

UME NEWSLETTER

Letter from the UME office

November 2024

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff!

Fall is in the air and Thanksgiving is right around the corner. I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and safe Thanksgiving Day!

Inside this newsletter you will find information about happenings in Phases 1 and 2, the UME Office, and other important areas in Norton COM.

I would like to address a topic that is of great importance for me.

I have recognized, since the day I became part of SUNY Upstate family, that the faculty, staff and students at Norton College of Medicine are our greatest asset. My top priority has been to create an environment that imposes no limits on anyone's ability to succeed at the work they love.

Everyone at a college of medicine should feel that they are in an environment where they can do their job, be respected, and be around others who are committed to treating each other—their colleagues, their patients, their students, their teachers, their collaborators—in a professional manner. It makes our work more fulfilling and our days more productive when we are setting a fully realized example for others. Each one of us is unique and together we make a distinctive, strong team, connected through respect and collaboration!

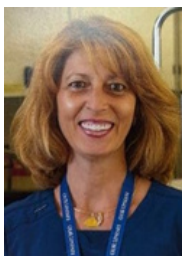
The hard work and dedication of our team has us on a trajectory to become better every day. In the spirit of the approaching holiday, I offer my thanks to the TEAM.

I am incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to work with all of you.

I wish you and your families all the best during the holidays!

Warm wishes for a holiday season that brings you together with friends and family!

Sincerely,
Dana Mihaila, MD PhD
Interim Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education



"The journey of a thousand miles
begins with a single step."
– Lao Tzu



Contact Info

www.upstate.edu/ume

SUNY Upstate Medical University
Undergraduate Medical Education Office
Setnor Academic Building
Suite 4508
766 Irving Avenue
Syracuse, NY 13210

[Google Maps & Directions](#)

Phone: 315 464-3826
Fax: 315 464-6025
Hours:
8:00 AM – 4:30 PM

Our Mission Statement:

Improve the health of the communities we serve through education, biomedical research and health care.

The UME Office is responsible for managing, coordinating and evaluating the medical school curriculum. In addition, we provide support to the students, faculty, and administration.

For questions regarding this publication, please contact:
Susan Anderson
(Anderssu@upstate.edu)

Extra! Extra!

Read more from:

Phase One,
Phase Two,
Binghamton Campus
Accreditation and
Compliance
Evaluation Assessment &
Research.

Phase 1



Dr. Rebecca Greenblatt



Dr. Rachel Hopkins

It is now late Fall, which means that the leaves are falling, there's a nip in the morning air, and the first-ever three-semester Phase 1 at the Norton College of Medicine is nearly complete. As our second-year students engage with their final Phase 1 coursework and prepare for the Step 1 exam, the faculty team is preparing a deep dive into assessment results and feedback from students and instructors. There will be (lots of!) discussion in the coming months about successes earned and lessons learned.

One early lesson from the first year of the new curriculum was that it was necessary to adjust our assessment structure for the new course format. The overall grading structure for each single-pass organ system unit uses a multicomponent grading structure with Written, Practical, and Active Learning components. The initial plan was for the Written component of each course to include grades on weekly Summative Quizzes in addition to a final Unit Exam. The intention was to help students stay on track with their studying and reduce the students' stress around the Unit Exam. Students generally performed well on the Summative Quizzes, but to our surprise reported that the weekly quizzes increased their stress and workload. By the end of the year, it had also become apparent that the Summative Quiz structure was particularly difficult for students who learned at a different pace. There was a significant minority of students who performed poorly on some weekly quizzes, but who did master the same content in time for the Unit Exam. Effectively penalizing this learning difference was an unfair and unintended consequence of the new grading system.

With these results in hand, we built a new assessment structure for both the Semester 3 second years and the Semester 1 first years. Weekly assessments became formative, with the Written component grade now being based completely on Unit Exam scores. To enhance the learning experience, students are also encouraged to write a short reflection on these assessments to review their study habits and understanding of the material. Most of our students are taking advantage of the opportunity to take the formative assessment, stay for a Secure Review period during which they can read the correct answer and rationale for each item, and reflect on their performance. As some faculty feared, the mean scores on weekly assessments did decrease when the graded element was removed. However, students have continued to perform well on Unit Exams, and feedback has indicated that the formative quizzes and opportunity for reflection are still useful to them as self-assessments of their comprehension and study strategies. Faculty reviewing the reflections have found that many of them are truly thoughtful examples of reflective learning practice. It has been satisfying to work together with our adult learners toward such a positive outcome.

Phase 2

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Our fourth-year students have applied to residency and are navigating interview offers and approaching interview season. We wish you all the best of luck on your interviews, and we hope you are all able to find a residency program that fits what you are looking for!

