



University of Colorado
School of Medicine
Class of 2016
MSI Handbook



A Letter From Your Editors:

Tracey Jordan: “Dr. Spaceman, when they check my DNA, will it tell what diseases I might get, or help me to remember my ATM pin code?”

Dr. Leo Spaceman: “Absolutely. Science is whatever we want it to be.”

Your path to medical school has been paved with late nights studying, volunteering on weekends, countless exams, personal essays, brutal standardized tests, and anxiety-inducing interviews. But now you’ve arrived and all of that is behind you. We’re just kidding, you’re going to work really hard, but you knew that when you signed up to become a physician. And while it is not true that medicine is whatever we want it to be, your first year of medical school is whatever you make of it. To help you make the best of your first year, the Class of 2015 has assembled this student guidebook, nay, tome of wisdom, in hopes of answering your questions and alleviating your concerns. Included is a lot of useful information we’ve accumulated from our own experiences, some information we straight up plagiarized from previous student handbooks, directly from our classmates via Google survey, conversations we’ve overheard, and some of it we just plain made up.¹

So, while this guide will not give you all the answers (remember: the Cremasters are not just a great football team, they also ascend the testicles). We hope it covers most of the bases and proves useful for your transition into medical school at the University of Colorado and throughout your first year. We have created sections on each of your classes, so please use this as a reference all year long.

Congratulations on your acceptance to medical school. And please, recycle after use.²

Sincerely,

Rebecca and Meredith³

¹ Plagiarism is strongly discouraged by the University’s Honor Code, the oldest student-monitored medical school honor code in the country. Also, we were joking about making stuff up. You hope.

² Congratulations on reading this much of the handbook.

³ School of Medicine, University of Colorado at Denver, Aurora, CO. The authors report no financial conflicts of interest, as both are waist deep in debt.

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I. Before You Get To The Classroom

In the months before medical school, you will be bombarded with paperwork, timelines, deadlines, and various administrative requirements that have to be dealt with – all at the same time as you are looking for somewhere to live and trying to accept that you're really a medical student. Much of this does involve tedious paperwork that must be waded through, but your first week of school will go so much easier if it is all in order before your arrival. This section of the handbook will help you deal with some of this drudgery.

A. Funding Your Medical Education

One of the biggest concerns for every incoming medical school student is the prospect of approximately \$200,000 of debt accumulating over four years. There is no easy way to pay for medical school, and for most of us, the cost will be supported by a seemingly staggering amount of government loans. There are however, a few creative ways (for those interested in them) to avoid this debt load.

FAFSA and Financial Aid:

Hopefully, you'll have completed several of these steps by the time that you sit down to read this handbook, but here is an outline of the traditional FAFSA/Financial Aid process.

January 2012:

Start working on and complete your 2011 Federal Income Tax Return. Completion of this document and confirmation of its receipt is required prior to your being able to complete the FAFSA application.

After finishing your taxes, head to www.fafsa.ed.gov and begin to fill out your financial aid application. The sooner you do this the better - scholarships and grant money that depend on income can run out quickly.

Important Information: the UCSOM FAFSA code is 004508
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If your 2011 taxes do not reflect your current income for any reason (e.g. if you will stop working when you start school,), then you can file a "Reconsideration of Income Appeal." This may change your "EFC" (the amount of money the university thinks it is reasonable for you to contribute to your education), and it may affect loans for which you qualify. It may also make you eligible for grants the school has reserved for low-income students. Once you start school, you will probably be classified as low-income unless you have a partner who works, or other special circumstances.

There are also "Increase to Budget" forms for increasing your aid if you have special circumstances such as buying a computer, childcare expenses, or high medical/dental expenses.

There is also a little known category of "negative income," which is particularly relevant for students with children. Talk to the Financial Aid Office for more details.

It is also time to start looking for scholarship money! As a public school, CUSOM doesn't have a huge endowment to draw on for scholarships. There are some special scholarships available, which you will hear about in the spring and others that you will automatically be considered for based on your financial situation. However, it is important to keep your eyes open for other available scholarships. One useful website is: www.fastweb.com. Scholarship information is also posted on the Accepted Student Website:

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/education/Admissions/AcceptedStudents/Pages/AcceptedStudents.aspx>

April-June 2012:

In April you will start receiving award letters from the schools to which you have been accepted. These award letters will detail the amount of money that will be given to you and where the money will come from.

It is important to remember that you can accept all, part or none of this loan money. Be deliberate in the loans that you choose to accept or decline. Examine interest rates, write out a budget, talk with parents or spouses, etc. Determine the minimum amount that you can easily live off of and try not to accept loans beyond that amount. Scholarships and grants from medical schools will be included on these reward letters but outside monies will not be included, so be sure to keep in mind any external sources of funds that you may have.

To accept loans of this amount, you have read information provided by FAFSA that imparts knowledge about loan repayment. These modules will be followed by exams that have to be passed in order for you to receive the loan - SO PAY ATTENTION.

Do not hesitate to contact the University of Colorado Financial Aid office at 303-724-8039 with any questions that you may have about anything money related.

Ten Tips For Saving Money

- 1) Sign up for as many lunch lectures as you can- they almost always provide free food. Make sure to take advantage of any leftovers.
- 2) Utilize the ARC thrift store or Nordstrom Rack to begin your professional wardrobe.
- 3) Instead of getting an apartment, just sleep in a humidior...no one will notice the smell - at least during anatomy.
- 4) Go home as often as you can and steal food from your parents. Their pantries are there for a reason.
- 5) Watch television shows online - don't pay for cable. Laptops and the Internet are also there for a reason.
- 6) Let the dental students check out your teeth so you don't need to pay for dental insurance (seriously, they have free clinics).
- 7) Duct tape. It seriously can fix anything.
- 8) Ride a bike everywhere you go. Better yet, get a tandem bike and bikepool to school.
- 9) Write all your notes on a white board to save on paper.
- 10) Go to business school instead.

A Little About NHSC and HPSP

If the idea of \$200,000 in debt is a little intimidating, there are several national programs that offer full scholarships to medical school in exchange for an obligation of service.

The **NHSC (National Health Services Corps)** provides both a scholarship and loan repayment program. The scholarship provides full coverage of tuition, fees and books as well as a living stipend. For each year the NHSC pays for, scholars must give one year of service. The NHSC restricts the types of residencies its members can participate in and if a scholar decides to go into a non-NHSC approved residency they must pay the debt back in triple. The loan repayment program allows residents of approved specialties to receive \$50,000 in loan repayment for two years of service. (hhs.gov/hrsa)

The **HPSP (Health Professions Scholarship Program)** is a military program that also provides significant support in exchange for a service obligation in one of the branches of the US Armed Forces. The scholarship pays for all expenses associated with medical school and a monthly living stipend. Students are required to serve 45 days of active duty each fiscal year while in school and are required to apply and to accept military residencies (though students may apply for a civilian deferment.) (goarmy.com/amedd/education/hpsp.html)

B. The Summer Checklist

When you're not stressing about funding four years of medical school, be thinking about your "Summer Checklist." Below, we've listed a few of the things that you want to take care of before your first day!

- Health Insurance ✓
- Vaccinations ✓
- Confidentiality Forms/Video Release ✓
- Housing ✓
- Also...
- Official Transcripts ✓
- "Hard-Copy" Facebook Information ✓
- HIPAA Guidelines ✓
- Recording Policy ✓
- Matriculating Student Questionnaire ✓
- CU Contract ✓
- Verification of Residency Form ✓
- Student Data Sheet ✓

Health Insurance

The University of Colorado requires all students to have FULL coverage health insurance. One would think that since we are a MEDICAL school that this would be straightforward. Unfortunately, this is something else to give a lot of consideration, prior to starting medical school.

The UCSOM provides an insurance plan to its students at around \$2200 per year per person. Routine dental and vision care are NOT included. You can find additional information at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/student-health/Pages/default.aspx>

If you decide that you do not want to enroll in the school's insurance plan you must enroll or be enrolled in an equivalent full insurance program. Catastrophic or short-term insurance does not qualify. What do we mean by an equivalent plan? UCSOM will not allow you to sign up for a plan that has a deductible higher than \$1000. You can find a list of requirements at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/student-health/insurance/Pages/Waiving-Health-Insurance.aspx>. Remember that with recent changes in healthcare and health insurance, students can now remain on their parents' health insurance until the age of 26. Make sure to consider all of your options carefully when choosing which healthcare plan to accept.

If you have questions about student health insurance, or problems with the insurance company, contact LaVerne Loechel at 303-724-7674 or at Laverne.loechel@ucdenver.edu. She is extremely helpful and very understanding of how difficult it can be to navigate the world of health insurance. If you have not received an insurance card and need one early in the fall semester (your card won't arrive until late September, though you ARE insured) you may get a temporary card from LaVerne.

