

PULSE. COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

The Heart of the UCF M.D. Program

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The White Coat Ceremony

By Sarina Amin

I must admit that when I was younger, I was terrified of going to the doctor's office. As soon as I stepped into the office, I started to feel anxious, my heart raced, and my blood pressure would rise. I now realize that in my youth I had the "White Coat Syndrome," which I learned about during my first preceptor session. Now, ten years after my fear subsided, I have a white coat of my own.

The White Coat Ceremony on August 3, 2009 was a momentous occasion. It not only marked the beginning of an innovative medical curriculum, but it also marked the beginning of a new phase of our lives. In the first few weeks of medical school, our class has come together to create the culture and traditions of the UCF COM M.D. Program, to establish life-long relationships, and to become the "Good Doctors" that we set out to become.

The ceremony itself was a testament to the widespread community support for the medical education program. As I looked out over the audience while I was receiving my white coat, it was overwhelming to visualize the sea of support consisting of our family members, the volunteer and full-time faculty, and our scholarship donors. On behalf of the Charter Class, I would like to thank everyone who came to the ceremony to witness the first day of our medical careers.



A letter from our M.D. Program Charter Class President:

Dear UCF College of Medicine Friends & Family,

Thank you for your dedication to the UCF College of Medicine. Whether you are a donor, administrator, faculty member, employee, or family member, the UCF COM depends on your support in order to continue growing and evolving in a positive way.

Since our class of 41 students started medical school on August 3rd, we have had many exciting classroom and extracurricular experiences. We were taught by some of the leading experts in their fields in the Human Body I module, solidifying our foundation of macromolecules and how they interact to make a functional cell. In addition to normal cellular functions, our professors provided many examples of disease states to demonstrate how classroom material will apply to our careers as physicians. We have even had real patients present in class to show how Down syndrome and gout affect patients' lives. Our heavy science-based curriculum is balanced by discussions about healthcare reform, medical ethics, and nutrition. In the Clinical Skills & Simulation Center we work with standardized patients, where we have the opportunity to practice communicating and interacting with patients by collecting a medical history. Every other week we spend half a day with physicians in the community. While in their practices, we take patient histories, obtain firsthand experience with diseases we have encountered in class, learn about the various roles of healthcare professionals in the office, note different styles of practicing medicine, and appreciate the difference physicians in Central Florida make to their patients. In our Focused Individualized Research Experience Module, many students have formed partnerships with research mentors and formulated research plans for the next two years. The establishment of student organizations has begun with the initiation of the Florida Medical Association (FMA), Medical Student Section of the American Medical Association (MSS-AMA), American Medical Student Association (AMSA), International Humanitarian Group, and the Wilderness Medical Society Student Interest Group.



I reflect on the many accomplishments of the UCF College of Medicine over the past two months and realize I am fortunate to attend a medical school that refers to its students as colleagues. Each day our faculty, administration, and students work together to make our medical school a success. It is the partnership between the administration, faculty, students, and community that will enable the UCF College of Medicine to become the premier institution in medical education.

The Charter Class Student Council will be yet another member of this already established partnership. We have a very capable group of students ready to serve the school and student body. As I look towards the end of this year, I envision the numerous accomplishments of the Student Council. We will work diligently to establish a strong foundation for the UCF College of Medicine MD Program student body. The Charter Class and the inaugural Student Council will set a precedent of excellence for this pioneering class and the future classes that follow.

Sincerely,
Brittany Moscato, Charter Class President

Allow us to introduce ourselves. We are the burgeoning UCF COM chapter of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA). Who are we? We are our values, our priorities, and most importantly, we are what we do.

Our values. Beneficence, mentorship, responsibility, Ubuntu philosophy.

What is Ubuntu philosophy? This is best answered with an excerpt from our constitution.

ARTICLE XI. UBUNTU PHILOSOPHY

Ubuntu Philosophy is a guiding value for UCF COM AMSA. Roughly translated from Bantu as “togetherness”, Ubuntu emphasizes the connection between the individual with their community. Archbishop Desmond Tutu described Ubuntu as:

“One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu - the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality - Ubuntu - you are known for your generosity.”

Our priorities.

1. Enhance the quality and access of healthcare in community.
2. Complete, enrich, & inspire education of medical students.
3. Develop strong healthcare leaders.

