Dear VMS,

We are very excited to present you with the Spring 2015 issue of the Careers in Medicine Newsletter!

Our Faculty Spotlight section includes interviews with Dr. Dan Brown, Director of Interventional Oncology, a subspecialty within Interventional Radiology (IR), as well as Dr. Stacy Stark, Assistant Professor in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R). When we surveyed current 4th-year students, asking them which specialties they wish they had obtained more exposure to during medical school, the most popular answers were IR and PM&R. We are therefore very grateful that Dr. Brown and Dr. Stark agreed to share more about these fields!

We’re also very excited to introduce a new section of the newsletter: VMS4 ADVICE COLUMNS! These are fun interviews with current 4th-year students, and some rising 4th-year students who took a year off. We really hope you enjoy reading all the advice and memorable VMS experiences they’ve shared!

As always, feel free to check out the Vanderbilt CiM website for more info: https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cim/

Thanks so much to everyone who contributed to this newsletter, and happy reading to all!

Margot Lazow, VMS4 and the CiM team

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The Careers in Medicine program at Vanderbilt University supports students as they **EXPLORE** career options in the health care field, provides structured advising as they **DECIDE** among various specialty choices, and paves the path for graduates to **SUCCEED** as they begin to embark upon their professional journey. We accomplish these goals by creating the foundation necessary to cultivate leadership and professionalism, by facilitating early and sustained exposure to various career options, and by fostering an atmosphere of dedicated mentorship by faculty and alumni.
1) What is your given role and title?
Director of Interventional Oncology. Interventional Oncology is a subspecialty of Interventional Radiology (IR).

2) Why did you choose Interventional Radiology?
I liked the integration of imaging as a navigational tool to perform procedures. The procedures developed in IR were several generations technically ahead of many other specialties. The ability to perform valuable and sometimes life-saving interventions on patients through a 2 mm incision was striking, especially after seeing patients recover from large surgical incisions.

3) Were you deciding between it and other fields?
I was strongly considering Interventional Cardiology as there is inherent overlap between these two areas. Cardiology is a great specialty, but the greater diversity of procedures in IR got me hooked.

4) Many VMS students have expressed interest in learning more about IR. Can you tell us more about this field, about interventional oncology in particular, and what your typical day (if there is such a thing) is like?
I have been allowed to develop a practice focused on oncology because of the support of my associates in IR and the vision of my chair, Dr. Omary. My weekly schedule includes up to four tumor board sessions in GI oncology, Liver Transplant, Neuroendocrine, and Sarcoma. As we add faculty, I look forward to seeing this part of our schedule expand. We see new and follow-up patients in clinic at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center. We usually have 2-4 procedures/day on service. Although most patients are treated as outpatients, we admit to our service when needed. Fortunately, we have a tremendous Nurse and Nurse Practitioner on hand to help juggle everything from scheduling to triaging questions that come up before and after procedures. Once the Interventional Oncology cases are completed, I try to help with the remaining IR cases on the schedule.

5) What does the training path consist of? (how many years are residency and fellowship? are there different paths to reach this end goal?)
This question is very timely! Interventional Radiology was recently made a primary specialty by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). Vanderbilt is going through the certification process to be one of the first programs in the Integrated Training paradigm. Following a surgical internship at Vanderbilt, candidates complete 3 years of core radiology training followed by two years of interventional radiology training. Graduates of these programs will be certified both in Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology. During the transition period traditional 1-year fellowships following a 4-year residency will continue to be offered. Vanderbilt’s Diagnostic Radiology Residency did very well in the recent NRMP match, filling all spots near the very top of its list.

6) What is your favorite part about your job/your specialty?
There are several things that are very satisfying from a patient and educational perspective:
• When a patient comes back to clinic and the images show a great response to treatment.
• When the same patient tells us that the recovery was so easy, it was like not even going through a procedure.
• Doing research and writing with medical students and residents. A Vanderbilt medical student, Mary Ellen Koran, won a research award at this year’s Society of Interventional Radiology meeting. It was very
rewarding as a mentor to see such as accomplishment. We have multiple ongoing or completed projects
with medical students, from review articles to outcomes measurements.

7) What is the most challenging part about your job/your specialty?
The most difficult aspect is that we can’t treat everybody that is referred. Although procedures such as
radioembolization of liver tumors are minimally-invasive, if a patient has severe liver dysfunction, we can
actually hurt rather than help. I recently saw a patient interested in tumor ablation of metastatic sarcoma who
had a tumor surrounded by large blood vessels and bowel. Had I treated her, she could have suffered a terrible
injury. For a patient who is understandably looking for any option to survive, these types of conversations can
be very difficult.

8) What’s the biggest stereotype about your specialty? Is it true?
The biggest commentary on Interventional Oncology centers on the lack of “big data”. Historically, this has been
an issue, but is improving. Treatment guidelines from the National Cancer Center Networks are centered on
evidence-based medicine and our treatments are part of the guidelines on Hepatobiliary, Neuroendocrine, and
Renal tumors. There are also a number of ongoing prospective randomized trials evaluating use of liver-
directed therapy with colorectal cancers and networks of large-volume centers are coming together. These
factors make the future very exciting.

9) What advice do you have for VMS students considering IR as a future specialty?
There are dedicated IR rotations at Vanderbilt. Someone who is considering a career in IR should complete such
a rotation. Peter Bream is the contact for student rotations (peter.bream@vanderbilt.edu). A number of
students have also shadowed one of the IR physicians or me for a day to get a feel. Finally, members of the IR
division are happy to speak with students offline to discuss relevant issues. My email is
daniel.b.brown@vanderbilt.edu. Finally, there is a student-run Interventional Radiology Interest Group
(https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/cim/interventional-radiology). This group provides networking
opportunities with other interested students, residents, and fellows.

**Faculty Spotlight:**

**Dr. Stacy Stark, PM&R (Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation)**

1) What is your given role and title?
Assistant Professor, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R).
I am Director of the core Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Residency Program
and Medical Director of Rehabilitation Services at the Monroe Carell Jr Children’s
Hospital at Vanderbilt.

2) Why did you choose Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation?
I chose PM&R by chance. I met a physiatrist while
working in the SICU. I found what she did
fascinating. She offered guidance and hope on
future recovery from a disability and that was
what I was looking for in a specialty…to really
feel like I could make a difference in people’s lives.

3) Were you deciding between it and other fields?
Yes. It was between PM&R and cardiology. Two different fields but PM&R won out in the end. I have never
looked back because I know I made the right choice for me.
4) Many VMS students have expressed interest in learning more about PM&R. Can you tell us more about this field and what your typical day (if there is such a thing) is like?

The official definition of PM&R found on the AAPM&R (American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation) website: “Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R), also called physiatry, is the branch of medicine emphasizing the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disorders – particularly related to the nerves, muscles, bones and brain – that may produce temporary or permanent impairment.”

PM&R doctors treat patients with acquired and congenital disabilities. Their focus is function. They understand the medical complications of a disability and work with a team (doctors, nurses, therapists, social workers, case managers, dieticians, etc.) to put together a comprehensive plan for each patient. They look at all aspects of a patient: medical, physical, social, emotional, psychological, vocational.

No day for me is typical. I absolutely love my job because it can change daily. I am board certified in both pediatric and adult rehabilitation medicine. So I can see patients from birth on up. I have done many things in the past 10 years of being an attending physician. I worked inpatient, outpatient, and consults. At Vanderbilt, my clinical duties are daily outpatient clinics and inpatient consults.

5) How many years is the residency, and what fellowship options are there if someone wanted to further specialize?

