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A Letter from the Editors

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 in the midst of more studying, exams, and standardized tests, we encourage you to take the time to make the most of your first year of medical school. To help you, the Class of 2016 has assembled this student guidebook to answer your questions and alleviate your concerns.

Included is a lot of useful information we’ve accumulated from our own experiences, coerced from our classmates (n = 113), or overheard while eavesdropping on conversations. And there’s plenty we straight up plagiarized from previous student handbooks (such as this sentence).

While this guide will not give you all the answers, we hope it covers most of the basics and proves useful not just for your initial transition into medical school but throughout your first year.

Congratulations on your acceptance to the University of Colorado Anschutz School of Medicine!

Sincerely,

Brittney, Regina, and Sarah

PEARL

You’re in medical school, congratulations!
Don’t forget to live your life while you’re here.
I. Before You Get to the Classroom

In the months before medical school, you will be bombarded with mandatory paperwork, timelines, deadlines, and various administrative requirements. You will have to juggle all that while looking for somewhere to live and trying to accept that you’re really a medical student. Much of this involves tedious paperwork that must be waded through, but your first week of school will be much less stressful if it is all in order before you arrive. 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 staggering amount in 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 2013

Start working on and finish your 2012 Federal Income Tax Return. You must complete this document and have official confirmation of its receipt before you can 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.

This is also time to start looking for scholarship money! As a public school, the SOM doesn’t have a huge endowment to draw on, but there are some special scholarships available, which you will hear about in the Spring. There are also others for which you will automatically be considered based on your situation. However, it is important to keep your eyes open for other sources. Fastweb.com can be helpful, but be forewarned that they like to send a lot of e-mails. Scholarship information is also posted on the Accepted Student Web site.

April-June 2013

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 keep in mind any external sources of funds that you may have.

Pearl

School of Medicine

FAFSA code: 004508

Ten Tips for Saving Money

1. Sign up for as many lunch lectures as you can—they almost always provide free food. Take advantage of any leftovers.

2. Visit the Goodwill. No one will ever know, unless you run into them there, which you probably will.

3. Instead of getting an apartment, just sleep in a cadaver humidor. No one will notice the smell—at least during Anatomy.

4. Go home as often as you can and steal food from your parents. They have a pantry for a reason.

5. Watch television shows online—don’t pay for cable. Laptops and the Internet also exist 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 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 whiteboard to save on paper.

10. Go to business school instead.
**What To Do When Your Income Changes**

Q. *I’ve been working, but I’m going to stop when school starts. How can I change my financial aid?*

A. The aid you receive for 2013-2014 will be based on your returns for the 2012 tax year. If your 2012 taxes do not reflect your current income, you can file a “Reconsideration of Income Appeal” with the Financial Aid Office. This may change your Effective Family Contribution (the amount the university thinks it is reasonable for you to contribute); it may also affect your eligibility for loans and 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.)

Q. *What if I encounter unexpected expenses?*

A. You can file an “Increase to Budget” form if you have special circumstances such as buying a computer, childcare costs, 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.

You can always contact the CU SOM Financial Aid Office directly at 303-724-8039.

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**A Little About NHSC and HPSP**

Several federal programs offer full scholarships to medical school in exchange for a service obligation.

The NHSC (National Health Services Corps) provides both a scholarship and a loan repayment program. The scholarship provides full tuition, fees, and books plus a living stipend. For each year paid by NHSC, you must give one year of service. The NHSC restricts the residencies its members can participate in and if you decide to go into a non-approved residency, you 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. (hhsc.hrsa.gov)

The HPSP (Health Professions Scholarship Program) is a military program that provides significant support in exchange for service in one of the branches of the US Armed Forces. HPSP pays for all expenses associated with medical school and a monthly living stipend. Students serve 45 days of active duty each fiscal year while in school and are required to apply and to accept military residencies (though some branches allow 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, tackle the many administrative details involved in matriculating at a new institution. Below, we’ve listed a few of the things that you should take care of before Orientation starts. And seriously, you really should do this before Orientation.

- Get vaccinated! (see section D)*
- Have official transcripts sent to Admissions*
- Mandatory forms to sign and e-mail*
  - Verification of Residency
  - CU Contract
  - Recording Policy
  - Confidentiality/Video Release
  - Technology Standards
  - Honor System
- Get your health insurance sorted (see section C)*
- Find housing (see section E)
- Fill out the Matriculating Student Questionnaire
- Write your bio for the MS1 directory
- Submit the Student Data Sheet
- RSVP for the White Coat Ceremony (in July)

* You will not be able to start school without completing this.
C. Health Insurance
The University of Colorado requires all students to have full-coverage health insurance. The school offers a plan for $2,688 to $3,460 per year (2012-2013 rates; varies depending on the plan you choose). There is no routine dental or vision coverage, although the plan does offer a discount through specific providers.

If you decide that you do not want to enroll in the school’s insurance plan (remember that with recent changes in health insurance, students can remain on their parents’ health insurance until the age of 26), you must submit proof that you have comparable insurance. Catastrophic or short-term insurance does not qualify. For details, search “Anschutz health insurance requirements” in your favorite search engine.

If you have questions about student health insurance or problems with the insurance company, contact LaVerne Loechel at 303-724-7674 or laverne.loechel@ucdenver.edu. She is extremely helpful and knows how difficult it can be to navigate the world of health insurance. In return, please understand that she too is at the mercy of the health-care system.

Note that if you join the student plan, your card probably will not arrive until late in September. You can still access services using a temporary card (available through LaVerne), although you may have to pay out of pocket and get reimbursed.

