

# CLAS Academic Advising Center

Academic advising for students pursuing majors and/or minors offered by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences  
Call Us: (616) 331-8585 • Visit us On-line: [www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising](http://www.gvsu.edu/clasadvising)

## Pre-Professional E-Bulletin

### Week of September 7, 2009

To those students who are attending Grand Valley for the first time, Welcome! For those who are returning, Welcome Back! As we start the new school year we hope to provide you with information that will assist you in classes, application processes and test preparation. While things can get hectic with a new set of classes, jobs and responsibilities it is important to keep your goals and post-baccalaureate plans in your mind. This E-Bulletin will have reminders for you regarding all of these issues.

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#### **1. Tips for First Year Students**

1. Be sure to stay on top of your classes. It is much easier to start with a high GPA then to start with a low one and try to bring it up. The average GPA of a student entering a M.D program is a 3.65.

2. Attend class, take notes, do assigned homework and keep up with class readings. This seems simple enough, but it is very easy to fall behind. Be sure to talk with your professor regarding any concerns or problems you may be facing in your classes.

3. SET UP AN APPOINTMENT TO MEET WITH AMANDA CUEVAS ([cuevasam@gvsu.edu](mailto:cuevasam@gvsu.edu)) OR DESTINY VASICEK ([vasicede@gvsu.edu](mailto:vasicede@gvsu.edu)). Call our office at (616) 331-8585 to do so. It is very important to be on the right track as you embark on your journey as an undergraduate. Setting up an appointment will give you insight on what will be expected of you, what your options are and the application process for different paths.

4. Be sure to eat healthy. It is easy to be writing a paper, realizing it has been 4 hours and you missed dinner. Along with this, do your best to get appropriate amounts of sleep. This will be beneficial both for success in class and staying healthy. If you are living in the dorms, keep a bottle of hand sanitizer at your desk and use it regularly.

5. Allow time for extra-curricular. They are important. Find the pre-professional group that is of interest to you. Also, find something that is of interest to you outside of your major and future goals. It is important to take a break from studying and academics, whether it is through exercise and sports, a social organization, religious organization or service and advocacy groups. They all can be beneficial in some way and will compliment your educational experiences. (Don't over-book yourself. Manage your time and you will be successful! )

## 2. Studying Science: Six Key Tips ([www.explorehealthcareers.com](http://www.explorehealthcareers.com))

### Key Number 1: Manage Your Time

New students often don't know how much time it really takes to study science. You'll need to make the most of every minute.

The first step in managing your time is to do a realistic accounting of how you currently spend your time. Keeping track of your time, hour by hour, can really help. Remember, you are doing this for yourself - so be honest. For a week, take notes on how you spend your time. Include everything: eating, dressing, getting to class, studying... watching TV, working out, surfing the Web, etc.

After a week of keeping track of time, look closely at your hourly and daily schedule. Now, begin to develop a new schedule. Different people have different cycles, so don't rely on someone else's timeframe for studying.

As you create a new time plan, keep in mind that some of your courses may require a lot of study time outside of class: For instance, you might need to spend 16 hours (or more) per week on chemistry. Biology may take another 15 study hours per week, and math may require 9 to 12 hours weekly.

Also, when allotting time, try to be as specific as you can - i.e., rather than simply planning to "study chemistry," specify how much time you'll spend on solving problems, studying for an exam, etc.

Be sure to include non-academic tasks in your schedule, too, such as working or managing personal responsibilities. And don't forget to make time for eating and sleeping!

Next, work up a new plan for spending your time, and try it out for a week. Decide what works and what doesn't, and revise your schedule accordingly. A good time management schedule is not written in stone. You should re-evaluate it regularly (i.e., once a week), and adapt it to suit your current study needs.

Of course, drawing up an efficient schedule is the easy part. The real challenge is sticking to it!

### Key Number 2: Create A Study Space

Studying while you're on the bus or subway may sound like a good use of time, but it really isn't. People study most effectively when they are alert and undistracted. That's why it's so important to create a dedicated study space.

Your study space should enable you to (a) focus solely on the subject and (b) concentrate for long periods of time. It might be a whole room, part of a room, or a study cubicle in the library.

