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To: Medical Student Class of 2017

From: Molecular and Cellular Principles of Medicine
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Welcome to SUNY Upstate Medical University!

One of the first courses that you will have in the fall is Molecular and Cellular Principles of Medicine (MCP). This course encompasses a broad range of topics including biochemistry, genetics, cell biology, and nutrition, and lays necessary groundwork for the understanding of modern medicine. In the first year curriculum, MCP begins in August and runs intermittently through the entire year so that the fundamentals you learn in this course can be coordinated with related topics in other first year courses. In addition, by revisiting the course at different points during the year, you have a chance to refresh your memory and build on the information you learned in earlier sessions.

The majority of material in MCP will be presented in standard lectures, but MCP also involves small group experiences. In the Clinical Problems sessions, you will be able to apply the basic science you learn in lecture to real life medical situations. While the MCP Conferences provide an opportunity for you to read in depth on an important topic in medicine and then present your findings to your group for discussion.

MCP will be taught in units 1 through 7 (minus units 4 & 5) of the seven total units in year 1. You will receive a single grade for the entire course, so your scores will accumulate as you progress throughout the year, and your final grade will be assigned in May 2014.

The following three textbooks, which will be available for purchase at the Upstate bookstore and on reserve in Upstate’s Health Sciences Library, contain most of the information that will be covered in MCP. Many of the faculty will use figures and diagrams directly from these texts in their lectures.


The following are hints that may help you succeed in medical school.

1. For MCP specifically, prior to arriving in August, you might want to review the most important elements of topics normally covered in biochemistry, genetics, and cell biology, if you had difficulty with the biology section of the MCATs or weakness in the respective coursework as an undergraduate.
2. Be prepared to get down to work at the start of school. Med school is demanding. You may have to work harder than ever before. Try to get settled in promptly and ‘hit the ground running’. Try to adopt a daily routine that allows plenty of time for effective studying. (You can always add back other activities later.)

3. Familiarize yourself as soon as possible with your complete schedule. For MCP, be aware of the course organization and faculty expectations. Read the course syllabi that you receive. Review the handouts before coming to class. Budget your time wisely.

4. Plan your weekends strategically. Trips home can really eat into study time, so be sure you have allotted enough time for “work” while you grab some relaxation.

Enjoy your summer!