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. If your PPD will be older than one year by matriculation, you must get a two-step PPD, which can take a month to complete. Even if you will have had a PPD within the year, you must get a one-step test. All PPDs have to be repeated yearly according to the same timing rules. There is a one-step PPD, the Quantiferon; this is more expensive and must also be repeated annually.

Community clinics and drugstores such as Walgreen’s also provide PPDs. It is the student’s responsibility to stay current on all immunizations. Where to go to gain updates is a personal choice often determined by the health insurance you have. If you have coverage through the school, one of your better options is the on-campus provider Environmental Health and Safety,
303-724-0345. Theoretically, Student Affairs has listings for clinics that can assist with immunizations, but one of your editors had no luck with this route.

E. Housing
Denver and Aurora offer many housing options, and a few students commute from towns farther away, such as Boulder, Centennial, Broomfield, and Englewood. Think about how much you want to spend, how you would like to get to school, and what resources you would like to have around you.

If you’re coming from out of state, don’t expect to find a real estate agent who will help you find a rental—they don’t do that here. You’re better off with a site like padmapper.com, but be wary of the numerous scams. Be skeptical of anything that sounds both cheap and fabulous.

Here are the most popular neighborhoods, their proximity to campus, and what we see as their pros and cons. When shown, prices are for 2012-2013.

21 Fitzsimons
Proximity on campus
Price mid to high (1BR $820-1,195; 2BR $1,142-1,819)
Pros 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.
Cons Price. When you are living off of $1,500 a month, spending $900 on rent is rough. You are far away from most of Denver’s nightlife and restaurants as well as the 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, including Copper Flats
Proximity bikeable (10 min), walkable
Price low to mid (Copper Flats: 1BR: $650-800 2BR: $900-1,100)
Pros 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 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.
Cons Though our campus is new, many areas on East Colfax have not caught up. Many apartment complexes are undergoing major renovations to attract medical school students but some are just not there yet. Remember, any apartment or house can look great on the Internet, so make sure to check it out in person before signing a lease. The area lacks good restaurants (except for the taquerías) and bars but has pretty good bus access to Denver.
**Stapleton**

**Proximity** 4 to 5 miles; bus or drive, could bike but route is poor

**Price** High ($1,004 & up for a 1BR)

**Pros**
Stapleton is a planned community close to school. Think kids (lots of kids) and young couples. It has many amenities, including swimming pools (annual membership, $20), medium-size parks, a public library, a summertime farmer’s market, King Soopers, Udi’s, a yoga studio, an upscale bike shop, a dry cleaner’s, and a liquor store. It’s close to Walmart, Target, and Goodwill. Rent varies widely, from affordable to fairly costly, and if you want to buy, there are townhomes and single-family houses available. We have heard that some complexes give a discount to medical students, but that may be over.

**Cons**
Some people might describe Stapleton as “Pleasantville,” and some people would be right. There are a couple of bars, but this is every inch a kid-friendly neighborhood. (If you’ve got a family, then this obviously is not a con.)

**Lowry**

**Proximity** 4 to 6 miles (10-20 min, depending on traffic)

**Price** Low to mid

**Pros**
Lowry is a quiet residential area built on an old Air Force base. It’s comparable in many ways to Stapleton, although it’s a bit older. Like Stapleton, it 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, where local artists often play. Also, Lowry is not far from the Cherry Creek shopping area, which has nice restaurants, bars, and the most upscale mall in Denver (just in case you want to blow your loan money at Louis Vuitton).

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

**Old Campus (Colorado and Colfax)**

**Proximity** 6 to 8 miles

**Price** Low to mid ($500-1,000)

**Pros**
This area, which includes Park Hill, City Park, and Cheesman Park, 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 in tenants from the move of the school and offer great move-in deals. There are several fun bars and restaurants close by, and Downtown is a short bus or car drive away as well. The bus (15 or 15L) runs straight down Colfax to school if you don’t want to drive. The nearby parks are good for running or playing with the dog.

**Cons**
It’s a bit of a hike to campus. The bus is great if you are good about waking up early enough 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 campus parking. The closer you get to downtown, the pricier it gets.

Downtown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proximity</th>
<th>10 to 12 miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pros</td>
<td>Welcome to Denver. You are in the heart of city, which is filled with great places to eat, drink, and study. If you 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cons</td>
<td>You pretty much need to buy a parking pass and drive. No bus heads directly to campus. Apartments downtown can get pricey, and you may have to pay for certain amenities, like a workout room, that other places offer for “free.” 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.</td>
</tr>
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How To Find Housing

The Student Assistance Office keeps current listings of housing online. Consider finding future roommates on your class Facebook page—many a happy friendship has been formed this way. However, 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

Renter’s Remorse

Finding the right apartment can be tough when you’re new to the area. Around 30% of our class played it safe and chose a spot near campus (21 Fitz, Copper Flats, Stapleton). When we asked classmates where they would live if they could do it over again, those locations were still popular. The big losers were Greater Aurora, Centennial, and, of course, Other.

Thanks to Sarah Cebron for surveying the class and creating the charts and map.
going through and can be awesome study partners), it can also be an additional stress (two med students in a room tend to talk only about med school). Just make sure that when you are deciding, you go with what will work best for you. Don’t put too much weight into what someone else says you should do.

There are several resources in the area that you also might find useful. Housing Helpers is a great free resource that can help you find 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.

For those considering buying a place, there are many condos and houses on the market that are taking a while to sell. You might be tempted by houses that are bank-owned, but the sales process can be excruciatingly drawn out, and the place itself may take a lot of fixing up.

When buying a place, consider what you will do with it after you graduate and what the resale value might be—as well as, of course, what you would do if your plan A fell through. In addition, keep in mind that you do a lot of moving around during third and fourth year, what with rotations and interviews. You may find yourself in the Denver/Aurora area consistently during your first two years only. While buying is a good investment for some (here’s to you, MSTPs), it may not be right for you.

