people-watching, and a decent hill.

Biking – A bike is a great way to get around the city and to get a workout! The GW bridge is open to bike riders, and Central Park is closed to traffic daily from 6AM-8AM so you can safely ride without worrying about cars.

Swimming – The BAC has a 15-yard pool, with hours that be found on the BAC website. For those willing to leave Bard, 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 $2.

Other Activities – Dance Haven offers classes throughout the year and there are yoga and pilates classes offered through Student Wellness (CUMC) or the Art of Living Club (on Morningside campus). Students also frequently get together to play squash, do Insanity/P90X, SoulCycle, or form teams for intramural sports. 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!

~Nicole Kelly P&S 2019, nek2124@columbia.edu (adapted from Jessie Calihan, 2017)

Shopping

Where to even start? There are endless opportunities to shop in NYC, ranging from malls, to shopping centers, to boutiques. Consider how much shopping you want to do and what you want to buy. Lots of different things? Go to a mall/area with lots of stores closely packed (i.e. you need shoes: go to 34th street where there are three shoe stores within a 3 block radius) If you just want to (window) shop and relax, try Broadway between 100th and 59th, and 5th/Madison avenue between 86th and 59th. Protip: download the app “retailmenot.” It has coupons from all over the place and will alert you if you are near a store with an awesome deal.

Online options:

Amazon prime: 2 HOUR DELIVERY. Realize you need lightbulbs, milk and pens? Amazon prime now will get it to you that day. It comes free with your amazon prime membership!

Washington Heights:

Columbia bookstore for obligatory shirts, sweaters, last minute book supplies. These items are overpriced, but if you forget to buy your anatomy scrubs you can pick some up here.

- Rite Aid (171st and Broadway)
- Melbran Pharmacy (168th between Fort Washington and Broadway across from ER)
- JJM scrubs- cheap scrubs!
- SMA hardware (173rd and Broadway)
- Sastreria Garcia: On 165th St. between Broadway and St. Nicholas, this is a great local tailor shop. Everything costs $5.
Upper West Side:
• 125th: Nine West outlet, DSW, Banana Republic Outlet, MAC, Marshalls, H&M.
• 116th: Columbia Undergrad campus bookstore with more Columbia gear, school supplies and a Barnes and Noble. University housewares (good all around home shop, not super fancy). Aerosoles.
• 103rd: Urban Outfitters.
• 96th: Columbia Square Plaza! Loft, Michaels, TJ Maxx, Homegoods, Whole Foods, Sephora, Duane Reade, Rite Aid, Verizon, Sleepy’s, Modell’s, Rite Aid. Extra: Birch: Cute coffee shop for studying.
• 86th: Banana Republic, Gap, Francesca’s, Victoria’s Secret, Aldo’s, Barnes and Nobles.
• 79th: DSW, Lush cosmetics.
• 60s: Apple Store, Bed Bath and Beyond, West Elm, Pottery Barn, Best Buy.

Midtown:
• 59th street mall: The Shops at Columbus Circle (an indoor mall!): Whole Foods, Sephora, J Crew, Coach.
• 50th: Salvation Army (go on Wednesday for half off furniture!). They’ll deliver for a fee (30-50 dollars).
• 33rd: Manhattan mall (indoors!): JC Penney, Express, Aeropostale, Victoria’s Secret, Lips.
• 42nd street: Times Square can get crowded but it has plenty of stores. Loft, Forever 21, Sephora, Muji (ikea alternative), American Eagle.
• 34th street area: Macy’s- one stop shop for everything. Warning: the first floor of this place is CRAY. Go upstairs and it’s like a shopping haven. Old Navy, H&M, Sephora, DSW, Kmart.

Shoutouts:
• 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 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.

Crosstown (East Side):
• 59th and Lexington area: Bloomingdales, Container Store
• 116th and 1st Ave.: East River Plaza, Target, Bob’s Furniture, Marshalls, Costco! Taxi or crosstown buses along 125th will take you to 1st avenue.

Bronx:
There are two Super Targets in the Bronx. Take the 1 to 225th OR 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).

New Jersey:
I’m a bit biased because I’m from Bergen county (right over the bridge), but the upside to traveling here is that there is no sales tax!! If you are doing a sizable amount of shopping, it is so much nicer to do so in a one-stop shop that could have everything you could ever want. NJ transit buses from the GW bridge terminal (175th) will take you right to the Garden State Plaza (humongous mall, ~5 dollars for the trip) in 15-20 minutes with no traffic. These buses will also take you to IKEA (right across from the mall). There are also outlets (Bergen Mall Outlet) along the same route (the stop is before the Bergen mall stop).

