UME NEWSLETTER

Letter from the UME office

June 10,2025

Dear Students, Faculty, and Staff!

I hope everyone is having a great spring!

It's been nice having bright, sunny days sprinkled in throughout the last few weeks, bringing hope that steady warm weather on its way!

Congratulations to the graduating class of 2025! The Office of Undergraduate Medical Education is proud of your accomplishments. As a team, we extend our heartfelt best wishes as you begin a new journey in your residency training.

Graduation represents a profound milestone—a moment that is both a conclusion and a new beginning. Today, our graduates begin to carry forward the ideals developed at Upstate, making an impact both locally and across the country in their chosen specialties The faculty and staff of the Office of Undergraduate Medical Education are honored to have accompanied you on this meaningful journey. We celebrate your growth, your accomplishments, and the knowledge and skills you have assimilated. We trust that you will continue to represent our school with integrity, resilience, and a readiness to serve with compassion and competence.

MS3s are nearing the end of their clerkships. This has been a year of great accomplishments and important decisions shaping their future careers. We wish you well in the fourth year of medical school!

It's exciting to see our MS2s transition from the pre-clerkship curriculum into the heart of clinical training! This class had the unique opportunity to learn alongside their colleagues from the third-year class for ten weeks and we were happy to learn that it was a positive experience for everyone. Congratulations to all students who took their first shelf exam -100% passed! Best of luck with the next clerkships!

MSIs have been very busy, too. We hope you enjoyed the first year of medical school, with a thoughtful balance of classroom learning and clinical exposure.

The UME Office remains committed to open communication with our students. We value their feedback and strive to consider and address it thoughtfully. As part of this effort, we've introduced a "From Student Feedback to Change" section in the newsletter to communicate and highlight the meaningful changes the UME Office has made in response to student feedback. Our goal is to ensure that students feel heard and that their perspectives are

reflected in the decisions we make. Communication is key to fostering transparency between the UME Office and our students.

As we close one academic year and begin another, I want to share with you how deeply proud I am of the NCOM faculty, who have a genuine love for educating our students. Each of them is dedicated to advancing student learning and nurturing a culture of continued growth -helping our students to become the best physicians they can be. I would like to also recognize the instrumental contributions of the team of staff that supports the MD curriculum. Their commitment to serving students and collaborating with faculty is invaluable, and their ongoing support is a vital pillar that makes our MD curriculum possible.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, and my message to ALL is this: Be a good team player. Work and have fun together. Take care of yourself. Support and uplift one other. Be excellent stewards of professionalism and integrity. Serve your community.

Congratulations to all our MD students on your outstanding work! We are incredibly proud of all you have accomplished and excited to see how you will shape the future of medicine.

Enjoy the summer!

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



"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." – Aesop

<u>Contact Info</u>

www.upstate.edu/ume

SUNY Upstate Medical University Undergraduate Medical Education Office Setnor Academic Building Suite 4508 766 Irving Avenue Syracuse, NY 13210 <u>Google Maps & Directions</u>

> 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: Katherine Roberts (RoberKat@upstate.edu)

<u>Extra! Extra!</u>

Read more from: Phase One, Phase Two, Binghamton Campus Accreditation and Compliance Evaluation Assessment & Research.



Dr. Rebecca Greenblatt



Dr. Rachel Hopkins

Phase 1

This March marked an exciting milestone as the first class to complete the newly redesigned Phase I curriculum including the integrated Longitudinal Clinical Preceptorship and the updated three-semester Foundations of Reasoning in Medicine and Practice of Medicine courses — began their clerkships.

This transition from classroom learning to hands-on clinical experience can be both rewarding and challenging. We hope that the foundational training these students received has prepared them well for this next phase of their medical education.

Over the coming months, we'll be gathering feedback from clerkship directors and clinical faculty to better understand how these curricular enhancements have shaped students' readiness and performance in the clinical setting. This ongoing feedback will help guide further improvements and ensure our curriculum continues to meet the evolving needs of both students and patients.

Rebecca Greenblatt, PhD Assistant Dean for Foundational Sciences

Rachel Hopkins, MD Assistant Dean for Phase 1 Clinical Sciences

Phase 2

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Congratulations to the class of 2025! We are very proud of the work they have done over the past several years. We welcome them as colleagues and wish them the best of luck in their residency programs.

The class of 2026 students transition to the start of their fourthyear this month. Over the next few months they will be working on 4th-year level experiences before applying to residency, including taking the USMLE Step 2 exam and participating in fourth-year electives and acting internships. Many of our students will be participating in away rotations at other institutions.

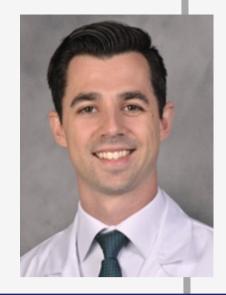
Residency applications through the ERAS system will become available for residency programs to view at the end of September.