F. Buying a Computer and/or Smart Phone
Having a computer is essential; a smartphone is debatable. You probably have both already, but here is our $.02 of advice, whether you want it or not.

Where students wished they lived. Campus is the pink rectangle near I-225. Starting with the red circle and moving clockwise: 21 Fitz, Copper Flats, Greater Aurora, Lowry, City Park/Uptown, Park Hill, Stapleton.
Computers
You do not need to buy a new computer for medical school. If you have a functioning machine with wireless and available memory, 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.

Minimum Requirements
80GB Hard Drive
1GB RAM (2GB recommended)
DVD-ROM drive
Video card
Macs: Intel chips; 10.7+ will make life easier
PCs: 2GHz or faster processor; Windows 7 is the officially supported OS
All computers: Microsoft Office, or the ability to view Word and PPT documents as well as PDFs

Next, you may be asking: Mac or PC? Most likely you already have an opinion about this. Both computers styles will work perfectly well; it truly is 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 many lecturers use one or both.

Smartphones
Phones running iPhone or Android have access to a multitude of helpful applications—flash card programs, Epocrates, study apps, and so forth. Windows and Blackberry phones are definitely behind in this area.

Like it or not, smartphones or some kind of tablet are rapidly becoming as basic a requirement as having a computer. You may find, as one MS1 did, that your preceptor strongly suggests you have one. So while we aren’t telling you officially that your education will be hampered without one, your education will probably be hampered without one.
II. After You Arrive

Whether you are a Colorado native or have only been here for your interview, odds are you have a lot of questions about what will be your new home for the next several years. We are here to help!

A. A Denver Native’s Guide to Getting Around

*This section comes courtesy of the class of 2013.*

So you’re saying that you’re not an expert on the ins and outs of Denver city streets? You’re telling me that if you are given an address, you don’t have the foggiest idea what part of the city it is in? Now, I know we all have GPS on our phones, but as a Denver native, I would like to 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 study along with these 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 (moving from north to south) are Montview, 6th Ave, Alameda, Evans, and Hampden. Major north-south streets (from west to east) are Kipling, Wadsworth, Sheridan, Santa Fe, University, Colorado, Monaco, Quebec, Havana, Peoria, Chambers, and 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), 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 have a letter.
   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.”

   Thus, 3215 E. Colfax is 32 blocks east of Broadway on Colfax.

5. As you move north of Ellsworth, the streets are numbered. The major exceptions are 15th Ave = Colfax, 20th Ave = Montview, 30th Ave = Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

6. South of Ellsworth doesn’t have any unifying pattern except that a chunk of avenues are named after states. However, based on fact 4, you know that something at 1476 S. Pearl Street is between 14 and 15 blocks south of Ellsworth (and about 30 blocks south of Colfax).
7. As you move west of Broadway, the street names will be alphabetical, and they will generally start over when they hit Z.

8. As you move east of Broadway, the street names have no pattern until you hit Colorado. Then you will encounter a double alphabet, with the second being the name of a plant.

Ed. note: Some streets below Colfax are one-way, which may or may not have already killed one of the editors.

B. Transportation and Parking—Getting to and from Class

Cars
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. First, it gives you a lot more flexibility in matching with a Foundations preceptor, which occurs in October or November of your first year. Second, you’ll almost certainly need a car for your third- and fourth-year rotations, since you can (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. If you live in the metropolitan area, you do not need 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 purchase a parking permit at the Parking Office, located on the first floor of Building 500 (note that Building 500 uses European floor numbers), near the bookstore and cafe. The phone number is 303-724-2555, but you have to show up in person to complete any meaningful transactions. The office usually opens at 7 a.m. You must have a student ID in order to purchase a permit (i.e., you can’t do this before you get badged during Orientation).

Expect passes to be around $36 a month. One nice option is a carpool parking pass—if your roommate is also an SOM student, you can purchase one pass to share and then you split the cost. There are also daily lots for $5 per 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 the Georgetown lot is only $1 during those times, this pass could easily pay for itself if it matches your schedule.

If you’re trying to escape paying for parking, there are a couple of secret places to park for free on campus. A few spots are behind the 21 Fitzsimons apartments, although these are limited and will almost always be gone before 8 a.m. We have seen some students parking on one of the side streets off of Victor St., between Montview and Fitzsimons Parkway.

You could also try leaving your wheels in one of the neighborhoods near campus, but we don’t know how accepting the locals are of unknown vehicles. You might return to find your car on blocks, sans stereo, or missing. Some free advice: Don’t chance it. Pay for a permit, use your bus pass, or hoof it.
Commuting
Some students commute from Broomfield 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.

RTD
RTD is the Front Range public transit service. As a University of Colorado student, you will get a “free” bus pass (paid for by student fees). Several buses stop on campus. The 20 runs from Stapleton to the entrance of Building 500, and the 15 and 15L run down Colfax to campus.

Don’t forget that your pass works on SkyRide (the airport route) and on the light rail that runs in the area Downtown. To check bus schedules and routes, visit 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. Bike racks live in front of every building on campus, either alone or in groups.

We used to say it was unlikely that your bike would be stolen or vandalized on campus as long as you locked it up, but we just heard there has been a rash of thefts. Consider investing in a good lock (if you buy a Kryptonite u-lock, they’ll replace your bike if it’s stolen) or buying a beater bike on craigslist. Also, Bill Brandenburg advises you to register your bike and keep track of the ID number.

C. Coffee and Food on Campus
Ed2 North, Building 500, and the library cafe all participate in the same frequent-buyer program. There are separate cards for food and coffee.

