Welcome back, Medical Sciences!

Being that this is the first MedCat Jr. of 2018, Medical Sciences Student Government and the MedCat Jr. team wanted to wish you a happy 2018, and a warm welcome back to school. It has been an interesting few weeks weather-wise, and looks like it is going to continue the trend of staying wacky.

On behalf of the Medical Sciences Student Government, I would like to make you all aware that the purpose of the UCCoM Tribunal is to better represent the undergraduate student population of the College of Medicine.

We are looking to best serve this purpose so if you are an undergraduate student, please feel free to fill out the following form to offer advice and suggestions.
A Demoralized Junior’s Thank You Letter to the Writers of the MCAT

February 1, 2018

Writers of the Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)
Association of the American Medical Colleges
655 K Street NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC, 20001-2399

Dear Writers of the MCAT,

I hope you are doing well. It’s been awhile since we last spoke (but these days, my idea of a conversation is saying hello to the librarians on my way to my study table). As a bright-eyed pre-medical student aspiring to make concrete changes in people’s lives through a fulfilling career in medicine, I am now preparing for the MCAT—your awe-inspiring, magnificent beast of a barrier to entry for medical school. I’ve been studying for about a month now, and I’ll be honest—I do not like it. Finding the time to dedicate the approximately 300 hours of preparation, universally recognized as necessary to do well on this exam, amidst a full class-load, extracurricular commitments, and part-time work has been challenging. Most days, I enter the library while the sun comes up and only leave when the moon is in full show. If I remember to eat lunch, I’m having a good day. And if I can manage through the day without becoming irrationally frustrated with an ordinarily trivial task, I know it was a great day.

I was assured that my rigorous undergraduate program would prepare me for the time commitment mandated by your exam. To be fair, I do not think there is a course of study in higher education that can genuinely impart the demands of MCAT preparation to students before they have actually sat down with a stack of review books or full-length exam and experienced the tedium of MCAT studying. My advisors aptly explained to me the fundamentals of proper preparation for your exam, but the enthusiasm with which they described this test as a means to achieving my goals did not illuminate the not-so-flowery aspects of the MCAT. Even my peers in their fourth and final year of college, having already surpassed the MCAT and looking eagerly towards medical school, described the exam as “not that bad” and “overrated.” Possibly, their mild reaction to your exam in spite of my lamenting underscores my inadequacy for medical school. Or, just maybe, it provides a quintessential example of Freud’s defense mechanism of repression—an unconscious mechanism employed by the ego to keep disturbing or threatening thoughts from becoming conscious—that has allowed my classmates to cope with their MCAT-provoked pain (can I have a 132 on the Psychological, Social, and Biological Foundations of Behavior Section now?).

While I find it cathartic to express my frustration with the stack of MCAT review books glaring at me from the corner of my desk, I recognize the value in your making the entrance exam for medical school arguably the most difficult readiness assessment of any graduate or professional school. Although I may not fondly reminisce on this semester of MCAT preparation in the years to come, I am certain that, if I am fortunate enough to succeed on this exam and gain acceptance into medical school, I will know that I have earned my white coat and the privilege to undertake the rewarding path of a physician and healer. So, thank you, writers of the MCAT, for ensuring that the next generation of physicians and physician-scientists are prepared for the ever changing demands of a diverse, twenty-first century patient population.

Sincerely,

Scottie Emmert
The Class Of 2021 Love Medical Sciences!

Balancing academics, extracurriculars, a social life, and sleep can be especially difficult during your first year in college. For medical sciences majors these first-year struggles can seem even more stressful since “ambitious” is near-synonymous with “Med Sci.” After surviving their first semester in college, a handful of first-year medical sciences majors sat down to reflect on their experiences.

“What were your general impressions of your first semester in college?”

“When I first moved in, I was like ‘wow, so much free time.’ But, as school progressed with other extracurriculars, it became a lot. I wasn’t managing my time well and didn’t have a time-management strategy. So, I just started writing everything [that I needed to do] down and it helped.” – Anurag Paul

“I had heard that the academic transition from high school to college was a huge shift. In reality, it’s not that much different, but you just have to push yourself. You have to take it upon yourself to do things; you don’t have professors that are always looking over your shoulder, making sure that you’re doing things. I think it’s a nice transition to build that responsibility yourself.” – Ross Tripp

“Did you enjoy your first semester as a Med Sci major?”