The class of 2027 is our first class on the new clerkship schedule where clerkship year starts and ends in mid-March, and they have been in clerkships for nearly 2 months already. As we mentioned in previous newsletters, this created a "double bubble" of both the class of 2026 and the class of 2027 in clerkships at the same time from mid-March through late-May. The "double bubble" officially ends on May 23, 2025, and will not happen again in future years now that the schedule is established.

Going forward, starting with our students who enter their 4th year in 2026, our students 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, Als, away rotations, and preparing for the USMLE Step 2 exam.

Thank you everyone for all your continued time and effort!

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



Dr. Matthew Mason

Report Gold Star





Dr. Leann Lesprance





Report Gold Star



Binghamton Campus

Greetings from your classmates and colleagues at the Binghamton Campus

The past few months sure have been full – full of activities and of overlapping classes!

In addition to their usual clerkship activities, Upstate students from the class of 2026 spent two afternoons participating in a geriatric fall risk assessment exercise with Binghamton University Pharmacy and Physical Therapy students. Students met in late January to plan their approach and then in February, carried out the steps with standardized patients. It was a great opportunity for our students to get to know each other and gain experience working together.

On Monday March 17, Dr. Davé and the Binghamton Campus welcomed 38 students from the class of 2027 for their clerkship year, which started with the Integrated Clerkship (IC). After a day and a half of IC orientation, students were split up into five groups that rotated through five different weeks: surgery/EM, internal medicine, neuro/psych, peds/ObGyn, and clinical skills – giving them a chance to sample each specialty and get organized to the Binghamton clinical facilities and local community. Clinical sessions were interspersed with didactics. Highlights included a panel discussion with current Binghamton campus students and a pizza party with two second year residents who were Clinical Campus grads.For any trivia buffs out there, the sculpture to the right of students in the class photo (in the BU Pharmacy Building) is a caffeine molecule!

Soon we will say goodbye to the bubble, and with it, some of the rising seniors from the class of 2026 who are returning to Syracuse or elsewhere to finish their electives. We wish them all well.

We look forward to working with the class of 2027 and the seniors who are staying in the area. We also are excited that class of 2025 graduates Zachary Davis and Rachel Ferraloro matched in Family Medicine at UHS and will be part of our Upstate team!

Peace,

Leann Lesperance, MD, PhD, FAAP (<u>she/her</u>) Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Binghamton Clinical Campus Clinical Associate Professor, Pediatrics

Gold Humanism Honor Society

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation was founded in 1988 to support humanism in healthcare for all.

The Arnold P. Gold Foundation champions humanism in healthcare, which we define as compassionate, collaborative, and scientifically excellent care. This Gold standard of care embraces all and targets barriers to such care. We empower experts, learners, and leaders to together create systems and cultures that support humanistic care for all.



SAVE the DATE

24TH ANNUAL STUDENT CLINICIAN CEREMONY RECOGNIZING EXCELLENCE & PROMOTING ROLE MODELS

9 TH OF JUNE, 2025

GOLD HUMANISM HONOR SOCIETY INDUCTION CEREMONY 5:30 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. LOCATION NAB 4414

RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Katherine Roberts ROBERKAT& UPSTATE.EDU Congratulations New Inductees!

CLASS OF 2026

Ahmad Wady Aila Karabegovic Alexandra Stone Amelia Boyd Amelia Gabor Anas Abbas Ava Conklin Basem Ashkar Brian Josephson Carsyn Dykes Davis Hedbany Gideon Adu Jacob Scarcella Katherine Narvaez Mena Laura Williams Lauren Abbuhl Mary Locastro Megan Ngai Nia Brown **Omar Yaipen** Patrick Saba Peter Fioramonti **Robert Contento** Saanchi Kukadia Sophia Silas Steven Lafever William Fitzmaurice **Zachary Williams**

Faculty

Dr. Courtney Maxey-Jones Dr. Mina Michael Dr. Jennette Ball

Residents

Dr. Sydney Read Dr. Stephen Ciaccio Dr. Brittany Nelopae

From the Office of Accreditation & Compliance

The Office of Accreditation and Compliance is excited to present the latest edition of our newsletter. This issue continues to build upon the foundations of previous editions, reaffirming our unwavering commitment to upholding the highest standards in both medical education and practice.

Accreditation and Compliance



AAMC Graduation Questionnaire (GQ)

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the 104 students who have already completed the AAMC Graduate Questionnaire as of Tuesday, May 27th. Your valuable feedback is essential, and we eagerly await the insights you've shared. The official feedback report will be available in August 2025.

For those who haven't yet participated, fear not! The questionnaire will remain open until the first week of June. We encourage you to take a few moments to complete it. Your input matters!

Important Reminders:

 \cdot The most recent reminder was sent on May 15 to eligible participants who haven't completed the GQ.