Coffee
Ed2 North, first floor 7:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Children’s Hospital  Opens at 6 a.m. The only place open on weekends.
Dazbog  6 a.m. - 5 p.m.
cafe adjoining library 7:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Building 500, first floor 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Food
first floor, Ed2 North pizza, sandwiches, bagels, sweets
Research Complex 2 Udi’s
Children’s Hospital cafeteria style; there is also a gelato bar
Restaurant area Subway, Jimmy John’s, Pudge Brother’s Pizza, Marble Slab Creamery, Big City Burrito. For directions, ask an MS2 or look for Jimmy John’s on Google Maps.
Building 500, first floor Wok’n’Roll, Mama Alvino’s Pizza, Bookstore Brew
D. Favorite Coffeeshops Off Campus
Some people are coffeeshop studiers. If this is you, test one of the beloved hangouts of the class of 2016. Every place has free wi-fi unless noted otherwise.

**Bardo Coffee House**
It’s a drive from campus, but it’s cozy and full of other people studying. S. Broadway near Alameda. Open early til late (1 a.m. Sun.- Thu. and til 3 a.m. Fri. and Sat.)

**Bicycle Cafe**
Get your bike fixed while you study. 17th & Lafayette, 6 a.m.-10 p.m.

**Caribou Coffee**
OK, no one mentioned this, but it’s close to campus (SE kitty corner) and stays open until 9 p.m.

**Common Grounds**
Endorsed by smartypants Tim Newton, so I’ll be heading there too. 17th & Wazee, 6:30 a.m.-10 p.m. Mon.-Fri.; opens 7:30 a.m. Sat. & Sun. and closes 9 p.m. Sun.

**Dazbog**
Multiple locations in Denver, including one on campus. A favorite of the class of 2015.

**Hooked on Colfax**
A porch and a basement equipped with comfy couches. Colfax & Steele, closes at 10 p.m.

**Illegal Grounds**
Uptown neighborhood, 17th & Ogden. 7 a.m.-9 p.m. Mon.-Fri., 8 a.m.-9 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

**Pablo’s**
In Capitol Hill, so there are fewer medical students around. Great coffee and no wi-fi, which Brittany Cowfer cites as a positive since you can’t get distracted. 6th and Washington, closes at 10 p.m.

**St. Mark’s**
Usually packed with medical school students. Brittany Farniok says the coffee is cheaper than many other places. 17th & Vine, closes at midnight.

**Starbucks**
The closest one is in Stapleton (where all the children are drinking growth-stunting frappuccinos).

**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 p.m. Sun.-Thu. and midnight Fri. and Sat.

E. Where To Eat
There are, of course, many resources for restaurant recommendations, such as 5280 magazine and Yelp, as well as good deals on Groupon and Urbanspoon. We asked our class for their favorites; the following table shows the write-ins with two or more votes, and below that are all the other mentions.

We have not double-checked these places, so we can’t guarantee that these are in fact restaurants (or at least bars with food), that they are open, that the names are spelled correctly, or that they even exist.
The Class of 2016 Favorite Restaurants Write-in Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Votes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atomic Cowboy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cedar Creek Pub</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>surprisingly nice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Cricket</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chipotle</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City O’ City</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Laura Kahn loves this place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Bar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euclid Hall</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>fancypants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jelly</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jett Asian Kitchen</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kona Bar and Grill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linger</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>tapas, drinks, former mortuary building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osteria Marco</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>hands down the best pizza in town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock Bottom Brewery</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Root Down</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snooze</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>best brunch and wackiest pancakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Star of India</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steuben’s</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi Den</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi Katsu</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai Flavor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thin Man</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vine Street Pub</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watercourse</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Restaurants: One Vote Wonders

1Up
Big Hoss BBQ
Billy’s Inn
BJ’s Brewhouse
Blake Street Vault
Buffalo Wild Wings
Cheesecake Factory
Chloe nightclub
City Buffet
City Grill
El Chapultapec
Falling Rock
Fat Sully’s Pizza
Fruition
Garbanzo
Giggling Grizzly
Gin Mill
Great Divide Brew Pub
Izakaya
La Sandia
Le Central at 8th and Lincoln
Lodos
Maloney’s Bar in LoDo
Mama Alvino’s
Mesob Ethiopian
Mod Market
My Other Bar
Nallen’s Irish Pub
New China Kitchen
Oceanaire
Park Burger
Park Tavern
Pho 888
Phoenician Kabob
Pinche Taqueria
PizzaFusion
Rio
Rioja
Samurai Sushi
Santiago’s
Senor Ric’s
Stampede
Sushi Kassai
Table Six
Tables
Taste of India
The Bull & the Bush
The Kitchen
The Tavern
The Yard House
Uncle
Uncle Dave’s BBQ
Wendy’s
Wild Eggs

Beer promotes facial hair. (l to r) Taylor Soderborg, Kevin Krughoff, Sarah Haeger, Elise Yerelian.
F. Life Outside School

Before you were a medical student, you were pre-med. No, seriously, you were many things: artist, athlete, traveler, volunteer, altruist, gym rat, bookworm, runner, skier, musician, actor, moviewatcher, golfer, climber, chef, activist, couch potato, friend, spouse, 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, and those are the things that you will have after you retire.

Taken as a whole, 2016 is an active class. Of the 113 respondents to our survey, 34 said they ski or snowboard in their free time. 36 mentioned hiking or climbing, and 8 ride bikes. Other students run, do yoga, ride horses, play soccer or basketball, or work out in general.