C. Buying a Computer and/or Smart Phone

Computers:

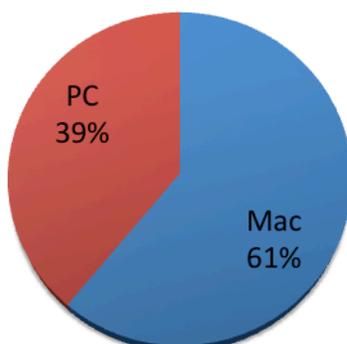
Let us make this clear from the get go: Computers are pretty much essential for medical school, but YOU DO NOT NEED TO BUY A NEW COMPUTER FOR MEDICAL SCHOOL. If you have a functioning computer with some available memory and wireless capabilities, you will be just fine.

If you do need or want to buy a new computer, the School of Medicine has instituted some minimum requirements for laptop computers (listed below.) The school also has discounts available with several vendors and you can even take additional loan money to buy a new computer at the start of school. If you have questions about hardware Vaquero Cooper is your go-to man. You can contact him at 303-724-1937 or vaquero.cooper@ucdenver.edu.

Minimum Requirements

PC and Mac Hardware:
80 GB Hard Drive 1.0 GB RAM (2 GB Recommended)
CD-ROM or DVD-ROM drive
Video card
Macs only: Intel based mac systems for both desktops and laptops
PCs only: Pentium 4- 2.0 GHz-processor or faster

Mac or PC?



In regard to the eternal question, PC or Mac, we decided to leave it up to our class. Based on a class survey, we have the following breakdown:

Both computers styles will work perfectly well, and it is truly based on personal preference. If you decide to go with a Mac, make sure that you have PowerPoint and Word or their equivalent programs, since almost all lectures are accompanied by PowerPoint presentations and lecture outlines. The IT department is most skilled at assisting with PC problems, but has just recently begun supporting Microsoft programs on the Mac.

Smart Phones:

In our first year of medical school, it has been repeatedly mentioned that smart phones will be extremely helpful during the clinical years. iPhones, the iPod Touch, and various other smart phones have a multitude of helpful applications – Netter’s Flash Cards, GFlashPro, Epocrates, iFlipr, Anki, etc. Some of us do NOT have smart phones, and we aren’t advising that you run out and purchase one, but it is definitely something to keep in mind.

D. Vaccinations

Students are required to have a number of immunizations prior to matriculation. You will complete an Immunization Certification Form, which will become part of your student records. Sean Spellman in the Office of Student Affairs will notify you if you are missing any of your required immunizations. Most immunizations are pretty standard, but the one to keep in mind is the PPD. UCSOM requires a two-step PPD to be performed, meaning that you receive one PPD, have it read, receive a second PPD within two weeks, and have it read again. Both tests need to be negative; otherwise you will need to follow-up. The caveat is that if you have had a PPD within the past year, you can skip the second test. There will be a PPD clinic the first couple of weeks of school. Last year it was \$30 without UCD insurance, and free with it. If that’s all you need, you can also get it taken care of at Walgreens and other drugstores.

It is the student’s responsibility to stay current on all immunizations. Where to go to gain updates is a personal choice often decided by the health insurance coverage you have. If you have student health insurance through the school one of your better options is an on-campus provider- Environmental Health and Safety 303-724-0345. The Student Affairs office has listings for other clinics that can assist you with immunizations.

Words of Wisdom:

“Make sure you get your immunizations before school starts- it is hard in anatomy because there are so many afternoon sessions.”

E. Housing

Denver and Aurora hold a plethora of housing options. Where you live depends on several factors like how much you want to spend, how you would like to get to school and what resources you would like to have around you. We want to highlight a couple of the areas and some of their advantages and disadvantages.

21 Fitzsimmons

Proximity to School: On Campus

Price: 1 Bedroom: \$895-\$1195; 2 Bedroom: \$1142-\$1819

Advantages: It doesn’t get any closer than this! If class starts at 8:00 am you are rolling out of bed at 7:45 and still walking in five minutes early. You won’t have to pay for on-campus parking, can cut down on eating out by making the short trek home for lunch and dinner and have a pool, hot tub and workout facility on site. All of the apartments are new and in great condition.

Disadvantages: Price. Remember, you have to budget now and when you are living off of \$1500 a month, spending \$900 on rent is rough. You are far away from a lot of Denver’s nightlife and restaurants and great outdoors. If you are a person who needs to get away after a long day in class, you never really get to escape from campus.

East Colfax/Near to School including Copper Flats

Proximity to School: Walkable or Bikeable

Price: Low-Mid

Advantages: Again, you are very close to school and if your dream was to walk or bike to school while being off campus, this is your best bet. Prices on houses and apartments are generally low which will give you a lot of extra cash to spend on other things like driving to the mountains. If you can find a couple of roommates, rental houses are very cheap and usually in good condition.

Disadvantages: While our campus is new, many areas on East Colfax have not caught up. While many apartment complexes are undergoing major renovations to attract medical school students, some are just not there. Remember, although an apartment or house can look great on the internet; make sure to check it out in person before signing a lease. The area lacks a lot of good restaurants (except for the Taquerias) or bars but has bus access to Denver and is developing.

Stapleton

Proximity to School: 4-5 miles

Price: Mid-High

Advantages: Stapleton is a new development close to school with a lot around it including a town center, new grocery stores and Northfield Mall a stones throw away. There is a wide price range in Stapleton ranging from very affordable to fairly costly. There are also several new townhomes for rent or to purchase if you are looking to buy. In addition, many of the Stapleton apartments give medical school students discounts on rent, security deposits etc. A pretty nice deal.

Disadvantages: There is no real nightlife in Stapleton to speak of. If you are looking for that nightcap after an evening of studying you may be hard pressed to find it. Some also describe the Stapleton area as "Pleasantville." Your ability to get to school without driving is totally dependent on how motivated you are to bike or get to a bus stop.

Lowry

Proximity to School: 4-5 miles (~10min drive, 15 with traffic)

Price: Low-Mid

Advantages: Lowry is a quieter residential area built on an old air force base and in many ways is comparable to Stapleton, although it's a bit older. Like Stapleton, Lowry has a town center with some shops, a grocery store, and restaurants. While Lowry does not have much of a nightlife, the Lowry Tavern is a laid-back neighborhood bar and grill with a big patio and good deals during football games. Underneath the Tavern is also the Soiled Dove Underground, a hip and intimate concert venue featuring many local artists. Also, Lowry is not far from the Cherry Creek shopping area, with many nice restaurants, bars, and the most upscale mall in Denver (just in case you want to blow your loan money at Louis Vuitton or Burberry).

Disadvantages: While some people can certainly bike to school from Lowry, most drive. Downtown Denver is about a 25-minute drive.

Colorado and Colfax/Old Campus Area

Proximity to School: 6-8 miles

Price: \$400-\$700

Advantages: The Colorado and Colfax area is loaded with apartments, condos and houses available for rent or purchase at affordable prices. Many developers and apartments are still struggling with the drop of tenants from the movement of the school and are offering great

move-in deals. There are several great bars and restaurants close by and when the class celebrates after tests, you should be within walking distance of your house. Downtown is a short bus or car drive away as well. The bus (15 or 15L) runs straight down Colfax to school if you do not want to drive. There are also several parks close by for running or playing with the dog.

Disadvantages: It is a little hike from home to campus. The bus is great if you are good about waking up 15 minutes earlier to catch it and want to leave school at a reasonable time. If you are not a morning person expect to drive and pay for a parking space on campus. The closer you get to downtown the pricier it can get.

Downtown

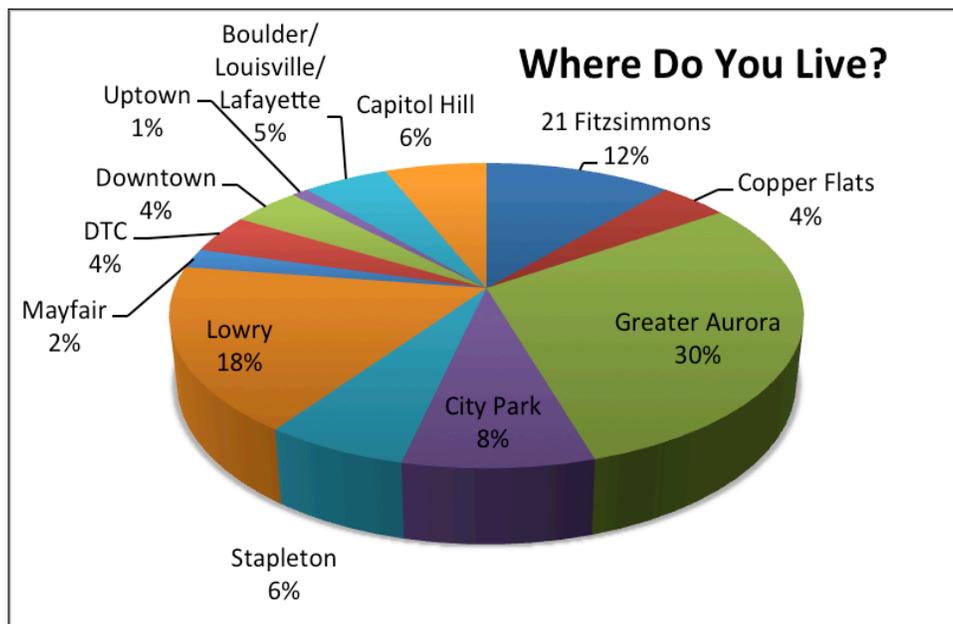
Proximity to School: 10-12 miles

Price: High

Advantages: Welcome to Denver. You are in the heart of city, which is filled with great places to eat, drink and study. If you still want to continue your college glory days, this is place to do it. Downtown has several great running paths and parks for the active individual and provides a great escape from school when you are off campus. It is easy to hop on the highway and be at school within 15-20 min.