· Expect the next reminder on June 1.

• Private and individualized links are emailed to those expected to graduate between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

Kongratulations to the GQ Sweatshirt Giveaway Winners from the Class of 2025:

- · Daniel Nichols
- · Gentry Hearn
- · Margaret Malone
- · Allen Luo
- \cdot Dario Lecusay

Your active participation is deeply appreciated! Keep shining, and thank you for contributing to the future of medical education. 3



Terry Pudney

Accreditation and Compliance

Important Policies for Medical Students Regarding Infectious and Environmental Hazards

At our medical school, we prioritize your safety and well-being. To ensure that you are wellprepared, we have established policies that address exposure to infectious and environmental risks. Here are the key points:

1. Education on Prevention Methods:

o We provide comprehensive training to all medical students on effective methods to prevent exposure to infectious diseases and environmental hazards.

o You'll learn about hygiene practices, protective measures, and infection control protocols.

2. Care and Treatment Procedures After Exposure:

o In the event of exposure, we have clear procedures in place.

o These include guidelines for seeking medical attention, reporting incidents, and understanding financial responsibilities related to treatment.

3. Impact on Learning Activities:

o We recognize that infectious or environmental conditions can affect your ability to participate in learning activities.

o Our policies consider accommodations and adjustments to support your learning journey.

4. Transparency and Communication:

o All registered medical students, including visiting students, receive detailed information about these policies.

o Before engaging in any educational activities that may pose risks, you'll be informed and aware.

Remember: **Prevention is Key!** As you continue in your clinical experiences, rest assured that you are equipped to prevent exposure and respond appropriately if needed.

Related Policies: <u>Student Occupational Health Exposure</u> <u>ESH Blood / Body Fluid Exposure Follow-Up</u> <u>Hazardous Materials and Waste Management Plan</u>

Accreditation and Compliance

Upstate Medical University provides Access to <u>Service-Learning</u>/Community Service Opportunities

Upstate Medical University believes in nurturing not only exceptional medical professionals but also compassionate citizens. As part of our commitment to holistic education, we are thrilled to provide you with access to service-learning and community service opportunities.

Here's what you need to know:

1. Service-Learning and Community Engagement:

- Our programs go beyond textbooks and clinical rotations. They empower you to engage with real-world challenges.
- By participating in service-learning, you'll learn while making a positive impact on the community.

2. The Center's Role:

- The <u>Center for Community Engagement Learning (CEL)</u> is your gateway to meaningful experiences.
- We administer approved programs that align with your educational journey.

3. Examples of CEL Programs:

- Health Clinics Outreach: Serve underserved populations by volunteering at local clinics.
- Health Education Initiatives: Educate community members about preventive health measures.
- **Community Health Fairs**: Participate in events that promote wellness and awareness.

4. Stay Updated:

• For an **up-to-date list of approved CEL opportunities**, visit our <u>NobleHour</u> portal.

Remember, your involvement matters. Together, we can make a difference!

Accreditation and Compliance

Ensuring Safety and Security: A Guide for Medical Students

Your safety and well-being are paramount to us. As part of our commitment to providing a secure learning environment, we want you to feel safe both on our medical school campus and at clinical sites. Here's how we ensure your security:

1.On-Campus Security Systems:

- Regular Classroom Hours:
 - During class hours, our campus security team maintains a visible presence.
 - Security personnel patrol buildings, parking lots, and common areas.
 - Emergency call boxes ("Blue Light Phones") are strategically placed for immediate assistance.
 - Access control systems limit entry to authorized personnel.
- Outside Regular Hours:
 - Even after class hours, security remains vigilant.
 - Well-lit pathways and parking lots enhance safety.
 - Security escorts are available upon request.
 - Surveillance cameras monitor key locations.
- Clinical Teaching Sites:
 - We collaborate closely with clinical partners to maintain safety.
 - Security protocols align with hospital policies.
 - In high-risk areas (e.g., emergency departments, and detention facilities), additional measures are in place.
 - Faculty and staff guide students on safety during patient interactions.
- 2. Emergency Preparedness:
 - Education: We educate all students and faculty on emergency and disaster preparedness.
 - Policies and Plans: Institutional policies are accessible <u>online</u>.
- Notifications: In emergencies, we use multiple channels (email, text, announcements) to inform the community promptly.

3. Crime Prevention Tips:

- Four Basic Rules:
 - Stay Alert
 - Keep your mind on your surroundings, who is in front of you, and who is behind you. Don't get distracted.
 - Walk purposefully, stand tall, and make eye contact with people around you.
 - TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS! If you feel uncomfortable in a situation, leave.
- Blue Light Phones:
 - Familiarize yourself with the locations of the "Blue Light Phones" on campus.
 - Don't hesitate to use one if you believe you are possibly in danger.
 - The phones ring directly into the University Police Department and a code shows which campus phone is activated.
 - An Officer is dispatched to assist and check the area.
 - Use foyer phones in the entryways of buildings to alert University Police to problems.

