



[www.upstate.edu/com/curriculum/](http://www.upstate.edu/com/curriculum/)

*Improve the health of the communities  
We serve through education, biomedical  
Research and health care*

## Letter from Dean Ko

# Curriculum Office

Winter  
2016

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

Dear Upstate Community:

I can't believe it's already December, and we had our first major snowstorm of the season in Syracuse. For most students, you are in an intense period of classes, clerkships, studying, and exams before the December Holiday Break. I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays, and looking forward to spending time with family and friends during this season.

Recently several of us from the Curriculum Office attended the AAMC National meeting for medical school administrators and educators from across country. One of the topics that was emphasized in the plenary sessions and workshops was the topic of Resiliency and Burnout in healthcare.

The issue of burnout among resident physicians as well as practicing physicians (regardless of specialty) has been well documented in the past. Recently, there has been more focus on the issue of burnout and wellness at the medical school level as well. The high prevalence of anxiety, depression, and stress among medical students across the country is alarming. This is an area that both the Curriculum Office and Student Affairs office is putting a lot of focus on, and will continue to do so in the upcoming months. Making sure our students have the available resources to deal with the rigors of medical school, and providing the necessary counselors and mentors to address these issues as they arise.

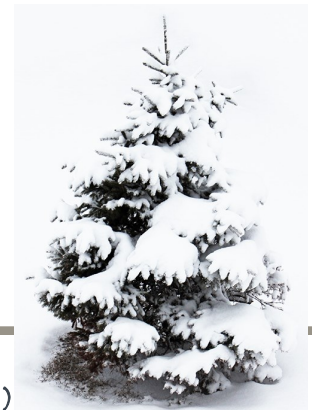
Many of you are either dealing with the stress of the residency interview process, midway through a long clerkship year, or in the midst of stressing about a unit exam or the looming Step 1 exam. I encourage you to try to take the time to take care of yourselves, and don't neglect to connect with family and friends.

Whether it is incorporating some of the mindfulness training or 'chocolate meditation' you may heard about from Dr. Nanavati, spending precious time with family or friends, exercising, or enjoying a long lost hobby, I hope we are all able to take the time to slow down during this busy season and enjoy all that is around us. Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Paul Ko  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education



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



# Student Well-Being

Going through medical school can be very stressful. Inevitably, some students find themselves doubting their choice to join the program. They wonder if they have what it takes. Medical Doctors make life-or-death decisions every day, and unfortunately, this kind of pressure occasionally takes a psychological toll.

What can you do to help yourself and your peers when it comes to the stress of medical school? Be on the lookout for warning signs such as loss of appetite and motivation or having negative thoughts. Familiarize yourself with services that the Upstate Medical University provides for your well-being. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

Canada's magazine "Maclean's" released an article that shares statistics on mental health among medical students and doctors, and different resiliency trainings that are being implemented to help students fight the stresses of medical school. We encourage you to review the article below:

<http://www.macleans.ca/education/new-curriculum-addresses-mental-health-for-young-doctors/>

Upstate Medical University services for your well-being:

Student Counseling Center:

<http://www.upstate.edu/currentstudents/support/scc/index.php>

Student Health:

<http://www.upstate.edu/currentstudents/support/health/index.php>

Academic Support Services:

<http://www.upstate.edu/currentstudents/academic/support.php>

You can also talk to your Basic Science Advisor or Clinical Advisor in your Learning Community.



**Joni Mitchell, MD**  
Director

## **Practice of Medicine Update**

**Alison McCrone, MD**  
Associate Course Director

The POM course has successfully completed an interdisciplinary inter-professional exercise with the Virtual Medical Error Room (VMER) created by Dr. Mitchell and her team at the VA. This unique experience focuses on patient quality and safety by helping students understand their roles and responsibilities in the large, multifaceted teams that exist in the hospital setting. Working together with students from other schools such as physical therapy, physician assisting and students from the college of nursing, Upstate medical students collaborated in this team building exercise to identify the hallmarks of excellent patient care. Students participating in this activity seemed to really enjoy the opportunity to learn from other students. We look forward to expanding this effort to include other learners next year!