Disadvantages: If living downtown, you pretty much need to buy a parking pass and drive. There is not a direct bus that heads to campus. Apartments downtown can get pricey and you may have to pay for certain amenities. Also, if you are not a morning person it may be hard to motivate yourself to get out of bed to head to school, especially if it is cold outside.

Class of 2015 says:



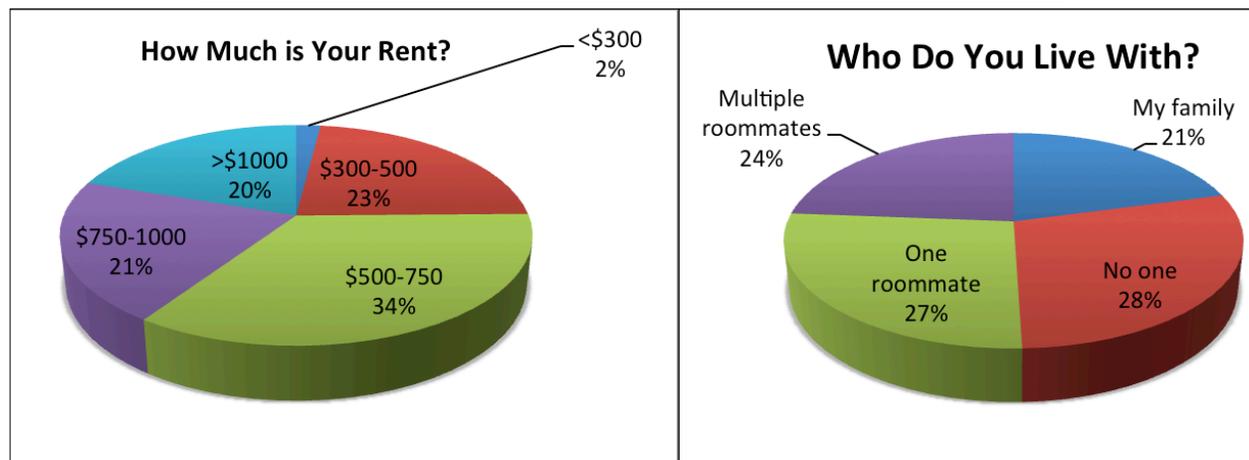
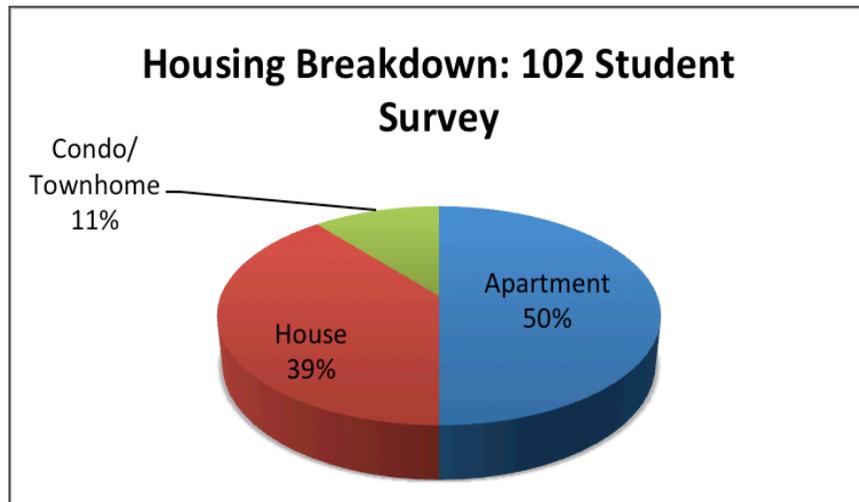
How To Find Housing

The Student Assistance Office keeps current listings of housing online. Always consider Craigslist or linking up with future roommates on Facebook to find people in need of roommates or looking to fill the extra room in their place. People have different opinions on whether or not you should live with another medical student. Although living with med students can be great (they understand what you're going through and can be awesome study partners), it can also be an additional stress (two med students in a room tend to only talk about med school). Just make sure that when you are deciding, you go with what will work best for you and don't put too much weight into what someone else says you should do.

In addition, there are several resources in the area to help. Housing Helpers is a great FREE resource that can help show you apartments in your price range. It is to your advantage to take the time to find a place you are comfortable living. A miserable life at home can lead to a miserable time at school.

If you are considering buying a place there are many condos and houses on the market that are taking awhile to sell. There are many houses that are bank owned and affordable but will take a lot of fixing up. When buying a place, consider what you will want to do with it after you graduate and how the resell will be. In addition, you do a lot of moving around third and fourth year with rotations and interviews and may only be in the Denver/Aurora consistently during your first two years. While buying is a good investment for some (here's to you MSTPs) it may not be for others.

Class of 2015 says:



II. When You Get Here...

Whether you are a Colorado native or just moving here for the first time, odds are you have a lot of questions about your new home for the next several years. We are here to help! This section of the handbook is dedicated to giving advice and recommendations on housing, transportation, eateries and the like.

Need a good place to study with a decent cup of coffee or maybe something for dinner? We have some recommendations for you. These are probably biased and always subject to change, so take them for what they are worth. Odds are you will find your favorite places over time. We are just giving you a place to start.

A. Welcome to Denver

A Denver Native's Guide to Getting Around Denver

So you're saying that you're not an expert on the ins and outs of Denver city streets? If you are given an address in Denver, you are telling me you don't have the foggiest idea what part of the city it is in? Now, I know we are all Google maps experts, and most of us have access to this on our phones, but as a Denver native, I would like to at least give you a quick guide to navigating this fair city; also, you can sound like a total expert when talking to your new classmates. So pull up a map of Denver on your browser, and here are a few key steps to orienting yourself:



- 1) Denver streets are based on a grid system. There are a few glaring exceptions, namely downtown, which happens to be at a 45° angle.
- 2) East-west streets are avenues. North-south streets are streets.
- 3) Colfax is the main thoroughfare going east-west through Denver. Other big ones (from north to south) are Montview, 6th Ave, Alameda, Evans, and Hampden. Major north-south (from west to east) include: Kipling, Wadsworth, Sheridan, Santa Fe, University, Colorado, Monaco, Quebec, Havana, Peoria, Chambers, Buckley).
- 4) The center point of most addresses in Denver and the surrounding metro area is the intersection of Broadway and Ellsworth. Broadway runs south (and then north-south as you move south through Denver), and Ellsworth runs east-west.
 - a. Any address south of Ellsworth will have an "S." in front of the street name. Any address north of Ellsworth will not.
 - i. So now you know that 3215 E. Colfax is 32 blocks east of Broadway on Colfax.
 - b. Any address west of Broadway will have a "W." in front of the street name. Any address east of Broadway will have an "E."

- 5) As you move north of Ellsworth, the streets are numbered. The major exceptions are as follows: 15th Ave = Colfax, 20th Ave = Montview, 30th Ave = Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
- 6) South of Ellsworth doesn't have any unifying pattern except a chunk of avenues named after states, but you could tell that something at 1476 S. Pearl Street is between 14 and 15 blocks south of Ellsworth (and ~30 blocks south of Colfax).
- 7) As you move west of Broadway, the street names will go alphabetical, and they will generally start over when they hit Z.
- 8) As you move east of Broadway, the street names have no real pattern, until you hit Colorado Blvd. Then you will encounter a double alphabet with the second street being a plant name.

If you have more questions or want to honor in finding your way around the city, please find Christie Osborne, resident Denver nerd.

B. Transportation and Parking – Getting To and From Class

Transportation

During your first and second year, you won't necessarily need a car. Getting around by bike and bus is relatively easy, and can save you a lot of money. However, there are a couple of reasons that you might want to have one; it gives you a lot more flexibility in matching with a Foundations preceptor, and you'll almost certainly need a car for your third and fourth year rotations, since you can be (and likely will be) assigned to sites in rural Colorado.

If you're buying a car and you're new to Denver, you should know that winters here aren't as cold and snowy as you might imagine! Even after a big storm, snow melts pretty quickly. You do not need a four-wheel drive for getting around, nor a block heater for freezing cold nights. A good set of snow tires will give you plenty of traction.

Parking

If you want to park on campus, you need to apply for a parking permit at the Parking Office, located on the ground floor of Building 500. The phone number is 303.724.2555; more information about lots and rates is available at <http://www.ucdenver.edu/about/departments/FacilitiesManagement/ParkingMaps/Pages/MapsInformation.aspx>.