Whatever and wherever it is, your study space should be your own personal sanctum sanctorum. You need to use it for studying only. If you need to take a break - to talk or eat or play music - then do it somewhere else.

Part of what makes a study space effective is that your brain comes to associate it exclusively with studying. As soon as you enter that space, you just click into the study mode. This, in itself, is an enormous time-saver.

### Stock It Up

Once you've created a study space, stock it up with all the essentials, such as:

work table and/or desk, lamp or other good lighting, ergonomically designed chair, computer with Internet connection (if needed), access to printer, paper-notebook and printer, pens, sharpened pencils, calculator, ruler, bookcase (and books!) file rack/cabinet, file folders and labels.

## Off Limits!

What should you banish from your study space (other than your friends)? All TVs, radios, CD players, PDfS with IM, and cell phones. By and large, they're just distractions that will slow down your thinking and make it hard to concentrate.

However, there is an exception to this rule: Some types of learners - i.e., those with attention deficit challenges - actually work better with a little background sound. By this stage in your life, you should know yourself well enough to understand what distracts you and what doesn't. Just use your discretion.

Last of all (and needless to say) the best study space in the world is pretty worthless... if you don't use it.

## Key Number 3: Master the Textbook

Are you intimidated by your science textbook? If so, you're not alone.

Developing an in-depth understanding of complex scientific principles can take an enormous amount of time and effort. Tackling a difficult text can be daunting, even for the most intelligent student. So daunting, in fact, you may be tempted to put off your assigned reading until the last possible moment.

Before you give in to the urge to run screaming from the room every time your eyes fall on that textbook - remember: It's not going away.

The only thing procrastinating will do, in the long run, is stress you out. You'll find yourself up late at night, rushing through the required reading and struggling to stay awake - which only makes it harder to grasp difficult concepts and easier to overlook key terms. (Besides, there's only so much latte one human being can drink.)

## A Horse of A Different Color

Before tackling your reading assignment, it helps to understand that reading a science textbook is not like reading a novel. It's a whole different creature, organized in a whole different way. Science textbooks follow an outline format - which you can tell by looking at the way the material is laid out on the page: the larger the heading, the broader the topic; the smaller the heading, the more specific the topic.

So... how do you read a science textbook? You have to scrutinize each paragraph carefully in order to extract important details, formulas, charts, graphs, and inter-related concepts. As you ferret out the facts, you need to keep in mind how they can be integrated with the material from your class. It also is helpful to notice what kind of study support the book itself provides: detailed indexes, glossaries, appendices, Website links, etc.

Here are the nuts and bolts of reading your textbook. First of all, as obvious as it sounds, be sure to do the assigned reading before the lecture, not after. This will enable you to ask the professor to clarify anything you may have found unclear in the text. S/he also can explain any differences between the way a topic is covered in the text and the way the material is presented in the lecture.

Before reading the assigned text, read (a) the summary at the beginning of the chapter and (b) the questions and problems at the end of the chapter. This will give you clues about what the author wants you to gain from the reading.

After this, allow yourself enough time to read each chapter more than once. Unless you're a genius, it will take you several readings to fully grasp and absorb the material. Don't start taking notes until your second reading - and when you do, follow the same format that the author used, using the chapter's basic structure as a guide.

After re-reading and outlining each chapter, turn the headings and sub-headings into questions, then see if you can answer them through either the class notes or your own knowledge of the topic. If you can't, go back and review that section of the chapter.

In addition to answering any assigned questions and/or solving problems, divide any unassigned questions among the members of your study group and try to answer them as well. (See "Join A Study Group," below.)

## Solve All Your Problems

It is extremely important to read and understand the sample problems highlighted in your textbook. Why? Because they emphasize important concepts in the chapter. Ask yourself the following questions:

What principle(s) is the problem demonstrating?

What part of the problem suggests that this principle is involved?

Why was a particular formula used in this chapter, as opposed to other formulas?

Why was each calculation performed?

Try to make associations between the system or process described in the problem and the scientific principles that are being applied. In time, you will begin to see the same principles recurring.

Once you fully understand the concepts, you'll be able to solve the problems on your own. Make sure that you can solve each problem without referring back to the text. Note: In this process, there are no shortcuts!