The core residency is 4 years. PGY-1 is usually a preliminary internal medicine year but can be a preliminary surgical year. PGY 2-4 is spent in rotations that are inpatient, outpatient, and EMGs. To graduate from a PM&R residency, one must observe and perform 200 EMGs. Other procedures that are performed during residency: botocx/phenol injections, musculoskeletal injections, axial injections, musculoskeletal ultrasound, programming and refill of baclofen pumps.

There are many fellowships/subspecialty certifications offered: pain medicine, musculoskeletal/sports medicine, neuromuscular medicine, spinal cord injury medicine, brain injury medicine, pediatric rehabilitation medicine, hospice and palliative care medicine.

6) What is your favorite part about your job/your specialty?

The patients are my favorite part of my job. Kids with disabilities are amazing! They do the most fantastic things. Their determination and will is inspirational.

7) What is the most challenging part about your job/your specialty?

Describing to people what type of doctor I am and why they were referred to me. Most people have never heard of the field of PM&R, so the first 5 minutes of a new patient visit is explaining how I can help them and what I do.

8) What’s the biggest stereotype about your specialty? Is it true?

We are doctors of physical therapy and only write therapy prescriptions. This is not true. PM&R physicians are medical doctors that provide numerous services from prescribing therapies, to prescribing medications, to performing procedures.

9) What advice do you have for VMS students considering PM&R as a future specialty?

Do a rotation in PM&R or speak with a physiatrist before deciding on the field. This is true in any field of medicine you are considering. PM&R has about 400 residency positions across the country in the match. There are approximately 80 residencies nationwide. The popularity of the field has grown over the past few years and PM&R is becoming more competitive. My hope is that you do consider PM&R as a future residency. The Vanderbilt department of PM&R has a physician in all specialties of PM&R. Please contact us if you are interested in knowing more about the field.

(Dr. Stark’s email address is stacy.m.stark@vanderbilt.edu)
Adeline Dozois

1) Hometown: Bradenton, Florida
2) College (undergrad) and major: University of Notre Dame, Biological Sciences
3) VMS advisory college: Chapman College (Go Dragons!!!)
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: I was pretty open, but I was attracted to Emergency medicine, pediatrics, infectious diseases, and palliative care
5) Specialty you’re doing: Emergency medicine
6) Where you matched: Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, NC
7) "Claim to fame": I think if I won a superlative, it would be “Most likely to trip in her heals on the way up to the stage on match day” (though surprisingly, I got through the whole ceremony without falling)

8) ADVICE:
   ▪ Keep an open mind about your specialty at least through clerkships; you’ll enjoy each rotation more if you haven’t already written off the field.
   ▪ That said, when the time comes don’t be afraid of committing to the specialty. Remember that it’s not a bad thing if you begin fourth year with 2 or 3 specialties that your excited about — it just means you have a lot of good options. No specialty is without its flaws, but at the end of the day, your career is what you make it.
   ▪ Don’t get discouraged if you feel like you forget most of what you just learned after each test. Everything that is important you’ll see again (and again and again). That said, work hard during first year, because the better you learn something the first time around, the easier it comes back later.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
   So much has changed since I started (back in the days of the old curriculum), but I think one of the most striking differences is how many clinical opportunities the first-years get now. When I was a first-year, if you wanted to see a patient or learn how to do a physical exam, volunteering at Shade Tree was your only option. Now, between CCX and PDx, the first years get to work on their clinical skills from the very beginning of medical school, which I think will put them light-years ahead in this important area of medicine.

10) A memorable story from your clinical rotations:
   When I was on my Hepatobiliary Rotation, I was lucky enough to work with Dr. Geehvarghese, who encourages students to ask questions. I saw a structure that I didn’t recognize, but that for some reason looked important to me. When I asked him what it was, he replied, “It’s not named...well at least not yet. Perhaps we can call it the Ligament of Adeline.” That day just so happened to be my birthday, and I hadn’t told the team about it. By far, my best birthday present ever!!

11) Any regrets?:
   During my preclinical courses, I think I was so concerned about learning efficiently that I didn’t delve as deep into some areas as I could have. Then while studying for Step1, I made it my goal to learn every subject as thoroughly as possible, which made me have to scramble a little bit at the end. Overall try to remember the balance between efficiency and thoroughness; both will be important throughout your career. (Disclaimer - This isn’t truly a regret, because I feel like it was a really important lesson for me to learn. That said, I hope maybe some of you can learn it through my experience.)
12) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?: Steeplechase!! (Mostly just for an excuse to wear a big floppy hat).

13) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?: I really like Suzie’s Espresso in the children’s hospital. They have yummy flavored coffees and an amazing veggie & hummus snack pack - it’s the best hummus on campus (IMHO) and a perfect way to stave off the late afternoon munchies on a long day in the hospital.

14) Favorite Nashville restaurant?: Epice - a delicious new Lebanese place on 12 South

15) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?: “State Mayhem,” starring the infamous Billy Sullivan

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Anna Garcia

1) Hometown: Clarks Summit, PA by way of Valdosta, GA

2) College (undergrad) and major: UNC Chapel Hill, Nutrition and Public Health

3) VMS advisory college: Batson

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: General Surgery

5) Specialty you're doing: General Surgery

6) Where you matched: UPenn

7) "Claim to fame": Probably falling asleep in class, being obsessed with diabetes, and having an identity crisis in terms of whether I am from the North or the South ...I tend to claim the latter.

8) ADVICE:
   ▪ Pick a research project or an extracurricular that you are passionate about and work hard. People recognize and respect that, and if you’re actually passionate about it, it will feel less like work or an obligation.
   ▪ Do yourself a favor and take however much time you need to do well on Step 1 and 2. Those tests matter.
   ▪ As for the other classes and clerkships, don’t freak out if you don’t honor everything... it might feel like the end of the world, but it will be FINE.
   ▪ Take the hard patients... especially the ICU ones. Yeah they are hard, but people usually have low expectations for you if you have them. Plus, if you take enough of them, you actually start to get good at taking care of sick patients and NOTHING will intimidate you (well, at least until intern year).
   ▪ Network. Whether it’s attendings, residents, or med students from other schools, making friends, especially in your field, will be an invaluable come 4th year. Especially get to know the people at Vandy in the specialty in which you want to match. Seriously. Do it. Do it EARLY.
   ▪ To that end, your mentors don’t have to all be in your specialty. I went into surgery and had many from that department, but also had close mentors who were PhD’s, endocrinologists, and in primary care. Be thankful for the people who take an interest in you!
   ▪ Similarly, put in the effort to make friends with people outside of your class or even med school. You never know when that guy you met at Tin Roof will end up being your best friend... or even fiancé 😊
   ▪ Make the time for your friends, significant other’s, dogs,... whatever. Operative phrase being MAKE THE TIME. It won’t just happen. You don’t want to graduate medical school having no idea what the rest of your friends from home/school/around town have been up doing with their lives. They make you a better doctor.
   ▪ I’m probably biased, but get an animal if you can. Especially if you have someone to help you. They make you think about someone besides yourself....
Everyone else is just as scared as you are... some people are just better at seeming confident. Figure out what makes you seem confident and do that all the time. Fake it til you make it (well, you know, within reason...)

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
It was easy to hide the fact I’m really bad at reading on a computer...

10) Any regrets?:
Nope!

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Go to the zoo and find the Red Pandas....

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Susie’s in Children’s - ask them to toast the sandwiches... they turn into Paninis that way!