~Allie Levin, P&S 2019, apl2124@columbia.edu (adapted from Plicy Perez, 2017)
FOOD
FOOD IN NYC

If you are a fan of great food, then you have come to the right place! New York has an amazing array of options from haute cuisine to hole-in-the-wall places that serve up any cuisine that you could imagine. Right here in Washington Heights we have some great Dominican food, lots of sandwich places, a good bagel shop, and a few nicer restaurants when you’re feeling a little fancy. I promise that you will have more than enough to eat between the meal plan, cooking in Bard Hall, and all that the city has to offer. It can be helpful to browse online a bit and keep an ear to the ground for great recommendations and offers. Pro tip: take advantage of Restaurant Week (which is really more like Restaurant Month), a tradition that occurs twice a year. During this “week” some of the best restaurants in the city serve 3-course meals for $25 for lunch and $38 for dinner. When you have a little bit of time on your hands, make it a priority to try out some places in the outer boroughs – great food isn’t limited to Manhattan!

Be sure to browse the appendices of this guide. We’ll walk you through the best places to buy or to order groceries, point you towards some delicious local options, and fill you in on some can’t-miss restaurants. Bon Appetit!

~Arielle Fein, P&S 2019, awf2126@columbia.edu

Cooking in Bard

OK, I’ll admit it – cooking without a private kitchen isn’t ideal. I lived in an apartment with a large kitchen for two years before moving to Bard, and I was definitely skeptical at first. Now I only go out to eat when I really want something special. I learned to get a little bit creative, and so will you!

There is a shared kitchen on the 11th floor and people use it to varying degrees. You can sign up for a locker but I would recommend getting a box or a cart to lug your various pots and pans back and forth if you think that you’ll want to cook there.

I do almost all of my cooking in my room. I highly (HIGHLY) recommend buying a mini-fridge (bonus points for separate freezer) and a microwave. Many rising second years will be selling these between June and August, so look out for the list that will be sent around. I like to keep a lot of non-perishable food in my room like soups, lentils, oatmeal, and tuna. I also found the following cooking gadgets to be really helpful: a microwave scrambled egg/omelet maker to step up my breakfast game, a coffeemaker/Keurig (for all of you single serve coffee fans out there, you can use your personal k cups in the Keurig machines in the library), a microwave pasta/rice cooker, and many
different microwave-safe containers. There is a company called Lekue that makes containers that let you cook just about anything in the microwave. I have friends that swear by NutriBullets, crockpots, rice cookers, and French presses. With some luck and a little bit of practice, you’ll find what works for you!

--Arielle Fein, P&S 2019, awf2126@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

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of staying well fed in medical school! Your stomach, brain, and grades (by grades, I mean Pass of course!) will thank you. While we may have hectic schedules and limited cooking space, Columbia has us covered with the meal plan. Meals are served buffet-style on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday nights between 5 pm (you can actually go at 4:45 if you need to!) and 7:15 pm in the Bard Ballroom, which is conveniently located on the basement level of Bard Hall. At 7:15, you are allowed to come back for any remaining leftovers. Meal plan package options are 40, 30, or 15 meals per semester, which work out to be around 3, 2, or 1 meal(s) per week, respectively. Since meals are purchased in bulk, you can use any number of meals in one week, regardless of which package you buy, until you reach your maximum. While even the highest option of 3 meals/week may not seem like much, you can buy a $6 set of “to go” containers (one time cost) in the beginning of the semester that allows you to save enough leftovers for at least a second meal (I’ve personally stretched mine out for three days). I have opted for the 2 meals/week option both semesters and have ended up with extra meals which can be used to bring guests/people who ran out of meals.

So how does a dinner trip to Bard Ballroom actually work? Once you have signed up for the meal plan in the beginning of the semester, all you have to do is give the awesome check-in woman your name, and then proceed along a self-serve buffet line. There is always a salad bar with toppings, fresh fruit (bananas, apples, oranges), soup, rolls/bread/bagels, and a variety of drinks. Hot entrées vary by night, but a menu is provided in the beginning of the semester to plan accordingly. There is always some sort of meat (chicken, steak, fish, shrimp, etc.), starch, vegetable, and vegetarian option. Highlights include Washington Heights-themed night, breakfast for dinner, and BBQ night. Each use of the meal plan allows 1 trip through the buffet and you can take the following: hot entrée, salad, 2 bowls of soup, 1 dessert, 2 pieces of whole 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.
Once you’ve gotten all your food, you can sit at one of the many large tables in the ballroom with classmates and students from schools across the campus. It’s a great social environment!