The POM course directors met with both the first- and second-year class representatives and are happy to incorporate the following changes based on student feedback. Keep those good ideas coming students!

**YOU SAID:** Include the POM calendar in the News flashes so we can be reminded of upcoming assignments

**WE DID:** Going forward, we will include the link to our course calendar with each News Flash for easy access

**YOU SAID:** News Flashes would be better a little bit earlier so we can prepare for the upcoming week

**WE DID:** News Flashes will now be sent out on Wednesday to give students more time to prepare for upcoming sessions, lectures, and assignments

**YOU SAID:** We want to make sure all of the clinical experiences are strong.

**WE DID:** Based on student feedback, certain clinical experiences have been eliminated and others have been extended to ensure quality clinical exposure

**YOU SAID:** It would be helpful if we had the answers to the clinical vignettes provided in small groups.

**WE DID:** On Friday of each week after students have completed their small group sessions, answers and discussion for the clinical vignette cases will be posted to blackboard

**YOU SAID:** It would be helpful to understand the rationale for exam questions that we might have gotten incorrect.

**WE DID:** We created a list of "Key Concepts" for every exam that is posted to BB so students can review critical concepts for the POM course

# Committee Updates

## Phase 1 Update

We recently had our Phase 1 Retreat with much discussion and small group work. We continue to implement the “UP” (Unified Pre-clerkship) Curriculum in the MS1 year, celebrating all of the innovative successes we have had and working out any kinks along the way as a team. Courses are now being reviewed on a “rolling” basis, instead of at the end of the academic year. We hope this will bring real-time change and influence to the courses throughout the year. We have heard your feedback on some aspects of both POM1 and FRM1 courses and made any real-time changes that we could. Our MS1 Unit Co-Directors and Thread Leaders continue to work hard to restructure our new courses and an MS1 focus group will be conducted mid-year (soon!) to gain feedback from the students.

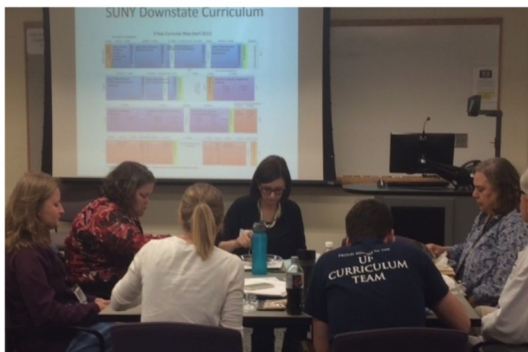
For the “UP” Curriculum in the MS2 year, we have identified almost all of our Co-Directors and are looking forward to launching this coming August. The Foundations of Reasoning in Medicine course for the MS2 year is now in the planning stage as well and will continue to incorporate evidence based medicine and clinical reasoning into small groups.

We hope you enjoy your holidays!

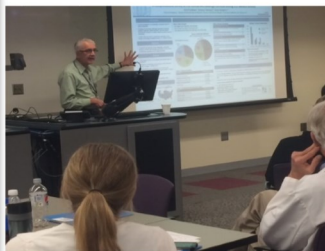
Please check out our weekly blog/newsflash to follow the content of the new curriculum!

Visit our  
Blog

<https://upstatemedicaluniversitymsiccontent1617.wordpress.com/>

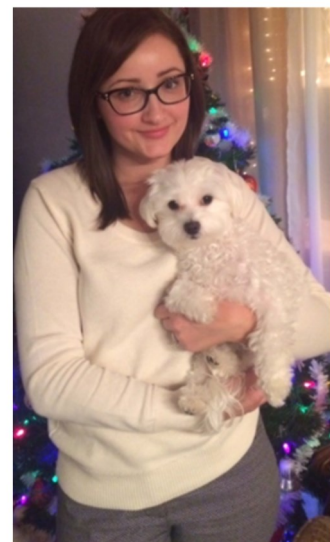


2016 Phase 1 Retreat



## WELCOME

Curriculum Office welcomes **Jelena Mlikota** as the new Phase 1 Coordinator! Jelena graduated with a Bachelor's Degree from Syracuse University. She has worked in higher education for the past 8 years. She has extensive experience working with students and faculty. Prior to joining Upstate, Jelena worked as a Student Services Coordinator at University College of Syracuse University. Jelena enjoys traveling with her husband and spending time with her furry friend Luna.