## Focus on Formulas

Formulas are also an important component of the problem-solving process. They are concise, mathematical statements that describe and make sense of some system or process in the real world. If you have only a superficial understanding of the meaning of a given formula, you will use it inappropriately. To gain a thorough understanding of this relationship, ask yourself:

What system or process in the world does the formula describe?

What does it say about the system or process?

What can it be used to find?

Think of ways to apply a given formula to your own experience. After you have calculated an answer, make sure that your answer has addressed the problem's underlying question.

Finally, review all the problems you have completed - not only to check for mistakes, but also to be sure that you understand the

## Read the Journals

Here's another word of wisdom: Try thumbing through the scientific journals. They often have valuable information that can help you better understand your coursework. (They also can be a great resource when you're trying to make a decision about your health career.)

Unfortunately, many students avoid reading science journals, because they're put off by the terminology, tables, graphs, and diagrams. Don't let that deter you! A good journal article can make a complex scientific topic come alive.

## Key Number 4: Note-Taking ABCs

If you want to be a successful student of science, you must master two essential in-class skills: effective listening, and effective note-taking.

Effective listening begins with (a) pre-reading and (b) having an idea of the topics that will be covered in a particular lecture. As noted above, pre-reading gives you key information about complex ideas the professor may cover in class. It also gives you a chance to raise your own questions and deepen your understanding of the topic.

Effective note-taking is also crucial. You need to develop a comprehensive record of the professor's ideas, so you can carefully review them later. Think of your notes as a handwritten book. If your note-taking skills are poor, your book - and hence, your knowledge of the subject - will be incomplete at best, and inaccurate at worst.

## Start with the Basics

The first step in note-taking is to have the right tools on hand: pens, pencils, highlighters, and a notebook with plenty of paper. Find a format of note-taking that works best for you, and stick with it. For instance, use the main

portion of your page for lecture notes and the margins for additional facts and insights (i.e., textbook page citations, URLs, or recommended outside reading).

Be sure to highlight any questions you have about the material; if the professor doesn't address them during the lecture, ask him or her about them afterward.

Get to class early enough to sit in the front, and really focus on the lecturer: maintain as much eye contact as possible, and notice his or her gestures and expressions. Body language can speak volumes about which part of the lecture is most important. Also, always write down whatever the professor writes on the blackboard. If the professor thinks it's important enough to write it down, so should you.

Understanding a professor's motivation or goal in a given lecture is as important as discerning what a textbook author is trying to convey in a given chapter. Professors use lectures for different purposes, and if you can discern his or her purpose, you can take better notes.

It is also important to put each lecture in context: Think about how it relates to previous lectures, assigned readings, and the class syllabus. To that end, before every class, it's a good idea to review your notes from the previous lecture.

### Learn to Discriminate

Be discriminating about the kind of notes you take. You don't need to write down every word of a lecture; make note of just what adds to the knowledge you've already gained from your textbook reading. Your notes also should answer any questions and/or clarify any confusion you may have about the material.

To make your class notes clear and concise, re-read them as soon as possible after class (ideally, within 24 hours); as you re-read your notes, highlight them and add explanatory information, as needed; if necessary, rewrite the notes altogether.

Reviewing your notes after class is an important discipline, for three reasons: (1) It can improve your comprehension of the topic; (2) It can increase your retention of what you've learned; and (3) It makes studying for exams much easier later on.

### Key Number 5: Join A Study Group

The best students - like the best health professionals - don't work in isolation. The friends you study with become allies in learning: You cheer each other on, brainstorm together, divvy up topics, and help each other study for exams. There's strength in numbers!

What makes for a successful study group? A study group should be carefully selected. Generally, a good size is 3 to 5 students. You should choose students who are committed to succeeding. Do not choose your group based on friendship; base it on commitment and similarity in study styles. Someone who is a night owl may not work well with an early morning riser, although they may both be diligent and committed individuals! Study groups should meet on a weekly basis, ideally for about two hours a week per class, but longer as exam time approaches. Generally, it is a good idea to meet toward the end of the week, because study groups are best used for reviewing material.

Each member of a study group should have clear responsibilities to cover specific material. This reduces the chances that somebody will come to the study group unprepared.