“I did… People mention a thousand times over that med-sci is a community of like-minded individuals and I wholeheartedly agree. I don’t find too many people pursuing medicine that aren’t truly genuine about it or lie about wanting to help people. And I really appreciate that; it makes me feel like I’m in the right place.” – Abram Roesner

“What were your original career plans when entering the Med Sci major? Have your plans changed after or during last semester?”

“My original career plan was to attend medical school and complete a surgical residency, all the while maintaining Spanish fluency. I had the privilege of attending the LeaderShape Institute program offered by the University Honors Program, and while there, I realized my vision for the world is to see an end to healthcare disparities. So, while my career plans haven’t quite changed from becoming a doctor, I think my focus as a practicing physician has shifted to one based in community practice and addressing disparities in healthcare.” – Matthew Raj

During high school, “I was looking at engineering or medicine, but I liked the personal nature of a career in medicine… Surprisingly, my plans have not changed. In college, I have been able to explore my interest in engineering through various hobbies, like working on 3D printers, and I think that has satiated my engineering side. But medical sciences has been fantastic for satiating my thirst for the sciences and helping others.” – Abram Roesner
AmeriCats: A Student Organization
Andie Shugar

Last year, an organization named the University of Cincinnati AmeriCats was officially recognized as one of the 500-ish student clubs registered at UC. AmeriCats is an organization that shows support for our military by completing fundraisers, drives, and raising awareness about veterans. This club is everything I stand for as an American citizen, and I feel fortunate to say that this club was an idea that came from a dream I had during my freshman year.

After finishing the book titled *No Easy Day* by Mark Owen (an autobiography about SEAL Team Six—the team that captured Osama bin Laden) on a Friday night, I took a nap and dreamed about ways I could thank our service members for all that they do to protect our country. As soon as I woke up, I began googling ways to support the military, and it soon dawned on me: a single donation from one person wouldn’t have the same impact as a group of people would. And right then, it became my goal to start a student organization that supported and gave military members the recognition they deserve.

Fast-forward to today, where I, along with my awesome executives, Freddy Lacey, Sydney Hamilton, and Kelsey Laizure (all of whom I could not do this without), are planning an eventful semester loaded with awesome ways to give back to veterans. Here is the lineup for the next few weeks for those interested in helping out:

**February (aka DONATION DRIVE MONTH!!!)**
- 5th-9th: canned food drive
- 12th-16th: toiletries drive
- 19th-23rd: clothing drive

Designated drop-off locations are in University Pavilion at the Veterans Programs and Services window (4th floor past One-Stop), the ROTC office in Calhoun Garage, and (potentially) the library front desk.

If you have any questions about the club or about starting up your own club from scratch, please feel free to contact me at any time at *shugaral@mail.uc.edu*.

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**A Valentine’s Day Special**
brought to you by Hoa Pham

Are you made of Fluorine, Iodine, and Neon? Because you are F-I-Ne

We go together like leucine zippers and zinc fingers.

We fit together like the sticky ends of recombinant DNA.

I want to stick to u like glue-cose.

Are you my appendix? I have a gut feeling I should take you out.
I wish I were Adenine because then I could get paired with U.

If I were an enzyme, you would be my substrate.

Blood is red, cyanosis is blue, I get tachycardia when I think of you.

You must be my coronary artery because you’re wrapped around my heart.

Are you Broca’s Aphasia? Because you leave me speechless…

If I were Evolution, I’d naturally select you!

HAPPY FEB 14 FROM ALL OF US AT THE MEDCAT JR!
An Internship to Remember with RISE Coalition  
Meghna Chandorkar

Today, the prevalence of acid violence has increased around the world. Acid violence refers to the act of throwing corrosive acid on the face and body, with the intent to disfigure, torture, or kill the victim. The acid can cause permanent damage to the individual as it can melt the flesh and cause lifelong scarring, blindness, and immobility. Research by Acid Survivors Foundation Uganda indicates that approximately 13% of Ugandan victims attacked with acid died as a result of their attack.