Expect passes to be around \$35 a month. One nice option is a carpool parking pass – if your roommate is a medical student as well, you can purchase one pass to share and then you split the cost. You can also pay for single day parking in the Georgetown guest lot for \$5 a day.

Another option is to pay a one-time \$10 “activation” fee that allows you to park in permit parking after 6pm on weekdays and all day on weekends. While parking in the Georgetown lot is only \$1 during those times, this pass will easily pay for itself!

If you're trying to escape paying for parking, there are a couple of secret places you can park for free on campus. Behind the Fitzsimmons 21 apartments there a couple of spots that are available, but remember they are limited and if you show up to school later than 8:00 they are probably all gone. In addition, you can try leaving your wheels in the neighborhoods surrounding

the campus, but we don't really know how accepting local businesses and residents will be of unidentified vehicles. You might return to find your car on blocks, sans-stereo, or even missing altogether. Some free advice: don't chance it. Either pay for a parking permit, use your bus pass, or hoof it.

Commuting

Some students commute from as far away as Highlands Ranch, Castle Rock, Longmont, and Boulder. The happiest commuters are people who enjoy driving or riding the bus, and who like to get up at 5 a.m., even when it's pitch-black outside. If this is you, get an MP3 player so you can listen to exciting lecture recordings during the commute time. If you prefer to get up later and hate driving, then don't plan a long commute.

RTD

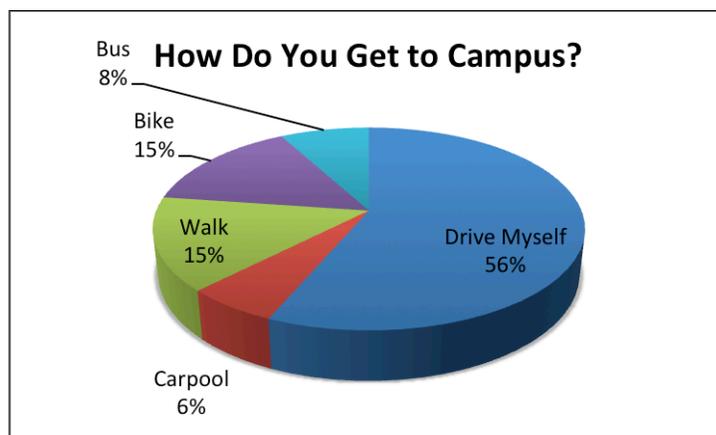
RTD is the Front Range public transit service and as a student at the University of Colorado you will get a bus pass. There are several buses that run to campus including the #20 which runs from Stapleton to right in front of Building 500 and the #15 and #15L which run down Colfax to campus. RTD also has many buses running downtown, and to the airport. Don't forget that your pass works on the light rail downtown. To check bus schedules and routes go to: www.rtd-denver.com

Biking

You can ride your bike to school most days of the year, given the abundant sunshine, but consider buying fenders and some lightweight rain gear for afternoon thunderstorms. We also recommend investing in lights for your bike as it is illegal in Colorado to ride at night without them.

It's pretty unlikely that your bike will be stolen or vandalized as long as you lock it up on campus, but to be on the safe side, don't bring your \$3,000 full suspension carbon-fiber mountain bike with disc brakes and lock it with a wimpy cable. If you're worried, buy a cheap cruiser on Craig's List. Also, if you buy a Kryptonite U-lock and your bike is stolen, they'll replace your bike!

Bike racks live in front of every building on campus, either alone or in groups.



C. Coffee and Food: When You Are on Campus

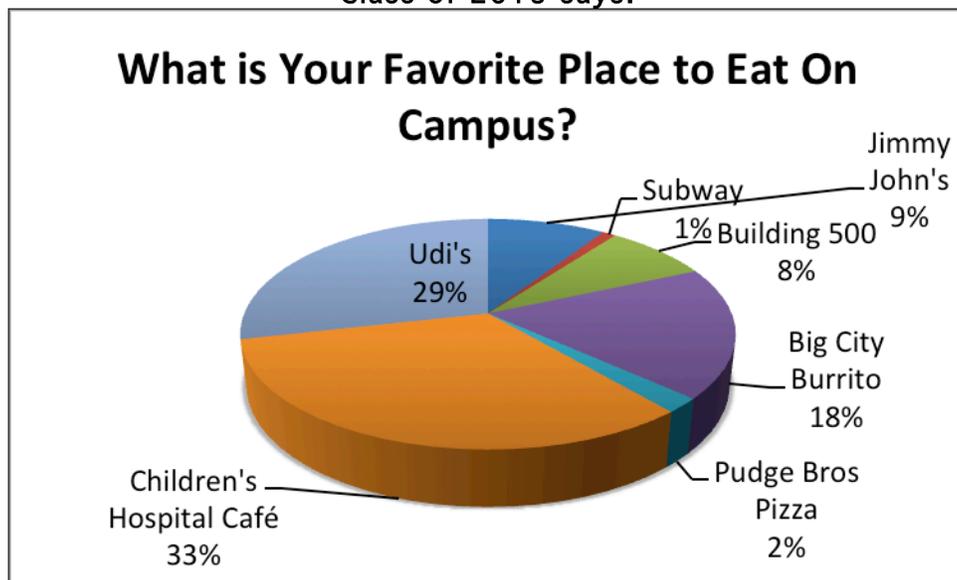
Coffee on Campus

- *Children's Hospital*: The only coffee shop open during the weekend.
 - *Dazbog*: 6:00-5:00
- *First Floor of Ed2 North*: 7:30-2:00
 - *Library*: 7:30-2:00
 - *Bookstore*: 7:30-2:00
 - *Udi's*: 7:00-3:00

Food on Campus

- *Children's/UCH Cafeterias*
- *Restaurant area*: Subway, Jimmy John's, Pudge Brother's Pizza, Marble Slab Creamery, Big City Burrito
 - *RC2*: Udi's Deli
- *Building 500*: Wok'n'Roll, Mama Alvino's Pizza, Bookstore Brew

Class of 2015 says:

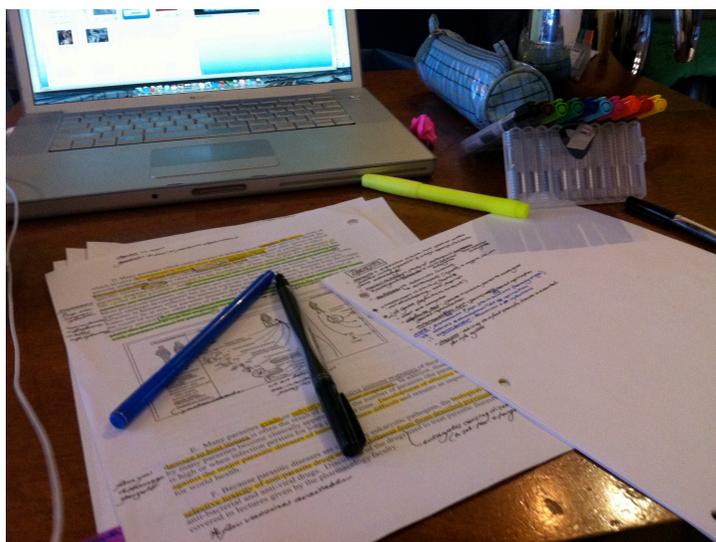


C. When You Are Off Campus

Coffee Choices Off Campus

- *Caribou Coffee*: Close to campus and open later (closes at 9 PM) than the shops at school when you are studying late.
 - *Daz Bog*: Multiple shops around the Denver area . Always a good cup of coffee.
 - *Starbucks*: You may have heard of it.
- *St. Mark's*: Usually packed with medical school students, has free Wi-Fi and study space, closes at midnight. 17th and Vine
- *Hooked on Colfax*: Free Wi-Fi, a porch and basement equipped with comfy couches. Closes at 10pm. Colfax & Steele

- *Pablo's*: In Capitol Hill, so there are less medical students around and they have great coffee, but they don't offer free Wi-Fi, closes at 10. 6th and Washington.
- *The Point*: New coffee shop in Five Points (closer to downtown), free Wi-Fi, great coffee and food, closes at 9. 26th and Welton. Open until 9 PM.
- *Stella's*: Closer to DU, but if you want to get away from medical students, and hang out with law school types and undergrads, this is the place to go. Pearl & Florida. Open until 11 PM Sunday-Thursday and midnight Friday and Saturday nights.



Food Off Campus
Class of 2014 says...

