Welcome, April!

Happy Spring, Medical Sciences!

Welcome to the MedCat Jr. of April 2018! Medical Sciences Student Government and the MedCat Jr. team wanted to wish you a happy April, even though with the weather of the past few weeks, it is spring!! We also wanted to issue a cautious reminder that April flies by - soon, it will be finals. And the semester will be over.

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.
To the Undergraduate Program in Medical Sciences,

After years of work, I am proud to say that the College of Medicine Tribunal has finally been officially approved. This represents the first time in the short history of the Medical Sciences program that all students will have representation in the Undergraduate Student Government. This is an extremely exciting time in our program and I look forward to seeing what the tribunal can do for you.

To better explain the significance of having a tribunal, let me start by explaining what a tribunal is. The basic purpose of a tribunal is to serve as the student government for each college. Every college on campus has a tribunal, ranging from CCM to CECH, but undergraduate students in the College of Medicine had not had a tribunal until now. Each tribunal works as a part of the larger Undergraduate Student Government, through which they receive funding, and representation in the form of two seats in the Student Senate. This Student Senate is made up of eight elected at-large positions, Student Government executive members (e.g. President, Vice President, etc.), and two senators from each of the colleges on campus. In short, tribunals help improve the college experience for students via funding student initiatives, and allowing each college to have a voice in major campus decisions that are discussed in the Senate room.

Our path to becoming a tribunal was not an easy one. We encountered great difficulty when we first began discussing the concept of creating a tribunal in Fall of 2015, primarily because we were considered too small of a program to be represented in Student Senate. As we attempted to move forward in the process of establishing a tribunal, we also began to realize that since all other tribunals had been established for many years, there was no set path for creating a new one. We continued to operate as Medical Sciences Student Government during this time, but faced difficulty in accomplishing many of the initiatives we had planned without a consistent source of funding.

Things began to look up during the Spring semester of 2017, when we worked with the Student Activities Board to successfully get approved as a student group in order to better establish ourselves as an organization. Through consistent contact with the Undergraduate Student Government throughout the rest of the year, we were able to share our progress, begin to properly establish our Constitution and Bylaws, and create bills for Student Senate to vote on. One presentation to Senate and two bills later, the Student Senate voted on March 21st, 2018 to approve the addition of our Tribunal to the Undergraduate Student Government. In fact, our two newly-elected senators were officially sworn in to the Student Senate on March 28th.

We have worked hard to see this vision become a reality. This could not have been possible without the support of the Medical Sciences administration, current and former MedSci Student Government members, and the Undergraduate Student Government. With the 2018-19 school year being the first time the Tribunal will be able to fully operate, I encourage all MedSci students to engage with the group and with your newly-elected Tribunal officers. The Tribunal can help make many of your own ideas come to fruition and can bring about a significant impact to the University of Cincinnati as a whole. For more information about the Tribunal, current initiatives, and to provide comments, feel free to visit our website at https://www.wordpress.comtribunal.com.

Rahul Sandella, Former Tribunal President
INTRODUCING THE 2018-2019
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TRIBUNAL

PRESIDENT
Minh Nguyen; ’19; Cincinnati, OH

As Tribunal President, I'm excited to lead an awesome executive team to further develop and establish the Tribunal as a governing body for the students, by the students.

Fun Fact: I’ve had the same haircut for over a decade!

VICE-PRESIDENT
Farhan Ilyas; ’20; Mason, OH

I'm excited to get to work with the different classes of Med Sci to improve the major as a whole

Fun Fact: I'm training for a marathon!

TREASURER
Nihar Rama; ’21; Mason, OH

I'm looking forward to more students getting both excited for and involved with the events and initiatives it will begin to drive at a much more significant level.

Fun Fact: I'm convinced that tiramisu has the ability to heal.
SECRETARY

Lauren Styczynski; ’20; West Chester, OH

I am so excited to continue working with the MedCat Jr. team, and for each issue to be better than the last. I am also super stoked to take on some new initiatives to benefit Med Sci.

Fun Fact: I have a tumor, and her name is Tabitha. She’s my pride and joy, and my favorite conversation starter.

SENATORS

Joanna Rebitski; ’20; Hebron, KY

I’m excited for UCCOM to be represented in Student Senate and for our tribunal to become more involved and have a stronger impact on Med Sci students.