If you’re not sporty, don’t fret (although exercise will do wonders for your stress level). Other activities mentioned were spending time with friends and family, trivia, dancing, singing, throwing parties, reading, catching up on TV, and enjoying the cultural events in Denver. And don’t forget about sleep. Mmm. Sleep.

Whatever it is you like to do, try to find a way to fit it in. It will make you a happier person, introduce you to your awesome classmates, and probably give you an incentive to be more organized in your studying.

Intramural Sports and Working Out

There are lots of opportunities to participate in sports, from organized basketball, volleyball, soccer, and ultimate frisbee, to pickup games in Boetcher Commons every day at lunch (or even during the 10-minute breaks between classes). 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, the new Health and Wellness Center, located near the northwest corner of campus, offers student memberships for $30 a month. The signup fee is waived for students and spouses (loosely defined—just play along), and it appears that spouses in fact pay only $20 per month. Classes are included, and our own Logan Mims sometimes teaches there. Find out more at anschutzwellness.com.

If you’re not into commitment, there’s also a free, Senate-funded workout room in the student lounge in Building 500 (Student Senate is the interprofessional version of a student council). There are several other fitness facilities (including 24-Hour Fitness, which offers students a discount), swimming pools, and climbing gyms scattered around. Facilities include the Central Park
Recreation Center (part of the Denver Parks and Rec system) and Bladium, both in Stapleton, and climbing gyms include Rock’n & Jam’n (two locations) and Spot in Boulder.

Google will help you here. You can also contact Cheryl Gibson in the Student Assistance Office with your campus sports- and fitness-related questions as well as questions about the 24-Hour Fitness memberships (cheryl.gibson@ucdenver.edu; 303-724-7684).

**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 Commons). 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 within two trips, for example. Keep an eye out for specials in the community as well; this year, several students signed up for an account at Wells Fargo during a 2-for-1 ski-pass offer.

Time on the slopes will be dictated by the weather, but in order to take advantage of a sudden snowfall, you will need to be diligent about your studies.

**Running and Biking**

Denver has miles and miles of trails, and with all these 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: Sand Creek runs just north of the golf course, heading east-west through some nature preserve areas and neighborhoods. It is mostly gravel and dirt, so it’s not the best for city biking. If you go a mile east on Colfax or a mile south on Peoria, you will find the Highline Canal trail. The Highline 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 www.mapmyrun.com/ and use 80011 as the zip code.

If you hate running alone, check out the interprofessional Anschutz Running Club, which meets once a week in front of Cedar Creek Pub. Times vary depending on the season. Look up the group on Facebook for more details.

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**PEARL**

Make sure you exercise!

It's the single most important factor for me in maintaining sanity and alertness while studying.

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Robbie Flick (l) conquers Long’s Peak.
Hiking and outdoor climbing
You can find good hiking guidebooks on Amazon. com, and your classmates from this area can provide recommendations as well.

Other activities
We’ve mostly written about sports here, we know, but that doesn’t mean that everyone in our class is out climbing a fourteenner on the weekend. There is almost always a group having a party, going to a concert or show downtown, or participating in a community event, advertised on your class’ Facebook page. You could also check out meetup.com or simply ask an MS2 or Student Affairs for suggestions.

We’re not exactly sure what’s going on here, but these painted beauties appear to have just run a race. (l to r) Reid Howard, Brittany Cowfer, Sarah Cebron, Maggie Reinsvold, and Emily Johnson at the Color Me Rad 5K.
III. Medical Student Life

A. Orientation — Yes, it’s required, and no, you won’t regret it
So you’ve made it to Denver and you’ve moved in and explored a wee bit. Now it is time for Orientation, the week when you meet your 159 future best friends, too many administrators and faculty to remember, and a bunch of second-years whose names you will forget within an hour of being in class. It’s meant to be fun, so enjoy yourself!

Monday: Admissions Day
This is the day you complete the administrative tasks needed to matriculate. Between getting your photo taken, picking a size for your white coat, completing forms, and getting badged, you’ll have the chance mingle with faculty and students over the provided breakfast and lunch.

Tuesday-Wednesday: Winter Park
What other medical school treats you to summer camp 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. CU provides transportation. In Winter Park, you will get to know your classmates, play fun games, and enjoy the great outdoors.

Thursday
You will have more activities planned for Thursday. Student Affairs is planning a new agenda to help you make the most of Orientation Week.

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. Brunch is provided for students and families, followed by the opportunity to attend Mini-Med School lectures from Dr. French and Dr. Cohen and to get tours from your amazing MS2 guides.

B. The Buddy System
Each incoming student is matched with a second-year buddy. The idea is to give each MS1 a friend who can provide encouragement, advice, and a survivor’s perspective during difficult times. Once you find out who your buddy is, get in touch, ask questions, and make some new friends, including your grandbuddy.

Some buddies go beyond the call of duty by lending textbooks, dissecting instruments, and study aides. The MS2s will set up a Buddy Social at the start of the year.

Tips for 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 burning orphans you pulled out of a snow bank. No one cares (except maybe those orphans).
C. Advisory Colleges
All students are sorted into one of eight colleges, which are named after 14,000-foot mountains in Colorado. Each college is led by fourth-year mentors and two faculty advisors who work with students to help make their experience at CUSOM as fulfilling and productive as possible. First-year students interact with fourth-years in their PBL groups and participate in several large and small events throughout the school year, including the Spring Stampede, our annual college competition.

If you are looking for advice on electives, the best ways to study, finding research or clinical opportunities, or managing life and school, or if you are just looking for a friendly chat, your faculty advisors and student mentors are always there for you. We hope that through your college you find an outstanding community that provides a wonderful and essential complement to the excellent medical training you will receive here. For more information, search “CU medicine advisory colleges.”

