July 8, 2016

Dear Class of 2020,

Welcome to Columbia College of Physicians & Surgeons! We hope you are enjoying the summer and we are looking forward to meeting you in August. This letter introduces you to an important component of your first semester of medical school. Please read it closely as it contains materials for you to review and return to us upon your arrival.

As part of the Foundations of Clinical Medicine I (FCM I) course, you will participate in a weekly clinical experience, referred to as Foundations Clerkships. Clerkships allow you to interact with patients and providers in a variety of health care settings in your new role as medical students. In some instances, you will have the opportunity to speak with patients and families and practice the interview techniques learned in lecture and seminar. In other instances, you will be learning by observation, keeping close attention to the interaction between patients and providers and to the context in which care is delivered. We will expect you to keep track of weekly experiences and bring back what you saw and heard and learned to seminar groups throughout the semester. You will also write two short essays based on what you noticed in clerkship, to be shared with your clerkship supervisor.

There will be two clerkship sessions in the course of the fall semester: Session A begins after Labor Day and lasts seven weeks, and Session B runs from late October until early-December, for six weeks. (Please note: Students placed at The Door, Callen-Lorde, or in the Brown Scholars program (see below) are expected to remain at these sites for the entire semester). Students are expected to participate in their clerkship for one 3-hour session each week, in the afternoons or early evenings. Clerkships are arranged so that they don’t conflict with your other medical school commitments and attendance each week is expected.

Most students work one-on-one with a supervisor (physician, nurse practitioner, physician assistant, nurse, social worker, physical therapist, occupational therapist, pastoral counselor) for one session, and then switch to a second clerkship for the remainder of the semester. Below are the exceptions, which continue for the entire semester:

1. **DANIEL NOYES BROWN SCHOLARSHIP**

Eight students will be selected to participate in a 4-year program in Primary Care. The goals are to teach students the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are at the core of longitudinal patient care and community health; provide one to one mentoring; and provide students with a home base during the four years of medical school. Students in this program will have a structured longitudinal four-year experience at a community-based clinic, with supervision by the same group of faculty at that practice. This clerkship does NOT involve extra course work; it affords the critical advantage of having many clinical experiences at the same site with a small group of outstanding faculty from the Department of Pediatrics and the Center for Family Medicine. **Students interested in being considered for this experience should complete the application that will be distributed during orientation.** Students who are not selected for the Brown Scholars program will be placed in another clerkship. If you have any questions, please email Dr. Heather Paladine (hlp11@columbia.edu) and/or Dr. Christine Krause (mck2013@columbia.edu).
2. THE DOOR: INTEGRATED YOUTH SERVICES

The Door is located in the Soho area of Manhattan and easily reached by the A train. This internationally acclaimed multiservice center serves youth between the ages of 12 and 24. The Door’s services include: (1) a counseling center for crisis intervention, counseling and substance abuse prevention, (2) legal services and support groups for special populations such as runaway and homeless youth, (3) a learning center which provides GED classes, college preparation classes, vocational workshops and job placement services, (4) a creative and physical arts center, and (5) a primary health care clinic. Six medical students assist the Door’s intake/membership service staff by completing comprehensive psychosocial assessments. Students do not work in the health center. For more information about The Door, visit their website at www.door.org.

3. CALLEN-LORDE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Callen-Lorde is one of the country’s best known health care facilities that focus on the health of LGBTQ community. The clinic is located in the Chelsea neighborhood of Manhattan, and easily accessed by A or C trains. Two students will work with CL clinicians and remain at that site for both Session A and Session B on Monday evenings. To learn more about Callen-Lorde, visit their website at http://callen-lorde.org.

To help us arrange placements for both Sessions A and B, please answer the few questions on the Clerkship Pre-Assignment Questionnaire no later than Friday, August 19th. This questionnaire is meant to identify students who may have additional commitments (e.g. childcare obligations) that would affect their participation in any particular clerkship. It is not meant for students to express preference for a specific site or medical specialty. If you are interested in one of the semester-long clerkships described above, you can indicate as such on the form.

You will be notified of your Session A clerkship assignment by Friday, August 26th. This will provide you with ample time to contact your supervisor by email and complete any paperwork you may need before your first visit in September.

If you have questions about the clerkship experience before you arrive, please contact the clerkship director Dr. Urmi Desai (uad2101@cumc.columbia.edu) or the clerkship coordinator Meghan Cahill (mc4103@cumc.columbia.edu). Once you arrive on campus, you can visit Dr. Desai’s office located at 701 W 168th St, 2nd Floor, Suite 201.

Enjoy the rest of your summer vacation, and please be sure to read The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down and The Health Care Handbook before you arrive. These two books will certainly get you primed for Foundations of Clinical Medicine and for your clerkship experience!

Best Wishes,

Delphine Taylor, MD
Urmi Desai, MD, MS
Meghan Cahill, MPH (candidate)