If a member of the study group comes to the meeting unprepared on a regular basis, you need to encourage him or her to find another study group. Study groups fall apart when some members feel that others are not doing their fair share. Giving each study group member specific responsibilities will make it easier to hold everyone accountable.

Study groups are particularly useful for reviewing material before an exam. As the exam approaches, expand the time that your study group meets. Discuss concepts you're not clear on and quiz other members of the group. The more practice you have answering questions, the more successful you will be on the exam.

In addition to helping you prepare for exams, effective study groups offer several real advantages. They allow students to share information, which helps everyone in the group to clarify what they do (and do not) know. At the

same time, when you need to use other members of the group as resources, you get a much better sense of what you still need to learn.

Study groups also provide you with valuable information about a variety of different study methods. Being in a study group also helps you to stay on top of your workload, because you have to be prepared for the weekly meetings.

## Key Number 6 : Don't Cram For Exams

We've all been there. You played, now you pay: The exam is tomorrow, and you're trying desperately to make up for lost study time - all in one night.

Cramming is stressful and exhausting, but even worse, it's not very effective. Even if you manage to recall the facts long enough to pass the test, you're unlikely to retain them, much less truly comprehend the subject matter. In the long run, it's easier and more effective to begin studying well in advance.

Step One is to reconcile yourself to the whole concept of exams, and why they're even needed. In science-based academic programs, the primary way a school measures your understanding of the material is through your performance on the exams. Thus, it's in your own best interests to prepare as thoroughly as possible for every test.

The watchword in studying for exams is organization. Put all of your materials - lecture notes, textbook notes, handouts, problems, etc. - into a coherent and logical order. This will enable you to more easily condense and review all of the relevant material.

### It's Not "Just the Facts"

Find out exactly what will be covered on the upcoming exam, then organize your information into manageable increments and develop a schedule for studying them. In organizing your materials, remember to look for the relationships between and among different concepts.

Use study groups to review course concepts, formulas, and equations - as well as to review the problems you already have solved. It's also a good idea to prepare your own problems for the group to solve. (See "[Join A Study Group](#)," above.)

When studying for an exam, the best approach is not only to prepare for whatever subject matter the exam will cover, but also to develop specific techniques that apply to the particular type of test you might be given.

Science exams fall into two formats: essay and objective.

Essay exams involve (as you might suspect) writing an essay. They also require you to solve problems, which usually take the form of mathematical essays (which explain a concept mathematically, as in solving a problem for X).

Objective exams consist of short-answer questions, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, matching, multiple choice, and/or multiple-multiples (also called "K"-type questions, which ask: "If A is thus and B is this, then K is what?")

Start the study process way ahead of the exam date. If possible, find out what the format of the exam will be. If the course is problem-based, do as many problems as possible that illustrate formulas and equations that were covered in class and/or the textbook. You may want to purchase a solutions manual for the course, if it is available. If the exam will be more concept-based, make sure you understand, not just the facts themselves, but the relevant principles.

### Don't Lose Sleep

The night before the exam, try to limit last minute studying. Just spend the evening relaxing in whatever way works best for you - go for a walk or a swim, have a massage, eat a good meal... and perhaps most importantly, get a good night's rest. You'll need to be alert in the morning!

When you finally sit down for the exam, take enough time to read the instructions and exam questions carefully. It's easy to misread something when you're under pressure, so take a deep breath and bring your full attention to each question. And for multiple-choice questions, make sure you read all the possible answers before you choose one.

While you're taking the exam, pace yourself: Don't spend too much time on any one question. If you find yourself struggling with a question, leave it and move on. You can always come back to it later, when you've finished the rest of the exam.

Finally, when the exam is returned to you, review your errors and be sure to resolve any misunderstandings that you had.

### **Building Success: It's Hard - But Do-able**

Learning the sciences is a building-block process. You need a strong foundation in order to fully understand the material. And, like building a stone wall by hand, it is a labor-intensive job. There's only one way to accomplish your goal - by spending many hours studying (and re-studying) the concepts.

Mastering the sciences can be tough work - but with enough concentration, commitment, and strong study skills, you can succeed.