# Committee Updates

## Phase 2 Update

**MS3:** We are now approaching the mid-point of the year and with that we know that our MS3 students have a lot on their minds.

**Grade Adjustments:** Where needed, clerkships will adjust their grades in accordance with policy. The grade distribution is 20% honors, 20% high pass, 60% pass. Grades can only be adjusted up, they cannot be adjusted down.

**Planning for the 4<sup>th</sup> year:** We know that a lot of students start to think about and worry about their 4<sup>th</sup> year of medical school while the 3<sup>rd</sup> year is on-going. The Curriculum Office will host a 4<sup>th</sup> year Planning Meeting on January 11<sup>th</sup>. Topics discussed will be the elective lottery, Step 2, away electives, graduation requirements, etc. In addition to this you will have the opportunity to meet with residency directors and specialty advisors.

**MS4:** Our 4<sup>th</sup> year students are busy on the interview trail. We know that you will do great.

**MS4 Task Force:** The MS4 Taskforce with approval from the Curriculum Committee has implemented a requirement for 4<sup>th</sup> year students beginning the 17-18 AY. All 4<sup>th</sup> year students must take ONE Acting Internship (AI). This really is a minor change because the majority of Upstate students already take at least one AI during their 4<sup>th</sup> year. This requirement will be explained during the 4<sup>th</sup> year planning meeting. If you have any questions though please contact the Curriculum Office.



*2016 Phase 2 Retreat*

## Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee recently reviewed the Graduation Competencies and Educational Program Objectives for the College of Medicine (often referred to as the GC&EPOs). These are the skills, attitudes, and objectives we expect all students to be able to accomplish by the time they finish the 4 year curriculum at Upstate.

All course and clerkship objectives are linked to these program objectives. The committee is looking at updating and revising some of these items as well plan for future iterations of this important document. Additionally, recently the Curriculum Committee approved a new graduation requirement that all students must do an Acting Internship (AI) as part of their 4<sup>th</sup> year coursework. Most students already accomplish this task in their preparation for residency application. Nearly 90% of medical schools across the country have an AI requirement as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

This change is part of a larger 4<sup>th</sup> year curriculum redesign that a 4<sup>th</sup> year taskforce is working on. The 4<sup>th</sup> year is an important year for students to solidify and build upon some of the skills they have learned in the required clerkship, and expand on it further. The 4<sup>th</sup> year taskforce will be working on providing structure to the 4<sup>th</sup> year while maintaining the flexibility that is needed by our students.



## *What's new with the Exams and Software??*

Colleen Denniston, Exam and Evaluation Coordinator

Hi everyone!! There have been some major changes in computers over the last few months. Because updating an operating system often effects the applications and software we have installed and use on our computers, many of those applications must also be upgraded.

As many of you know, Apple has completed operating system upgrades for both their laptop platforms (OS Sierra) and their mobile device platforms (10.1.1) within the last few months. I am happy to let our Students know that they are able to upgrade to both OS Sierra and mobile platforms 10.1.1 without any adverse implications.

Please note that if you have the Upstate University free version of McAfee Antivirus on your computer, you will need to make a visit to Jeff Wessel (LIB 222D) or Mike Morose (LIB 050) to have your antivirus updated so it will be compatible with the new version of Sierra.

Reminder: anyone who is not running antivirus software on their laptop, it is one of the minimum requirements of the institution. Please install one as soon as possible. We realize that you will have to turn them off for the exam. There will be instructions on the Academic Computing and Exam Information Website on how to turn McAfee Antivirus off temporarily for the exams.

If you have any questions regarding this, please feel free to email me or stop by anytime!!