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>Zip code</u>
Taste of Saigon	\$	11697 East Colfax Avenue	Aurora	CO	80010
Ethiopian Restaurant	\$	2816 East Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80206
Africana Café #2	\$	5091 East Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80220
Chipotle	\$	13700 East Colfax Avenue	Aurora	CO	80011
Pho Duy Restaurant II	\$	3371 Peoria Street	Aurora	CO	80010
Noodles & Co.	\$	13700 East Colfax Avenue	Aurora	CO	80010
Panera	\$	240 Milwaukee Street	Denver	CO	80206
Pho 75	\$	2050 South Havana Street	Aurora	CO	80014
Pho 79 III	\$	1080 South Havana Street	Aurora	CO	80012
Qdoba	\$	200 Quebec Street	Denver	CO	80230
Spicy Pickle	\$	13700 East Colfax Avenue	Aurora	CO	80010
St. Marks	\$	2019 E 17th Avenue	Denver	CO	80206
Sue of Siam	\$	106 Del Mar Circle	Aurora	CO	80011
Swing Thai	\$	845 Colorado Boulevard	Denver	CO	80206
Thai Flavor	\$	1014 South Peoria Street	Aurora	CO	80012
Barolo Grill	\$\$	3030 East 6th Avenue	Denver	CO	80206
BJ's Brewery	\$\$	14442 East Cedar Avenue	Aurora	CO	80012
Cheesecake Factory	\$\$	1201 16th St. #100	Denver	CO	80202
Cherry Cricket	\$\$	2641 East 2nd Avenue	Denver	CO	80206

Emilio's	\$\$	338 East Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80203
Hapa	\$\$	2780 East 2nd Avenue	Denver	CO	80206
Dozen's	\$\$	236 West 13th Avenue	Denver	CO	80202
John Holly's	\$\$	2422 South Downing Street	Denver	CO	80210
Kona	\$\$	3800 East 1st Ave #184	Denver	CO	80206
Govnr's Park Tavern	\$\$	672 Logan Street	Denver	CO	80203
Pasquini's	\$\$	1336 East 17th Avenue	Denver	CO	80218
Potager	\$\$	1109 Ogden Street	Denver	CO	80218
Root Down	\$\$	1600 West 33rd Avenue	Denver	CO	80211
Cheeky Monk	\$\$	534 East Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80203
Vine Street Pub	\$\$	1700 Vine Street	Denver	CO	80206
WaterCourse	\$\$	837 East 17th Avenue #103	Denver	CO	80218
Fogo de Chao	\$\$\$	1513 Wynkoop Street	Denver	CO	80202
Lala's	\$\$\$	410 East 7th Avenue	Denver	CO	80203
The Market	\$\$\$	1445 Larimer Square	Denver	CO	80202
Earls	\$\$\$	140-1600 Glenarm Place	Denver	CO	80202
Jax Fish House	\$\$\$	1539 17th Street	Denver	CO	80202

Bars

Name	Neighborhood	Address	City	State	Zip code
Irish Snug	Capitol Hill	1201 E. Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80218
Kinga's Lounge	Capitol Hill	1509 Marion Street	Denver	CO	80218
Park Tavern	Capitol Hill	931 E. 11th Avenue	Denver	CO	80218
Govnr's Park	Capitol Hill	672 Logan Street	Denver	CO	80203
The Fainting Goat	Capitol Hill	846 Broadway	Denver	CO	80203
Atomic Cowboy	Colfax & Colorado	3237 E. Colfax Avenue	Denver	CO	80206
Mezcal	Colfax & Colorado	3230 E. Colfax Ave	Denver	CO	80206
Goosetown Tavern	Colfax & Colorado	3242 E. Colfax Ave	Denver	CO	80206
Rock Bar	Colfax & Colorado	3015 E. Colfax Ave	Denver	CO	80206
Tratorria	Colfax & Colorado	3201 E. Colfax Ave	Denver	CO	80206
Baker Street Pub	DTC	8101 E. Belleview Ave	Denver	CO	80237
Old Chicago	DU	1280 S. Colorado Blvd.	Denver	CO	80246
Z Cuisine	Highlands	2239 W. 30th Ave	Denver	CO	80211
Croc's	LoDo	1630 Market Street	Denver	CO	80202
Cru	LoDo	1442 Larimer Street	Denver	CO	80202
Red Square	LoDo	1512 Larimer Street	Denver	CO	80202
Gin Mill	LoDo	2041 Larimer Street	Denver	CO	80205
Wynkoop	LoDo	1634 18th Street	Denver	CO	80202
Hi Dive	South Broadway	7 South Broadway	Denver	CO	80209
Sputnik	South Broadway	3 South Broadway	Denver	CO	80209
The Hornet	South Broadway	76 Broadway	Denver	CO	80203
The Thin Man	Uptown	2015 E. 17th Ave	Denver	CO	80206
Uptown Tavern	Uptown	538 E. 17th Ave	Denver	CO	80203
Vine Street Pub	Uptown	1700 Vine Street	Denver	CO	80206

D. Other Activities

Life Outside School

Before you were a medical student, you were an artist, an athlete, a traveler, a volunteer, an altruist, a gym rat, a bookworm, a runner, a skier, a musician, an actor, a movie-watcher, a golfer, a climber, a chef, an activist, a couch potato, a friend, a spouse, a writer And now that you are in medical school, you need to continue to be all those things. Those are the things that got you accepted (no one cares what your MCAT score is anymore) and those are the things that you will have after you retire. Everyone has their own formula for maintaining balance, but here are a few things to consider.



Words of Wisdom

What are some of your favorite things to do outside of school?

Common answers include: hike, run, bike, ski, snowboard, rock climb, frisbee, catch up on non-school reading

“I love to spend time in the mountains, especially hiking or snowboarding! It’s my time to get away from med school, let go of stress and worry and be completely present. It sure beats Aurora!”

“Blues dancing in The Highlands; rock climbing at the gym in Thornton; guitar playing and singing with friends; brunch/lunch/dinner/drinks with friends; sleep in; runs in City Park.”

“Salsa dancing, Symphony (student discount tickets for \$10), Massages”

“Snowboard, run, hike, eat sushi, go to the Rockies/Nuggets, Comedy Works”

“Err... life outside of school??? Get a pass and ski every other Saturday during the season, I didn't do it enough but when I did I was always happy about my decision. Frankly, taking a day off is essential to being productive during the rest of the week.”

“Climb, ski, drink, sleep, go to the gym, catch up on hulu, try to keep my long distance relationship alive...”

Intramural Sports and Working Out

There are lots of opportunities to participate in sports, from organized basketball, volleyball, soccer, and other sports to informal "Sports Fridays" on Friday afternoons. Many med students are runners, cyclists, swimmers, climbers, and skiers, so it's easy to find workout partners.

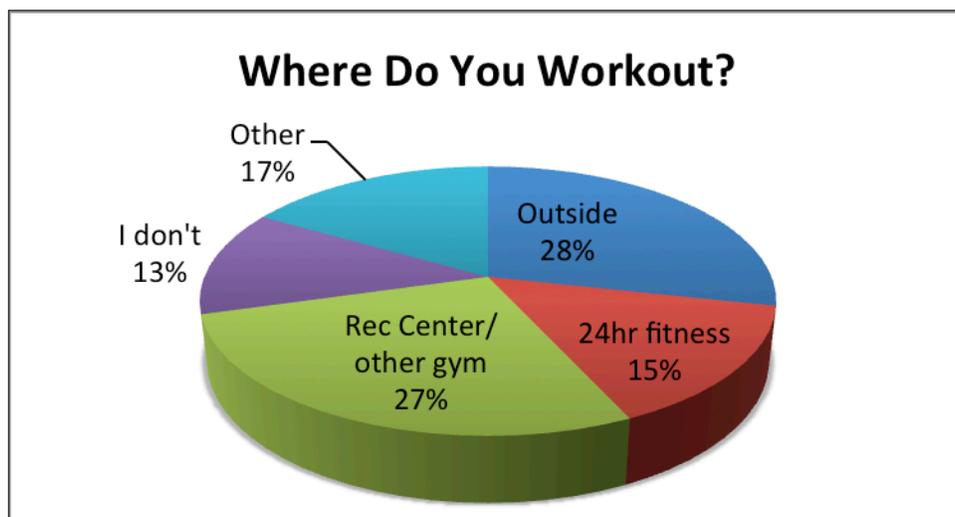
If you're looking for a gym membership, there are discounts available at 24-Hour Fitness Centers. There are several other fitness facilities, swimming pools, and climbing gyms scattered around, but nothing on campus (not yet! The new Health and Wellness center is scheduled to open in April of 2012) . You can also get a Denver Parks and Rec Membership which gives you

access to ALL Denver recreation centers and pools. A year's membership is \$150, but you may purchase 3 and 6-month memberships as well.

Cheryl Gibson at the Student Assistance Office is the contact person for sports and fitness related questions (and for 24-Hour Fitness memberships): 303-724-7684.



Class of 2015 says:



Skiing and Snowboarding

Early in the fall semester, there will be a couple of days when discounted ski resort passes are sold on campus (usually at tables set up in the quad). You will find out about these via e-mail. These are some of the best deals you will find. The student rate for the Eldora season pass will pay for itself in two days, for example.

There were people in our class who managed to get in 30 days or more of skiing or riding last year, although this admirable achievement requires exceptional dedication plus the ability to get more studying done in less time.

Running and Jogging

Denver has miles and miles of trails, and with all those sunny days, jogging is a great way to squeeze some active time into your schedule on the cheap. Two main trails pass close to campus: The Sand Creek trail runs just north of the golf course, and runs east-west through some nature preserve areas and neighborhoods. It is mostly gravel and dirt, so its not the best for city biking. If you go a mile east on Colfax or a mile south on Peoria, either way you will find the Highline Canal trail. This trail winds its way all through Denver, and connects with other trails in the city. The whole trail is paved, which is good for city bikes, but if you'd rather run on dirt, there's space for that next to the paving. For mileage and route planning, go to <http://www.mapmyrun.com/> and enter 80011 as the zip code into the route creator.