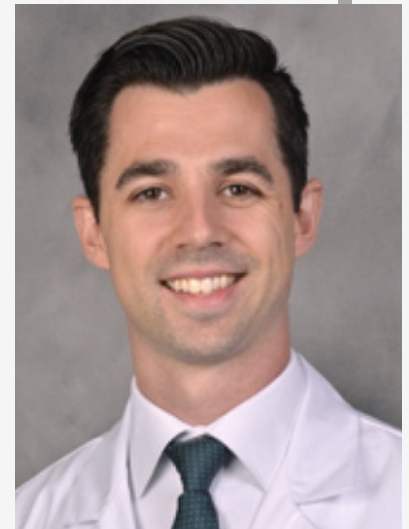
Medical students in the clerkship-year are getting close to halfway through their clerkships. With the daylight getting scarcer and the weather getting colder, it can be tough to stay motivated and prioritize studying, finishing charts, and complete evaluations. Students, keep at it! Remember to make a schedule of study activities that you need to stick to each day. Find ways to study for a few minutes at a time if there is downtime during your rotations, and hold yourself accountable to study goals over the duration of your rotation.

This clerkship-year is our last class of students that will have clerkships starting in May, as future classes of students will have clerkships starting in March. In March 2025 we will have a period where the nearly-4th-year students overlap with the brand-new clerkship students for 10 weeks, as the curriculum transitions from the old schedule to the new schedule. Our students doing clerkships in the 2025-2026 year will finish their clerkships 10 weeks earlier, allowing them additional time to prepare for application to residency – doing electives in specialties they are interested in, AIs, away rotations, and preparing for the USMLE Step 2 exam.

Faculty, let's set a good example by getting our student evals done as soon as possible. It has been shown that student evaluations are more accurate if completed soon after working with the student. Over the next few months, the monthly MS3 class meetings will include topics like preparing for the 4th year, the Step 2 exam, 4th year electives and Acting Internships, away rotations, letters of recommendation, and the residency application process.

We would like to thank all our faculty, staff, and students who help make the environment in which we take care of patients and learn from one another as positive as possible. Thank you for being courteous to one another, setting good examples for those learning from you, and for taking the time to teach each other even when you are busy! Remember that we can recognize each other for positive experiences and impacts on learning! Anyone can go to the "Gold Star" website on the Upstate page. A Gold Star can be given by anyone to anyone they feel deserves recognition for the great work they are doing, whether it is faculty, staff, resident, or student.

Matt Mason, MD
SUNY-Upstate Medical University
Assistant Dean for Clinical Sciences, Norton College of Medicine
email: masonm@upstate.edu



Dr. Matthew Mason

Thanks to all of you
for all your hard work
and dedication to
education and
learning!

-Dr.Mason

Report Gold Star



Binghamton Campus



Dr. Leann Lesperance



Ellie Sommers and Leann
Lesperance at the Walk Run
For Kids

Report Gold Star



Greetings from the Binghamton Campus!

Two Binghamton Campus students were recently featured on Upstate's Informed Patient podcast. In October, Amer Mansour talked about hearing loss and findings from his research on which patients with hearing loss get referred to an audiologist. He presented his paper on this topic at the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery annual meeting. In May, John Babich discussed research on hyperkalemia and plant-based diets in chronic kidney disease. Traditional dietary guidelines ("renal diets") restricted plant foods but new evidence suggests that plant foods may offer many benefits for kidney health and should not be excluded. Find these and other news stories at [The Informed Patient Podcast](#).

The Upstate Foundation's third annual Walk Run For Kids was held on Saturday September 23 at Otsiningo Park in Binghamton, kicked off by remarks from Dr. Greg Conners, Chair of Pediatrics at Upstate. Clinical Campus student Ellie Sommers took first place for women and second place overall in the 5K race! (Dr. Lesperance walked the 5K and finished much later than Ellie!) Nearly \$50,000 was raised to support the Upstate Foundation's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Campaign and the Upstate Golisano Children's Hospital Southern Tier Region Fund. The Upstate Foundation also presented a check for \$15,000 to Dr. Mary DeGuardi, director of pediatrics at UHS (and pediatrics clerkship preceptor!), to support the UHS Reach Out and Read program. A great time was had by all!

Thirty-two Binghamton Campus faculty participated in the BEST (Build Excellent Skills for Teaching) workshop on Monday October 28 at UHS's Eckelberger Community Room. Associate Dean for UME Dr. Dana Mihaila and neuroscience clerkship director Dr. Mike Vertino presented on Positive Learning Environment and Providing Effective Feedback. The Binghamton Campus sincerely thanks Drs. Vertino and Mihaila for driving down and for working so well with the faculty, and also thanks UHS for the meal.

Get out to enjoy some fall weather. Winter will be here before we know it!