Beginning in the fall of 2017, I have held the honor of interning at RISE Coalition. RISE is a grassroots nonprofit organization based in Cincinnati. RISE provides support to acid attack survivors by collaborating with other organizations around the world. Interning at RISE has been an amazing experience. I have been able to communicate with acid attack survivors in Uganda, and have learned so much about acid violence, such as the medical effects of acid on the skin and the types of reconstructive surgeries that are available. Even though I learned a lot about the aftermath of acid attacks, I really wanted to understand why these horrific events occur. I was shocked to find out that most acid attacks are caused by individuals who are close to the victims. It is very common for an attack to occur after problems in a relationship arise. Woman may be attacked after rejecting a marriage proposal. Men may be attacked over land disputes. Sometimes, individuals may be attacked based on their political affiliation. I was shocked to learn this. However, I also wanted to do something that would help combat this horrendous crime.

Since my time at RISE, I have become taken part in many two projects. I have helped in designing a medical information page for RISE’s website. My research included the effect of acid on the skin, possible surgical treatments, and over the counter remedies. I am currently in charge of publishing RISE stories on RISE’s website. RISE stories are stories that serve to empower and inspire readers. It serves to inform people that no individual is ever alone after rising from a difficult point in his/her life. Publishing RISE stories has been a great project because I have gotten to learn so much about different individuals. Some RISE stories are very sad to read. For example, there may be a woman who is physically abused by her alcoholic husband or a man may be attacked with acid for simply standing up for another person’s honor. Such stories make me feel thankful and proud to be a part of such an organization.

My one take away from my experience with interning with RISE would be that everybody can make a change. Every person has a unique set of skills that have an important purpose. It just takes time to figure out what that may be. As the RISE team would say, “We RISE by lifting others.”

If you would like to get involved, feel free to go to RISE’s website (http://www.risecoalition.org) to check out volunteering opportunities and scroll through the artisan marketplace, which includes crafts that are handmade by acid attack survivors from Uganda. Furthermore, RISE- UC Chapter will also begin this upcoming semester. If you would like any information, contact Divya Vinod and Meghna Chandorkar for more information!
The Anatomy of an Email
Brendan Ho

While I’m sure that there are many other important life skills that I have picked up over the past four months, the first one that comes to mind is the process of crafting an email. Sending emails is a decidedly stressful activity, and while that may never go away, here are a few things that I have learned recently that can make this process easier for you.

After selecting a recipient, the first step is writing the greeting. While some may prefer to fill out the subject first, I prefer to do this step last. Commonly, greetings look something like “Hi [First Name]”. However, if you are unsure if this is too formal, particularly when addressing an MD or PhD, I usually opt for something like “Hi Dr. [Last Name]” or simply “Dr. [Last Name]” depending on how well I know my recipient or if the email contents are more formal, such as a shadowing request. From the style and formality of the response, one may then adjust the greeting to match that of the responder.

The body should generally be concise and straightforward. I like to begin with my name, major, and year (first-year), which is immediately followed by the general topic or action I am pursuing. In the following two to three sentences, I further elaborate on this topic, bolding the important phrases present. For example “I was wondering if it would be possible to schedule an interview so that we can further discuss this topic”. In this case, I would also provide a list of times that would be convenient for me to avoid sending another email in the future to accomplish the same thing. This list would potentially be in a bullet point format so that it is easier for the recipient to find the information, also remembering to include “AM” or “PM” following each time. Nobody wants to look at a solid block of texts to find the pertinent information, so creating new paragraphs for separate blocks of information can be helpful. It can also be useful to include a reasonable deadline for the request, keeping in mind that they may not receive the email for a while.

Finally, I usually end the body information with a sentence indicating I would be happy to provide more information or accommodate any other times. This usually totals to around four sentences, which can be read efficiently and effortlessly.

In some cases, it may be helpful to offer other contact information, such as a phone number or address, if such a relationship may be better suited to a different method of communication.

The sign off is usually an expression of gratitude (ie. “Thanks!” or “Thank you so much!”), but certainly not “Thanks much”), followed by your name, a picture, and a few lines of text with contact information, social media (ie. LinkedIn), and affiliated organizations (ie. University of Cincinnati or CCHMC). If you’ve got five free minutes, it is pretty easy to create a signature in Microsoft Outlook in Office 365. Click on the settings gear near the top right and a panel should open. At the bottom, click on “Mail”, and another panel should open. Under the Layout section, select “Email Signature” and check the options that you would like to include your signature on.