What have we done? After only 9 weeks of school we have already acted on our values and priorities. As AMSA member Kathryn Ferstadt has said, “This is only the beginning. . .”

1. We have drafted a constitution and bylaws, led by primary author Virgil Secasanu. The document will shape all that we will do as representatives of UCF and AMSA.
2. On August 28, Brittany Moscato, Mitch Popovetsky, Olga Tusheva, and Will Kang participated in game night at the Women's Residential and Counseling Center (WRCC). The WRCC is part of the Coalition for the Homeless of Central Florida.
3. From October 16-18, Luke Lin, Uchechi Anumudu, Mitch Popovetsky, Will Kang, Ashley Ferrara, Tiffany Chen, Ashley Curry, Olga Tusheva, Brittany Moscato, and Kathryn Ferstadt attended AMSA's Regional Conference in Atlanta, Georgia. AMSA conferences are gatherings for medical students regarding education and leadership development. Highlights included a keynote address about leadership from Dr. David Satcher, the 16th Surgeon General of the United States.

What's next? On November 7, AMSA is organizing the first community outreach event as a class. We will be cooking a home-cooked meal for the residents of the Ronald McDonald House at Arnold Palmer Medical Center. Ronald McDonald Houses provide a "home away from home" for families with seriously ill, critically injured, or chronically ill children who are being treated at local hospitals and medical facilities. AMSA member and student body president Brittany Moscato is heading the project.

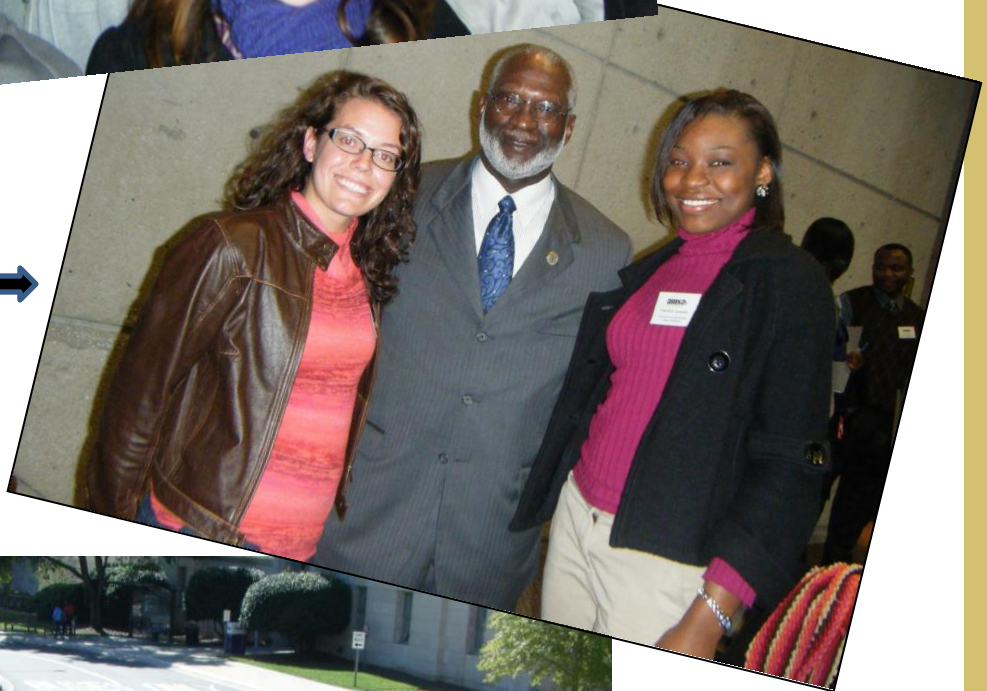
TO THE TALENTED MEMBERS OF THE UCF COM CLASS OF 2013: *Our professors are doing a great job teaching us what happens in the hospital, but it takes more than a great medical school to make a great doctor. How will we learn about what happens to the children and parents when they go home? Through events like this, we help the community but also become better doctors. Lend a hand. We need cooks and servers for dinner on November 7.*

UCF COM AMSA Pictures – Atlanta Conference



UCF COM AMSA members at the AMSA Conference in Atlanta, Georgia

Two UCF COM AMSA members with David Satcher, the 16th Surgeon General of the United States