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Husk...or Hattie B’s

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Old Spice Parody

Chelsea Samson

1) Hometown: Baltimore, MD

2) College (undergrad) and major: Vanderbilt University, Biomedical Engineering

3) VMS advisory college: Gabbe

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Plastic Surgery, General Surgery

5) Specialty you're doing: (Pediatric Interventional) Radiology

6) Where you matched: Washington University / Barnes Jewish

7) "Claim to fame":
Art lover with the curly hair

8) ADVICE:
▪ Keep an open mind about specialty selection. You will meet people and careers that really "click" with your goals, which may evolve over the course of medical school.
▪ Mentors are key! Network within fields in which you are interested, but also outside of those specialties.
▪ Find time to explore the extracurriculars that you enjoyed before coming to medical school, particularly during the early non-clinical years of medical school. Take classes in painting, hang gliding, drumming-- do things to set yourself apart from the pack (your future interviewers will appreciate it), while having fun and rejuvenating!
▪ Go to lunch lectures. Absorb some knowledge on what's new and cutting edge in medicine, the humanities, etc.
▪ Rock Step 1! (Buzzkill, I know...) Don't study like everyone else does: identify your learning style and adapt your strategies to best suit you.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
We had two full years of basic science training, IR wasn’t its own residency path, and the smell of McDonald’s fries wafted throughout the med center courtyard.

10) Any regrets?:
Not making my big break in the music world
11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Finally see a big-name celebrity sitting next to me at a coffee shop

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Sweet iced tea: anywhere, anytime. BOGO pastries after 11pm at Au Bon Pain for nights on-call.

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Monell's

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
CELA pranks

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Cristin Quinn

1) Hometown: Beaumont, TX

2) College (undergrad) and major: Washington and Lee University, Biology

3) VMS advisory college: Chapman

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school:
Something involving children

5) Specialty you're doing: Pediatrics

6) Where you matched: Vanderbilt!

7) ADVICE:
   ▪ Make time for spending time with friends and doing things that you enjoy throughout med school. It will make the journey so much more enjoyable and will ultimately make you a better doctor.
   ▪ When choosing a specialty, remember that it is something you will be doing for the rest of your life so make sure that it will allow you to pursue other things that you are passionate about (research, policy, quality improvement, hiking, etc).
   ▪ Don’t feel bad about factoring aspects of your personal life (significant other, family, etc.) into your residency decisions.

8) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
Free lunch was a daily occurrence

9) A memorable story from your clinical rotations:
The first patient I ever admitted as a third year was a 6 year-old girl wearing pink silk zebra pajamas. After talking for 30 minutes, she crawled on my lap, hugged me, and asked her mom if I could come over for a slumber party in her room that night. I think that was the moment I knew I would end up doing Peds.

10) Any regrets?:
Not really- the last five years have been some of the best yet

11) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
ABP

12) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Rolf and Daughters

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Cristina Farkas

1) **Hometown:** San Diego, CA

2) **College (undergrad) and major:** UC San Diego, Psychology

3) **VMS advisory college:** Gabbe!!

4) **Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school:** Neurology, Psychiatry, Pediatrics, Medicine, Ophtho

5) **Specialty you're doing:** Pediatrics

6) **Where you matched:** UCLA Medical Center

7) "Claim to fame": Dancing and singing in medically themed T. Swift parodies

8) **ADVICE:**
   - Use all of your mentors: We have a long standing peer mentoring system and a bunch of helpful, caring school-mates that will be honest and real with you if you ask them for honest advice. The most dangerous part of med school is the myth of not needing help. Especially if you're a first generation doc (I am!) then you need a lot of guidance from where to buy books to how to get enough sleep at night.
   - Continue doing what you love, it will keep you a real person: You may not be able to talk to your old friends as much, run as much, sing as much, or travel as much as you'd like, but it's still important to indulge in non-school activities regularly. Patients want to talk to people, not walking textbooks. And it's important to feed other aspects of your life; you don't need to resent medicine.
   - Be grateful. There are so many things to be thankful for in medical school, and it's important to remember that so many other students would love to be in your position. That being said, when it gets tough, remember my #1.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
   Only a small portion of my class was seeing patients as a first year (ie no CCX/VPIl requirement). You're lucky to see patients and real doctors every week- it keeps your eye on the prize and you gain an extra mentor!

10) **A memorable story from your clinical rotations:**
    When I was on Pediatric Neurology clinic, I collected my H&P for a 3 year-old with epilepsy while sitting on the floor, making block towers and talking to his mom. I got the information I needed for the history and did a playful neuro exam. He didn't talk much, but was very cooperative. When I returned, the sweet patient said "Look Mommy, the adorable doctor came back!"

11) **Any regrets?:**
    I wouldn't change anything except my hours of worry and self-doubt. If your classmates and professors believe in you, you should too! Doubting over decisions and abilities was a waste of energy.

12) **If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:**
    I've been pretty good about taking advantage of Nashville (including getting to go backstage at the Grand Ole Opry!), but I still need to see the Smokeys in East TN and sing karaoke at Santa's Pub!

13) **Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:**
    Ben and Jerry's

14) **Favorite Nashville restaurant?:**
    Margot

15) **Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:**
    VMS is Harry Potter
Emily Zern

1) Hometown: Pittsburgh, PA
2) College (undergrad) and major: Vanderbilt University; double major: Molecular and Cellular Biology & Medicine, Health and Society
3) VMS advisory college: Batson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Pediatrics or EM
5) Specialty you’re doing: IM (interest in cardiology)
6) Where you matched: Massachusetts General Hospital
7) "Claim to fame": Second year of medical school: out loud said "lower respiratory tract means below the diaphragm right?"
8) ADVICE:
   ▪ During the wards, focus on being a good team player, particularly with your fellow medical students.
   ▪ Use residents and fellows to make research connections and find mentors. They have more of the inside scoop than anyone.
   ▪ Keep doing you. You will be happier (and therefore you will be a better medical student) if you choose to put down the books for a couple hours after a long day and go for a run or get ice cream or a drink with a friend.
9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?): Free food. so much of it.
10) A memorable story from your clinical rotations: Had to get removed from a 70+ year-old patient's case because he insisted on kissing my neck every time I tried to listen to his heart/lungs... plot twist: this was not at the VA.
11) Any regrets?: In 8 years in Nashville, I never made it to Bonnaroo or the full moon pickin parties. Grr- what was I thinking?
12) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?: Soak in the live music, play in Percy Warner, and frankly just enjoy the sunshine since I hear Boston gets a little more snow than Nashville, sample every Jeni's ice cream flavor, steal Rich Latuska's new french bulldog puppy, eat free mac-and-cheese samps from ABP until I finally get yelled at for it, figure out how to interpret the Barista Parlor coffee menu into human English, and love on my classmates because for real I'm going to miss everyone. Vandy med school is a cool place.
13) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?: I have been known to frequent Pizza Hut, Taco Bell, and Ben and Jerry's all at once in the children's hospital...particularly post shelf exams. But this is still runner up to the ABP mac-and-cheese samps.
14) Favorite Nashville restaurant?: Marche, specifically brunch. (has been my favorite for 5 years and counting...)
15) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?: 2014 Dean's skit - what does the fox say. Really wish we could have the video for that one...
Fayrisa Greenwald

1) Hometown: Long Island, NY
2) College (undergrad) and major: Vanderbilt; Molecular and Cellular biology; Sociology
3) VMS advisory college: Batson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Undecided, possibly pediatrics
5) Specialty you’re doing: Psychiatry
6) Where you matched: NYU
7) "Claim to fame": Winning the fishbowl on Match Day! Haha.

8) ADVICE:
   - I think it’s good to keep an open mind. I feel like almost everyone in our class went into something completely different from what he/she originally envisioned. It’s ok to decide later on; I did not know for sure until my 4th year.
   - It's essential to keep a good balance, especially when work consumes more and more of your time. Always make time for your loved ones and yourself.
   - Also, really don’t stress the small stuff. One test grade or even one course grade in any given year will not determine your future.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
   We had very different acronyms! SFD, MFM, M&I, etc. I feel like y'all speak a different language now!