Leann Lesperance, MD, PhD, FAAP (she/her)
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
Binghamton Campus

Evaluation, Assessment & Research

We hope you are all enjoying the beautiful fall weather. It has been a busy season for us, and we are excited to share our recent activities and achievements.

Patient Care Assessment in the Clerkships

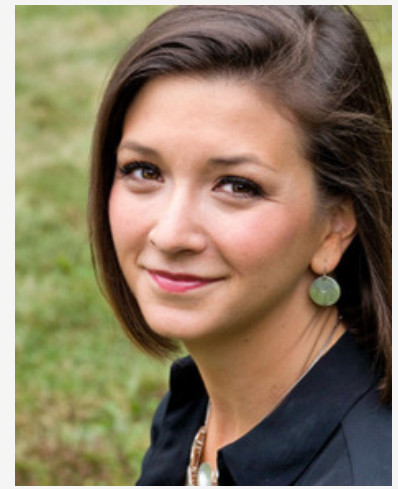
Our analyses indicate that the clerkship students have reached a point in their training where the vast majority (95%+) of their patient care skills meet expectations across the board. Over the past month (9/24/24 to 10/24/24), 280 individual assessment forms were completed in the required clerkships and nearly all of them indicated that students were meeting or exceeding performance expectations in all 9 domains. In the few instances where performance criteria were not met, faculty and residents gave ample feedback to help improve performance.

Medical Knowledge Assessment in Phase 1

Our team continues to work with the UME team to analyze Medical Knowledge assessments and performance across the curriculum. We partnered with Ms. MaryAnn Grandinetta and Drs. Maimone and Greenblatt to analyze student performance on unit exams and diagnostics. Semester three students, congratulations on completing the CBSE, we know it's a long and often stressful exam. Prior cohort's performance on the CBSE exam has been correlated with Step 1 timing and outcome. We strongly advise that you reach out to your advisor or Maryann Grandinetta if you are concerned with your score.

Interpersonal and Interprofessional Communication Skills

This October, our colleagues in the PT program presented a poster on a project we collaborated on at the Physical Therapy Education Leadership Conference in Oakland, CA.. The poster is titled, Relationship Between Students' Communication Skills During a Standardized Patient Examination and First Full-time Clinical Experience. Their work indicated correlations between Standardized Patient issued scores on the Gap-Kalamazoo Communication Skills Checklist and performance ratings during their first clinical rotations. The MD program also uses this checklist so the implications may also inform MD program outcomes.



Dr. Lauren Germain



Ms. Josie Suser

Welcome, incoming MS1 students!
We are thrilled to have you here.

Congratulations to our returning
MS2 students! We hope your
summer break was restful and
restorative.

Report Gold Star



Ethics and Professionalism

Last year, students Elana Sitnik and Briar Bertoch published this paper about student perceptions of professionalism with the support of our team and Dr. Carrie Roseamelia: An Introductory Qualitative Exploration of Medical Student Perceptions of Professionalism at One Medical University. PRiMER. 2023 Jun 15;7:18.

One of the ways the MD curriculum assesses this is in the Clerkship Faculty/Resident evaluation of student form. Thus far in the year, 65% of evaluations (2,237 out of 3,413) have indicated a perfect score for this domain.

Practice-Based Learning and Improvement

Clerkship students reflect on their performance at the mid-point of every clerkship prior to meeting with clerkship directors. Our analyses indicate that, at this point in the year (9/24/24 to 10/24/24), students indicate they feel they are still working to improve their history taking, physical exam, and assessment & planning skills. Students feel they are “doing well” in communication skills/building patient rapport and clinical skills development as well as increasing in their proactivity and feedback seeking skills.

Systems Based Practice and Population Health

Throughout the clerkship year, students take a population health longitudinal course, directed by Dr. Travis Hobart. One of the requirements for being eligible for the Alpha Omega Alpha honors society is to pass this course. To date, all students who are otherwise eligible for AOA have met this requirement.

Innovation

We are thrilled to announce that our team, in collaboration with leaders from across the institution (Drs. Mihaila, Mason, Welch, Dhamoon, Cleary, Nakeia Chambers, Robert Ruiz, & MSIV Belinda Tang) have been awarded one of the inaugural 2024 AMA Equity, Diversity, and Belonging Grants. This prestigious grant will support our work over the next two years as we explore innovative approaches to equitable assessment.

Our project focuses on growth mindset and belonging as well as developing a local coaching program. The AMA funding aims to drive positive change across the medical education continuum. As grant recipients, Upstate has joined the ChangeMedEd® Consortium, contributing to the AMA’s mission to catalyze change and seek innovations that reduce barriers to lifelong learning and improve patient outcomes.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to excellence in medical education.