D. The Honor Code, Professionalism, and Evaluations
The Honor Code
The School of Medicine has a strict honor code. Each incoming class writes its own component, which will follow the section written by the university. You will sign your class’ honor code at the White Coat Ceremony.

PEARL
It’s normal to feel a little lost during the transition to medical school. Remember that almost everyone else feels the same way.

Do This During Orientation Week

1. Make sure your ucdenver e-mail address is working, and choose a snappy password you won’t forget.

2. Get on Canvas (the new course system) so you can see how your classes are organized.

3. Get a locker in Ed1 or Ed2 and stock it with snacks and professional clothes for those SPETA sessions you forgot about.

4. Orient yourself to campus. When you have to meet with a professor 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.

5. Get organized for school. Buy school supplies (you’ll want at least four different-color pens or pencils for Anatomy).

6. Visit the doctor. During Anatomy, you’ll usually be in school during business hours, so if you don’t do it now you may have to wait until M2M.

7. Ask an MS2 leader. If they don’t know the answer, they’ll point you in the right direction. You’ll hear 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 everything with a grain of salt.

(1 to r) Alex Ly, Sarah Allexan, Jessica Mackey, Brittney Macdonald hanging out at the Denver Zoo Lights event sponsored by the Advisory Colleges.
You’ll experience the impact of the honor code during the first exam. Exams are not proctored—a faculty member distributes questions at the start and collects them when time is up. You may leave the room and complete the exam anywhere you prefer—and this means anywhere, even off-campus—so long as you return to the lecture hall in time to turn in your answer sheet.

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 both for the vast responsibility of the medical profession and for the necessity that medical professionals act with the utmost integrity.

Professional Behavior
Med school is 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 as professional a manner as if 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, students, or patients; inappropriate clothing in a clinical setting; absence from mandatory classes or small groups; 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 matters are professional interactions and, as such, are governed by the same rules that apply to face-to-face interactions. Obscenities, name-calling, and blame-placing are never appropriate. If you have a conflict or disagreement with someone, 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 difficult and emotional situations that we will invariably face.

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—you will receive an online survey to complete. At times, the number of evaluations can seem overwhelming, but do not ignore these.

The premise of the evaluation process 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. Take the time to make your voice heard. The evaluations are completely anonymous—no one, including the Evaluation Office, can link what you write

PE A R L
According to our professors, studies show that hitting the 85% benchmark in lecture courses prepares you well for studying for Step I.*

* Please note we didn’t say “prepares you well for Step I.” You still have to study.
with who you are. If you have questions about this, contact Gretchen Guiton, an associate professor and the head of Evaluations (gretchen.guiton@ucdenver.edu).

Failure to complete an evaluation will result in a professionalism violation, and as we said above, this is taken very seriously. A survey of medical students and physicians showed that a significant predictor of professional censure was whether or not that individual had faithfully completed evaluations throughout medical school.

It is a good idea not to wait to complete these until the night before they are due. You may have more than 20 evaluations in a block, and it can be hard to remember what constructive feedback you meant to provide.

E. Assessment—No, It Never Ends

Honors/Pass/Fail

Nearly all of your required first-year courses will be graded on the honors/pass/fail system. Passing requires an overall score 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—not that anyone aims for this.

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 honoring in a course is important to you. Some faculty may choose to round up from 89.5% and some absolutely will 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 on which you scored the lowest, with the ultimate goal of raising your cumulative score enough to achieve 70%. 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, and there is no cutoff for how many people can honor. 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. The theme here is “us vs. the test,” not “you vs. me vs. the test.” Help each other out!

PEARL
Not all schools have such a collaborative environment—take advantage of the fact that we all want each other to succeed.

Preclinical Grades: Do They Matter?

In a 1997 survey of residency program directors, preclinical grades were ranked 12th out of 16 variables in importance. This survey was repeated in 2006, and pre-
clinical grades were again 12th. The point? Honoring courses is nice, and that H sure does look great on your transcript, but not honoring will have little impact on your residency match. The most important variables are clerkship grades (years 3 and 4) and your Step I score. However, an F in a preclinical course will matter and is something you would need to explain to residency programs.

Grades in the Hallway
Following an exam, the 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 among a group of students searching for your number and your grade can be anxiety-inducing. You may feel exhilarated, disappointed, or relieved after seeing your grade; however, it is unlikely that the person standing next to you is feeling the same emotions. Please be courteous. Almost 100% of the time, answers will be posted before the scores are. Because you receive a sheet along with your test booklet on which to record your answers (for multiple-choice exams), you have the option of grading your own test. Some students love doing this the moment answers are posted, while others prefer to wait for grades to avoid increasing their blood pressure.

Please be delicate if you share your scores with others. 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, but at the same time, it can be very disheartening to hear someone complain about a 95% when you are working flat out just to pass. Everyone contributes to a collegial environment, and keeping your composure is one way to keep things collegial.

F. Classes: Tips for Success
To Go or Not To Go?
Although, in principle, you are expected to attend all lectures, attendance is generally optional in practice. 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 whiteboard.

For those students who choose not to attend class (whether on a regular basis or just once in a while), 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. The quality isn’t great, though. So if you plan on becoming besties with Panopto, you may want to make friends with someone who goes to class so you can copy material written on the boards, which are usually illegible or simply not recorded by the camera.

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
RR: How To Read Before Class

This article was written for you by our beloved immunology professor, Dr. JJ Cohen. His advice on studying (and pre-reading!) has helped countless students over the years.

The first time you encounter new material, memory traces are laid down, mostly in the hippocampus. Sleep allows them to be consolidated for longer storage in the cortex. A second exposure to the material, within about three days, potentiates connections (“neurons that fire together, wire together”). Lectures are too chaotic an environment in which to learn material for the first time.