10) Any regrets?:
    Stressing the small stuff early on more than I should have.

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
    This makes me sad because Nashville has been the only city that I have chosen to live in before I made my interview rounds for residency. I hope I’ll be back a lot so that I’ll be able to do all of the cool new things that Nashville will offer in the future! I think I’ve done everything on my list, including getting authentic cowgirl boots!

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
    Children's food court, especially Ben and Jerry's on free cone day.

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
    Puckett's in Franklin

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
    The one from my first year where college pre-med students asked really interesting questions.

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Ian McGuinness

1) Hometown: Nashville!
2) College (undergrad) and major: Miami University (Oxford, Ohio); Zoology
3) VMS advisory college: Chapman
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Pediatrics, Med-Peds, Internal Medicine
5) Specialty you’re doing: Neurology
6) Where you matched: University of Colorado SOM—Denver

7) "Claim to fame": My photo of dancing in a flash mob during Cadaver Ball first year made the back cover of the Vandy newspaper—Pretty much everyone in our class has said something to me about it during my 4 years!

8) ADVICE:
   - Go out of your way to meet and befriend people who aren’t in medical school or even medicine for that matter. This was probably the most valuable part of my medical school experience, outside of school that is. Vanderbilt, while being a wonderful place, is not all there is in the world, and frankly, is not very representative of the rest of Nashville or Tennessee in terms of the kinds of people who live here. Try to go out of your comfort zone and meet some grad students, business students, or try to find a roommate who doesn’t go to Vandy Med. I was able to find these friends through the church I went to. It can definitely be a challenge if you don’t have an organization like that that provides such a social outlet outside of the school. It will really broaden your horizons and give you a surprisingly refreshing break from the med school environment.
   - Don’t get involved in a hundred different things, BUT do get involved in something! You’ll probably be pressured to join a bunch of organizations once you arrive to campus, ones which have very legitimate and worthwhile goals and missions. I would really delay committing to organizations as long as possible to get a feel for how difficult school is and what you can handle extracurricular wise. With that said, if you’re really excited about something, go for it, but I would try to limit what you do to 2 to 3 things max. Getting involved in school organizations (I was really involved in my church, Medical Christian Fellowship, and Shade Tree Trot stuff) is a great thing, but be sure you’re not burning yourself out.
   - Accept and embrace early on that it is IMPOSSIBLE to learn everything and set firm boundaries on your studying. If you got into Vanderbilt, you are capable enough to graduate from here—so sit back relax and enjoy the ride! You will definitely spend a ton of time studying, but you must know when to call it quits. Learn to draw boundaries now in medical school before you have a family, significant other, etc (if you don’t already), when it’s easier to do so. For example, I would have a routine of things I would ALWAYS do every week (with almost no exceptions): church on Saturday/Sunday, take an afternoon or an evening off from studying on the weekend to hang with friends or relax at home, go to Bible study on Mondays, call my parents and brother and sister once each, at least once a week, exercise 2-3 times weekly. And then I would have daily things I’d do (pray, read my Bible, talk to my fiancé/friend about her day, talk with my roommate about his day, stretch at night) to remind me of what was important. Find a routine of some sort that gives you meaning every day.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?): I definitely wish the new students could have been taught by Dr. Norden and Dr. Riebau

10) A memorable story from your clinical rotations: I had a VA patient describe to me how he believed chickens breathed out of their necks, not their mouths, and that he proved this by cutting off one’s head and sticking it in water to show it still could breath. That’s just one of many VA "story gems" :D

11) Any regrets?: One always can wonder about “what if’s”...Whether they’re legit or not who knows. The main thing I wonder about is if I could have spent a little more time with my classmates outside of school, especially during the summer between 1st and 2nd year (we had 3 months off). I tended to hang out with non-med school folks as I was very burnt out with all things med school—but this is a soft call because I’m still very close to many friends in med school while making some awesome friends outside of med school, too. I’m going to miss them all a ton!

12) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?: Go to the Bluebird Café

13) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?: The cafeteria breakfast is definitely a guilty pleasure of mine...

14) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
PM on Belmont Blvd

15) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
1st year standardized patient pranks in CELA by the 4th years

Irène Mathieu

1) Hometown: Winchester, VA

2) College (undergrad) and major: The College of William & Mary; International Relations

3) VMS advisory college: Robinson Ravens for life!!!

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Med/peds

5) Specialty you’re doing: Pediatrics

6) Where you matched: Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia

7) "Claim to fame":
Being the social justice lady and the poet.

8) ADVICE:
   ▪ Set your priorities! I scheduled my hobbies just like I scheduled my study time. By applying the same amount of discipline to everything I wanted to do in the past five years, I was able to maintain my exercise routine, keep up with friends outside of Nashville, publish my first poetry collection, etc.
   ▪ Practice mindfulness. The wards can be a little overwhelming at first. I started carrying around a notebook in which I’d write down every time I had a strong emotion or something intense happened. Then I’d take a minute or two to reflect on it between patients. That helped me process things in the moment instead of feeling burned out at the end of the day.
   ▪ When choosing a specialty, try to find that sweet spot where your ability intersects with your passion. If you thought you’d love one thing and you turned out to really dislike it, see if you can figure out why. Maybe you just didn’t click with the people. Maybe you didn’t like that practice setting. Give yourself as many chances as you can to see the different aspects of anything you’re considering. For instance, pediatrics isn’t just about kids; it’s about parents and families, working with other pediatricians, reading pediatrics literature, and being a community advocate for child health. Think about every specialty as broadly as you can!

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
We had more student body diversity and greater participation in extracurricular opportunities. Hopefully as everyone settles into the new curriculum we will continue our previous tradition of involvement in campus and community events.

10) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
I’ll be running the Country Music Half Marathon before I move!

11) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Suzie’s or Ben & Jerry’s in the children’s hospital cafeteria.

12) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Husk (fancy) or the taco truck at the BP gas station on Nolensville Road (not fancy).
Jana Bregman

1) Hometown: Nashville
2) College (undergrad) and major: Vanderbilt University; Molecular and Cellular Biology
3) VMS advisory college: Gabbe
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: hand surgery via orthopedics
5) Specialty you’re doing: Ophthalmology
6) Where you matched: Vanderbilt University for preliminary year and University of Maryland for ophthalmology
7) "Claim to fame": Nashville for life!
8) ADVICE:
   ▪ Your college mentors rock and have lots of good advice to offer. They also are familiar with helpful resources and connected with lots of folks in the Vanderbilt community, so make sure to use them for help!
   ▪ No matter how busy you are, sleep, eating well and exercise are important. If you take the time to make those three things part of your routine then you will benefit immensely in the long run.
   ▪ Don’t compare yourself to other people. You will be in medical school with peers who are all high achievers but at the same time on individual paths. Do what is right for you and stay true to yourself! Remember that you would not have gotten into Vanderbilt in the first place if you were not absolutely qualified to do so and to succeed throughout medical school!
9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?): There was a free lunch lecture at least weekly! Now brown bag lunch lectures are the "in vogue" thing. I’m not so sure I like this fad :)
10) Any regrets?: During my fourth year of medical school I participated in the cadaver ball dances, which was a ton of fun and I wish I had done them during other years. I also missed college cup the last two years for reasons out of my control and something I nevertheless regret. So take home message - don't miss cadaver ball or college cup if you can avoid it!
11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?: Station Inn, Belcourt, drive out to camp in the Smokies (only 4 hours away!)
12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?: Children’s hospital cafeteria
13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?: Calypso cafe!
14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?: "Shake It Off - Cadaver Ball 2015"
Jasia Mahdi

1) Hometown: Dallas, TX
2) College (undergrad) and major: SMU, History and Biochemistry
3) VMS advisory college: Robinson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Child Neurology, Psychiatry
5) Specialty you're doing: Child Neurology
6) Where you matched: Wash U
7) "Claim to fame": I’m known for being a little sassy, but ultimately sweet. Also, I have been told that I have the sneeze of a baby elephant.
8) ADVICE:
   - The challenges that will come your way in medical school may seem daunting and insurmountable initially, and things may feel like they may fall apart at any point. But, somehow everything that you thought you could never accomplish, you will accomplish in time, and all the hardships that you thought you could not endure, you will find a way to endure them. Medical school has a way of engendering resiliency within medical students, so trust yourself.
   - Keep things in perspective when they become overwhelming. There is more to life than getting that honors or making that perfect step score, and you'll find that when you are sincerely passionate about something, you'll find a way to make it work. Just give what you have to give, and you’ll be more than fine.