Fun Fact: One time I broke both of my wrists at the same time in a skiing accident.

Rahul Patel; ’21; West Chester, OH

I am excited to represent the undergraduate students in the College of Medicine. I cannot wait to work with everyone so that we as students can get the most out of our undergraduate experience and our college.

Fun Fact: I have seen the third highest mountain in the world and watched the sunrise over the Himalayas.
Recap: What MedSci Has Been Up To

A Fantastic Freshman Year In Med Sci
Chinmay Bakshi and Anurag Paul

The past year in the Medical Sciences program has been one of the best years of our lives. The Med Sci program has offered us so many opportunities to get us up and running right from freshman year!

First of all, mandatory classes such as Exploring Health Professions and History of Medicine were built into our schedule to help us understand if medicine is a good fit for our lives. These classes have boosted Med Sci’s reputation to the next level.

Next, the acclaimed freshman seminars gave us a nice overview of the lives of medical students. If we are fortunate enough to get into medical school, the information that these seminars have taught us will be highly useful, assuming our memories stay strong.

Lastly, Med Sci offered us unique experiential learning opportunities. From the fantastic shadowing experiences provided by Cindy Bachurski to the intriguing research opportunities provided by the RAMP program, Med Sci has it all. And don’t worry, even if you don’t get involved with research by the end of freshman year, Biomedical Lab Techniques will bring research to you. Even though Beth’s departure has saddened us, Rachel still stands strong to help us with anything we need.

#MedSci4Ever

MedSci’s Summer 2018 Plans
Missy MacDonald

As the spring semester comes to a close, most students are gearing up for finals while looking longingly at the horizon for summer. Other students, however, also see the dread of upcoming graduate and medical school entry tests. Preparing students to face any challenge that comes their way is one of the focal points of the Medical Sciences program. Despite all of this preparation, the MCAT and GRE exams are anxiety inducing for many students. Not only could a bad score deter future plans, having to take the MCAT or GRE multiple times is a huge financial burden. Review courses cost around $2500, review textbooks around $150. The test itself costs $305, not including transportation to and from the site and lodging, if necessary. Despite the extremely high prices, students continue to invest is these resources in order to succeed on test day.
With the rise of electronic media, however, students are able to mitigate some of the cost by using public access resources. A simple Google search of “MCAT studying” yields 250,000 results. YouTube accounts like Khan Academy walk students through subjects similar to the review textbooks. Students who have recently taken the MCAT and done well often post their schedules and any tricks they learned on open forums like Reddit.

In the end, it is important for students to know what studying strategies work best for themselves. Although working at their own pace may work for some students, others need a more structured approach. Some may be able to design a schedule for themselves, while others appreciate having a method that has been in place—and given good results—for years. When 14 Medical Sciences third years were surveyed, 9 indicated that they are opting to study on their own, while only 5 will be enrolling in review courses. No matter what route is taken, the MedSci students will be able to face any test question thrown at them.

My Experience at AMIA
Paul Murdock

Over spring break, I attended the AMIA 2018 Informatics Summit conference and had a blast! I highly recommend to attend a research conference if you ever get the chance to. In one word (or three): it was wonderful. Not because I love waking up every day at 7 am, or because I am some informatics guru who was able to knowingly contribute to my field, but because it allowed me to broaden my scope. To begin, it offered me the unique opportunity to network with faculty that I could only dream of talking to. For example, I got to network with Dr. Douglas Fridsma, the President and CEO of AMIA, whom I shared a one on one conversation with about medical school and my future career in informatics. He offered me career advice and the steps leading up to where he is today. He also offered me some insight into what he is working on, what resources AMIA has and how they can help me, and said he was excited to see me at the main AMIA conference. I would have never imagined making such a valuable friend from this experience.

Presenting a poster was intriguing, and I think my favorite part was getting to see what other students were working on. I was very excited to see what others in the informatics community were doing outside of reading journal articles and talking to team members in my own lab. In fact, this was the first time I got to see what the WORLD of informatics was doing. It really broadened my perspective in this way, too. Presenting my poster was fun also, I mean it’s always exciting for someone to express interest in the work you are doing.

My favorite part of the conference was learning about the basic principles within informatics. For example, I had no idea what high performance clustering was, but I had an idea what a BLAST sequence was because of my genetics class here, so seeing someone combine these two and create an
informatics project out of it was super cool! Therefore, one of my other favorite parts was how much I got to learn. Also, seeing my fellow Bearcats present was cool too!