Remember, you are part of a supportive community. Together, we create a safe and secure environment for learning and growth.

Institutional Compliance, Privacy and Ethics

Hotline Numbers

Institutional Compliance Anonymous Hotline

<u>(315) 464-6444</u> Addresses known or suspected Upstate Medical University & Hospital compliance and ethics concerns.

- Clinical Data Services Coding Hotline
 (315) 464-7809
- Medicare Fraud & Abuse Hotline Department of Health and Human Services
 (OIG)

(800) <u>447-8477</u> Addresses concerns regarding people or facilities who may be cheating the Medicare program.

■ upstate.edu

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Medicaid Fraud & Ahuse Hotline -

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IMPORTANT POLICIES FOR YOUR REVIEW

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- Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, Sexual Harassment and Title IX Policy Link
- Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy <u>Link</u>
- Harassment Prevention Policy Link

To have questions answered relating to discrimination concerns or to arrange an appointment, contact the Office of Institutional Equity at (315) 464-9590

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.

📃 Office of Institutional Equity

Office of Institutional Equity

The Office of Institutional Equity is responsible for all investigations of discrimination, harassment and Title IX complaints, and ensuring compliance with SUNY policies related to sexual harassment prevention training.

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Stay informed:

- If you have a question for the Office of Institutional Equity, you may contact the Office directly by emailing equity@upstate.edu
- We encourage you to sign up for our mailing list to stay informed about relevant news and events related to the work of the office. <u>Click here to sign up.</u>

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Mechanisms for Reporting Positive Behaviors Experienced During Medical School

An environment that optimizes learning and is built on respect and dignity is Upstate Medical University's expectation. To do so, the Gold Star Report provides a mechanism to identify positive influences on professional standards and the learning environment. Please fill out this <u>electronic form</u> to highlight examples of faculty, students, or staff who have demonstrated exemplary professional behaviors.

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



Report Gold Star

Recent Gold Start Recipients

Dr. Margaret Maimone - Cell and Developmental Biology Faculty

"I had a family emergency come up during my Step 1 dedicated period that caused me to become exceedingly stressed in an already stressful time and made me fall behind with my Step 1 preparation. I was so nervous about reaching out and asking for help, but the moment I spoke to Dr. Maimone, I felt so much better. She went out of her way to meet with me quickly, even late in the evening, was exceptionally kind and supportive, and worked with me to create a plan for moving forward that was individualized to my situation. She went out of her way to emphasize the importance of prioritizing taking care of myself and my family while helping me move forward with Step preparation in the most efficient and least stressful way possible. There is no way I would have passed Step 1 within the dedicated period without Dr. Maimone's support and guidance. She deserves recognition not only for exceptional academic guidance but also for being a kind and compassionate human."

The Gross Anatomy Department

"Thank you all so much for the work you put in to teach us the gross anatomy of every course. I really appreciate you all and I have learned so much on identification and clinical application."

Dr. William Schu - Surgery Faculty

"Dr. Shu has been exceptionally kind and supportive throughout my clerkship. He has fostered a safe and engaging learning environment, providing me with the opportunity to actively participate in procedures while offering clear, insightful guidance. As a mentor, he is consistently eager to teach and engage with both students and staff alike. His influence has truly enhanced my experience at Crouse, making it far more rewarding than I could have ever anticipated. I aspire to become a physician as compassionate and skilled as he is one day."

Dr. Joshua Mathew – Internal Medicine Faculty

"Dr. Mathew is such an excellent mentor who really gave importance to student education. He asked me and another medical student on service regarding concepts we needed help with during the rotation and tailored very helpful, hour-long educational sessions which helped us for our shelf exam. In addition, he would point out important clinical pearls during rounds and gave valuable advice on preparing for residency. Dr. Mathew is truly a role model and he inspires me to mentor future trainees in my medical career."

Recent Gold Start Recipients Continued

Ava Conklin – Class of 2026 MD Student

"Ava has consistently demonstrated exceptional kindness, professionalism, and mentorship throughout my time interacting with her on clinical rotations. As my assigned "Near Peer" mentor, she went above and beyond while on her Internal Medicine rotation, warmly welcoming myself and another M1 to the team. She actively sought out meaningful learning opportunities for us, frequently involving us in patient care by facilitating practice history-taking and physical examinations. These experiences were invaluable for developing our clinical skills and confidence. Even outside of her formal mentorship role, Ava continues to set a high standard. I recently encountered her again while shadowing, and she treated me with the same generosity of spirit, approachability, and clinical insight as she did during our structured mentorship. Her dedication to teaching and fostering a supportive learning environment truly deserves recognition."