John Erickson

1) Hometown: Massillon, Ohio
2) College (undergrad) and major: Case Western Reserve University, Biology
3) VMS advisory college: Robinson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Internal Medicine
5) Specialty you're doing: Pediatrics
6) Where you matched: Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
7) "Claim to fame": Either "one of those random MD/PhDs that rejoined our class" or "that swimmer guy who always wins at College Cup"
8) ADVICE:
   - Make time for whatever activity brings you stress relief - For me that is exercising. When I got all wrapped up in the classes during my first year I stopped working out to make more time for studying, but I ended up just getting more stressed and doing worse in classes. So keep doing whatever makes you sane!
   - Make time for friends/family - Again, it's easy to get bogged down by studying, classes, and outside activities. But at the end of the day remember what is important to you and work at maintaining the relationships that you care about. At the end of your life, you’re not going to remember those extra hours you studied for some random class, but you will certainly remember your friends and the time you spent together at Vandy.
   - Be honest with yourself about what specialties you like and ask your friends/family/significant other what
they think you liked best - I had thought I wanted to do Internal Medicine, but my wife was keen to observe how much happier I was on my pediatrics rotation and more passionate I seemed about it.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
My class was the first to move up to the new anatomy lab, Dr. Gabbe was dean of the medical school, Harry Jacobson was Vice Chancellor of the medical center, Curriculum 1.0 was still chugging along, and George W. Bush was president (a lot happens in 8 years!)

10) Any regrets?:
I regret nothing!

11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
I want to see Mammoth Cave (which is southern KY). Despite a million people saying how great Arrington Vineyards is, my wife and I have never gone. I have never been to the Country Music Hall of Fame, but am not sure I want to.

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
There is a Quizno's hidden in the dorms between the medical center and the rec center - it's the bomb!

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Mafioza's (pizza, Italian)

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Everyday Normal MSTP

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Kat Weber Montgomery

1) Hometown: Bloomfield Hills, MI

2) College (undergrad) and major: University of Michigan, Neuroscience (also: Master of Public Health, University of Michigan, Epidemiology and public health genetics)

3) VMS advisory college: Batson

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Radiology, pediatric surgery

5) Specialty you're doing: Pathology

6) Where you matched: Vanderbilt!!

7) "Claim to fame":
Singing in our class's band, Viscous Meniscus. (And some people would probably say asking too many questions first year 😊)

8) ADVICE: [ps: Kat is the sole VMS4 going into pathology, and pathology was one of the specialties that students told CiM they really wanted to learn more about, so we've asked Kat to specifically give some advice about how she chose pathology. Thanks, Kat!]

- When choosing a specialty, people will try to give you a lot of advice (usually with the agenda of convincing you to specialize in their field, and dissuading you from any other specialty you're considering). Listen to everyone's opinions, and then make your OWN decision – you know yourself better than anyone else. I'm going into pathology, a specialty not well-understood, even by other doctors, and with its fair share of stereotypes. I was told I was "too social", "too good with patients", too whatever for pathology, but many people don't understand that pathologists interact with clinicians and techs all day long and often teach medical students – communication and social skills are incredibly important. Along the same lines, if you think you're interested in a specialty we don't get much exposure to (such as pathology, radiology, ENT, rad-onc, etc), reach out EARLY – send e-mails, talk to professors, read up on what the specialty is like! Most would be very happy to have you shadow and give you advice about how to go into a specialty. If you’re
thinking about pathology, PLEASE send me an email (kcaweb@gmail.com) - I would be more than happy to share my experiences and answer any questions over coffee or ice cream!

- I came into medical school with the notion that I would have to “put the rest of my life on hold” during this intense time – but as you will be told many times, medical training is a marathon, not a sprint. You can’t just hold your breath and white-knuckle it until it’s over. Of course, during some rotations, you will have less free time than others, but you have to make time to pursue the things that are important to you, and enjoy the journey along the way. I like to make lists of things I want to accomplish or make time for each semester, and make sure that I get to them (running races, reading books, etc).

- Be conscious that the team you are working with can color the experience you have on a particular rotation. This was particularly noticeable on my NICU rotation, which started with a team that did not involve me in the care of patients and made me feel like more of a nuisance than an asset. I couldn’t wait for the rotation to be over. After the first week, the clinical teams switched to a group of people who were willing to let me take responsibility for patients, have conversations with families, and even catch babies after emergency c-sections! It quickly became my favorite rotation of third year. If possible, talk to members of the team to make the experience more meaningful for you, but sometimes you just won’t ‘gel’ with a particular resident or team – just be aware that this doesn’t mean the specialty’s not for you!

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
Light hall streaking was still a thing! And Batson was led by Drs. Wilson and Heavrin 😊

10) Any regrets?:
I chose all my electives based on what I thought would prepare me for residency, but I wish I had used one or two just to see something I will never see again (labor and delivery, trauma, peds surgery, etc), even if it will have nothing to do with my future career.

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
I’m not leaving, but I still want to go to every festival and eat in every new restaurant that opens! And finally make it to the zoo!

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Courtyard Café (It’s cheap!!) or Ben & Jerry's!

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
For date night, Finazza. For casual, Fido or Hattie B’s.

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Allstate/Mayhem with Billy Sullivan

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**Kate Doherty**

1) **Hometown**: Dallas, Texas

2) **College (undergrad) and major**: Vandy- Medicine, Health and Society + Spanish

3) **VMS advisory college**: Chapman!

4) **Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school**: ENT, Infectious Disease

5) **Specialty you’re doing**: OB/GYN

6) **Where you matched**: Brown University!

7) "Claim to fame":
[part of] that spunky odd-ball couple

8) **ADVICE**: 
- Take non-traditional paths. Life is too short to stay on the straight-and-narrow. Make time to do
international electives, start a business, or get another degree. It will always be time well spent.

- Find a community of supportive and distracting people. Your head shouldn't always be in medical school. Finding interesting people who challenge you outside of the classroom and broaden your horizons in life. It will make medical school more fun.
- Believe in yourself. You haven't made it this far on sheer luck. You're in the top one percent of the world in terms of dedication, intelligence, and passion- it's time you stopped doubting if you can pass this next exam!

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
you had to choose which free lunch lecture you'd go to

10) Any regrets?:
Not doing enough outside electives and fellowships. There are so many incredible opportunities out there for medical students- ask around- you'd be amazed what kind of experiences are at your fingertips!

11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Bluegrass Underground- apparently an incredible musical treat, in a cave!

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Sportsman's $5 Burger Mondays! [it's very close to campus...]

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Miel

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Unhelpful Feedback

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**Lani Feingold-Link**

1) **Hometown:** Yardley, PA

2) **College (undergrad) and major:** Penn, Biochemistry

3) **VMS advisory college:** Gabbe

4) **Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school:** Science (I was MSTP)

5) **Specialty you're doing:** OBGYN

6) **Where you matched:** Pennsylvania Hospital—come visit, especially if you get pregnant!