Please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns:

- Dr. Lauren Germain: germainl@upstate.edu
- Ms. Josie Suser: Suserj@upstate.edu

Wishing everyone a successful end to the semester!

Accreditation and Compliance

Update from the Office of Accreditation and Compliance

On October 1, our MS2 students along with medical students from 154 other institutions received an email from Y2Q@aamc.org containing a private, unique link to the Y2Q survey and most likely it was followed by a reminder on October 15 and again on November 1 and will continue until you the survey is either completed or at its conclusion on January 5, 2025.

The web-based questionnaire will ask participants to share thoughts on a variety of topics including learning climate, adjustment to medical school, and future career plans. The results of the survey, which will be issued and shared with you next March, aim to help Upstate Medical University staff better monitor the learning environment.

We would strongly encourage you to take the time to fill out the survey as these surveys are used to help us understand the climate and culture and evaluate the program to improve the medical student experience.



Terry Pudney



Year Two Questionnaire Findings

The 2023 Year Two Questionnaire (Y2Q) provided valuable insights into the experiences of second-year medical students. Here are some noteworthy findings that future respondents will find interesting:

Improved Learning Environment

The emotional climate among students showed a positive trend, with an average score of **9.5 out of 15**, up from **9.1** in 2022 and **8.8** in 2021. This improvement indicates a more supportive and positive learning atmosphere, suggesting that initiatives aimed at enhancing student well-being are taking effect.

Heightened Awareness of Mistreatment Policies

Awareness of procedures for reporting mistreatment has significantly increased, with **82.8%** of respondents knowing how to report such incidents—up from **76.6%** in 2022. Additionally, **95.5%** reported being aware of their school's mistreatment policies. This growing awareness reflects ongoing efforts to create a safer environment for students.

Overall Satisfaction with Medical Education on the Rise

In 2023, **83.8%** of second-year students expressed satisfaction with the quality of their medical education, a notable increase from **80.2%** in 2021. This positive feedback underscores the effectiveness of curriculum improvements and student support initiatives.

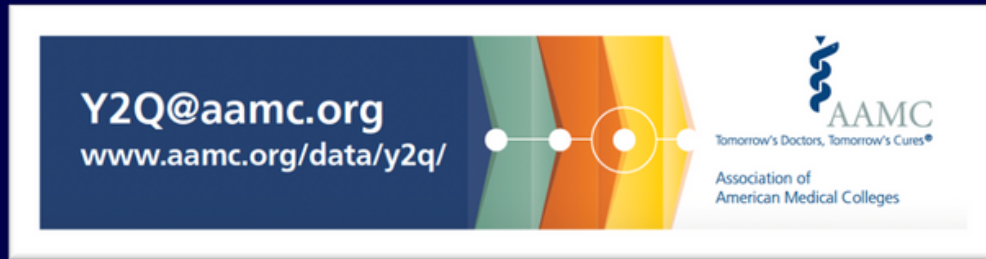
Increased Awareness of Disability Accommodations

Among students identifying as having a disability, **52.7%** reported receiving accommodations from their medical school, a rise from **47.8%** in 2022. This indicates progress in addressing the needs of students with disabilities and highlights the importance of inclusive education practices.

Focus on Mental Well-being

The survey revealed that **65.5%** of respondents felt satisfied with programs promoting stress management and overall well-being—an increase of six points from the previous year. This trend aligns with the reduction in burnout, as evidenced by lower average scores for both disengagement and exhaustion compared to prior years.

These findings provide a glimpse into the evolving landscape of medical education and the increasing focus on student well-being and inclusivity. As we look ahead to next year's survey, these positive trends encourage continued engagement and improvement within the medical community.



Graduate Questionnaire Findings

The 2024 Graduation Questionnaire (GQ) offers intriguing insights into the experiences of graduating medical students. Here are some highlights that future respondents may find particularly interesting:

Satisfaction with Electives Guidance

A significant **77.1%** of graduates felt they received appropriate guidance in selecting electives to inform their career choices, an increase from **74.8%** in 2023. This suggests that the medical school is becoming more effective in helping students navigate their educational paths.

Career Guidance Shows Improvement

A significant **77.1%** of graduates expressed satisfaction with the guidance they received in selecting electives. This marks an upward trend from previous years and reflects the ongoing commitment of the medical school to support students in their career planning.

Positive Ratings for Professional Behavior

Students generally observed fewer disconnects between what they were taught about professional behaviors and what they saw in practice among residents compared to faculty. Over **56%** reported experiencing such disconnects "never" or "almost never" with residents, indicating a positive trend in mentorship and role modeling.

Away Rotations on the Rise

Participation in away rotations has rebounded to **51.8%**, a substantial increase from just **18.5%** in 2021. This trend suggests a return to more diverse training opportunities and experiences for medical students as they prepare for residency.