Dr. Ramiro Gutierrez – Internal Medicine Faculty

"Dr. Gutierrez is one of if not the best teacher I have learned from at Upstate so far. Incredible patience in allowing students to explore and learn on their own, while providing expert insight in how to better think and investigate as an infectious disease specialist. In just the short time I was able to learn from him during the IM clerkship, I gained so much in knowledge areas I was weak in, but more importantly thought processes and structures to help guide me to investigate the best diagnosis for the patient. Extremely patient and always willing to take time to explain concepts."

Dr. Rachel Fisher - OB-GYN Resident/Faculty

"Rachel was a fantastic resident to work with during OB. She is a wonderful example of both a resident and a teacher. She helped us adjust to a fast-moving labor and delivery floor and was a valuable mentor as we had questions throughout our rotation. She greatly enhanced my learning experience during this time."

"During my time on OB/GYN, Rachel Fisher was by far the most encouraging and helpful resident I had interacted with. She made sure the students never felt like a burden even when the residents were all overworked and busy. She answered our questions with patience and introduced us to various Obstetrics concepts and procedures with enthusiasm. She always brought positivity and humor to each day and I really appreciated it during a time of a tough transition to clerkships for new MS3s. She made sure students could learn from any possible opportunity, once tapping me out of morning sign-out so I could watch another vaginal delivery. When students had more down time and were trying to practice suture tying, Rachel went out of her way and paused her note-writing to patiently teach us each method of tying a square knot. She periodically checked up on us and gave us constructive feedback for each kind of knot tying method. She is an outstanding teacher and resident and I was grateful to have worked with her."

Dr. Shahid Mughal - Internal Medicine Faculty

"Although our time with Dr. Mughal was limited, he was such a kind and excellent educator during the Internal Medicine week of our Integrated Clerkship. He provided opportunities for us to practice H&P while getting constructive criticism from him and our team. Furthermore, he used every opportunity during rounds to teach us something new. He was always so encouraging, and his mentorship made me excited for the start of clerkships."

Recent Gold Start Recipients Continued

Dr. Janine Axelrod - Emergency Medicine Faculty - Binghamton

"Dr. Axelrod made an effort to create a learning environment where I felt safe to ask questions and learn the ins and outs of the emergency room. I felt like she acknowledged my questions and needs to the best of her ability. She also went out of her way to discuss a case she encountered years ago as a teaching opportunity. She then gave me the opportunity to see patients and gave me feedback so I could improve for my journey in medical school."

Dr. Emma Zulch - Surgery Resident/Faculty

"Emma is both a wonderful physician and a dedicated advocate for students. She made my time on the Surgery rotation not only enjoyable but deeply educational. It is obvious that she values teaching and mentorship, frequently taking time to help others practice suturing techniques or review challenging material. She also caters her teaching; for example, helping me with new consults and drafting discharge orders/summaries. She also deeply cares about her patients, being uniquely sensitive to patient concerns and ensuring their care is optimized. Ma will continue to be a positive influence for many others."

Dr. Joseph Domachowske - Pediatric Faculty

"Dr. Domachowske and I were seeing a patient who had recently emigrated and had limited access to healthcare. The patient's mother expressed needing help securing resources for her family, including her other 4 children, as her husband was sick and unable to work. She discussed feeling sad that her child was sick as well, and that it was very hard coming to a new country, learning a new language, and having very limited help for her family. Dr. Domachowske took the time to validate the mother's concerns and assured her she was doing an exceptional job taking care of her sick child. He provided a grocery gift card to the family from the pediatric emergency fund, and let the patient and his older brother pick out a toy to take home. He also made sure a social worker would be present at the patient's next appointment to connect them to resources in the community. Dr. D cared for the whole patient, not just the sickness, by identifying a need and addressing it in a respectful manner. He built patient trust by listening to their concerns, even if they weren't related to the visit, and made sure to provide a positive experience for the children. Dr. D embodied the type of physician I hope to be in the future, one who I not only skilled at patient care, but kind, empathetic, and compassionate towards every patient.

Dr. Sandra Hansen - Surgery Faculty

"Dr. Hansen is one of the kindest physicians I have ever worked with as a medical student. She truly cares for her students and residents; I remember how eager she was when we first met and how much she asked about my background and interests as a medical student. Even in the midst of the busy surgical ICU, she made sure to take time to explain procedures and medical knowledge to the team. She consistently checked on the medical students to ensure they were able to follow along and checked on their mental wellbeing while working with fatally ill patients. Dr. Hansen was the first attending I've ever worked with who truly treated me and the other medical student as equal members of the team. I never once felt afraid to be wrong or ask her questions because of how warm and welcoming she is as a person. I wish every student and resident could work with Dr. Hansen as she is truly a great teacher and human being."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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. Steven Taffet, PhD, a professor of Microbiology and Immunology at Upstate Medical University, is the March 2025 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. TAFFET'S STUDENTS:

""Dr. Taffet is an educator at heart, and you can tell that within minutes of hearing him speak. His lectures were always the most engaging and informative we had, and he is a well-loved lecturer by our medical school class. I was truly so sad when I asked him if he comes back to teach us more and he replied that he was actually retiring. Good luck in retirement, I feel so lucky to have had a chance to learn from him."