7) **"Claim to fame":**
Probably sending so many school-wide emails... but let's be serious, I throw pretty decent events and am a better email composer than most, so deal with it.

8) **ADVICE:**
- Don't suffer in silence... I definitely struggled hard first year and spent a lot of nights worrying about being found out as a fraud that didn't deserve to be at Vanderbilt Medical School. One night when I was a particularly weepy mess, I called a 2nd-year who had mentored me and he totally calmed me down and reassured me. He gave me some tips on keeping it together until the exam. I honestly never felt lost or alone again.
- Give back to the Vanderbilt and Nashville community... Everything that makes your life great is because other people work hard to make it that way. Pay it forward. Mentor underclassmen. Run clubs. Be a student leader. Organize events. Get active in your college. It is the single most important way to nurture the environment from which we all benefit.
- Throw potlucks and theme parties (or make friends with people that do)... Keeping your friends close and your best friends closer will make medical school a breeze. I mean Losers is okay but no one can say no to a potluck or a party with a good theme. Skip the going-out and invite friends over for Asian cuisine night or a
Mexican dish potluck or a Chosen Onesie Bar Mitzvah party. Get that oxytocin pumpin.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
Pinterest wasn’t a thing. During 1st year class we just had Facebook and gchat and online shopping. Twas a rough life.

10) A memorable story from your clinical rotations:
In adolescent clinic a very mature 14 year-old young man told me he was having sex with his 16 year-old girlfriend. I offered him STI testing and he looked suspicious, asking what would be required of him. He seemed like the kind of kid who could take it, so I told him we would just need to put a Q-tip about 3 inches up the tip of his penis and “swirl it around a bit.” His eyes got huge before I told him I was kidding.

11) Any regrets?:
No regrets. If you find yourself on the wrong path, even if it seems impossible to change your course, do it. I didn’t find out I was on the wrong path until 2.5 years into medical school, and even though it felt like an insurmountable challenge, I did what I had to in order to right myself. I would have had regrets if I didn’t do that.

12) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
My Nashville bucket list is basically a bucket of food that I have yet to try or need to get my fill of before I bounce. For example, gonna hit up the Farmer’s Market for food court lunch one of these days.

13) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Student lounge fridges... if you take just a little bit from lots of people’s lunches usually no one notices.

14) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Tough call... the belly ham pizza from City House with an egg is just about the best thing I have ever put in my mouth, though.

Lulu Wang

1) Hometown: Irvine, CA
2) College (undergrad) and major: MIT, Brain and Cognitive Sciences
3) VMS advisory college: Robinson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Pediatrics
5) Specialty you’re doing: Emergency medicine
6) Where you matched: Brigham & Women’s Hospital/Massachusetts General Hospital
7) "Claim to fame":
Voicing thoughts that are only half-formed (no filter!); getting too excited and blurt out the punch line of a story
8) ADVICE:
- Shadow! Don’t base your idea of a specialty on whether you "think" you’ll like it or not - just spend a few days with some physicians and actually check it out. And give it a few chances - just because you don’t like something as a 1st year doesn’t mean it won’t strike your fancy later on as a 3rd year.
- If you have an hour to rest, try to get some fresh air. It’ll be the last thing you want to do after a long day on the wards, but I promise it’ll feel much more refreshing than sitting at the computer for another hour.
- Cherish your friends and family outside of med school. They may not fully understand the stress you’ll go...
through as a med student, but they'll help pull you out of that study slump and give you some much-needed perspective.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
We had to look up anatomy in the cadaver lab in Netters - we didn't have any fancy shmancy ipads that hooked up to the big touch screen monitors. And we had to walk up all those flights up stairs to anatomy lab ... upstairs both ways. (Ok that last one wasn't true).

10) A memorable story from your clinical rotations:
My first rotation of the year was neurology. There we were, sitting in the call room - two residents and two med students (bright-eyed and bushy-tailed). We had a patient who was complaining of an itchy rash in his submandibular region, so the chief had my classmate call a consult to dermatology. "How can I help you?" returned the call. "Uhh, well, we have this male patient who's complaining of an itchy rash under his chin, started this morning. No recent changes in medication or topical exposure." "Interesting. Could you tell me if anything new that has happened since yesterday?" "Hmm... Well... I guess he did shave this morning..." At this point, everyone in the call room is in tears. Everyone but the dermatologist knows the rash is just razor burn - and she figures it out pretty quickly. We look like a bunch of idiots - newly minted clinical med students without a lick of common sense. But hey, at least she gave some good recs.

11) Any regrets?:
Not taking more 2-week electives in things I might never see again (medical photography, a business class or two).

12) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Monell’s and Loveless Café; try out a shooting range; see Taylor Swift - though she lives in NYC now, so unlikely 😊; have one last night out on the town with my fellow classmates.

13) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
ABP for their hazelnut coffee, cafeteria for their single-serving sizes of pick-me-up pie

14) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Husk

15) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Dr. Bader being mistaken for a hobo

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Margot Lazow

1) Hometown: Marlboro, NJ
2) College (undergrad) and major: Columbia, Biochemistry
3) VMS advisory college: Chapman (Go Dragons!!)
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Ophtho (I did ophtho research in undergrad...)
5) Specialty you’re doing: Pediatrics! 😊
6) Where you matched: Cincinnati Children’s Hospital
7) "Claim to fame":
Long-haired girl known for watching too much tv, spending lots of time reading People magazines, putting cards in people’s mailboxes, and using lots of exclamation points in emails! 😊

8) ADVICE:
- Make time for whatever is important to you! I think the most useful advice I can share is to make time in your busy schedule for whatever gives you personal “wellness” (our favorite Vandy buzzword!). You
absolutely need to take breaks from studying and/or at the end of the day to do whatever you enjoy, because if you don’t make time for whatever is most important to you, you run the risk of getting burnt out! I know for a lot of people, this is exercise- and if you’re one of those people, that’s amazing! But it’s also totally ok if this includes something other than exercise--for me, it was important to make time to call family members, get together with friends, and of course, watch TV (#shondaland)!

- Realize that it’s impossible to learn every single thing you’re taught during medical school! There’s going to be a lot of info thrown your way, and over time (as things are taught to you repeatedly, and as you care for patients and are able to put some of this knowledge to practice), you’ll gradually absorb some of this material. But don’t expect to be able to learn all the material the first time you’re exposed to it—it’s totally ok that you can’t (always remember the “10% box!”).
- Don’t spend time/energy comparing yourself to your classmates! I think a lot of us (definitely myself included!) spent time worrying that we weren’t as smart (or as efficient, or as hard-working, or as on-top of the material, etc) as our classmates. Just remember that everyone deserves to be here, everyone has different strengths that they contribute to the class/team, and everyone has a different learning style!

9) "Back in my day... (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):"
Students of all 4 years were doing the same (traditional) curriculum; people were still talking (+lamenting) about how ABP had recently taken over McDonald’s space, & Chapman College was mostly female.

10) Any regrets?:
None, other than getting stressed out at various times during medical school when I didn’t need to be! (Everything ends up working itself out!)

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Try out a bunch of the new restaurants that have been getting rave reviews!

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
ABP

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Maggiano’s (I <3 Italian food!)

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
“Shake it off” (2015)

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Mary DeAgostino-Kelly

1) Hometown: Jackson, MI
2) College (undergrad) and major: Notre Dame, Biology and Anthropology
3) VMS advisory college: Chapman
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Med/Peds
5) Specialty you’re doing: Ob/Gyn
6) Where you matched: Penn (Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania)
7) "Claim to fame":
Being pregnant for most of 4th year
8) ADVICE:
- Having made it this far, you should stop worrying about making the “right” choice (about courses to take, specialty to choose, ranking residency programs, etc.) – you are choosing from all stellar options, so no need to stress! Pick what fits you best 😊
- Strive for school/life balance as best you can when book studying, but really throw yourself into your
limited time on the wards. You can (and will) always look things up in books later, but you are only a medical student in the hospital once!