These findings shed light on the evolving landscape of medical education and the ongoing commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for all students. As future classes engage with the GQ, these insights may inspire further improvements in medical training and student experiences.



Report Gold Star

Recent Gold Star Recipients

Join us in congratulating and celebrating some of our recent Gold Star recipients.

★ Susan Anderson | Director for Phase 2 Program ★

"I write to commend Susan for her exceptional support and dedication throughout MS3. Her proactive approach, attention to detail, and genuine care have been invaluable to students, providing timely reminders and steadfast assistance during clerkships. Susan's behind-the-scenes efforts have played a crucial role in our academic journey, ensuring we stayed on track and offering support to those facing challenges. Her commitment to student success is exemplary, making a significant and positive impact on our experience throughout MS3."

★ Dr. Carla Miguel | PGY-5 Urology Resident ★

"I have had the pleasure of rotating with Carla on the urology service during my surgery clerkship, and she has been extremely welcoming, kind and inclusive. She makes me and my fellow classmates rotating on the service feel welcome to ask any questions and makes the effort to get us involved in cases as much as possible. She also takes the time to teach without ever shaming us for not knowing certain things. Carla took the time to actually get to know us and treated us like we were important assets to the team, despite being below her in training. I am grateful to have gotten to work with her!"

★ Dr. Qasim Gadiwalla | PGY-1 Surgery Resident ★

"I am nominating Dr. Qasim Gadiwalla for recognition, as he has made a significant impact on my surgery rotation and professional development. From the beginning, Dr. Gadiwalla went above and beyond in mentoring me, not only in clinical skills but also in how to excel as a medical student in the surgical field. He offered invaluable insights into the culture of surgery, teaching me what it means to be part of a surgical team, how to navigate its unique demands, and how to carry myself with the confidence and professionalism that is expected in this specialty. Early in my rotation, Dr. Gadiwalla provided me with constructive feedback that was both timely and incredibly valuable. He delivered this feedback with a level of professionalism and thoughtfulness that was truly remarkable, ensuring I understood how to improve while feeling fully supported. This guidance was instrumental in helping me refine my performance and better integrate into the team. Dr. Gadiwalla has been an exemplary role model, demonstrating the excellence in patient care, mentorship, and collegiality that the department values. He goes the extra mile out of genuine kindness, without any expectation of recognition, which speaks volumes about his character and dedication."

★ Tyler Gumpel | MS4 Student - Class of 2025 ★

"For the past 2 weeks, Tyler, MS4, has been a great role model and teacher to me and the other 3 students at the clinic. When he is free, he spends his time talking through concepts with us and answering the numerous questions we have. He teaches us every afternoon, even giving high quality lectures. He is incredibly smart and also kind, fostering a supportive learning environment for us."

★ Dr. Jennifer Moffat | Microbiology and Immunology ★

"Dr. Moffat has been an exemplary professor while delivering us her portion of the MCM course. She always came in with a bright and positive attitude and uniquely engaged us in the material with relevant examples and appropriate humor. It was a universal pleasure for our class to listen to her lectures. We believe she should be recognized for her excellence and truly appreciate her contributions to our education!"

★ Sonny Pohar | MS4 Student - Class of 2025 ★

"Sonny enthusiastically jumped in despite the last minute nature of the request to help plan a session on Clinical Reasoning for first year students. He brought great clinical examples to demonstrate the skill we were teaching and was definitely the highlight of the presentation. Beyond that lecture, he's also been a valued tutor in the ECS office and he single handedly provided a series of review sessions for MCM."



★ **Dr Mahin Mammadli | R-3 Internal Medicine Resident** ★

"Dr. Mammadli has been by far one of the best doctors I have ever worked with. She went above and beyond to enrich our educational experience, ensuring that I understood medical concepts. For example, she always encouraged us to look over chest xrays and EKGs and would go over them in detail in order for us to become more comfortable reading these diagnostic tools. She provided much valuable educational opportunities, and encouraged collaboration. It was truly great to learn from her leadership and bedside manner beyond just medicine."

★ **Dr. Jeremy Walsh | PGY-1 Surgery Resident** ★

"Dr. Walsh was an incredible mentor to me throughout this rotation. The time and energy he put in to explaining the procedures we would be involved with and the conditions our patients had was profoundly impressive to me, especially considering the number of tasks he was juggling simultaneously as an intern. Not only that, but even as early on as he is in his residency, he was able to provide me with some of the most clearly understandable explanations and directives, which enabled me to grow and eventually develop a sense of comfort assisting the team during rounds, and even during select OR procedures. Any team would be lucky to have him, and I am deeply grateful to have learned from and worked with him."