""Immunology is challenging in many ways and the way that Dr. Taffet has taught has helped immensely. Dr. Taffet is so good at making mnemonics and explaining conceptually so that one remembers what it is that is being taught."

"I find Dr. Taffet's lectures to be extremely interesting. There is never a dull moment in class when he's lecturing. He makes a complex subject, like immunology, very easy to understand. Thank you so much for making MCM enjoyable."

"Dr. Taffet showed up with enthusiasm to lecture. I believe he said he is close to retirement, but what I appreciate is that he did not phone it in, he made an effort, and it was evident in each and every class. When you see a teacher making this kind of effort, it motivates you as a student. Very happy with his effort and his kindness."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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COMMENTS FROM DR. TADEPALLI'S STUDENTS

"Shreekari is an absolute gem. If there is any resident who deserves all the flowers, it is her. She has consistently showed that she cares about our well-being, and goes above and beyond to check-in and make sure we are okay. The same can be said about her attitude towards patients. She is wellrounded, kind-hearted, easy to talk to, and I cannot think of a resident who has shown as much care for medical students as she has. She continues to stand up for the wellbeing of both patients and anyone she interacts with. I am so very fortunate to have been able to spend time working with her, and she is the true embodiment of the kind of person I want to be as a resident. Words cannot express how beautiful of a human being Shreekari is."

"Shreekari is such a great teacher, resident, and provider! She was so easy to talk to and was always willing to answer questions. I appreciated that she asked patients if they were comfortable with medical students before we entered the room out of respect for both us and the patient. She was a great team player and always helped out her co-residents in any way she could. She was also a great communicator in the OR and I admired her calm, reassuring demeanor."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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. Harish Babu, MD, PhD, an assistant professor of Neurosurgery at Upstate Medical University, is the April 2025 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. BABU'S STUDENTS:

""Dr. Babu consistently made himself available outside of class to answer my questions, regardless of how minor, and did a sensational job helping me get up to speed on course material after I struggled in the beginning of ANA. In the end I outperformed my expectations and that is in large part due to the effort and dedication of Dr. Babu. Specifically, when I was struggling to read angiograms in lab, he stayed after class to explain them. He took time out of his busy schedule to help me understand the material, and I ultimately left the session feeling extremely confident in the material. This marked a turning point in my confidence."

"Dr. Babu is phenomenal and demonstrates all the excellent qualities of an outstanding course director. He was easily accessible, went above and beyond for every session and helped students by drawing the neuroaxis out, showing pictures and rewording things in new ways. I have done better in ANA solely because of his guidance and teaching."

"Given that Dr. Babu is a practicing neurosurgeon, I frankly did not expect to see him that much. However, he managed to be present for nearly every lab, CRA, and TBL session for the course. He was amazingly approachable, kind, and knowledgeable. Dr. Babu will always take as much time as needed to teach and advise you in any setting."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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. **Ghina Fakhri, MD,** a resident in Pediatrics at Upstate Medical University, is the **April 2025** recipient of the **Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. FAKHRI'S STUDENTS:

"Ghina is an exceptional pediatrician, leader, and teacher. Working with and learning from her during my inpatient pediatrics rotation was an incredible experience. From the very first day, she established a welcoming and inclusive learning environment that allowed me to make the most out of this rotation. As a teacher, Ghina was gracious and patient, always taking the time to explain various concepts and aspects of patient care to me and my fellow medical students. Her ability to break down complex topics and ensure everyone felt supported was truly remarkable. Ghina's ability to collaborate and communicate effectively with patients and their families was profound, fostering trust and understanding in a way that left a lasting impression on me. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have worked with Ghina on this rotation. She has taught me so much, and her example will undoubtedly influence my future as I pursue pediatrics."

"Dr. Fakhri's welcoming attitude immediately fostered a sense of camaraderie and cohesion among the students and residents. She is a patient and effective teacher who obviously cares about student education. Examples include spending significant time working through pediatric treatment pathways with me as well as spending one-on-one time helping me prepare for my direct observation. I should note that this individual teaching occurred in the setting of managing a very busy pediatric inpatient service. It's obvious that attendings and residents alike trust her judgment, both situational and clinical."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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. Jeffrey Amack, PhD, a professor of Cell and Developmental Biology at Upstate Medical University, is the May 2025 recipient of the Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition.

COMMENTS FROM DR. SISSKIND'S STUDENTS:

""Dr. Amack is an excellent instructor. I always look forward to Dr. Amack's lectures. He makes the class fun by holding a Kahoot at the end, and somehow manages to also include a wealth of helpful knowledge in his lectures."