E. Orientation

So you've made it to Denver, you've moved in, explored a wee bit, and now it is time for orientation. You're excited, nervous, and in general feel a little bit like a kid before the first day of kindergarten. These are good feelings, except the whole being nervous part. Don't be nervous. You are into school. You have made it, and now comes the fun part. So relax and have fun. Here is a little bit of information about Orientation Week.

General Schedule

Monday: Admissions Day

When you arrive to campus, you will check in with your smiling and clearly amazing MSII Orientation Leaders who will give you a packet of information. Breakfast and lunch will be provided for you. On this day you will meet a lot of people, some of whom you will be friends with throughout school. However, you will not get to know most of them until later. You will be marched around campus to get your ID badge, have your composite photo taken (to be used for all small group sign-ins), be fitted for your white coat, and have insurance questions answered, etc.

Tuesday-Wednesday: Estes Park

What other medical school lets you spend two days in the beautiful Rocky Mountains during orientation? You will meet on campus early in the morning on Tuesday and come back Wednesday in the early evening. Make sure either you have a ride or you have your parking set up, so you can leave your car. In Estes you will get to know your classmates better, play fun games, and enjoy the great outdoors. Your meals will generally be covered.

Thursday: Curriculum Day

You will be introduced to a slew of faculty members, and while you may not remember all of them, they are all essential to the academic portion of your medical school career, so it is nice if you stay focused. Many of your academic questions will be answered here.

Friday: White Coat Ceremony

You will receive your white coat and stethoscope during the ceremony in the morning. This symbolizes your matriculation to medical school, and it is an excellent time for your family to come see what your world will be like for the next four years. There will be a very light brunch provided to the students and families, and then they will get the opportunity to attend Mini-Med School lectures from Dr. French and Dr. Cohen and get tours from your amazing MSII guides.

Things to Do During Orientation Week

- Get your locker in Ed1 or Ed2, and stock it with non-perishable snacks (this editor is notoriously fond of juice boxes, Snack Packs™, and goldfish crackers) and "professional clothes" for those SPETA sessions you forgot about.
- Designate some anatomy clothes and shoes. Choose old, worn clothes and worn out shoes, 'cause by October they'll be able to stand up by themselves. No, we really are serious about this.
- Get yourself oriented on campus. When you have to meet with a professor whose office is on the 9th floor of RC1 North over lunch and be back for lecture at 1, it's good to know what you are up against.
- Make sure your @ucdenver.edu email address is working, and choose a snappy password you won't forget amongst all the anatomy terms.
- Get yourself organized for school. Purchase school supplies and make sure that your life is somewhat in order before you get to the first day of classes; it will all become a whirlwind after that.
- Get on Blackboard, once you have access, so you can see how each of the pages is organized.

Tips for having a great Orientation Week

- RELAX. No seriously. Relax. School hasn't started yet, so there is really nothing to stress about. Appreciate this time without classes and labs.
 - Be friendly and outgoing. While this can be difficult for you shy members of the audience, try to branch out and make a few friends. It can help med school seem like a much less scary place.
- Check your ego at the door. Every person in your class is awesome and deserves to be there, and you will only do yourself a disservice by letting the whole world know what your MCAT score was or how many blind orphans you pulled out of a snow bank. No one cares.
- Use the MSII leaders as a resource for your questions. If they don't know the answer, they will point you in the right direction. You will hear a number of rumors about everything from Dr. Carry's amazing sense of humor (true, he is hilarious) to horrific accounts of Dr. Boyer's pathology labs (not true, Dr. Boyer rocks). Take some information with a grain of salt.



The Buddy System

Each incoming student will be matched with a second year buddy. The idea is for you to have someone who can provide encouragement, advice, and a different perspective on first year during difficult times. Once you find out who your buddy is, we encourage you to get in touch, ask questions and make some new

friends including your "grand buddy" (your buddy's buddy) who can help you with the medical school experience. The MSIs will also set up a "get to know your buddy social" at the beginning of the year.

Some buddies go above and beyond the call of duty, by also lending textbooks, dissecting instruments and study aides to their first years.

Words of Wisdom:

"Your second year buddy can be one of your best resources – don't hesitate to ask any questions that come up! If they don't know the answer, they'll find someone who can 😊"

General School Stuff – The Essentials

A. Professionalism, The Honor Code, and Evaluations

Professional Behavior

Med school is very different from most other educational programs in that you are viewed as a professional from the moment you start school. Even as a student, you are expected to conduct yourself in a professional manner just as though you were a practicing physician.

There are many behaviors and actions that would not violate the Honor Code, but would be considered unprofessional; these cases are dealt with by the Professionalism Committee. Examples include being rude to faculty, fellow students, or patients; inappropriate clothing in a clinical setting; absence from mandatory classes or small group sessions; and inappropriate (i.e. ANY) use of alcohol on campus.

Keep in mind that your e-mail communications with faculty and fellow students about school-related matters are professional interactions, and, as such, are governed by the same rules that apply to face-to-face interactions. Obscenities, name-calling, and blaming are never appropriate. If you have a conflict or disagreement with a student, faculty or staff member, it should be handled via course reps, the course director, or other appropriate mediators.

Students often joke about professionalism and professionalism violations, but it is something that is taken very seriously by the school. By fostering professional behavior throughout the course of our education, we are all more likely to act professionally in our careers – even in the face of the myriad of difficult and emotional situations that we will invariably face.

The Honor Code

The SOM has a strict honor code. Each incoming class of students writes its own addition to the honor code, which will follow the section written by the university. At your White Coat/Matriculation Ceremony, you will sign your Honor Code.

If you're used to vigilant proctoring during your undergraduate exams, your first med school exam will be a different experience. Exams are not proctored – there will be a faculty member to

distribute exams at the start and to collect exams when all exam time has elapsed. Additionally, you may leave the room and take the exam anywhere you prefer - and this means anywhere, even off-campus locations so long as you return to the lecture hall in time to turn in your exam.

You'll learn more about the honor code at orientation. The ideal way to think about it is as a step in helping you prepare to accept both the vast responsibility of the medical profession and the necessity that medical professionals (you included) act with integrity.

Evaluations

We won't spend too much time on evaluations, but it is a topic that we want to introduce to you now. Following every course, most small groups, and just about every other curriculum-based activity that you engage in during medical school, you will receive an online survey. At times, the number of evaluations can seem overwhelming and tedious, but it is not something to be ignored.

The premise of the evaluations is to provide feedback to lecturers and faculty members so that the quality of our education can be continuously improved. In reality, you are only doing yourself a disservice if you have complaints or criticisms that you do not voice in the evaluations. They are there for a reason; utilize them to make your voice heard.

Failure to complete an evaluation will result in a professionalism violation and as we said above, these are taken very seriously. This stems from the fact that a survey of medical students and physicians showed that a significant predictive factor for malpractice incidents was whether or not that individual had faithfully completed evaluations throughout medical school. Thus, they are taken seriously and it is best to simply complete them when they are received.

B. Assessment – It Never Ends

Honors/Pass/Fail

In a big change from undergraduate education where every few percentage points, your grade changes, nearly all of your required first-year courses will be graded on the **honors/pass/fail system**. Passing requires an overall score in the course of 70% or higher – this means that it is absolutely possible to fail an exam (or even more than one exam) and still pass the course if your cumulative average is greater than 70%.

The Honors standard is set at 90%. The number of people who honor will vary from course to course and it is a personal decision about whether or not receiving Honors in a course is important to you. Some faculty may choose to round up from 89.5% and some will absolutely not.

In the case that you do fail a course, all is not lost. At that point, you will be given an opportunity to remediate the course. This will involve retaking the exams that you scored lowest on with the ultimate goal of raising your cumulative score about 70% to "Pass." This will be entered on your record as a "PR" – Pass with Remediation. The important thing to remember is that the School of Medicine is investing a large amount of time and money in your education and they absolutely do NOT want you to fail. In general, the majority of students will pass every class. And for those who do need to remediate, nearly all pass when given that chance.

The final point we want to make is that there is no curve – you are not being judged against your classmates, there is no cutoff for how many people can honor, and thus there is no reason

for competition between students. Our class and previous classes have developed an incredible culture where everyone works to help others and shares study materials, online resources, etc. It is a great way to learn. And the better your whole class does, the better your whole class will look – meaning everyone has better letters of recommendation and great shots at the residencies of their choice. Remember, the general mentality here is “us vs. the test” rather than “you vs. me vs. the test.” Help each other out!

Preclinical Grades: Do They Matter?

In a 1997 survey of residency program directors, preclinical grades were ranked 12th in importance of 16 variables. This survey was repeated in 2006, and preclinical grades were again in 12th. The point of this is that honoring courses, of course, is nice and that H sure does look great on your transcript, but not honoring will in no way decrease your chances for matching to a residency program. The most important variables were clerkship grades (those from years 3 and 4) and your Step I scores. However, an F in a preclinical course will matter and will be something that will need to be explained to residency programs.