★ **Dr. Jamie Lee | PGY-2 Surgery Resident** ★

"Dr. Lee was exactly the kind of mentor I needed at this stage in my training. What I mean by this is that she was direct, stern, and uniquely discerning. On my first day, I was brought into a case late in the afternoon, and it just so happened to be a BKA. I had scrubbed into a procedure exactly one time prior to this, so when I was asked if I had scrubbed in before, I said "yes" like the naive medical student that I am. As I was gowning, she pointed out how I could extend my arms more forwards rather than downward to reduce the risk of contamination. The next few hours were as inspiring as they were gory. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, and before I knew it, I had been sprayed with blood and asked to hold an Army-Navy. By the end of it, I was ready for them to ask if I had sutured before, and this time I had prepared to preface with "not on a human yet." When this happened, and I was given permission to begin, I was shaking so bad, and there were so many tips being suggested to me, that I eventually said, "I'm just so nervous." Dr. Lee proceeded to relate to me when she was in my stage of training, and suggested how I could better receive feedback by pausing, processing what was said to me, and simply saying okay, without explaining my mistakes. She proceeded to give me tips at every opportunity she had throughout the next few weeks, and I am eternally grateful that she was one of my supervisors for this first surgery rotation."

★ **Dr. Hannah Marmor | PGY-4 Surgery Resident** ★

"Dr. Marmor was the prime example of how you can work like a soldier, but still remain empathetic and nurturing. She was a leader, and although she was consistently presenting patients on rounds and managing her team, she always made sure to check in and find ways to include me when I looked (and felt) lost. There are many examples over the last three weeks of times that she demonstrated these qualities, but my favorite was how she always knew exactly when to tell me that I should go get something to eat and drink before going into a potentially long OR case. Reminding us as medical students that we are humans and should be encouraged to take care of ourselves is important to reducing burnout, and I think it is no small feat that in the midst of the chaos she always found a way to check in and make sure I was doing okay."

Accreditation and Compliance

Report Mistreatment

An environment that optimizes learning and is built on respect and dignity is Upstate Medical University's expectation. The way we treat others (faculty, students, residents, staff) either realizes this expectation or interferes with the learning process. Discrimination, humiliation, and harassment simply can't be tolerated.

Please fill out this [electronic form](#) or use the QR code to find procedures and report confidentially any incidents or concerns regarding mistreatment or harassment.



Upstate Institutional Compliance Anonymous Hotline

315 464-6444

The office of Compliance, Privacy and Ethics has been established to preserve the ethical and honest practice of all faculty and staff at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

The hotline is available for anyone to report a known or suspected Upstate Medical University & Hospital compliance and ethics concern. More about this hotline and other important numbers can be found on the [website](#).

FACULTY EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

September 2024



Mina Michael, MD, an assistant professor of Neurology at the Norton College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, is the September 2024 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. MICHAEL'S STUDENTS:

"Dr. Michael was incredible in med student education. He allowed us to see our patients, ask him any questions we had, and then discuss the case with him and go over plan and management of the patient. His interactions with the medical students made us feel like we were residents. Dr. Michael asked me to go on a deep dive through a patient's history to try to uncover what could be exacerbating their current symptoms. We spent time together talking about which parts of the history were relevant to the case, and the manner in which they were relevant. This fostered a great learning environment."

"I felt like I improved every day with more effective feedback as I started to implement it more and more. I was more confident by the end to give a presentation knowing exactly what Dr. Michael was looking for. There was no guesswork in the process. Whenever I asked a question, no matter how small, he would provide answers that were thorough and educational. Even if small curiosities not related to the case came up, he would be as interested and make sure we knew the answer to the extent we wanted. He encouraged and pushed us to make our interpretations, which was an important skill rather than relying on the charts. He taught me that getting my history is just as important as any exam. He made me feel comfortable enough to ask any question no matter what it was."

The Norton College of Medicine recognizes exceptional teachers with the monthly "Exceptional Moments in Teaching" program.

Honorees are selected via student assessments from courses and clerkships.

Recognized teachers—including medical faculty, residents, nurses and other educators—are those who challenge students and provide an exceptional learning experience.

RESIDENT EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

September 2024



Michael Kennedy-Yoon, MD, a resident in the Department of Pediatrics at Upstate Medical University, is the September 2024 recipient of the Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. KENNEDY-YOON'S STUDENTS:

"Dr. Kennedy-Yoon has been one of the best residents I have worked with during my clerkship rotations. His constant enthusiasm, care for the patient, and passion for teaching were evident throughout the weeks we spent on service with him. He made the days go quicker and more productively because of his teaching. I aspire to have similar qualities as him when I become a physician."