# SUNY UPSTATE'S RURAL MEDICAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM



*The mission of the Rural Medical Scholars Program is to identify, recruit, and nurture future small town physicians. We offer a unique, four-year curriculum through elective coursework.*

## INTRO TO RURAL HEALTH UPDATE

Cynthia Elkins, MD, PhD is the instructor for this lecture-based course that focuses on the health care system and practice needs of rural communities. MS1 and MS2 students participate. In October, Terry Yonkers from the Fingerlakes Community Health Center spoke on the topic of Telemedicine. A suturing clinic took place in November hosted by the St. Joseph's Hospital Residents

## RURAL IMMERSION WEEK UPDATE

The RMED program is in the process of recruiting additional communities to participate in rural immersion. Batavia, Geneva, Lowville and Ogdensburg communities have expressed interest in hosting our students next summer in addition to our previous hosts: Canton-Potsdam Hospital and Oswego Hospital. The purpose of the program is to provide a recruitment opportunity to New York State small towns in need of future healthcare providers, while also offering a fun and meaningful experience to our medical students. Our intent is for students to gain an understanding of the local economy, public health issues, recreational offerings, educational resources, social influences and other elements that help define small town communities



## RMED UPDATE

The RMED program is pleased to announce the newest member of the team, Robert Reeves, MD of Irongate Family Medicine in Glens Falls, NY. RMED and Upstate graduate (Class of 1993), Dr. Reeves has worked as preceptor to RMED students over the past 20+ years. He has well earned his new title of Master Community Faculty.

The Sixth Annual Fall Faculty Development was held on October 15<sup>th</sup> at Greek Peak Resort. This year's topic was "Geriatric and Palliative Care for the Office Preceptor." Many thanks to our speakers: Sharon Brangman, MD, Mary Obear, MD, Dennis Daly, MD and Danielle Longo, RPh, PharmD for a successful conference!

Program Director, Carrie Roseamelia, PhD visited 15 hospitals across the state this fall. The RMED team has successfully negotiated the placement of 17 MS3 students in rural communities beginning in January 2017. Our sites for 2017 include: Auburn, Batavia, Canandaigua, Canton, Cortland, Geneva, Hamilton, Ithaca, Lowville, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Oneonta, Oswego/Pulaski, Plattsburgh, and Utica.



## From the Office of Evaluation, Assessment, & Research

### The Latest Step 2 Clinical Knowledge Scores Shows Upstate Is Above National Average!

For students taking the USMLE Step 2 CK for the first time between July 2015 and June 2016, Upstate had a **98% passing rate** (national rate was 96%).

The mean score for Upstate test takers was **245** – above the national average of 242!



### What's up with the MS3 Evaluation Form??

After fielding some questions from students about the new version of MS3 Clinical Evaluation form, we took a look at the data so far. Reviewing data from May-September, we found that **very few students received across the board "Developing" ratings**. And of those students who did, most occurred in the first 3 months of the year, which makes sense since this was the first time MS3 students were exposed to the clerkship environment.

Overall, when looking at which categories students received "developing" on, the top categories were: "Generates appropriate assessment & treatment plan", "Applies appropriate fund of knowledge and understanding to clinical problems", and "Generates clear, concise oral presentations". **It is appropriate and expected that students would be rated as "Developing" in these categories.**

The form is really doing what it was designed to do. And don't forget what Developing means – "Emerging skill performance for a third year student"



### Recent Poster/Abstract Presentations

**Dr. Paul Ko** presented a poster at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Annual Meeting in November titled "*Baseline Core Entrustable Professional Activities for Entering Residency (CEPAERs or EPAs) levels of medical students at the end of 4th year curriculum using a mixed method approach*"  
Poster authors included **Colleen Dillenbeck, Kara Welch** and **Lauren Germain**.

**Dr. Rebecca Greenblatt & Lauren Germain's** poster "*Identifying Flawed Exam Questions: Two Statistics, and Beyond*" was presented at the Association of Medical School Microbiology and Immunology chairs (AMSMIC) at the Educational Strategies Workshop in May 2016.

In October, **Rebecca Bellini** presented her and **Dr. Kwame Amankwa's** abstract "*Tackling the Surgical Assessment Form: A Piloted Form to Improve Utilization and Increase Feedback Comment*" at the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress. They saw a 21.9% increase in total word count per total student with the new piloted form!