Words of Wisdom

Multiple professors have told us to aim for 85% or above in our lecture courses. Studies have shown that if you hit this benchmark, you will be well prepared when it comes time to study for Step I.

Grades in the Hallway

Following an exam, anywhere from within 24 hours to taking about a week, the exam answers and each person’s grade will be posted in the hallway outside the lecture hall. Grades are listed by student number and thus remain confidential, but standing amongst a group of students searching for your number and your grade can be an anxiety-inducing moment. You may feel exhilarated, disappointed, angry, or relieved after seeing your grade; however, it is unlikely that the person standing next to you is feeling the same emotions.

Almost 100% of the time, answers will be posted first – and because we are given sheets on which to record our answers for all multiple-choice exams, you have the option of grading your own exam. Some students love grading their exams the moment answers are posted and others prefer to wait for grades, as the act of checking your own exam does have a tendency towards increasing blood pressure.

Because of how grades are posted, you should be delicate when considering with whom to share your grades. There is nothing like receiving congratulations from your study group when you improve your test grades, or a compliment from a classmate who knows just how hard you worked. At the same time, it can be very disheartening to hear a fellow student announce his disappointment with another 98%, when you yourself are working flat out just to pass. Be selective about sharing both the triumphs and the trials. Everyone contributes to a collegial environment, and keeping your composure is one way to keep things collegial.



C. Classes – Tools for Success

Classes: To Go Or Not To Go?

Although you are, in principle, expected to attend all lectures, lecture attendance, in practice, is generally optional. The faculty will let you know in advance if there is a mandatory lecture. As you'll see, some people always go to lecture and others rarely or never do. Some instructors hand out notes and PowerPoint slides from which you can easily see what material was covered; others prefer to use only the white board.

For those students who choose not to attend class (whether a regular non-attende or a one time occurrence), most lectures are recorded (audio and visual) and then posted online on the student Blackboard page. Panopto (the recording program) is a great resource for watching lectures that you missed or just reviewing a lecture that you are still confused about. If you plan on becoming besties with Panopto, you may want to make a friend who goes to class to copy any board-drawings from, as they usually don't get picked up by the recordings.

You may think that it would be valuable to know which instructors are the best so that you can attend their lectures, and which lecturers are the worst so you can avoid theirs. However, in our experience, it's very rare that the class is unanimous in their opinion about a given professor: your favorite instructor may teach in a way that sets your best friend's teeth on edge. Go to lecture and then decide for yourself.

If you choose to attend lectures, please be courteous to your instructors and fellow students: show up on time, turn off your cell phone, and be quiet during class. If you get bored and restless, then don't come to class. With the plethora of electronic devices that we all own, it is not uncommon to see someone checking the news, planning their wedding, shopping, playing games, sending emails, etc. Just try to always be respectful of those around you and be as "non-distracting" as possible. It's not fair to everyone else if you're talking or messing around when they're trying to listen.

In contrast to lectures, small-group sessions are mandatory. It is important to remember that failure to attend mandatory sessions is a professionalism violation, and is taken fairly seriously. The faculty are annoyed if you don't show up (remember that they are giving up their time to teach you), and, since they all have the class composite photo, they will know exactly who you are. If you are unable to attend a mandatory session because of travel or illness or some other natural disaster, make sure to inform your small group leader and the course directors ahead of time (as soon as you know or at least 2-3 weeks ahead of time). If you're missing PBL, talk to Dr. Michaels. She and the course directors will generally be accommodating.

Studying: How Much Time Does it Really Take?

In our class, there was a huge range of study time – all the way from people who only study a few hours per week (they are rare) to people who study 12 or more hours per day. Again, much of this will depend on personal preference and personal study habits, as well as your background in the material that is being taught.

From our experience, most people have the most success if you work steadily to master each day's material. This takes discipline and time (at least a few hours each day outside of class time) but can be very rewarding.

Words of Wisdom:

"Take a deep breath. There's always going to be something else to work your ass off for, study harder for, or do better than the next guy on. Another test, another class. So, just enjoy it. It's

all cool information and it's fun to learn and if you murder the test - great, if you don't there will certainly be another one. Having said that, start studying. Now.”

We polled our class regarding their study hours and later in this manual, we've broken down their responses by course.

Remember: You are only taking one class at a time (mostly). You may have 4-8 hours of new material presented in a single day and then another 4-8 hours the following day. Getting behind can be crippling, so try your best to stay on top of the material. DON'T leave everything for a major cram session the night (or weekend) before the exam – there is simply too much material!

Learning Objectives: How to Use Them and How Not to Use Them

Learning objectives will be provided for each lecture. They exist because the LCME (our medical education accreditation body) wants us to have them, and because they are pedagogically a sound approach to improving teaching and learning. Each faculty member usually writes his or her own learning objectives.

At best, learning objectives (LOs) guide you to the most important material so that you can focus on understanding said material first. Also, test questions are based on LOs.

At worst, LOs are vague or general, and, although they guide you to the important concepts, the test questions will examine minutia.

In our experience, LOs are highly instructor-specific. Instructors may tell you explicitly that their test questions focus on the LOs, but their idea of "conceptual" questions will often be completely different from yours. Until you get to know an instructor's testing style, the safest approach is to learn the material covered in the learning objectives, but also learn the specific details emphasized in lecture.

Some students will religiously answer every learning objective, while others will never look at them and only work from the lectures. There are many methods to the madness of medical school, and learning objectives are simply one tool for you to use, as you like.

Frontloading: What is It?

Some of you may already be familiar with this concept, but many of us weren't and it is repeatedly emphasized throughout your courses. Frontloading is the idea that when you attend a lecture, you have already seen the material being presented at least once. This can be anything from skimming through that day's handouts and learning objectives the day before lecture to intensely studying the material and completing the learning objectives beforehand.

The theory is that by introducing yourself to this material, you will be better able to focus in lecture and better able to ask discerning questions of the lecturer.

You will learn more about this study technique throughout the year, but it is definitely something to consider. Some students (including one of your editors) swear by frontloading, whereas others never frontload. Once again, this comes down to personal preference.

Words of Wisdom:
FRONTLOAD!!

Textbooks: Are They Worth the Expense?

Just as with study techniques, med students differ widely in their opinions about textbook use. Some people don't buy or use them at all. Others do. Again, we polled our class and have broken down their textbook recommendations by course. Every course will present a list of "required" and "recommended" textbooks. For some courses, "required" really does mean required, whereas in others, you can get away without buying the books and referencing them (when needed) in the library.

Here are some suggestions:

- You don't need textbooks to prepare for exams in most courses; almost all instructors base their test questions on material that they present in lectures, and on material included in their note packets.
- If you have no background in a basic science topic (biochemistry, molecular biology, genetics), then, depending on the quality of the handouts and the lectures, you may want or need supplemental explanations. Ask your friends in second year about their favorite textbooks for specific subjects. Better yet, your buddy might lend or give you a good textbook.
- Board review books often don't have enough detail to be good textbooks. If they do, then they are too detailed to be good board review books. One example of the latter is Pamela Champe's "Biochemistry" review book (blue cover, Lippincott), which is excellent and has plenty of detail. Faculty members in the past have used diagrams from this book (among many other review books). It is commonly thought that studying with a review book at hand is beneficial for long-term preparation. Note that these cannot be returned to the campus bookstore, so buy carefully (great deals on Amazon).
- Although it's convenient to buy from the campus bookstore, you'll probably want a discount when you are buying a lot of books. If you link to Barnes and Noble through the AMSA website, you get a 5% discount. As a student, you are eligible for free 2-day shipping via Amazon Prime, and anyone can sign up for Amazon Mom (you don't even have to be female). Also consider half.com, eBay, and other discount websites that are good if you have enough time to wait for slower shipping. If you have a frequent flyer account, most airlines have some kind of online shopping "mall" that gives you two or three miles per dollar spent at B&N. These miles can add up really quickly.
- For free textbooks, you can always **check out books from the library**, which has nearly all required and recommended textbooks available for a two hour loan, or borrow from friends or your MSII buddy. We will also be going through the courses and telling you which books we found absolutely necessary.

Exams: What To Study?

The best advice we can give is that if the lecturer provides or recommends practice questions, **DO THEM**. Exam questions often look a lot like practice questions. If the lecturer doesn't provide questions, then ask if he or she has



suggestions for a good source. You can often find good practice questions online, or in board review books.

It is a violation of the Honor Code to study from unauthorized copies of old exams. Don't worry; there is no frat house file of old exams that your classmates are using to gain a competitive advantage.

You will often find that you do not have enough time to learn all of the material for a particular exam. Our advice is to stay calm, and prioritize your studying based on the material that is worth the most points on that exam, or that is most straightforward and easy to learn, and then just take the hit on the things you don't know. Most of us have passed exams without learning all the material. It can be helpful to stop studying early the night before, get a good night's sleep, and be able to think clearly the next morning, rather than being mentally and physically exhausted when you get to the exam. Some students can do well with little or no sleep, but this does not work for everyone!