"Dr. Kennedy-Yoon was one of the most uplifting and positive residents I've worked with during third year. He provides unsolicited positive reinforcement and carries a positive attitude that lifts up the entire team. When he finds room for improvement in the medical students, he mentors. Whether it be a medical or team-building teaching point, he is able to give concrete and specific tips in a discrete manner to help that student improve. In addition to all of this, he personally bought Glazed and Confused donuts for the medical students on his team as well as the medical student on the other pediatrics inpatient team on the last day of service. This shows his commitment to being a genuinely nice leader who looks out for those around him."

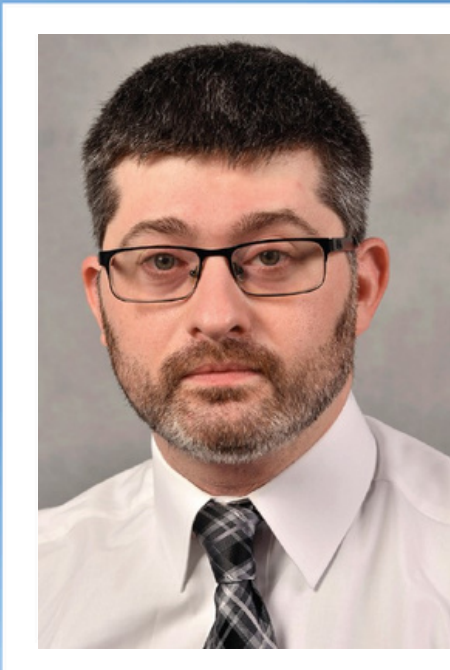
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FACULTY EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

October 2024



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Alex Helkin, MD, an assistant professor of Surgery at the Norton College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, is the October 2024 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. HELKIN’S STUDENTS:

“Wonderful teacher and surgeon. Truly take the time to make students feel seen, included, and part of the team. His patience, especially in the OR, allows students to feel calm while practicing new skills while also gaining invaluable experience for the future. Dr. Helkin also deeply cares for his patients, going above and beyond to make sure they get the best possible care. Amazing example for future physicians and future surgeons!”

“Dr. Helkin was a pleasure to work with and learn from. He took time throughout the day, while rounding and in the OR, to teach and ensure my understanding. He provided helpful feedback and was very communicative with all members of the team. Dr. Helkin exhibits excellent bedside manner, as he takes time to explain important things to patients and their loved ones, and he treats everyone with utmost kindness and respect. This was an especially busy two weeks of service, and I found it to be rewarding, both academically and personally.”

“Dr. Helkin was kind, respectful, knowledgeable, and inclusive of the medical students on service. I learned a lot about our patients and their disease processes from him, and he served as a role model for me, solidifying my desire to pursue a career in surgery. Overall, he made the experience incredibly worthwhile and exciting.”

RESIDENT EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

October 2024



Mohamed El Refaey, MD, a resident in the Department of Neurology at Upstate Medical University, is the October 2024 recipient of the Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. REFAEY'S STUDENTS:

"I worked with Dr. El Refaey for two weeks on my neurology clerkship. He delineated his expectations on our first day with him, which set the tone for the rest of the clerkship. He always encouraged us to ask questions and made sure each one of us provided a topic for teaching in the afternoons. He went through countless CT and MRI scans with us in detail, ensuring that we understood each step of image interpretation and how the lesions identified contributed to the patient's pathology. Beyond medicine, he was always very candid with us and offered his advice regarding medical training and life in general. I always felt comfortable asking him difficult questions because I knew that I would get an honest response. I feel lucky that I was able to work with him and hope to work with him again in the future."

"Dr. El Refaey went out of his way to make sure that we weren't only going through the motions but actually understanding what we were doing and why we were doing it. Even though he had a lot of patients to take care of, he took the time to elaborate on things that were important for us to understand as future clinicians. His bedside manner was outstanding and his level of composure even when dealing with difficult patients was something I'd like to grow to be like."

The Norton College of Medicine recognizes exceptional teachers with the monthly "Exceptional Moments in Teaching" program.

Honorees are selected via student assessments from courses and clerkships.

Recognized teachers—including medical faculty, residents, nurses and other educators—are those who challenge students and provide an exceptional learning experience.

FACULTY EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

November 2024



Margaret Maimone, PhD, an associate professor of Cell and Developmental Biology at the Norton College of Medicine at Upstate Medical University, is the November 2024 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. MAIMONE'S STUDENTS:

"I was struggling in the initial portion of the Molecules, Cells and Microbes course and not passing my formative assessments. Dr. Maimone stuck to her worked and followed up with students who were not doing well. She took time from her busy schedule to meet with me to discuss how I was studying and how I could improve. I appreciated how she listened to me and tried to find solutions with me. She also looked up resources I could use as a student with ADHD. I really felt her support, and maybe if I had not met with her to discuss how I could improve my study strategies, I would not have passed the course."