I recommend participating in the meal plan, even if you only try 1 meal/week- it is convenient, good quality, and actually a pretty good deal; each meal comes out to just under $10 dollars, which is a steal considering the amount of food you are allowed to take is closer to 2-3 meals each trip. Using the meal plan is also a great opportunity to relax and socialize with your peers, because even people who don’t have the meal plan are welcome to sit at the tables and enjoy the atmosphere. Cooking is nice, but on those busy nights, you just can't beat the meal plan!

~Nicole Kelly, P&S 2019, nek2124@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

Here’s an intro to your guide to grocery shopping in Washington Heights and beyond, compiled by your friends from P&S 2019! Skip to the appendix for a helpful list of all the different ways you can acquire groceries in NYC. To start off, you’ve got your standard brick and mortar grocery stores - they range in size, price range, location, and really just what you’re looking for. But wait, there’s more! One of the wonders of NYC that completely blew my mind (coming from a small town) is that you can order groceries online and have them delivered without having to step foot outside your door, which is especially useful during the winter wonderland months. A lot of these services offer free trials so you can check them out before paying for a longer membership; and you could even look for a grocery buddy to split a membership with and do your online shopping together! Whatever your preference, I would recommend shopping around a little bit to figure out what/where works best for you. So now head on over to the appendix to check out all your options!

~Delia O’Shea, P&S 2019, dmo2131@columbia.edu (adapted from Connie Wang, 2018)
IDENTITY

LGBTQ

Oh, 2016, what a wonderful time to be queer! And what better place to cultivate your beautiful identity and share it with the world than New York and, in particular, Columbia. P&S has a vibrant LGBTQ community with representations from many of its health professional schools, including Lambda (P&S), Queer Health Task Force (Mailman School of Public Health), and the Queer Ally Partnership. Together these organizations put on a variety of social gatherings, film screenings, lectures/panels on LGBTQ health and social issues, sensitivity training workshops, and much more in order to create a sense of community at P&S as well as prepare future health care professionals to work with LGBTQ patients. The recent addition of the Q Clinic to P&S’ many student-run clinics allows for students to provide outreach and primary care services to homeless LGBTQ youth in the city. We also team up with BALSO every May to organize an AIDS walk team. Outside of P&S, New York City has so many opportunities and resources for you to thrive. Downtown, The Center (https://gaycenter.org/) can connect you to entertainment, cultural, and wellness resources, while Callen-Lorde (http://callen-lorde.org/) can connect you to LGBTQ health care volunteer opportunities. In terms of social life, there are tons of bars, clubs, theater, and cultural activities in Hell’s Kitchen, the West Village, and Chelsea, to name a few. My personal favorite is the historic Stonewall Inn; a night of dancing and drag shows is a wonderful way to spend your Saturday night. Finally, Dr. Amiel, our Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs, also doubles as the faculty liaison for LGBTQ students. He’s a fantastic source of support and direction. If you’re questioning and want to talk, Jane, Justin, and Meg in the Wellness Center in Bard are open, supportive, and a delight to speak with. Lambda (along with the rest of CUMC) is here to support you and your identity in whatever form it might take. We want to help you be bold, be fabulous, and be great, so welcome!

~Kyle Zuniga, Class of 2019, kbz2102@columbia.edu

Hispanic

¡Bienvenidos! With one of the largest populations of Latinos in the United States, New York City is a great place to go to medical school if you are of Hispanic descent. Moreover, 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. So, if your comfort foods include rice and beans, mofongo, empanadas, plátanos maduros, and dulce de tres leches, have no fear! There are plenty of restaurants and bakeries nearby to satisfy your cravings. Washington Heights also has a growing population of other Latino groups, and so, you will readily find Mexican, Venezuelan, and El Salvadorian cuisine nearby, just to name a few. Of course, whatever you can’t find in Washington Heights is just a subway ride away!
There are also plenty of opportunities to practice your Spanish and connect with people who share a Hispanic heritage, whether in CUMC or out in the neighborhood. Through my first semester clerkships, for instance, I was able to talk to Latino patients and observe the dynamics of patient care as it affects our community. Meanwhile, if you are looking to improve your Spanish, Columbia offers a subsidized class that medical students can take as an extracurricular (very low stress). Or, you can join one of the “Familias” through Digame Mas and practice your medical Spanish (see the Digame Mas entry under P&S Clubs). For the advanced/ fluent Spanish speaker, you can even take a medical interpreting course (again, as an extracurricular) that helps you meet requirements to become a certified health interpreter.