Very few lecturers will tell you exactly what material is on an exam, often because they did not personally prepare the exam. Instead, they are likely to tell you that the questions will focus on the Learning Objectives.

In the past, some lecturers have tested on detailed material that students did not expect to see on the exam (this is common at med schools across the U.S.). Our best advice is to learn as much as you possibly can, and then simply do your best. Know that unfair questions will be dealt with through a formal review process (we'll talk more about this in a bit), but don't count on arguing every question you miss.

Study Groups: To Group or Not to Group

In our experience, smaller study groups are best – once you gather more than two to four people, you may simply have too many voices. Groups are particularly good for verbal quizzing before exams and for bouncing ideas off of if you are having trouble understanding a topic or memorizing a drug list. Find the group that works best for you; you will work much better with some than others.

Group studying is also very good if you are having trouble settling down to work; two or more people studying in the same room can help each other focus and get more work done (or you might be a gigantic distraction to one and other).

It's important to keep your discussion positive and avoid complaining, which can eat up a lot of energy and a lot of time with zero productive results.



Problems During An Exam

Because of the UCSOM Honor Code, there are no professors or faculty members present in the lecture hall during an exam and you will not be able to ask questions regarding question content. The time for that comes following an exam when, as mentioned previously, there is a formal review process in which you can “contest” specific exam questions that you feel were unfair, confusing, or inappropriately answered.

Instructors do their best to write clear questions. Some will have other faculty check over the questions, and will eliminate those that have been problematic on past exams. However, some exam questions will be poorly written, confusing, and ambiguous. Previous classes have provided abundant feedback to lecturers and course directors, but problems have continued. Know that students at med schools across the country encounter these kinds of problems. Our best advice is to avoid wasting time and energy by becoming frustrated and angry during the exam (or afterward). Stay calm and relaxed.

Following the exam, you will be given an opportunity to e-mail the course rep(s) regarding any questions that you are concerned about. The course rep(s) will then forward this to the course director, who will contact the appropriate lecturer. You will generally have a 48-hour window following the exam in which to do this. Remember to be polite and courteous and always keep in mind that it is very likely that the instructor will disagree with your analysis of the question. Historically, you are most often not successful and will not regain that point on the exam – but it is always important to put your opinion out there and to continue the pressure on faculty members to write good exam questions.

Failing An Exam

Most medical students come from an academic background where they were the curve-setters or were at least always at the far right of the normalized bell curve. But now that we are all medical students, that is no longer possible. This means that we are all spread along a new bell curve and you may not be able to predict where you will fall.

Inevitably, you will do less than stellar on an exam, but that is no reason to panic. One poor exam grade is not going to ruin your chances of becoming an amazing physician and the odds are good that you will end up passing the course anyway. Remember that you are in medical school, you deserve to be here, and you are more than capable of graduating.

However, if you do fail an exam and are concerned about the exam, the course as a whole, or anything else, the Office of Student Affairs has resources that are there waiting to be utilized. They can address study strategies, time management, and test taking. Dr. Carol Lay, a learning specialist, works with the Office of Student Affairs to aid students requiring assistance in these areas. You can schedule an appointment with Dr. Lay by calling the main office line at 303.724.6407. The office can also make arrangements for a tutor to assist you.

Words of Wisdom:

“I think students should be advised to work hard, have fun, and keep the big picture in mind. We're here so we can take care of patients. It's easy to lose track of that with all the learning

objectives, spam emails, and constant evaluations. Whenever I'm getting frustrated or feeling burnt out I try to remind myself of how lucky I am and what a privilege it is just to be here. Every day we learn something new that is going to help us make a difference in the life of one of our patients. Keep that perspective and you will do very well!"

D. Electives – For Those Students Who Want Extra Classes

For more detailed course descriptions, check the UC SOM Course Book,

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/student-services/resources/registrar/faculty-staff/Courses/>

If you're finding that you're not busy enough with learning lecture material or you're simply interested in something that isn't being covered or you have a desire to volunteer in a clinic setting, then you may be interested in taking an elective course. Electives are generally a relatively minimal time requirement, but keep in mind that everything adds up...

Electives are courses that address specific interests or provide clinical opportunities for 1st and 2nd year students. These courses are generally graded Pass/Fail and can be a great way to mix up your afternoons and weekends. However, be wary when thinking about signing up for electives. In the first few days of the semester, every elective sounds incredible and it is easy to get in over your head. Some people will take no electives and some will enroll in 5-6. This will really have no impact on your ability to become a great doctor or get into a good residency – they are simply outlets for your interests. For most people, taking 1-3 electives offered plenty of stimulation without completely overshadowing everything else you have to do.

You'll get information from the Registrar, Wayne Sell, with elective course descriptions and details about how and when to register, during the first couple of weeks of classes. All registration is done online, except for summer courses. For the more popular electives (Stout St, Warren Village, SABES, etc), you'll want to register ASAP after it opens. There is no extra tuition charge for electives, although enrollment in the summer generates a fee. The following is a list of some electives that were offered during the 2011-2012 academic year:

Both Semesters 2011-2012

- Healthcare for the Poor and Homeless (Stout Street Clinic) – 2 semester course
- Introduction to Biomedical Research
- Pre-hospital Medicine (ambulance ride-along)
- SABES Spanish Immersion – 2 semester course
- Health Care in Public Policy
- Denver CARES
- Clinica Tepayac
- Warren Village
- Literature, Art, and Medicine
- SUD in Medical Practice
- Geriatric Medicine

Fall 2011

- Geriatric Medicine
- CAM/Alternative Medicine
- Introduction to Emergency Medicine
- Introduction to Wilderness Medicine
- Global Health: Issues and Opportunities

- Introduction to Women's Health
- Career Elective in Dermatology
- Career Elective in Otolaryngology
- Career Elective in Urology
- Career Elective in Anesthesiology

Spring 2012

- Nutrition and Cancer
- Art in Medicine, Medicine in Art
- Introduction to Orthopedics
- Introduction to Emergency Psychiatry
- Medical Hypnosis For Primary Care
- LEADS

Summer 2012

- Introduction to Family Medicine Research Methods
- Immersion Spanish
- Summer Preceptor Experience
- Global Health Studies (in the United States or abroad)
- Career Elective in Dermatology
- Career Elective in Otolaryngology
- Career Elective in Urology
- Career Elective in Anesthesiology
- Warren Village

Words of Wisdom:

“These are often a great way to spend a lunch hour or get additional clinical experience at Warren Village or Stout Street. Go for 'em!”

IV. Getting Involved

Student Government

Each year, the MS1 class elects about 40 people to various student governance positions. These positions provide a wide variety of opportunities to help your class, and the School of Medicine, function smoothly and productively. Active, well-informed class reps can make a big difference!

Some of these positions require a significant time commitment all year; others require your time only for a few weeks or months; others don't require much time at all. Since most positions are shared, and everything is oriented around the MSI and MSII class schedules, it is rare that you will have conflicts between your class schedule and student governance responsibilities.

None of these positions requires any related experience, although certain positions are better filled by people who are very comfortable simultaneously handling many projects, or who will handle lots of questions promptly, or people who can resolve conflicts quickly and smoothly. If you don't already have these skills but would like to develop them, this is a good opportunity to do so.

In any of these positions, it is very helpful to check in with the person who had the position last year, or the MSII with the same position.

Why get involved when I feel overwhelmed?

by Christie Osborne

So you have started your first week of Human Body block and between lectures, lab, and still settling in to life in medical school you are trying to maintain some semblance of balance between school and your home/personal/social life (while smelling like the anatomy lab). You're thinking, “There is no way I could possibly commit to anything more and still learn everything. It's just not possible. “

In response to that, I would counter with a few things. First and foremost, it is impossible to learn and/or remember absolutely every minute detail that the faculty throw at you in the first year. An old adage is that medical school is like trying to drink from a fire hose. Unless you have a truly eidetic memory, you will forget things. However, don't panic. If you study consistently and frequently, you will pass and you can honor; many people do in each block.

Ok, now that we have accepted the fact that the first time around we will not remember the pharmacokinetics of all cardiac drugs, we can move on to why getting involved is important. To dispell the rumor that you won't have enough time, keep in mind that unless you are running for co-president or if you get involved in multiple activities (like say MSC, interview days, orientation, writing this handbook, etc.) the time commitment is minimal- a couple meetings a month, a couple activities to attend a semester. You *do* have that much time. I promise you.

Also, it's extremely important to have some sort of balance to your life in medical school. You will hear this ad nauseum from physicians, faculty, residents, and older students. As you move forward in your careers, your life will not get less complicated or busy, so it is important to do other things besides study. And these leadership positions can be rewarding beyond simply padding your CV for residency. You will get to interact and develop relationships with other students (particularly the super awesome class of 2015), amazing faculty members, and other physicians in the community. So, peruse the following leadership position and student interest group positions, and find something you are interested in. Also, highly competitive residencies look for those who have held leadership positions. There are a variety of different ways to get involved, and if you are passionate about what you are doing, you will be much happier to commit to it.