"This instructor is one of my favorites solely for the fact that Dr. Maimone is very intentional with the time that she has with students. Her enthusiasm alone is such an encouragement to students struggling with the material. Furthermore, when I reached out to Dr. Maimone before the exam for last-minute clarifications, she expressed an eagerness to help me grasp the material. She genuinely understood all of my misunderstandings and allowed me to explain where I was struggling. One thing I really appreciated about Dr. Maimone was her thorough, multi-faceted explanations that touched base on concepts outside of the lectures she specifically taught on. She is a phenomenal teacher and did not make me feel belittled for asking many questions."

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RESIDENT EXCEPTIONAL MOMENTS

November 2024



Sahib Laskar, MD, a PG-4 resident in the Department of Surgery at Upstate Medical University, is the November 2024 recipient of the Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. LASKER'S STUDENTS:

"During my time on my Surgery rotation, I had the pleasure of working closely with Sahib, who stands out as an exceptional chief resident. Without a doubt, he is the best chief I've ever worked with. His remarkable skills were evident not only in his clinical expertise and patient care but also in his ability to seamlessly organize and lead our team, even under the most challenging conditions. Sahib's dedication to his patients was truly inspiring. His compassionate approach and meticulous attention to detail ensured that every patient received the highest standard of care. Watching him interact with patients and their families was inspiring, as he displayed empathy and professionalism. He consistently went above and beyond to ensure that every patient felt heard, understood and well-cared for."

"One of the most impressive aspects of working with Sahib was his extraordinary leadership. He managed to maintain an organized and efficient team environment, fostering a sense of camaraderie and mutual respect among all team members. His ability to delegate tasks appropriately and maintain clear, open lines of communication was crucial in managing the high-pressure situations we often faced. His calm demeanor and quick thinking were invaluable in navigating the complexities of Surgery. Sahib's patience and kindness were also greatly appreciated by everyone on the team."

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Student Spotlight

Joey Giancaspro - MS4

The family of a patient thanks student, Joey Giancaspro, who took care of their father at the VA Hospital in Syracuse, NY, during August 2024. Joey's knowledge, promptness, and bedside manner were impressive. He was knowledgeable, thorough, and attentive to our concerns. His bedside manner was kind and considerate, and he was always willing to listen and answer questions. Joey explained the diagnosis in simple terms, which was crucial when dealing with elderly people. His dedication and professionalism made him an amazing young man with a promising future ahead. His dedication and professionalism make him an asset to any healthcare team.



The AQA senior elections for the Class of 2025 were held at the end of August. Please join me in congratulating the newly selected members!

Senior Elections

Rachel Aber
Christiana Agbo
Felix Appiah
Jessica Dobler
Rachael Ferraloro
Joseph Giancaspro
Jason Grullon
Rohan Gupta
Rowan Melcher
Akshay Patel
Olivia Preston
Paola Robles Vera
Serena Schmitt
Rebekah Schwartz
Jack Sedaka
Belinda Tang
Brandon Wainwright

Junior Elections

Robyn Anderson
William Borchert
Hallie Buddendeck
Evan Chernov
Mia DiFrancisco
Abhishek Doshi
Alexis Gursky
Ciara Guzman
Jacqueline Hogan
Lorie Kim
Sarah Malik
Megan marte
John Panzone
Sarah Papa
Sonny Pohar
Rashmi Rege
Nabeel Saif





Student Spotlight

Dillon Prus - MS3

A patient's family wrote the following:

I wanted to let you know about my experience with one of the 3rd year medical students during my late husband's recent stay at Upstate Community. Dillon Prus was working in the ER when my husband came in by ambulance. His genuine kindness and concern immediately put us more at ease, despite the circumstances. After my husband was transferred, Dillon still made a point of stopping in to say hello and have a friendly conversation – his visits were the highlight of my husband's days (I hope my visits were at least a close 2nd).

My husband passed away 5 days after leaving the hospital. In the last hours of consciousness, he was still talking about "that wonderful medical student" who had brightened his days at the hospital. Even though my husband knew he was dying, Dillon's visits brought him such joy.

I assumed that after we left the hospital that we wouldn't hear from Dillon again, but after my husband passed, I received a sympathy card from Dillon with a lovely, thoughtful personal note about my husband. Dillon did more for my husband with his kindness than all of the medicines and treatments combined. He was a breath of fresh air, in a depressing situation.

I will never forget "that wonderful medical student." Just wanted to share with you that you have a medical student who SHINES!



Report Mistreatment

An environment that optimizes learning and is built on respect and dignity is Upstate Medical University's expectation. The way we treat others (faculty, students, residents, staff) either realizes this expectation or interferes with the learning process. Discrimination, humiliation, and harassment simply can't be tolerated.

Please fill out this [electronic form](#) or use the QR code to find procedures and report confidentially any incidents or concerns regarding mistreatment or harassment.