Lastly, you can rest assured that you will be well supported in your medical school journey through the Office of Diversity (Dr. H, Suzette, and the rest of the team are amazing) and BALSO (see the BALSO entry under P&S Clubs). As the 2015-2016 BALSO Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA) representative, I highly recommend getting involved with the BALSO board. BALSO quickly becomes your own familia away from home, and I cannot overstate how fulfilling this experience has been. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to reach out to me.

~Tina Roa, P&S 2019, tr2468@columbia.edu (adapted from Alejandra Perez, 2017)

Black

The black experience here at Columbia P&S is unique because of the people, the support, and the location. We have one of the most diverse medical student bodies in the country. I represent one of the smallest demographic groups in medicine as a black male, but I am still able to find individuals I can relate to both in my class and in the classes above me, and I have felt extremely comfortable here. BALSO (Black and Latino Student Organization) really builds a strong knit community between all of us here. The administration is also extremely supportive - Dr. Hutcherson provides us with an enormous amount of guidance and support, and we know that she is looking out for us. Coming to Columbia P&S also places you right next to a ton of black culture. History fact: Malcolm X was assassinated at 163rd and Broadway, and there is a memorial there in honor of him. Harlem is a 10 minute subway ride, with all the Soul Food, soul music, dancing, and Caribbean Jerk you could desire, and the historic Apollo Theatre is on 125th Street as well. Another place I’ve enjoyed is The Shrine World Music Venue on Fredrick Douglas Blvd and 133rd St. Artists of all genres are performing in Harlem and downtown Manhattan all the time, and the options feel unlimited! Every year, Caribbean Carnival occurs in New York over the summer, which is a fantastic, fun event. You have every opportunity to have a rich experience here at P&S. If you have any other questions, feel free to reach out to me!

~Denzel Woode, P&S 2019, drw2118@columbia.edu

Asian

Columbia is welcoming place for an Asian American to come for medical school. A significant portion of our class is Asian American, and within that there are many different ethnicities (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Indian, to name a few). New York City has plenty of Asian food and several Asian ethnic neighborhoods, like K-town, Manhattan Chinatown, and Flushing that are just a subway ride away from Washington Heights. There are enough Asians here that you won’t feel like you’re alone but still a good amount of people from other backgrounds to add to the diversity of Columbia. Everyone here is friendly, intelligent, and talented. Practically any Asian student should feel right at home here in Columbia.

~Ingold Huang, P&S 2019, ih2294@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. If you’re looking to catch Jumuah, there’s a weekly service on the second floor of Milstein Hospital near the cafeteria at 1:15pm. 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 is 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

Hello Class of 2020 and welcome to P&S! If you are Christian or just looking to explore your spirituality there are plenty of opportunities here! Columbia Christian Fellowship (CCF) and Saint Luke’s Society are two student-run groups that are part of the P&S Club and are great places to start if you’re looking to get involved in a Christian community. I’ve found CCF to be a great way to meet other Christian students, study the Bible with friends, and find awesome people to go to church with on the weekends.

Columbia Christian Fellowship (CCF) is an inter-denominational, student-run organization that encourages students to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and to serve and love the CUMC community around them. If you would like to explore the Bible, CCF is a great place to ask questions. All are welcome to the weekly meetings, which include Bible studies, speaker events, praise & worship and social gatherings. CCF includes students from the medical, dental, graduate, nursing, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and public health schools, as well as friends and spouses. Various speakers, including medical missionaries, practicing medical professionals in NYC, and others address the group regularly.

It’s also going to take a little bit of exploring to find a Church you feel at home in. Some of the big name churches in the city are Redeemer Presbyterian Church (the church that I regularly attend) and Hillsong Church. There are also several Catholic Churches in the area. 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 and the Church of St. Rose of Lima. There are also church services at St. Paul’s Chapel on the Columbia main campus and at other churches in the Morningside area. If you have any questions about CCF or would like more church recommendations don’t hesitate to reach out!

~Emily Nuss, P&S 2019, een2109@cumc.columbia.edu

Jewish

Mazel Tov on being in the greatest med school mishpucha you could want! It’s Bashert! However you prefer to define your Judaism, Columbia offers a lot in terms of Jewish life, both up at CUMC and down by the Morningside 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
all year. This past year, for example, we had a huge Shabbat dinner with about 100 attendees, a Challah baking event, and a Purim Hamantaschen study break. Our members are from across the medical center, which makes MCJA a great way to meet people from other schools.

The MCJA also has a close relationship with Columbia Hillel, and medical students are always welcome to go there for services and holiday events. Just one more stop down is the Upper West Side, which has a great community of young Jewish professionals, as well as synagogues and minyanim catered to young adults. It’s easy to get involved and fun to join!