One final tip. You can set the “importance” of your messages (the exclamation marks that appear next to the subject in the inbox) using the “… ” button next to the “Discard” and “Send” options. If a message is urgent, this may come in handy.

That’s all! Good luck in your future email endeavors.
The Joy of Learning Communities
Anurag Paul and Chinmay Bakshi

When we first walked into our LC class, we expected it to be simply a formality - something that we just needed to be a part of to fulfill a requirement. However, being a part of the learning community has been so much more.

Having the same class schedule as our fellow LC members has fostered a highly collaborative environment. Whether frantically working together in Langsam to finish the Fertilizer Project due for chemistry lab or studying for the upcoming exam in biology class, having the same schedule paved the way for our LC to study together and help each other do well in classes. During LC class, before upcoming exams, we would split up in groups and face each other in Jeopardy and Kahoot, competing with each other in a friendly manner to ensure that everyone would be ready for the exams. Being in our LC has definitely strengthened our academic experience and eased our experience of taking college classes for the first time.

Yet, the joy of learning communities stretches far beyond academics. The learning communities have provided us with a great group of peers that we can truly relate to, like no other at the university. One of my biggest concerns coming to UC was not finding a group that I could talk to about classes and everyday events. The learning community has been able to be that support group, as we all share the common experiences of being in the Medical Sciences program. Led by our amazing LC leader, Ellena Privitera, the activities we have done together, from group meditations to carving pumpkins on Halloween, have brought us together to be more than just classmates, but friends.

Learning communities have truly defined the first semester. Reflecting back, the past semester in LC has been great, and we can’t wait for the next!

Cooking in College
Josi Sammarco

Cooking in college can be a real challenge. Many students have been faced with the dilemma of leaving the comfort of homes and family to find that they now need to cook and don't have the knowledge to do so. Also, many students in traditional dorms only have microwaves, a slight problem when trying to cook anything besides ramen. Lucky for us college students, the only foods we can
usually afford are pretty easy to make. Hopefully some of these extremely basic and practically foolproof ideas will help you cook in your dorm, and give you a break from the food of the dining halls.

Veggies
Did you know that all you need to do to cook those healthy things is a microwave, a preferably microwave safe container, and some plastic wrap or something else to cover your container? To steam veggies in the microwave, throw them in the container, put a splash or two of water into the bottom, cover it, and put it into your microwave for a minute. If this doesn't cook them as much as you want/if your microwave only seems to emit one photon at a time, keep microwaving in 30 second intervals until they're done. Accept your new status as a glowing goddess of health who has found inner peace and flows with the energy of the universe.

Pasta
I have recently discovered to my dismay that more than one person has no idea how to cook noodles. To cook this seemingly elusive food, one simply fills a pot about halfway with water, and boils the water. Then add pasta to the water, and fully immerse the pasta in the boiling water. Let the whole thing keep boiling for about 10 minutes. After that, take out a noodle and eat it. If it tastes done (not hard in the middle of the noodle), turn off the stove and attempt not to burn yourself as you drain the water out of the pot. If not, let it cook for 1-2 more minutes and try it again. Or throw it at the wall and see if it sticks.

Sweet Potatoes
I may not know how to cook any Indian food at all, but thanks to my grandmother I know how to cook a sweet potato with nothing but a microwave. Get a sweet potato that looks relatively edible, and use a fork to poke a FEW holes in the skin. Too many and it'll turn into a dry piece of orange, root shaped cardboard. Take that tuber to the microwave, and put it in for four minutes. Flip it over (relatively speaking of course; it's hard to flip a round object) and microwave for four more minutes. If it's not done, just put it back in for 3 minutes. By then it should be an adequately hot potato.

Thank you so much for reading the February edition of The MedCat Jr. Newsletter!
If you would like to write for The MedCat Jr., or have info you want in the The MedCat Jr. please contact Editor-in-Chief Lauren Styczynski at styczynl@mail.uc.edu

Happy February!