### Student Learning Outcomes Committee's Lunch & Learn

Thanks to everyone who joined us at the Lunch & Learn on 11/3/16 titled "Faculty Innovations in Assessment". **Dr. Joni Mitchell** spoke about the Virtual Medical Error Room and **Dr. Mark Schmitt** spoke on how to assess student research activities.

If you missed the event – you can view the PowerPoint presentation on our BlackBoard site – CUR101 Assessment Research and Resources: [https://bb.upstate.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course\\_id=43695\\_1&content\\_id=610781\\_1&mode=view](https://bb.upstate.edu/webapps/blackboard/content/listContent.jsp?course_id=43695_1&content_id=610781_1&mode=view)





## Status Report

At its October 18-19, 2016 meeting, the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) reviewed the status report submitted on August 5, 2016 on behalf of the medical education program leading to the MD degree at Upstate and found that Upstate is in compliance with all 12 standards.

## Next Site Visit

The next full survey visit by the LCME will occur during the 2018-19 academic year. We will begin self-study process in January 2017.

An LCME Steering Committee and 8-12 Self-Study Work Groups will be formed and will include students, faculty, administration, staff, affiliated hospitals, residents, and alumni representatives. The Work Groups will review and analyze the information gathered through the database collection process and prepare a report of their findings, including supporting documentation, needs and recommendations. Self-Study Work Group reports will then be reviewed by the LCME Steering Committee.

The LCME Steering Committee will be composed of the Self-Study Work Group Chairs and will be responsible for synthesizing the Self-Study Work Group findings into the final institutional Data Collection Instrument (DCI) report which will be submitted to the LCME three months prior to the LCME Survey Team.

As the process moves forward, we will keep you updated through emails and the Upstate LCME Accreditation website: <http://www.upstate.edu/com/curriculum/lcme/index.php>

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## Next Site Visit

The next full survey visit by Middle States will occur during the 2018-19 academic year. We will also begin self-study process in January 2017. The process of self-study will follow the format describe above; however, the Work Groups will include representatives from all four colleges.



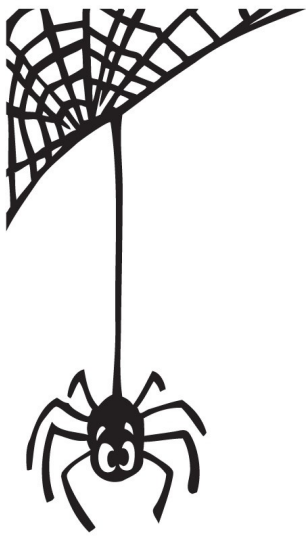
## Welcome

We would like to welcome **Lisa Kelly** who will be starting on December 7 in Academic Affairs as the new Accreditation and Compliance Coordinator. Lisa Kelly will be working closely with Lisa Phelan and all of you as we embark on the self-study processes described above for both Middle States as well as the LCME.

Lisa graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Masters of Public Health. She has worked as the Student Education Coordinator for the Neurology department since November 2014.

Lisa's office will be located on the first floor of Weiskotten Hall in the entrance to the New Academic Building. We are excited to welcome her!

# Curriculum Office Community Service



Curriculum Office staff participated in the annual Golisano Children's Hospital Halloween Parade





## Community Puzzle

If you happen to walk into the New Academic Building, take a quick break to add a couple of puzzle pieces in the community puzzle. Enjoy!



## Curriculum Office Closures

Friday December 23 - closing at noon  
Monday December 26 - closed for Christmas Holiday  
Friday December 30 - closing at noon  
Monday January 2 - closed for New Years Holiday

## Contact Us

Remember to use our **Virtual Suggestion Box** to anonymously submit any questions or concerns. Simply send an e-mail to [upcurriculum@upstate.edu](mailto:upcurriculum@upstate.edu). You can also drop by Sarah Edwards McNamara's office (Setnor 4508) to chat!



Have you liked us on Facebook yet?