These four principles (all supported by extensive evidence) suggested an approach to learning in medical school that I call RR: Read, Recite. It’s based on a classic “How to Study” scheme called SQ3R (survey, question, read, recite, review), which is too cumbersome for advanced studies. It’s a little more than just “pre-read.” RR requires two things: a readable set of notes, or specific textbook readings, and well-constructed (technically: Magerian) learning objectives. If the course does not provide these, students have the right to demand them.

The process then is this: 1 to 3 days before class, read the notes. Do this as if you’re interested in the material, not 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 e-mails, etc. Just be respectful to those around you and 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 to 3 weeks in advance). If you need to miss PBL, Talk to Dr. Michaels. She and the course directors are generally accommodating.

Studying: How Much Time Does it Really Take?
In our class, there was a huge range of study time—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 depends on personal preference and study habits, as well as your background in the material that is being taught. From our experience, most people do best by working 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.

Remember: You are only taking one or two classes at a time (mostly). You may have 4 to 8 hours of new material presented in a single day and another 4 to 8 hours the next 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 before the exam. There is simply too much material.

Learning Objectives: How To Use Them and How Not To Use Them
Learning objectives (LOs) will be provided for each lecture. They exist because the LCME (the U.S. medical education accreditation body) wants us...
to have them, and because they are a pedagogically sound approach to improving teaching and learning. Each faculty member usually writes his or her own LOs, and test questions are ostensibly based on them.

The best LOs guide you to the most important material so that you can focus on understanding that material first. Not-so-good LOs are vague, leading to test questions that examine minutiae rather than your true level of understanding.

In our experience, the quality of LOs (and test questions) are highly instructor-specific. Some professors may tell you explicitly that their test questions come from 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 both the material covered in the learning objectives and the specific details emphasized during lecture. Some students will religiously answer every LO, while others will never look at them and only work from the lectures. There are many methods to the madness of med school, and LOs are simply one tool available to you.

Frontloading: What Is It?

Some of you may already be familiar with this concept, also known as prereading. You will repeatedly hear the recommendation to frontload throughout your courses. The idea behind frontloading is that when you attend a lecture, you have already seen the material being presented at least once, so that lecture becomes a review that solidifies concepts in your brain. Frontloading can be anything from skimming through handouts and learning objectives the day before lecture to completing the learning objectives beforehand.

You will learn more about this study technique throughout the year, but it is definitely something to consider. Some students swear by frontloading, whereas others never frontload. Once again this comes down to personal preference, but you should at least give it a try.

Textbooks: Worth the Expense?

Every course will identify “required” and “recommended” textbooks. For some courses, “required” really does mean required, whereas in others, you can get away without an occasional review of the library copy. Just as with study techniques, med students differ widely in their opinions about textbooks. Some people don’t use them at all. Others make them their primary focus.

Here is what past classes have found.

1. Textbooks aren’t necessary to prepare for exams in most courses. Almost all instructors base their questions on the notes they provide and the lectures they present.

2. If you have no background in a basic science topic (nephrology, genetics), you may want or need an introductory text. Ask your friends in second year about their favorite textbooks for specific subjects. Better yet, your buddy might lend you a good textbook.

There is no replacement for getting enough sleep.
3. **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. Some students like having review books on hand for structure and summaries.

4. **If you buy textbooks, take advantage of the Internet to save money.** 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 & Noble through the AMSA site, 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). If you have time for slower shipping, consider half.com, eBay, and other discount sites. For frequent flyers, most airlines have an online mall that gives you two or three miles per dollar spent at B&N. The miles can add up really quickly.

5. **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 MS2 buddy.** In a later version of this document, we will go through each course and tell you which books we found absolutely necessary.

**Study Groups**
In our experience, smaller study groups are best—once you gather more than two or four people, you simply have too many voices. 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.

Groups are particularly good for verbal quizzing before exams and for bouncing ideas around for how to handle tough tasks, such as memorizing a drug list. Find the group that works best for you; you will work much better with some than with 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. Then again, you might just be a gigantic distraction for one another.

**Exams: What To Study?**
The best advice we can give is that if the lecturer 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, prioritize your studying based on the material worth the most points or that is most straightforward and easy to learn, and take the hit on the things you don’t know. Most of us have passed exams
without learning all the material. It can be more helpful to get a good night’s sleep than to end up 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 finished exam. Instead, they are likely to tell you that the questions will focus on the LOs. In the past, some lecturers have tested on detailed material that students did not expect (this is common at med schools across the United States). Just learn as much as you possibly can and simply do your best. You can address unfair questions through a formal review process, but don’t count on successfully arguing every question you miss.

Problems During an Exam
Because of the SOM 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 course directors attempt to eliminate questions that have been problematic on past exams. However, there will inevitably be some exam questions that are poorly written or ambiguous. 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 or angry during the exam (or afterward). Stay calm and relaxed.

Each course has one to two reps, volunteers from your class who address problems during a course. Following the exam, you will be able to e-mail the reps regarding any questions that you are concerned about. The reps will then forward a consolidated list of questions 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 highly unlikely that the instructor will agree with your analysis of the question. Historically, contesting has not been successful—but it is important to make student opinions heard and to continue the pressure on faculty members to write good exam questions.

Failing an Exam
Most medical students come from an academic background in which they were the curvesetters, or at least far to the right of the 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 that, 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 clinical psychologist and learning specialist, works with Student Affairs for just this purpose. 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.

G. Electives

Electives address specific interests or provide clinical opportunities for first- and second-year students. These courses are generally graded Pass/Fail and can be a great way to mix up your afternoons and weekends. Some people will take no electives and some will enroll in 5 to 6 over the first two years. For most, electives offer plenty of stimulation without completely overshadowing everything else you have to do.