"Dr. Amack consistently delivers extremely insightful and entertaining lectures that enhance my learning while also being extremely enjoyable. His notes and PowerPoints are extremely well organized and easy to digest."

"Every unit, this man impresses me more and more! His test questions are fair and stimulating and his lectures make me want to dive deeper into the subject matter and approach the material from different angles."

"Dr. Amack goes above and beyond with his role as a professor. He has clear objectives (that are clinically and board relevant) that he wants his students to know and that they will know. He provides additional notes that highlight what needs to be known, presents his objects logically and organized, and writes test questions based on those objectives. Ultimately, Dr. Amack deserves recognition for his exceptional ability to advance the students' clinical knowledge efficiently and effectively."

Alan and Marlene Norton College of Medicine



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. **Michael Tao, MD,** a resident in Otolaryngology and Communication at Upstate Medical University, is the **May 2025** recipient of the **Resident Exceptional Moments in Teaching recognition**.

COMMENTS FROM DR. TAO'S STUDENTS:

"Dr. Tao was a great resident to work with. He was always patient, happy to talk me through our cases — both simple, short procedures and longer, more complicated ones as well. He was kind and really made me feel like a part of the team, which I appreciate as a medical student. He was easy to talk to and always made sure I was comfortable in our cases and knew exactly what was going on during procedures. He is a talented surgeon and physician, and his future patients and colleagues are lucky to have him."

"Dr. Tao went above and beyond during my rotation to ensure my success in the rotation. Even if he was not the resident who was also seeing my patients, he was always there to answer my questions. He went above and beyond to help me and encourage me to challenge myself. He also provided me with lots of learning opportunities."

"Dr. Tao was dedicated to ensuring that students were incorporated in the learning experience. He took the time before and after clinic as well as OR cases to review the relevant diseases with me."

Academic Affairs



Student Research Day was held on March 12, 2025. The event highlighted research from students in the four colleges at Upstate. There was a great deal of research done which represented the Norton College of Medicine this year.

The day featured a keynote presentation, oral presentations from students, and a poster/abstract session. Please join me in congratulating this year's awardees from the Norton College of Medicine.

> Oral Presenters Estelle Khairallah, Class of 2027 Anjali Malhotra, Class of 2027 Zachary E. Williams, Class of 2026

Top 10% of NCOM Posters Presented Benjamin Coffey, Class of 2027 Jessica Dobler, Class of 2025 Nyaari Kothiya, Class of 2027 Mark Lutz, Class of 2026 Adrian Temnycky, Class of 2026 Kayla Lieb, Class of 2026 Yaroslaw Salenko, Class of 2028

Thank you to all of the students who submitted posters, and to the students who took the time to assist with the judging. Keep up the good work!



Patty Gooden Student Research Day Liaison, NCOM

Academic Affairs



The A Ω A junior elections for the Class of 2026 were recently held. Please join me in congratulating the newly elected members.

Anas Abbas Demi Ajao Jonathan Bearden Alison Buseck Katie Farkouh Peter Fioramonti Ethan Fung Amelia Gabor Elizabeth Lee Madeline Lee Jian Lin Mary Locastro Mark Lutz Genevieve McCormack Megan Ngai Sara Solasz Tai Hansen Ahmad Wady **Zachary Williams**

Patty Gooden AΩA Chapter Administrator



Evaluation, Assessment & Research

Greetings from the Office of Evaluation, Assessment, and Research!

We're excited to introduce our newest team member, Michael (Mike) Fiore. Mike joins us as an Analyst, bringing a strong background in data analytics and program evaluation. He supports our mission by contributing to research design, statistical analysis, and data reporting to inform decision-making across the institution. Mike holds an M.S. in Educational Psychology from the University at Albany and is passionate about leveraging data to enhance educational outcomes and institutional effectiveness. Outside of work, he enjoys coaching ice hockey, running, and fishing.

One of Mike's key projects will focus on tracking student performance throughout the clerkship year. As many of you know, we currently have two cohorts of students overlapping due to an earlier start to the clerkships. We have analyzed faculty and resident evaluations for the first two months of the Class of 2026's clerkship year and have now done the same for the Class of 2027.

We're pleased to share that the evaluation scores are highly comparable across both cohorts, as shown below. Faculty and resident training on clinical evaluations continues throughout the year, and norming of evaluation scores remains an important part of our annual clerkship review process.

	Domain 1	Domain 2	Domain 3	Domain 4	Domain 5	Domain 6	Domain 7	Domain 8	Domain 9
Class of 2027	8.59	8.63	9.29	9.30	8.96	9.25	9.08	9.07	9.06
Class of 2026	8.73	8.70	9.35	9.27	8.94	9.24	9.08	9.10	9.10

We also want to extend a heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2026 for completing your clerkship year—an incredible milestone! As you move on to your acting internships, we encourage you to consult the Away Elective Survey available on Brightspace, in your Career Exploration page. This resource compiles nearly a decade of student feedback on away electives to help guide your decision—making.