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.

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 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.

~Rhyan Goldman, P&S 2019, rrg2149@columbia.edu (adapted from Adam Butensky, 2017)

International Students

Congratulations!!! You made it to medical school! Few people know how hard it is to get accepted to medical schools in the United States as an international student! You’ve overcome financial, bureaucratic, and emotional roadblocks to make your dreams become a reality! Woot!!! You’re part of a small but integral group of students in your class and we are glad you made it. International students studying at P&S have usually received their undergraduate education from either the United States or Canada – so I’m guessing you’ve been in North America for at least four years. Well we are sure that attending P&S and living in NYC will be a big shift from what you’re already used to! New York has a place for everyone – regardless of your citizenship or where you grew up. You will definitely find a community in the Big Apple that shares your values and traditions! There is so much to experience from this beautiful conglomerate of cultures! Just look up “New York City ethnic enclaves” to get a sense of the incredible number of international communities NYC has to offer! Ever had Halal food or watched a Broadway show? How about karaoke in K-Town? The convenience and ease of the subway system in NYC is remarkable and very user friendly. Getting from Washington Heights to anywhere in NYC is a breeze! Who knows? In four years you might even get used to this Fahrenheit and yards stuff. The support staff at P&S are outstanding. If you have any concerns, feel free to contact Bonnie Garner (blg12@cumc.columbia.edu) at the International Affairs Office or Marcia Stark (ms63@columbia.edu) at CU International Students and Scholars Office. They will help you with visas, F-1 status transfer, I-20s etc.

~Parth Patel, P&S 2019, pp2560@cumc.columbia.edu
From Around the U.S.

**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). 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.

~Deborah Boyett, P&S 2019, dmb2245@columbia.edu (adapted from Hannah Ware, 2017 and Dan Arteaga, 2017)

**From the West Coast**

I grew up in and near beach cities all my life (true Californian kid). I love In-n-Out, avocados, driving cars, and the whole beach / suburban life. Living in Manhattan, though, is such a completely different experience but one well worth it.

Weather? You’re right, you won’t get consistent 70 degree sunny weather. But you will get some of the most beautiful displays of seasons: the colors of fall, the snowfall in winter, the flowers in spring, and summertime sunshine. Pack a warm coat and get some thick boots so you can enjoy the urban jungle’s seasons!

Culture? Californian life is a chill life. But don’t listen to what people say: New Yorkers are super cool and very friendly, too! They are generally, however, more up front and honest. It’s also important to know that Manhattan is one of the most diverse cities on Earth. Almost every culture in the world is represented in NYC, somehow! It’s incredible. And don’t worry, although there isn’t In-N-Out, you will be able to enjoy so many amazing restaurants that are only found in NYC! You won’t go hungry :).

Outdoor Activities? Missing the surf, or amazing hikes? I’m glad to report that it’s very easy to get PLENTY of outdoor time outside the urban jungle!! Traveling upstate, or taking the train to Connecticut leads to some of the most beautiful outdoor sights. Whether it’s the Catskills, Bear Mountain, or Ice Caverns upstate, or skating and rock climbing in Central Park, you will have so many awesome opportunities to do outdoor activities! (And surprisingly, there’s still a pretty big surf culture here!)

~Alex Vu, P&S 2019, ahv2114@cumc.columbia.edu
**From the Midwest**

Congratulations on being from the greatest place in the entire world! (Oh, and I guess congratulations on getting into P&S as well). As a native Midwesterner, I know you’ll miss the lush open fields, lake cabins, Big Ten football (Go Gophers), and everything else that makes our homeland incredibly awesome. But rest assured, you’ll have a pretty great time in NYC as well. This city has so much to offer, from museums to theatres to world class restaurants. Couple that with all of the fun things you’ll be doing in the P&S club, and you won’t have a lot of time to think about how much you miss tater tot hotdish or cheese curds or whatever amazing Midwestern food you love. And if you ever feel a little overwhelmed by the city, I get it. I recommend a trip down to central park or even just over to Ft. Tryon to get a little fresh air (plus both of these places are so beautiful you’ll immediately remember why you wanted to move here). Keep in touch with your friends and family, but remember you’re a part of a family here at P&S. I haven’t regretted moving here for one second; living in New York when you’re young is a life-changing experience. Enjoy the ride!