Electives generally have low time requirements (most meet during the lunch hour), but keep in mind that everything adds up—and that in order to pass, you must attend most sessions. It is easy to get in over your head.

At the start or just prior to each semester, you’ll receive an e-mail of electives, their prerequisites, and how to register. For the more popular electives (Stout Street, Warren Village, SABES), you’ll want to register ASAP after it opens. Registration is done online through the UCD Access portal.

There is no extra charge for electives, although summer electives carry a fee. Here’s a list of the electives offered during the 2012-2013 academic year. This is just an example; not all of these may be offered again.

| CAM/Alternative Medicine                      | Intro to Orthopedics                      |
| Career Elective in Dermatology                | Intro Wilderness Med                      |
| Career Elective in Otolaryngology             | Introduction Biomedical Research          |
| Career Elective in Urology                    | Maternity Matching                        |
| Clinica Tepeyac                               | Medical Hypnosis                          |
| Critical Evidence Appraisal                   | Molecular Biology Cancer                  |
| Denver CARES Elective                         | Pre-Hospital Medicine                     |
| Emergency Med Skills                          | Psychiatry in Great Literature            |
| Flight Medicine                               | Quality Improvement                       |
| Geriatric Medicine                            | Refugee Health I                          |
| Global Health Seminar                         | SABES Spanish Immersion                   |
| Health Care and Public Policy                | Substance Abuse in Medical Practice       |
| Health Promotion I                            | The Healer’s Art                           |
| Healthcare for the Poor and Homeless          | Urban Underserved Care                    |
| Intro Emer Med & Trauma                       | Veteran Palliative Care                   |
| Intro to Emergency Psch                       | Warren Village                            |
| Intro to Global Health                        |                                        |

PEARL

Books and lectures can be tedious. Going to clinic or joining an elective can help you remember why you are working so hard on the basics.
IV. Getting Involved

A. Class Elections
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 for only a few weeks or months; others don’t require much time at all. Since most positions are shared and everything is oriented around the MS1 and MS2 class schedules, it is rare to 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 skilled at multiproject management, conflict resolution, or customer service. If you don’t already have these skills but would like to develop them, this is a good opportunity to do so. It is very helpful to check in with the person who had the position the previous year. Below is a list of the positions that need to be filled. Full descriptions and contact information will be provided in the final version of this handbook.

President 1 year, 2 people
Vice President 1 year, 1 person
Secretary 1 year, 1 person
Treasurer 1 year, 1 person
Medical Student Council 1 year, 2 people
Honor Council 4 years, 1 person
Student Senate 1 year, 2 people
Curriculum Steering Committee 4 years, 2 people
Longitudinal Curriculum Committee 4 years, 1 person
Faculty Senate 4 years, 1 person
Intercampus Teaching Excellence 1 year, 2 or more people
Student Financial Aid Committee 4 years, 1 person
Social Chair 1 year, 2-ish people
Historian 1 year, 2 people
Course Reps Duration of course, 2 people
Office of Diversity 1 year, 2 people
Prospective Students 1.5 years, 4 people
Alumni Board 4 years, 2 people
Student Professionalism Committee 4 years, 1 person
Wellness 1 year, 2 to 3 people
Editor MS1 Student Handbook 1 year, 1 to 2 people
Orientation Video Producer 1 year, 2 to 3 people
Essential Core Block Director 2 years, 2 people
VOICE Committee 4 years, 2 people
Clerkship Block Director 4 years, 2 people
Technology 4 years, 1 to 2 people

Why Get Involved When I Feel Overwhelmed?

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 addage is that medical school is like trying to drink from a firehose. 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 dispel the rumor that you won’t have enough time, keep in mind that unless you are running for co-
B. Groups and Organizations

The Anschutz Medical Campus is home to many student groups, catering to individual professional schools as well as all comers. Here is a list of a few of the groups; we will update this list with descriptions in the final version of the handbook.

If you have a question about a specific group, please contact Student Affairs or the Student Assistance Office.

- All ‘Bout Couples and Families (ABC)
- AMSA
- Anesthesiology Interest Group (AIG)
- Arrhythmias
- BRANCH (Bridging Research and Aurora Neighborhoods for Community Health)
- Benjamin Rush Society
- Business & Healthcare
- CAMPS (Colorado Asian Medical Professionals and Students)
- Christian Health Fellowship
- Colorado Medical Society
- Culturally Effective Medicine Interest Group
- Diabetes Interest Group
- Dermatology Interest Group
- Disability Dialogue
- ETIG (Education and Teaching Interest Group)
- Emergency Medicine Interest Group (EMIG)
- Family Medicine Interest Group (FMIG)
- Institute for Healthcare Improvement Open School Chapter
- Integrative, Complementary, and Alternative Medicine
- Internal Medicine Interest Group (IMIG)
- Medical Humanities Interest Group
- Medical Students for Choice
- Military Medicine Interest Group
- Nutrition and Preventive Health Interest Group (NPHSIG)
- Oncology Interest Group
- Ob Gyn Interest Group
- Ophthalmology Interest Group
- Orthopaedic Student Interest Group
- Otolaryngology Interest Group
- Pediatric Medicine Interest Group (PMIG)
- Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)
- Prism
- Radiology Interest Group
- S.I.G.N. (Student Interest Group for Neurology)
- Students Interested in Brain Surgery
- SNMA (Student National Medical Association)
- Surgical Society
- Wilderness Medicine

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 2016), 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.

Christie Osborne, Class of 2013
Tasha Cabrera and Sarah Haeger turn to more beautiful things. Sarah won’t let us tell you where this is. ©Someone else