Dr. Lauren Germain



Ms. Josie Suser

Report Gold Star



Evaluation, Assessment & Research

Kudos to the Class of 2028 as well, for successfully completing your first year of medical school! Enjoy your well-earned summer break. Our office continues to analyze the correlation between first-year unit performance and Step I readiness. We're proud to report that curricular assessments show strong correlations with Step I outcomes using regression models, Pearson's correlations, and ttests. If you have concerns about your performance, we encourage you to meet with Maryann Grandinetta, Director of Educational and Career Success (grandinm@upstate.edu).

Finally, thank you all for completing your evaluations—they are a vital part of Upstate's Continuous Quality Improvement process and essential for LCME accreditation. A special thanks to the Class of 2027 for completing your End-of-Semester 3 evaluation before starting clerkship—we're already implementing several of your suggestions. Classes of 2026 and 2028, please don't forget to complete your end-of-year surveys.

Please feel free to reach out with any evaluation or assessment questions, or to just say hi! Lauren Germain, PhD: <u>germainl@upstate.edu</u> Michael Fiore: <u>fioremi@upstate.edu</u> Josie Suser: <u>suserj@upstate.edu</u>



Dr. Lauren Germain



Ms. Josie Suser

Report Gold Star



Feedback in Action

From Student Feedback	to Change: Preclerkship years
You preferred your summative quizzes for CNS to occur in a more controlled testing environment	We moved them to WHA 9295 mid-semester after your request
Having <u>LCP</u> the week when there is an exam on Friday is a distraction	Moving forward, MS1 students will not have LCP on exam weeks
You wanted clerkship preceptors to understand that some MS2s would be mixed in with MS3s in the same clerkship, and would have much less clinical experience	We communicated to clerkship preceptors about this variance in experience
Feedback was received that too many clinical experiences were scheduled in Semester 3, particularly given that the new curriculum integrates POM clinical experiences across all three semesters through the Longitudinal Clinical Preceptorship (LCP) program	These will now be optional for students in their 3 rd semester.

From Student Feedback	to Change: Clerkship years
Confusion about professionalism expectations; (especially call expectations, making up time and reporting for duty)	The syllabus directly outlines expectations and the repercussions for failing to meet them.
Increase comparability between formative SPE and summative SPE	For the 2024-2025 academic year, the formative SPE has been moved to the Clinical Skills Center allowing students to interview a SP portraying a caregiver and examine an infant simulation mannequin.
Too many assignments that seemed like busy work	Significantly decreased number of assignments Made assignments more "real life" Example: replaced required patient write-ups (for a grade) with a logging requirement that benefits students in real time (students get feedback on one of their patient notes)

Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program Memorial Service



By Darryl Geddes

Upstate Medical University honored more than 200 individuals who have donated their bodies for medical study during the past year at a memorial service in April.

Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program memorial service is organized largely by students in the medicine, physical therapy and physician assistant programs to acknowledge and thank families for the important role their loved ones have played in education.

Among those speaking at the service were, which included student performances of music and poetry, were Upstate President Mantosh Dewan, MD; and Dana Mihaila, MD, PhD., director of the Anatomical Gift Program and Norton College of Medicine Dean Lawrence Chin, MD.

"It is my honor to be with all of you in recognition and appreciation of the gift that your loved ones have given to us, our school, our students," Chin said.

One of the hosts of the service, Safa Nadeem, a student in the Physician Assistant Program in the College of Health Professions, said she is deeply moved and humbled by individuals' decision to donate their bodies to medical education.

"Before I ever hold a stethoscope to a living heart, I learn from the stillness of those who gave themselves fully to my education," Nadeem said. "Their silent sacrifice speaks louder than any lecture, reminding me that medicine doesn't begin with answers—but with respect."

Also participating in the service is Stevie Tchako-Tchokouassi, a student in the Norton College of Medicine Class of 2028.

"Their gift was not just of the body, but of spirit and a profound trust in the future of medicine," he said. "Through their selfless donation, they became my first patient and my first teachers. They guided my hands, shaped my understanding, and reminded me daily of the sacred responsibility I carry as a future physician. They are the reason I will always approach medicine with humility and gratitude. I will honor their legacy in every patient I care for."

The recorded service will be available after the service here.

To learn more about Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program visit <u>Upstate Medical University honored more than 200</u> individuals who donated their bodies for medical study during the past year.

<u>Upstate's Anatomical Gift Program is organized largely by students in the medicine, physical therapy and physician</u> assistant programs to acknowledge and thank families for the important role their loved ones have played in education.

or call 315-464-4348.

The website includes the Anatomical Gift Pledge Form as well as frequently asked questions.