### **About the Authors**

[Dr. Stefan Bosworth](#) is the author of several MCAT preparation books, as well as books and articles on learning skills for the sciences. Dr. Bosworth works as a consultant, designing science-oriented programs for minority students who want to enter the health professions. He has worked with such medical schools as UC San Diego, The Sophie Davis School of Biomedical Education, Mt. Sinai School of Medicine, SUNY School of Optometry, SUNY Downstate, and the NY College of Podiatric Medicine. In addition, the undergraduate programs at CUNY City College, Xavier University, and Staten Island University Hospital have utilized his services to enhance the success of minority students.

[Lolita Wood-Hill](#) is Director of Pre-Health Advising, Pre-Professional Advisor, and the Director of the [Pre-Medical Committee](#) at the [Hunter College](#) of the [City University of New York \(CUNY\)](#). She holds offices in several organizations: the National Association of Advisors of the Health Professions and the National Association of Medical Minority Educators, Inc. at both the regional and national level. She was the recipient of the American Association of American College's (AAMC) Group of Student Affairs - Special Recognition Award in 2001. Ms. Wood-Hill serves as a consultant for the Associated Medical Schools of NY, AACOMAS, and University of Virginia. She also conducts workshops on debt management and financial aid for Pre-health students for several colleges and organizations.

## **3. Open Houses**

### **St. George's University Open House – School of Medicine & School of Veterinary Medicine**

Wednesday, September 16, 2009 -- 7:00-8:30 pm

Marriott Detroit at the Renaissance Center

[Detroit, MI 48243](#)

Thursday, September 17, 2009 – 7:00-8:30pm

The Blackwell

[2110 Tuttle Parke Place, Columbus, OH 43210](#)

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 – 7:00-8:30 pm

Conrad Chicago

[521 North Rush Street at Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611](#)

## **4. Graduate Programs in Biomedical Sciences**

### **University of Michigan PIBS**

UM PIBS is hosting its 6th ANNUAL PREVIEW EVENT, OCTOBER 29-31, 2009. We invite you and your colleagues to encourage top under-represented minority students to apply. This is a great way for your students to find out first hand what UM PIBS has to offer them for graduate training.

PREVIEW INCLUDES:

- \* an all-expense-paid visit for selected participants (i.e. travel, lodging and on-campus meals)
- \* activities and workshops on applying and attending graduate school at UM including the PIBS Annual Biomedical Sciences Open House (<http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/openhouse/>)
- \* one-on-one and group interactions with faculty
- \* networking with current graduate students and peers from across the country
- \* tour of campus, facilities and the city of Ann Arbor

PREVIEW APPLICATION DEADLINE: 9/30/09

For more information about the PIBS PREVIEW, visit

<http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/preview/welcome.html>. Please contact Tiffany Porties or the PIBS Team if you have any questions at 734-647-7005 or [pibs@umich.edu](mailto:pibs@umich.edu).

Linked, you will find an email announcement (including new pdf overviews of both PIBS and Ann Arbor) and PREVIEW flyer for distribution.

<http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/preview/PreviewAnnouncement.html>

<http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/brochure09.pdf>

<http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/a2brochure.pdf>

[http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/preview/preview\\_flyer\\_2009.pdf](http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/preview/preview_flyer_2009.pdf)

OUR 13 PROGRAMS: <http://www.med.umich.edu/pibs/prospective/programs/index.html>

- \* Bioinformatics
- \* Biological Chemistry
- \* Biophysics
- \* Cell & Developmental Biology
- \* Cellular & Molecular Biology
- \* Human Genetics
- \* Immunology
- \* Microbiology & Immunology
- \* Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology
- \* Molecular & Integrative Physiology
- \* Neuroscience
- \* Pathology
- \* Pharmacology

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[www.MED.UMICH.EDU](http://www.MED.UMICH.EDU)

## 5. CLAS Academic Advising Pre-Professional Resource Room

For those of you who don't know, we have a resource room available for students to utilize for MCAT prep, DAT prep, etc. There are a lot of study books available for students to use in the room or to copy pages from for practice. Also, there are ADEA guides to Dental Schools, Getting into Medical School Information along with writing essays and figuring out a specialty. There are resources to careers in health care, Medical and Veterinary School admissions requirements and Osteopathic Medical College information books. We also have a great deal of information about specific programs for Allopathic Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, Chiropractic Medicine, Podiatry, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Caribbean Schools, Optometry, Veterinary Medicine and many other programs that pre-professional students may be interested in. Please come check it out! C-1-140 Mackinaw Hall.