UCF COM AMSA members outline "UCF!" on the Emory University Campus

The UCF COM Student & Faculty Fall Picnic

By Jon Beilan

As HB-1 was wrapping up, you could feel the nervous bustle in the air as students prepared for the big finale on October 9, 2009. All across the COM, signs of cramming could be seen: books scattered across the study rooms, empty coffee mugs awaiting a refill, the infamous half-sensible scribble on each of the white boards. Throughout the final week of preparation, however, a light shined at the end of the tunnel. Dr. Husty's party offered an exciting release that we all planned to use as rehabilitation towards normal life...once the exam was over, of course.

The party was amazing—far exceeding any of our expectations. Maybe it was the interesting drive through the orange grove, or the tall trees that surround the house, but when you arrived at the party you felt like you had entered a different world. Imagine friends, family, students, and faculty all enjoying each other's company over appetizers instead of books. Aside from the scenic lakefront property and cooperative weather, there was great outdoor music, tons of delicious food, and plenty of activities to keep everyone entertained. Some people socialized with friends and colleagues of the UCF COM family while others played soccer, cornhole, and frisbee (who knew Chip Roberts, the Assistant Vice President of COM Development, once played in college?). A showcase game of volleyball involved at least 20 people and provided the perfect competition to work up an appetite. After the activities, everyone gathered around the buffet table that exhibited student and faculty cooking talent.

The highlight of the evening had to be the fireworks. Thanks to Dr. Husty, his advanced kayaking skills, and his pyrotechnic crew, everyone enjoyed a spectacular show that was as impressive as a Disney fireworks production. Finally, with full bellies and minds happily out of academic mode, everyone was ready to head home. Thank you to Dr. Husty and his family for hosting such a fun event.



My First Patient Experience

By Ashley Ferrara

I was lucky to start my day with two adorable patients, ages three and four, who hugged me as I came in. Both patients were only there for a very quick checkup, but I was excited to witness the relationship between the family and my preceptor, and to see how they would respond to my presence. I was slightly nervous and curious about the level of knowledge that the family and preceptor expected of me. Meeting these patients made me eager to learn more and have patients of my own.

The Shakespeare Gala

By Uchechi Anumudu

During my days before medical school, I often dreamed of the school I would attend. My ideal medical school would have, among many things, a supportive team and a vibrant and enthusiastic community. I daresay I found the medical school of my dreams. Just when the outsider might think that a community that has already donated nearly \$7 million to fund our education could not be more generous, members of the Central Florida community have given even more to the College of Medicine inaugural class.

They have extended their donations to ensure that while getting our medical education, we do not suspend the education of other aspects of our being. For example, in the ten weeks since classes started, all 41 of us have received complimentary tickets to the Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando Shakespeare Theater's Gala, and the upcoming Festival of Orchestras. The gala of the Shakespeare Theater was especially appreciated as we were able to take time away from our studies to enjoy a beautiful night in town. We were entertained with great food, good conversation and the preview to the musical "Big Bang." By the end of the night we were all happy to have tickled another side of our brains.

In all, my classmates and I remain indebted to this wonderful society. We continue to enjoy these generous opportunities that we are afforded and look forward to repaying the community to the best of our abilities.



Student Case: Taking Risks in Medical School

By Anika Mirick

Every Friday, the faculty present a medical case that integrates that week's lecture material. We have covered Down syndrome, Sickle-Cell Anemia and Tissues Engineering to name a few. As we begin our medical school journey, we take a leap of faith in attempting to characterize the complexity of the human body with only a few biochemistry and genetics principles under our belts. And so far, we've succeeded in doing so – or at least in learning something new.

The majority of the class also took a leap of faith this summer while choosing with whom to live and where. Some pored over the Facebook profiles of classmates looking for hints of compatibility; others chose each other for more practical reasons like timing and convenience. The desperation of leaving these decisions to the last possible moment was probably the major motivating factor in many of our decisions – yes, even med students procrastinate!

And yet, none of our parents understood this rationale. “You met your roommate over the *internet*? But this is *medical school*!”