~Brian Reuland, P&S 2019, bdr2128@columbia.edu

**Not A Science Major**

You’re at the right medical school. P&S has an incredible Arts and Humanities scene (see Bard Hall Players, CoffeeHouse, Reflexions). From Political Science and Economics to English and Narrative Medicine, humanities are incorporated into the Fundamentals curriculum. That said, it can feel intimidating at the beginning. As someone who took the necessary science prerequisites – and then explored every major at the other end of the spectrum, I found myself struggling to recall even basic principles of my relevant undergraduate coursework. This was particularly true when lectures in MM discussed different research methods and techniques with which many of my classmates had extensive experience. Here’s the thing: everyone feels completely overwhelmed in the first few months, no matter her or his college major. It is a steep learning curve, but 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 as you progress through your first year. Much of medicine is literary description. You’ll encounter a plethora of strange and vibrant metaphors to describe the body, write critical essays (better known as patient write-ups) arguing for a diagnosis through compelling evidence, and begin to master the new foreign language of medicine.

One more reassuring thing: while the information in MM may be more easily accessible to the many students who have a strong background in it (and your science major friends are an amazing resource for studying), the material in BHD is new to everyone. 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!

~Hannah Ford, P&S 2019, hannah.ford@columbia.edu (adapted from Jemma Benson, P&S 2018)
From Postbac Premed Program

Congratulations! You worked your butt off as a postbac, and now you’re joining a wonderful group of classmates here at P&S. When I made the same transition last year, I found out that some aspects of medical school are a big adjustment from the postbac experience – and I did my postbac at Columbia!

Academically, it took some time to realize that the goal of medical school is not necessarily to get a perfect score on every exam. I’m not saying I stopped working hard after postbac, but the mindset of needing an A+++ on every assignment is unhealthy and counterproductive here. Moreover, the need to compare yourself to your classmates is a thing of the past. Every course in the Fundamentals Curriculum is Pass/Fail, and you are not ranked during this portion of your medical school career.

Socially, I found that postbac was very one-dimensional. As a career-changer, I saw my decision to pursue medicine as a bit of a gamble, and was determined to make it pay off. So I threw myself at the premed workload, and put my social life on the backburner. That probably wasn’t the best decision during postbac, but I want you to know it’s DEFINITELY not the best decision here. You’re surrounded by amazing people, and P&S has so many extracurricular offerings. I hope you’ll take advantage of both.

Congratulations again, and don’t hesitate to get in touch if you’d like to talk more!

~Cyrus Attia, P&S 2019, caa2156@columbia.edu
LIVING AND LOVING
Living & 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 and Andrew Moss, P&S 2018, am4261@columbia.edu

Living off Campus

Congratulations! Living off-campus is the best! You have a full-sized kitchen you don’t have to share with an entire building, you have your own private space physically separated from medical school, plus you have the freedom to choose exactly 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 and Queens. Different neighborhoods and buildings have their own specific benefits (proximity to Central Park, cool bars and restaurants, ability to have pets, living with a significant other, etc.), but all will make you feel like a bona fide New Yorker. 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. The subway is fantastic and it’s easy to get a seat when coming to early classes, plus it facilitates a good time to study, watch lectures, or even read a book for pleasure! I live in Bushwick with an hour commute each way and it’s often the two most productive times of my day – studying without internet access forces you to concentrate. 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!
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.

Finding 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. It’s usually 1 month’s rent. However, there are “no [broker’s] fee apartments” out there.

Here are some good places to begin your apartment search:
1) http://bohemiarealtygroup.com/ This website is clear and easy to use and a lot of apartments don’t have a broker’s fee.
2) https://www.halstead.com/rentals/new-york/ 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 great websites.
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. 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) Word of mouth! Talk to upperclassmen, let people know 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
Long Distance Relationship

You can definitely be in a (good!) long-distance relationship in medical school! It takes planning and compromise, but there are definitely ways to make it work! Remember that you WILL be a doctor four years from now, so make sure you maintain a healthy personal life and don’t let school consume you (or your relationship).

General advice: Communicate! Med school is a weirdly specific experience and it can be a challenge when your SO hasn’t been there/done that too. The challenges and triumphs you face in med school can seem pretty big 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. Talk about what’s going on, what’s hard, 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 a community here. Most importantly, know that you will have to prioritize school at some points (for exams and to make friends, don’t isolate yourself!). At other times you will have to prioritize your relationship (it’s okay to miss 1 of 15 post-exam parties to leave town). Make sure to have an open discussion about this last point before the school-year starts!

Concrete advice:

1. Plan out times that you will actually talk, not just text, each week. Everyone has a lunch break and it has worked pretty well for me to talk then (mid-day), rather than assuming we will always have time at night. Try different times, see what works best for you and your partner. If you are a morning person, try before class.