- Pick one or two extracurricular groups/activities that you are passionate about, and make time for those during medical school. Unfortunately there is not time for everything, and it's better to do a couple of things well then short-change a bunch!

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
No one studied for the last anatomy exam of first year – it was the extremities and only counted for 10% of your final grade, so you could calculate what score you needed to pass...and for most of us, that was somewhere in the 0 – 50% range.

10) Any regrets?:
No regrets, just glad I was able to balance medical school with getting married and having a baby! Highly recommended 😊

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Get to the Bluebird, see one last show at the Ryman

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Subway

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Patterson House

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Too many to choose from!

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Michael Maggatt

1) Hometown: Knoxville, TN

2) College (undergrad) and major: Notre Dame, Biological Sciences

3) VMS advisory college: Batson

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Orthopedics, Radiology, Pathology, Pediatrics

5) Specialty you’re doing: Radiology

6) Where you matched: Jackson Memorial/U of Miami

7) "Claim to fame":
Ha I don't know if I am a famous member in our illustrious class...I may be the quirky/comical guy who people look at and think, "It makes sense that he’s going into radiology." I think I've been a relief to people who are in clerkships with me because they know they don't have to kill it to look good.

8) ADVICE:
- Success in the clerkships does not come strictly from knowing your stuff; it's letting your superiors know you know (in a polite manner, of course). The feedback was noticeably different when I purposefully talked a lot.
- Work-life balance is possible, even during surgery! You may not be able to go out and lounge in Percy Warner daily, but time for exercise and eating actual food is possible - made easier if you methodically schedule time to cook/exercise.
- When studying for the STEP and shelf exams, questions >> books! The books can be nice, but running through questions - multiple times - and reading the answers are much more valuable.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
2011 and 2012 were simpler times - an age when a website called Knowledgemap, on which we exclusively relied, didn't regularly crash or send you 300 emails when you were editing an assignment. Of course, the site had the vibe of a 90's Geocities webpage and didn't always have an easily downloadable slideshow format like PowerPoint for the lectures...

10) Any regrets?:
I remain happy about my decision to go into medicine. If I have regrets, they would be that I approached research with excessive, unwarranted anxiety. Researchers are less judgmental than one might think/fear.

11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
I've got another year! I need to visit more of the popular restaurants (spicy chicken establishments). I could do with another concert or performance at the Bridgestone Arena.

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Children's Subway. Also, if you need a snack, just go to the MCN canteen instead of overpriced ABP.

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
McDougal's

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
"State Mayhem" from 2012

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Rachel Wolf

1) Hometown: Pelham, NY

2) College (undergrad) and major: Dartmouth, Psychological & Brain Sciences

3) VMS advisory college: Batson

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Pediatrics

5) Specialty you're doing: Med-Peds

6) Where you matched: UPMC (Pittsburgh)

7) "Claim to fame":
I have no idea! Having a cute baby?

8) ADVICE:
- Establish and maintain contact with faculty/residents you connect with as mentors. These individuals will provide you invaluable advice for your career/personal life (and often have lots of contacts that can help you if it is an area out of their realm of expertise).
- Don't pick a specialty based solely on your third-year clerkship or experiences with particular mentors. Consider questions such as what will I be doing day-to-day as an attending? Am I interested in the future of this field? Do I want to practice in the hospital or in the community? What are my family/future family obligations? Do I identify with the people who are currently in that specialty?
- Learn to prioritize. Med school is busy. Life is busy. There (most likely) will be a day when you can't get everything done. Practice placing to do items in order of importance. This ability to triage will help you as a resident and physician too!

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
When I started med school...Shade Tree was in a double-wide trailer. The sense of community was very strong even then and it has been wonderful to watch the organization improve and expand over the past five years. The pre-clinical curriculum was two years. While I enjoyed my preclinical years, the opportunity for choice in the latter two years will strengthen graduating students. College mentoring has become more structured and
greatly added to the advising aspect of the advisory colleges.

10) Any regrets?:
Not going abroad as a fourth year...do it if you can!

11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Food! Love to try new restaurants and revisit our old favorites including Watermark, Etch, Farmhouse, Lockeland Table, Rolf and Daughters; Hot chicken...haven't done this yet...I’m scared; Honky Tonk Central (I still call this the new place, but pretty much everyone has already been there!); Johnny Cash museum.

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
coffee at Susie's in the children’s hospital

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Fido

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Google searches video

Sarah Coggins

1) Hometown: Cabot, Arkansas

2) College (undergrad) and major: Vanderbilt, Molecular & Cellular Biology and Spanish

3) VMS advisory college: Robinson

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Adult ID, Ob/gyn

5) Specialty you’re doing: pediatrics (likely NICU or PICU)

6) Where you matched: CHOP

7) "Claim to fame":
Watching way too much Netflix, being a cat lady.

8) ADVICE:
- I love hanging out with my med school classmates, but I think it’s equally important to maintain some time alone to recharge (with sleep, Netflix, exercise, whatever!)
- During 4th year, resist the urge to only do electives in your chosen specialty - this may be one of the last opportunities you have to get in-depth exposure to specialties not included in the clerkship year! (i.e. derm, radiology, pathology, surgical subspecialties, etc!)
- There are so many ways to be involved meaningfully within the medical school - you definitely don't need to do everything, but choose a few things you love and stick with them! (I really like research, but am not so much into clubs/extracurriculars - it is totally OK to do what makes you happy!)

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
There were 100 less students on the wards at any one time! :)

10) Any regrets?:
I wish I had spent more time hanging out with my classmates and relaxing in general - there is such a thing as studying too much with diminishing returns!

11) If you’re leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
Visit Cheekwood Botanical Gardens; try hot chicken.

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
ABP
13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Burger Up! (my favorite veggie burger in Nashville!)

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Shake It Off and Sh*t Attendings Say

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**Tulsi Roy**

1) **Hometown:** Belvidere, IL

2) **College (undergrad) and major:** Case Western, Biology and History & Philosophy of Science

3) **VMS advisory college:** Gabbe

4) **Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school:** OB-GYN, Internal Medicine, Gen Surg

5) **Specialty you're doing:** Plastics

6) **Where you matched:** UChicago

7) "Claim to fame":
Being cynical and brown simultaneously.

8) **ADVICE:**
- Not doing well in an anatomy (pre-clinical years) course does NOT mean you can't excel in your surgery clerkship or match into gen surg or a competitive surgical subspecialty (and I matched in plastics). I hate(d) anatomy practicals and lectures. I just don't learn that way, and especially not while trying to adjust to a whole new location and group of people in med school. Being able to regurgitate large amounts of information is a valuable skill in med school, but you will be able to learn on the wards and on your own through repetition and exposure. You will be fine, and it's not like most ophthalmologists can name all the insertions of the all muscles of the foot anyway. Study for the tests, but know that your career isn't over before it even began.
- Don't stress if you don't decide your specialty in the same way everyone else does. A lot of people decide what they want to do at specific branch points (surgery vs. medicine, adults vs. pediatrics). It was not as black and white for me, and it can get a little uncomfortable when your residents or classmates complain or bash other specialties while you're trying to figure out what you want to do with your life. I went through third year and loved plastics, internal medicine, and psychiatry. I chose plastics because of its flexibility and because it would let me see pediatric and adult patients in less of a clinical outpatient setting for chronic conditions--not because I hated IM. It's OK to like the things you like. Just because you want to be a pulmonologist doesn't mean you have to hate the OR. And just because you want to be a surgeon, it doesn't mean you have to hate reading EKGs. (For what it's worth, I like surgery, EKGs, and pulmonology. Dream big, kids.)
- The first 1-2 years of med school is a lot of lectures from a lot of people. Your ability to do awesome on group CBL stuff and exams that last 4 days does not automatically determine your performance on Step 1 and your chances for residency. I was fairly mediocre grade-wise in my pre-clinical years at Vandy (maybe even below average in anatomy and biochem) and I got a strong Step 1 score. I study best by myself, and the five weeks of solitary board studying was probably the most helpful educational experience than any group exercise or classroom lecture. I'm not knocking the Vandy curriculum (there are obviously some stellar teachers); I just learn a little differently. In any case, the clinically-relevant knowledge will be reiterated over and over on the wards, so if you don't retain everything the first time you see it, don't worry, you'll have plenty of opportunities to see it again.