Something else I learned was how broad the Informatics field is. In fact, it’s so broad that it had to be broken up into 3 different keynote addresses focusing on the different areas of informatics (bioinformatics, translational, and clinical informatics). I did not have a great appreciation for the these and how much goes into each, it’s very hard to be an “expert” in informatics, you really must be an expert in a subfield of informatics. Within my field, clinical informatics, I was surprised by how relevant both my own research and classwork has been in “grooming” me into a bioinformatician! I have been extremely lucky through the opportunities I have embarked on as they have provided me with an excellent foundation of the field.

Overall, the conference was fantastic and so was the free coffee! I would be happy to talk with other Medical Sciences students on this experience if anyone has any specific questions. I hope you all continue to be rock stars in your fields, and that I can in some way encourage other students to embark on a similar journey. In closing, it is important to never your talents or training for granted, as you never know when they will pay off. I was not aware until this experience, but I can say I’m more than thankful for those faculty and students who encourage me to be better each and every day.
Andie Does Karate
Andie Shugar

Grade school through high school, most kids play school sports; the popular ones including soccer, basketball, football, volleyball, swimming, and track and field/cross country. Then, there were some kids who chose the non-traditional school sports, such as gymnastics, hockey, and martial arts. I was one of the kids who “played” the non-traditional sport of karate. I grew up training, teaching and competing in the sport, and I was always known in my school system as “that girl who does karate.” Not that it bothered me, but it was always a label I carried. I trained about 4 nights per week, including Friday nights, and couldn’t regularly attend fun sporting events after school with friends due to training. So, when I graduated high school, I decided that after almost 16 years of karate, it was time to end my career. I didn’t want to be known as “the girl that does karate” anymore; I wanted to have fun and actually have a social life for the first time in my life!

Karate was a huge part of my identity. It was a humbling experience finding out who I was without karate at the start of my collegiate career, but after almost a year and a half of time away from the sport, I realized how much I truly missed it. The day after fall semester finals were over, I decided to attend class for the first time since June 2016.

Putting a gi (pronounced “gee” - the white robe outfit) and gloves on again had both negative and positive consequences. The negatives included being teased by my classmates and karate instructor, or Sensei (“Move faster!”), and collecting angry blisters on the balls of my feet. It was extremely frustrating being so bad at a sport that had always come naturally to me. However, I was falling back in love with a part of my life that I left behind. I started training over winter break, and continued when spring semester began.

After being back for about a month, I was presented with the opportunity to try-out for the AAU National Karate Team traveling to Dundee, Scotland in June to compete in the WUKF World Karate Championships. About a week after tryouts occurred, I received a letter stating that I had made the National Team, and will be competing the in the World Championships in several months! This is not an easy task; I am training about 15 hours per week. I am already several months into training, but I am looking forward to the next few months to prepare for this event, even if it means giving up time to train instead of hanging out with my friends. I am so thankful that I have found my way back.
The TEDx Talk
Lauren Styczynski

On February 17, I held the honor of being one of the student speakers at TEDxUCincinnati’s Constellations event. I know you’re all heard of TED talks, so I will spare you the details of what those are all about. It was always a dream of mine to give a TED (or TEDx) talk at some point in my lifetime, but as a scientist. I dream of giving a talk about changing the world of pain research, presenting data, and interesting findings. I still hold this dream, but now it is different.

My talk was about my tumor, Tabitha, which many of you know about. My main takeaways were that life is incredibly unpredictable, and you can’t always have a plan for everything. My other takeaway was that you are only as strong as the people that you are surrounded by.

The TEDxUCincinnati team did such a great job coordinating everything, from curation meetings, rehearsal, and of course, the day of the event.

The day of, I thought I was going to vomit. In fact, I was more nervous than I was for surgery. However, the liaisons made me feel like such a celebrity. Everyone was coming up to me telling me that they were so excited to hear my talk, but all I could think about was keeping down my lunch.

One of the coolest things about TEDx, was the support that I had from my friends and family. My parents and best friends came out to support me, and right after I knocked over the T in front of everyone during intermission, a family friend that I didn’t think was coming walked over to me. I cried. And I still hadn’t given my talk yet.