2. PLAN YOUR VISITS EARLY. They release exam schedules 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. And then you’ll get to look forward to the visit all semester! In general, you will be done by 3:00 or 4:30pm on Friday in first semester (this switches every week depending on your non-dissecting session in anatomy), and generally by 1:00pm second semester. 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. It can be hard being away a lot of weekends so you might find that it’s helpful to bridge the gap and introduce your SO to med school friends. Your SO can definitely go to post-exam parties with you, which makes the post-exam celebration that much better!

When you are away from each other 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. Just try to be open with yourself and each other about how it’s going. And know that Justin and Jane from Wellness are always here when you need to vent!

~Allie Levin, P&S 2019, apl2124@columbia.edu, (adapted from Mary Davies, 2018)

Dating in NYC

Whether you’re just looking to meet a new friend, interested in a real relationship, or desiring a Netflix and chill kind of night, you can find all those things in New York City. There are a million places to meet people and apps like Bumble, Tinder, and Hinge to explore. These are the things that worked best for me.
Places to take a Date (Reasonably Priced and Easy Access from Washington Heights):

• Geisha Sushi (Broadway and 142nd) has really good specialty rolls at a reasonable price.
• Harlem Public (Broadway and 149th) is a hipster gastropub that has quickly become a favorite of the Class of 2019. It has friendly bartenders, an awesome feel, 10 unique craft beers on tap that change almost every night, delicious food (peanut butter burger with brown sugar maple bacon!), and great outside seating during the warmer months.
• At The Wallace (Broadway and 149th) is a great bar with games like giant jenga, giant connect four, shuffleboard, and Buck Hunter.
• Jin Ramen (Broadway and 125th) is a cheap delicious date spot right off the subway.
• Kazza Wine Bar (Broadway and 177th) is a chill intimate spot to grab a drink. They often have live music and poetry readings.
• La Marcha (Broadway and 170th) has yummy tapas and a great brunch special on weekends.

Fun Non-Alcohol Date Ideas:

• Chelsea Pier Golf Club driving range
• The High Line in Chelsea
• Picnic in Central Park
• Smorgasburg in Brooklyn
• Comedy Shows downtown
• Ice Skating in Central Park (during the winter)
• FREE Kayaking on the Hudson (select dates during summer)
• Any professional sports game (Islanders and Nets both in Brooklyn or baseball are the cheapest)

Places to Meet People the Old Fashioned Way (Aka More Social Bars):

• Standard Biergarten (Meatpacking District)
• Brass Monkey (Meatpacking District)
• SideBAR (15th and Irving)
• Johnny Utah’s (51st and 5th)
• Amity Hall (3rd Ave near Washington Square Park)
• Houston Hall (Houston and 7th)

~Matt White, P&S 2019, msw2164@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, engaged, 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!

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 you always have someone to “go home to”, you always have a “patient” on whom you can practice, there will always be someone who loves you after a long day, and you save a lot of time in the dating scenes. Communication is the key to every successful relationship, so communicate with your partner about school requirements, exam schedules, stress, happiness, and whatever. Also, don’t forget to spend dedicated quality time with your partner. Although we are all poor and busy medical students, you will always find time to go on short trips together or go to an event with great Columbia student discount.

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.

~Merry Ruan, P&S 2019, zr2187@columbia.edu
## Academic Resources

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Subject</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SSN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lilly textbook</td>
<td>Cardio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sketchy Medical</td>
<td>Infectious Disease Pharmacology</td>
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<td>Pathoma</td>
<td>Pathology</td>
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<td>Picmonic</td>
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<td>Costanzo Physiology textbook</td>
<td>Renal</td>
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<td>FIRST AID</td>
<td>USMLE Step 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karinja Notes</td>
<td>Everything!</td>
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<td>Eugene charts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Khan Academy videos</td>
<td>Great for physiology</td>
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<td>Sketchy Micro</td>
<td>MID</td>
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<td>Essential Anatomy app</td>
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<td>Dr. Carney’s drawings</td>
<td>Anatomy</td>
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<td>Jonah Rubin’s notes</td>
<td>Immunology</td>
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## Groceries