9) "Back in my day..." (how VMS was different when you started 4 or more years ago?):
Jeanette Norden taught Brain and Behavior. It was le awesome.
10) Any regrets?:
Being extremely reserved in first year. I'm an introvert, and adjusting to Vanderbilt, Nashville, and med school all at once was pretty overwhelming. I sort of retreated into myself, and I think if I were more social I would have gotten to know some great people in my class a bit better.

11) If you're leaving Nashville, any bucket list items you want to make sure to do before you graduate?:
I still need to do karaoke. And go to Loveless Cafe.

12) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Any Starbucks, anywhere. I am hooked on lattes. There's one on the 8th floor of MCE, which is pretty great.

13) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Kien Giang (Vietnamese)

14) Favorite Cadaver Ball video(s)?:
Mayhem and Intussusception. (2012)

Year-Off Advice Columns:
=Advice from rising 4th years who took a year-off this past year (between 3rd and 4th year)!

Cooper Lloyd

1) Hometown: Boston, MA
2) College (undergrad) and major: Stanford University, Human Biology
3) VMS advisory college: Robinson
4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: I had no idea, but pediatrics was definitely a possibility
5) Specialty you're doing: I'm leaning towards med-peds
6) "Claim to fame":
I love Shade Tree social work.

7) What have you done during your year off?:
MPH at Harvard Chan School of Public Health

8) How did you find out about this year-off opportunity?
I'm from Boston and had heard about this program. I knew an older Vandy med student who had done this MPH a few years prior.

9) ADVICE for students considering taking a year-off:
- Start thinking about it and planning for a year-off early – many programs have deadlines in the fall and winter, and you'll need to allow time to write applications and get recommendations in order.
- Seek out older students who have taken a year off for advice. Mentoring is one of Vandy's strengths, and I definitely benefited from the advice of older students.
- Consider doing some immersion phase rotations before you leave for your year off, if your schedule allows. This makes coming back less stressful and gives you more time during your final year to pursue research or other interests.
- Come back for match day for the class you left! I was blown away by how powerful it was to see all my former classmates match. The anticipation for match day is infectious, and even though it isn't your own match day, it's an amazing experience. It also transformed how I was approaching the return to med school – from ambivalence to real excitement. Plus, coming back makes you realize that you're up next!
10) Share about your year-off experiences:
I've had a fantastic experience in my MPH year. I've enjoyed stepping back from learning about the individual physician-patient relationship to think more broadly about the kinds of organizations, programs, and policies that influence health at the population level. I've taken courses on topics ranging from community organizing to safety net health systems to program evaluation to leadership. These courses broadened my understanding of the context in which we operate as physicians and have given me greater insight into the kinds of career possibilities that may interest me in the future. For example, I now hope to include some combination of advocacy, public health and policy work into a career in primary care. My experience in the MPH has also helped me rearticulate my overarching career goals; I now see medicine and public health as the toolsets I bring to the greater movement for social justice in all domains of our common life. One especially exciting aspect of the year was getting to know other students, both at the School of Public Health and at the Harvard Kennedy School, who are driven by similar desires to create social policies and systems that better include society's most vulnerable. In some ways, I feel like I “found my people” in public health school, and while I will always feel most tied to my Vanderbilt med school community, I know I will carry many of these friendships with me and be able to draw on my public health colleagues’ experiences well into the future.

11) Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:
Free cone day at Ben & Jerry's. And the outdoor farmer's market.

12) Favorite Nashville restaurant?:
Monell's

13) Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:
Pranking the first-years in CELA

Denise Ye

1) Hometown: Los Angeles, California

2) College (undergrad) and major: Harvard, Molecular and Cellular Biology

3) VMS advisory college: Robinson!

4) Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school: Internal Medicine or Ob-Gyn

5) Specialty you’re doing: Neurology

6) What have you done during your year off?:
NIH Medical Research Scholars Program (MRSP)

7) How did you find out about this year-off opportunity?
During my third-year medicine clerkship, one of the students on my team was doing an away rotation here; she was an alumnus of the NIH program and I learned a lot about it through her.

8) ADVICE for students considering taking a year-off:
- If you are considering a research year, look closely at what each of the programs offers or focuses on as they can be quite different. Some things to look at include type of research (basic vs. clinical/translational), whether you need a formed project idea and plan prior to applying, the number of structured activities for students (a lot of lectures and required student activities vs. none), and location (based only at one institution vs. anywhere your lab of interest happens to be).
- Do it! 😊

9) Share about your year-off experiences:
I have absolutely loved my year-off at the NIH! I've learned a ton and the experience has definitely reaffirmed my interest in neurology and my desire to have a career involving research. It’s also been awesome to explore a new city and meet other medical students (although I definitely miss Nashville and Vandy!).
10) **Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:**
Baja Fresh (chips and queso for life)

11) **Favorite Nashville restaurant?:**
Rolf & Daughters

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**Trisha Pasricha**

1) **Hometown:** Ellicott City, MD

2) **College (undergrad) and major:** Harvard University, Visual & Environmental Studies (film/video)

3) **VMS advisory college:** Robinson

4) **Specialty (/specialties) you thought you were going to do when you started med school:** Internal Medicine

5) **Specialty you're doing:** Internal Medicine

6) **"Claim to fame":**
Making movies and forcing my classmates to be in movies.

7) **What have you done during your year off?:**
I'm a Medical Research Scholars Program fellow at the National Institutes of Health. I work in an immunology lab studying novel therapeutics for Crohn's disease.

8) **How did you find out about this year-off opportunity?**
I heard about it from another Vanderbilt student (Michael Spinner, class of 2014) who had participated in the program.

9) **ADVICE for students considering taking a year-off:**
   - Just do it! This is a golden window. You’re never going to get protected time like this to explore something new and take a break from the hustle of medical training.

10) **Share about your year-off experiences:**
I never really enjoyed basic science when I attempted stem cell culture experiments in college. But I took a gamble on pursuing a basic science project during my year off because of my clinical interest in GI patients and wanted to work on developing therapeutics for inflammatory bowel disease. There was a small learning curve, but I discovered that being motivated by the clinical outcome made the basic science really exciting! I got a chance to dive really deep into a field that I would never had otherwise felt equipped to pursue. And working at the NIH was a huge inspiration, it felt like I was walking among gods every day. I had always thought about clinical research in my future career, but never considered basic or translational science an option—but now I absolutely do. A year off is great even beyond your academic achievements (I got married and traveled a ton during my year off!). It's a fantastic time to step back, live like a normal member of society for a year, and re-evaluate what’s important for how you're going to shape the rest of your career.

11) **Favorite place to grab a snack, meal, or drink on the med center campus?:**
Baja fresh burritos save lives—they're open late!

12) **Favorite Nashville restaurant?:**
Hattie B's hot chicken

13) **Favorite Cadaver Ball video?:**
Harry Potter and the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine from our first year!