## 6. Interesting Reading/Viewing/Listening

Interesting Reading: [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/26/education/edlife/26medicalschoo.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/07/26/education/edlife/26medicalschoo.html?_r=2)

#### Interesting Viewing:

Osteopathic Medical Student Profiles In their Own Words: A Snapshot of the Osteopathic Medical Student

The students profiled here have all made journeys similar to yours. They have completed all their pre-medical coursework, taken the MCAT, volunteered, shadowed a DO, and worked with their prehealth advisors to ensure a smooth transition to medical school. Now, they either are studying in osteopathic medical schools or have recently graduated and are beginning their careers as osteopathic physicians. Please click on this link to view this wonderful resource: <http://www.aacom.org/InfoFor/applicants/profiles/Pages/default.aspx> We hope these profiles will encourage and inspire students from all walks of life to pursue their career goals of joining our community of physicians!

#### Interesting Listening:

RADIO ROUNDS RETURNS AUGUST 9 FOR SECOND SEASON

Radio Rounds is the first-ever medical radio talk show produced entirely by medical students, and having completed a successful first season in the spring of 2009, the 'Rounds' crew is headed back to the airwaves this fall!

The second season of Radio Rounds premieres on Sunday August 9 at 12pm ET, and the live show can be accessed at the show's website, [www.radiorounds.blogspot.com](http://www.radiorounds.blogspot.com) <<http://www.radiorounds.blogspot.com/>> . Radio Rounds is produced by medical students at the Wright State University Boonshoft School of Medicine in Dayton, Ohio. In addition to airing live every Sunday from 12pm to 1pm ET, all shows are also available for free on iTunes. Podcasts of the initial eight episodes of Radio Rounds this past spring were downloaded over 5,000 times, as featured guests included nationally-renowned physicians such as Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen (creator of "The Healer's Art"), Dr. Amy Reed (vascular surgeon, Cincinnati), and Dr. Alvin Jackson (Director of the Ohio Department of Health).

Our special guest for the August 9 premiere will be Dr. Brian Cole, Head Team Physician of the Chicago Bulls and Professor of Orthopedics at Rush University Medical Center. Dr. Cole was recently named the 2009 NBA Team Physician of the Year. Additional guests who will join us on various Sunday afternoons this fall include:

- Elissa Ely: Psychiatrist, NY Times Columnist, Former NPR Contributor
- Thomas Gill: Medical Director for the Boston Red Sox, Team Physician for the New England Patriots and Professor of Orthopedics at Harvard Medical School
- Tracy Kidder: Pulitzer Prize winning American author of Mountains Beyond Mountains: The Quest of Dr. Paul Farmer, A Man Who Would Cure the World and his latest book Strength In What Remains
- Martin Makary: Chair of Gastrointestinal Surgery and Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Surgical Outcomes Research. Dr. Makary serves in leadership roles for the United Nations World Health Organization and is a regular medical guest on CNN.
- Stephen Bergman: Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and author of The House of God
- Gloria Wilder: Physician, President and CEO of Core Health
- Sandeep Jauhar: Director of the Heart Failure Program at Long Island Jewish Medical Center. He writes regularly for The New York Times and The New England Journal of Medicine and is the author of Intern: A Doctor's Initiation.
- Evan Lyon: Internist, Editor of the Journal of Health and Human Rights, Physician for 'Partners in Health' organization.

- Robert Marion: Professor of Pediatrics and Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York, Author of six published books, including The Intern Blues and Learning to Play God: The Coming of Age of a Young Doctor.
- Michael Collins: Practicing orthopedic surgeon in Illinois, Author of Blue Collar, Blue Scrubs and Hot Lights, Cold Steel
- Legislators in Washington, D.C. working on health care reform

Again, Radio Rounds returns August 9, and we hope that you will be able to listen on Sundays this fall! Contact us at [radiorounds@gmail.com](mailto:radiorounds@gmail.com) for suggestions and feedback!

## 7. International Pathways

A very interesting opportunity from Thea Volpe, former Director of the Advising Center at Yeshiva University:  
 Tomorrow, I am joining International Pathways, an organization that places American premedical students in a unique medical school setting. Students spend the first two years studying basic medical sciences and attending the University of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia and then spend the second two years at the Ochsner Clinic in New Orleans.