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<tr>
<th>Online</th>
<th>Fresh Direct</th>
<th><a href="https://www.freshdirect.com/welcome.jsp">Link</a></th>
<th>Delivery of groceries straight to your door; can be a little expensive, but super convenient!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peapod</td>
<td><a href="http://www.peapod.com/">http://www.peapod.com/</a></td>
<td>Same as Fresh Direct with potentially different prices - try 'em both!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Express</td>
<td><a href="https://www.google.com/expess/">Link</a></td>
<td>Get delivery from Costco, Fairway, Target, Walgreens, Staples, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Amazon Fresh</td>
<td><a href="https://fresh.amazon.com/welcome;jsessionid=9F27DDB4B652CE6AB7AB10F0C690F064">Link</a></td>
<td>Amazon's grocery delivery service, recently started delivering to Washington Heights; reasonable prices for delivering fresh goods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Pantry</td>
<td><a href="http://www.amazon.com/gp/pantry/info">Link</a></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Groceries</th>
<th>Key Foods</th>
<th>172nd &amp; St. Nicholas</th>
<th>Closer, but more expensive than Key Foods; 10% student discount on Thursdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Washington Heights</td>
<td>Gristedes</td>
<td>170th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Way better quality than Key Foods, comparable to slightly better pricing; surprisingly diverse selection of beer and hard cider; nice array of traditional Dominican foods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bravo</td>
<td>175th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C-Town!</td>
<td>161st &amp; St. Nicholas; 176th &amp; St. Nicholas</td>
<td>Crazy good sales on certain items</td>
</tr>
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<td>La Rosa</td>
<td>176th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Spaniard grocery with some relatively inexpensive specialty items; occasionally has better produce prices than Bravo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Associated</td>
<td>162nd &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Cheaper than Gristedes or Bravo; better quality than Key Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fruit and vegetable street vendors</td>
<td>169th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Take a gamble on some 50-cent avocados! Also sometimes has a good sampling of yummy Dominican fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer's markets</td>
<td>In front of Hammer (on Tuesdays); next to Bravo (on Thursdays, Jun-Nov)</td>
<td>Some people like to run there and take the 1 train back with their groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere in NYC</td>
<td>Trader Joe's</td>
<td>72nd &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Some people like to run there and take the 1 train back with their groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zabar's</td>
<td>80th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Some people like to run there and take the 1 train back with their groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole Foods</td>
<td>97th &amp; Columbus</td>
<td>Some people like to run there and take the 1 train back with their groceries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>West Side Market</td>
<td>110th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>If you're at the Morningside campus, this is a nice place to stop by for groceries; quality is good and lines aren't too long; somewhat pricey, though</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fairway</td>
<td>133rd &amp; 12th; 74th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td>Some people like to run there and take the 1 train back with their groceries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Washington Heights Restaurants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Washington Heights Lunch Spots</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tasty Deli</td>
<td>168th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Classic deli sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike’s Bagels</td>
<td>168th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great lunch bagels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeu Jeu</td>
<td>168th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Salads, Paninis, and Soups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilltop Perk</td>
<td>170th &amp; Haven</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lunch buffet or Sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tung Tong Thai</td>
<td>169th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awesome lunch special</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipotle</td>
<td>168th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Deli sandwiches and buffet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prestige</td>
<td>169th &amp; Ft Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subway</td>
<td>169th &amp; Ft Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Washington Heights Dinner or Brunch</th>
<th>What?</th>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coogan’s</td>
<td>169th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bar &amp; Grill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas BBQ</td>
<td>166th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>For frozen margaritas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi Yu</td>
<td>181st &amp; Ft Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saggio’s</td>
<td>181st &amp; Ft Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great ambiance, better Italian food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malecon</td>
<td>175 &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Dominican Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Marcha Cocina</td>
<td>171st &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Great Brunch special!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antika</td>
<td>165th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pizza &amp; Pasta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire Szechuan</td>
<td>170th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chinese and Japanese dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reme’s</td>
<td>169th &amp; Broadway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Amazing breakfast deal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Other Restaurants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Restaurant</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Harlem/ Morningside</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem Tavern</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinosaur BBQ</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Park 112</td>
<td>Awesome Brunch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange 67</td>
<td>Best underground cocktail bar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lido</td>
<td>For when your parents are in town</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem Food Bar</td>
<td>Burgers!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aritzia</td>
<td>For Ethiopian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin Ramen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Rooster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Ellington</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoma</td>
<td>More Ethiopian!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bier</td>
<td>For beer... duh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlem Public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper West Side</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob’s Pickles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ayurveda Cafe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Candle Cafe</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabriela’s</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cafe Lalo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calle Ocho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kefi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momoya</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacefood Cafe</td>
<td>Vegetarian/Vegan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton Chutney Company</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gluten Free in NYC?</strong></td>
<td>nobread.com</td>
<td>Will be your bff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blossom Du Jour</td>
<td>Take out on 9th Ave</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Beet</td>
<td>W. 50th Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LYFE Kitchen</td>
<td>W. 55th Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbocato</td>
<td>Expensive, on W. 55th Street</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>