But soon, it was time. Backstage I began to panic about everything; my hair, my face, and whether or not something was in my teeth. But I was also so hyped up that I began to dance. Of course I did. And soon enough, it was my turn.

I went out on the stage and began to give my talk, about Tabitha, the ups and downs of having a wacky tumor on my uterus at 18/19, what my tumor has taught me, and what my community has taught me. But the whole time, I still thought I was going to throw up.

And then it was over. But I knew that I had messed up in my talk, and so I wasn’t thrilled with myself; I wasn’t proud of myself. This was the same moment that I realized that I have some work to do on myself, and I need to begin to believe in myself and be proud of myself. I’m still coping with that.

But, when the edited and professional video comes out on the Internet, I will share it with everyone. Bonus points if you figure out where I almost fall over.
Med Sci Takes on SALD Student Impact Symposium
Matthew Raj, Ellena Privitera, Lauren Styczynski

On March 20th, 2018, selected student groups and individuals were invited by SALD to present their work at the Student Impact Symposium held in TUC Great Hall. With an emphasis on impact, action, and reflection, projects were selected based on core SALD values of equity, inclusion, integrity, growth, leadership, and community. A poster session was held where the public could talk and interact with the students who have made such an important impact on their communities. During this poster session, student groups and individuals were judged by SALD staff to determine top prizes of up to $500 for the most impactful work done in the community. During the poster session, GlobeMed’s project in funding Social Action for Women (SAW) was presented by Medical Science students Anna Layman, Emily Kim, Aswin Bikkani, and Matthew Raj. Later in the afternoon, four projects were invited to present a TED-style talk to the audience about their projects—with three of the four being presented by Medical Science students: Matthew Raj presented about GlobeMed’s partnership model; Ellena Privitera presented about Free the Slave’s collaboration with other organizations for their Hurricane Harvey drive; Zoha Mian and Umar Safwaan presented about Books Not Bombs.

GLOBEMED: Matthew Raj, Anna Layman, Emily Kim, Aswin Bikkani

Speaking more specifically about GlobeMed, we are a national organization with 60 university-based chapters across the country with a mission to empower students and communities to work together to improve the health of people living in poverty around the world. There’s a misconception that one must travel abroad to practice Global Health, and it’s a misconception that GlobeMed challenges everyday. In the GlobeMed model, university-based chapters are paired with organizations that are already improving the health in the communities they serve—organizations that are on the ground and know what works best. Chapters support projects that these organizations wish to implement, often through funds collected throughout the school year, and the health of the community improves as a result. This model is dependent on communication between both partner organizations, first by identifying needs and strengths, and then by working towards that goal, all the while communication is maintained. GlobeMed at UC is partnered with Social Action for Women (SAW), an organization located on the border between Thailand and Burma. They host countless programs to assist the vulnerable Burmese migrant population living in Thailand, from running a shelter for women escaping...
domestic abuse to managing a school for migrant children who wouldn't otherwise receive an education. Our specific partnership funds their Community Health Outreach Program (CHOP), which hosts workshops for Burmese migrants to educate them on basic health and wellness practices. Each year, our goal is to raise $10,000 to fully fund CHOP, and to date, GlobeMed at UC has raised over $66,000, all of which has gone directly to SAW! It is the power of this partnership model that allows students in Cincinnati, Ohio to support and advance the health of a population half a world away; however, the real beauty of the partnerships model is that it can be used anywhere. There are communities right here at home that could benefit greatly from a partnership with YOU. The importance of communication cannot be understated, because it’s through that dialogue that truly wonderful partnerships are born. Identify a community you want to help. Engage in a conversation with them and discover what their needs are and what you can provide them. Finally, get to work on making a meaningful impact! Soon enough, it’ll be you presenting at the next Student Impact Symposium about the great work that partnership has helped you accomplished!

BOOKS NOT BOMBS: Zoha Mian and Umar Safwaan-Durrani

Books Not Bombs is an initiative that provides scholarships for refugee students in the Cincinnati area, proposing that the University of Cincinnati provide multiple, full-tuition scholarships for college-seeking students of refugee students. The initiative is also proposing that the University of Cincinnati to join the Syria Consortium, head by United Nations' Institute of International Education (IIE). According to Junior League of Cincinnati, there are as many as 12,000 to 25,000 refugees living in
Greater Cincinnati. Within the US, Ohio is one of the top seven resettlement states, hosting 5% of refugees. Over the last two years, most of the refugees that have been resettled to Greater Cincinnati have been from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Central African Republic, Cuba, Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Nepal, Rwanda, Somalia, Syria, Tanzania, and Uganda. The United Nations Refugee Agency estimates that fewer than 1% of refugees globally are enrolled in higher education programs.