This is an exciting and academically excellent opportunity for American students.

If you would like to explore this opportunity, the next class enters in January 2010 and applications are still being accepted. If you would like to learn any more about this program, please visit [mededpath.org](http://mededpath.org), call me at 877-777-0155 ext. 104 or email me at [Tvolpe@mededpath.org](mailto:Tvolpe@mededpath.org).

Best,  
 Thea L. Volpe, Ph.D.  
 Vice President Enrollment Management  
 MedEdPath, Inc.

## 8. MCAT Information

I feel like I should know the answer to this! I have a student who is planning to retake the MCAT in early August after a disappointing score from a previous administration. The student has already submitted their AMCAS so they can't use the essay to let med schools know that he or she is going to retake the exam. What is the best way (if any) for the student to let med schools know a retake is planned?

**FOR AAMCAS:** Applicants can, at anytime pre or post submission, let medical schools know they plan to take another MCAT and the date they plan to take the test. They log into their AMCAS application go to the STANDARDIZED TEST tab (Section 9) and select Next MCAT from the options available on the right, they'll be presented with the list of MCAT dates and they need to select the date they plan on taking the test. If they decide, later, not to take the test, they can change their answer again. They need to be sure to re-submit their application by selecting SUBMIT APPLICATION on the Main Menu in order for the changes to save and be sent to the medical schools. This will have no affect on their processing time; if they are already processed we will make the new data available to the schools. MCAT scores are automatically inserted into the AMCAS application, if the examinee has applied to AMCAS, once the scores are available. The applicant doesn't need to take action once the scores are in, he or she can check the AMCAS application though to double check that the scores appear in the application.

**FOR AACOMAS:** For medical school applicants to AACOMAS, they may go back into their application and at the tab for "MCAT" they can update it with their next "planned" MCAT test(s) dates. This will automatically update their AACOMAS application and the Osteopathic Medical Schools they've applied to will receive an updated application as well. Very simple and user friendly for all involved, so applicants should not have any worries.

The 2010 testing calendar for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) is now available online at <http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/reserving/mcatschedule2010.htm>. If you are unable to click on the link, try cutting and pasting the URL into your browser. If that doesn't work, then you may find the calendar from our home page, [www.aamc.org/mcat](http://www.aamc.org/mcat), by clicking on Reserving a Seat. The link for the 2010 testing calendar will be on the right side of the page.

The following are some frequently asked questions about the calendar:

Q: When will registration open for the 2010 test dates?

A: Registration will open in fall 2009 for the January through May test dates. We will announce the exact date about one week prior to the opening day, however, we will not announce a specific time of day. Registration for the June through September test dates will open in early 2010.

Q: Can examinees with 2009 reservations reschedule into 2010?

A: Since registration for 2010 will open after we complete 2009 testing, examinees may not reschedule from 2009 to 2010.

Q: When will the registration deadline and score release schedule be posted?

A: We will post these dates along with updated MCAT Essentials and other relevant information when we announce the registration opening date.

Q: When will international testing dates be available?

A: We are working on the international calendar now and expect to post these dates by the end of this summer.

Q: Will MCAT staff host Web conferences for advisors again this year?

A: Yes, we will plan Web conferences to review the registration process and policies and give advisors an opportunity to ask questions before we open registration. We expect to announce the conference dates in late August or early September.

Q: Will the AAMC provide the calendar pads again this year?

A: Yes! We have printed pads and are creating some other helpful resources for advisors to provide their students. We will mail the package to advisors and admissions officers around late September.

Please let me know if you have other questions.

With warm regards,

Michelle

Michelle Sparacino  
Director, MCAT Administration & Reporting

The AAMC has developed a new financial assistance program for MCAT examinees applying for accommodations. Some examinees applying for accommodations do not have documentation of their disabilities or medical conditions that meet our currency requirements. Our program is designed to assist low-income students and provides support to reduce the cost of re-evaluations. Please take a look at the program details on our Web site which also describes the eligibility requirements and application process:

<http://www.aamc.org/students/mcat/accommodations/scholarship.htm>.

***Best Wishes for a Successful Fall 2009 Semester!***