But we would argue that we *have* all met before – at least in spirit. All of us took a “risk” in attending a partially-accredited school over the prestigious universities at which we'd all been accepted. And we're all willing to take the “risk” of living with people with whom we've never met. The vein that runs within us all is the willingness to take risks and the knowing that certain risks are worth taking.

At first glance, my roommate (whom I met online) and I appear to be very different. Susan hails from New Jersey, has a PhD in Medical Sciences, is the CEO of a small nonprofit organization, has an assortment of exotic animals in our apartment (including a fox) and is married to a virologist. I am from the north woods of Wisconsin, grew up skiing competitively and camping, worked for the NIH for two years and aspire to be an oncologist. Susan's influence has led me to take up yoga, research alternative medicine, seriously consider quitting my aspartame addiction and look into buying a fox of my own. I knew this would happen and I am grateful it has already begun.

Medical school is not about passing tests or getting into the most competitive residency. It is about the people you meet along the way – the people who inspire you, who teach you, the patients with whom you interact – all of whom will help us to determine how we will best fit within the medical field. The true “risk” of medical school is learning to trust yourself and to be able to look back one day and know you made decisions for the right reasons.

For that, we are grateful that you took a “risk” on us as your charter class. Every day we are taken aback by the astonishingly thoughtful support of our new community. Thank you for knowing that some risks are worth taking.

The Wilderness Medical Society at UCF COM

By Luke Lin

The Wilderness Medical Society was founded in 1983 in order to advance healthcare, research, and education related to wilderness medicine. Wilderness medicine topics include expedition and disaster medicine, dive medicine, search and rescue, altitude illness, cold- and heat-related illness, wilderness trauma, and wild animal attacks. The WMS offers conferences, courses and fellowships that focus on these topics.

The UCF COM Wilderness Medical Society Student Interest Group (WMSSIG) is currently structured as a loose association of students interested in exploring wilderness medicine. The main purpose of WMSSIG is to tie together our passion for medicine with our love of the outdoors through activities that bring these two fields together.

UCF COM WMSSIG events currently planned include:

- Hosting a lecture introducing dive medicine with a local expert
- Attending the WMS conference on high altitude medicine held in February in Park City, Utah
- Training a team for the Southeast Medical Wilderness Adventure Race held in April in Fort Gordon, Georgia
- Outdoors excursions such as a dive trip, multi-day back country camping or kayaking in the Everglades

You do not have to be a member of WMSSIG to participate in these events. If any of these events interest you or if you have any questions/suggestions please contact Lynn McGrath (lbmcgrath@knights.ucf.edu) or Luke Lin (lehyeong@gmail.com).

UCF COM International Humanitarian Group

By Irina Prelipcean

The idea of starting a group focused on global humanitarian aid is old news. There are many well-established programs out there which send teams across continents to offer some form of assistance to those in need. One might ask why the call to form yet another one of these groups at UCF COM. Apart from my desire to create memorable traditions at UCF COM, I believe that having such a group at our school is an essential milestone. While it takes a leap of faith to say that we are going to do it better than all others, there is, at least in my heart, the certainty that our school would be missing something without a group like this. More than anything, humanitarian trips impact those who give rather than those who receive. Therefore, students will be made aware and possibly transformed by what they will experience. Becoming intimately involved in humanitarian efforts such as this will impact career choices, professional attitudes, benevolence, and many other facets of the physicians we are striving to become. Of course, we must not forget that there is an ongoing need in the world and even small efforts will have meaningful effects. Stay tuned...

Congratulations to our newly elected Charter Class officers for the 2009-2010 academic year!

President

Brittany Moscato

Administrative Vice President

Ashley Curry

Vice President of Information Technology

Jason Crowley

Secretary

Jonathan Gullett

Treasurer

Irina Prelipcean

Chair of Social Activities

Mitch Popovetsky

Organizations Chair

Ashley Ferrara

Honor Code Committee Members

Keith Connolly

Briana Gapsis

Virgil Secasanu

Representative to the UCF Student Government

Ruth Strakosha

Representative to the MD Program Curriculum Committee

Lynn McGrath

Rafik Zarifa (alternate)

Representative to the M-1/M-2 Subcommittee

Anika Mirick

Representative to the Program Evaluation Subcommittee

Susan Salganik

Historian

Sarina Amin