This concern for the enrollment of refugees in Higher Education led the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to include Higher and Tertiary Education as a key priority of the 2012-2016 education plan. Additionally, 47% of refugees resettled during the study period from 2000-2016 were under age 14 and another 12% were between the ages of 14 and 20 (Migration Policy Institute) and 2,500 refugee students are studying at U.S. schools on visas. There are an estimated 200,000 refugees worldwide who had been in college before and during countrywide conflicts that are now in an educational limbo.

Currently, immigrants in Cincinnati (3.5% of the population), hold more than $1.5 billion in spending power and contributed over $189 million in state and local tax. Educational opportunities for refugees could allow families to thrive financially, which may lead to a more prosperous Cincinnati in the future. In 2012, foreign-born households contributed more than $266 million to Social Security and $62 million to Medicare. Immigrants represented more than 10% of local STEM workers, 6.8% of the high-tech workforce, and 11.3% of all information technology workers.

Books Not Bombs is active at over 190 universities in the United States, United Kingdom, and Canada. Universities such Barnard College, Michigan State University and the University of Southern California have created scholarship opportunities for students from Syrian refugee families. Other resolutions have been passed by Rice University, Tufts University, University of Southern California, University of Michigan, Johns Hopkins University, Michigan State University, and UC Irvine, and Columbia University, and it is proposed that at the University of Cincinnati begin an active chapter.

Providing refugees with an education can do much to improve the University of Cincinnati’s image with respect to diversity issues. Considering the recent calls for diversity in Student Government and other campus organizations, providing this scholarship could be a unique opportunity for this university to embrace and foster an evolving definition of diversity on its campus.

FREE THE SLAVES: Ellena Privitera and Erika Nguyen

Free the Slaves UC Chapter (FTS) is a branch of a nonprofit, Free the Slaves, that works in DC, the Congo, Ghana, Senegal, Haiti, India, and Nepal with the mission of ending slavery worldwide. The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates that there are approximately 40 million people who are slaves - this is defined by being forced to work without pay beyond subsistence, and being unable to leave because of violence or the threat of violence. In the United States, "slavery" is often used synonymously with "human trafficking" - when someone profits off of another by exploiting them through force, fraud or coercion (does not necessarily involve the movement of a person across state/country lines, but it can include that). Regardless of how you say it, modern slavery is characterized by violent control, and results in exploitation. The reason that people end up in slavery
is because of **vulnerability** that another person with power uses to trap that person. Among the many factors that play into that vulnerability is a lack of critical services. For example, not having a job, or not being able to go to school puts people in vulnerable situations where they can be taken advantage of. And, when a natural disaster hits, that vulnerability becomes exponentially worse. In fact, when natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes arrive, traffickers are often the first people to arrive to the scene.

So when Hurricane Harvey hit Houston, FTS was interested in attempting to reduce the vulnerability of survivors. FTS hosted a drive to gather non-perishable food items, personal care products, cleaning supplies, paper products, baby & infant supplies & first-aid items to donate to Houston citizens in the fall semester. FTS Exec members, including Medical Sciences Students Ellena Privitera, Zoha Mian, Erika Nguyen, Andrew Snider, and Akshar Kathula, called upon University offices and other student organizations, including the First Year Experience Program + Resident Education & Development, to expand its scope and get students to donate. Free the Slaves collaborated with the Muslim Student Association, the South Asian American Student Association, Global Public Health Brigades, and GlobeMed. A competition between Learning Communities was developed, and drop-off locations were located in Residence Halls + at student organization meetings. Two cars-full of items were collected in the process, and they were then delivered them to Matthew 25 ministries, which was then transported to Houston. The project has solidified ongoing partnerships between student organizations, and in the future you can expect to see Free the Slaves engaging a more diverse and more interdisciplinary assortment of student organizations in their initiatives! Want to learn more about Free the slaves? Check out freetheslaves.net and email ucfreetheslaves@gmail.com for more information about modern slavery.
Thank you so much for reading the March 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 styczyln@mail.uc.edu

Happy April, and good luck with the end of your semester!