

# Town Hall 2019

Tips & Tricks for the Transition from 3<sup>rd</sup>  
to 4<sup>th</sup> Year

## Right Now Advice

- Write down meaningful and memorable patient stories as you go along, because it will help you tell more vivid stories during interviews
- Enjoy 4<sup>th</sup> year! If you are applying to highly competitive specialties, the first of the year will be busy with away rotations, Step 2 studying, applications, and interviews. Schedule easier electives and vacations either during interviews or the second of the year because it's your last chance to have no obligations
- Explore fun, interesting, or career-enhancing electives
- Fourth year transition can seem overwhelming but take it one step at a time and celebrate your accomplishments

## MS4 Scheduling

- Even though your required rotations are assigned, they may conflict with plans you thought you'd have. Reach out to your classmates and Amanda Ybarra about possible switches. These can be done quite close to the actual rotation and plans change so keep an eye out. Nothing is perfect but everyone makes things work in the end.
- Next scheduling round is all elective and vacation months. The second round is open the entire year so you change electives/vacations as you want/need. You create your own vacation schedule by only placing electives in months in which you prefer to have rotations and then leaving vacations months unfilled. You can place an elective or vacation in ANY month that you do not have a required rotation.
- Everyone's 4th year scheduling *will be different* based off your goals and specialty - make sure to talk to your career advisor in your field and lead advisor and come up with a plan before you schedule
- At times it's helpful to go into the scheduling system with an idea of when you are taking CK/CS, away months, personal/family events in mind
- FYI: Interview season is October-January (varies slightly by specialty)
  - Find out the prime time for interviews for your specialty and plan for lighter months during that time

## Sub-I Timing

- Depends heavily on specialty → IM, Peds, FM, Surgery, OB can all be done now
- If you are going into one of these specialties then most students prefer to have it during June, July, or August to collect letters of recommendation and experience before interviewing. Thus, if you're not applying to one of these specialties (ie plastic surgery) then typically June, July, August is filled with electives in the chosen specialty that serve as an unofficial SubI.
- Find out when your specialty interviews and DO NOT schedule emergency medicine/subI then - these are notoriously strict rotations that will fight you on letting you off for interviewing. For example, Medicine interviews Nov-Jan so using a vacation month and a pathology TA for two of the months is a good way to ensure you will be able to interview at the number of places you need

## Scheduling Interviews

- Find out when peak interview season is for your desired specialty so that you can schedule a vacation month or chill elective to be on during that time.
- Use a vacation month to cut down on stress significantly
- Avoid having required clerkships in November or December, it will still be possible to interview with a
- core elective during one of these months as these spots will have to be filled
- Schedule light rotations during Nov/Dec/Jan
- Think about doing Research or Pathology TA and the Health IT elective during your two months of interviews so that you do not have to use a vacation month

### **Scheduling Advice from Previous Students**

- “Depending on which field you plan to pursue, your year will look different. Everyone will have different opinions and there’s no single right way to do it. Think about what strategy will work for you and implement it, and the year will be as stress free as possible”
- “Take required clerkships early and during non-interview months. You won’t get everything you want so make the best of what you get.”
- “If you are interested in staying at IU, take lots of electives at IU in the summer so that people on the committee know you personally.”
- “Front load your schedule with rotations that are in line with your career choice.”
- “Try to schedule vacation for the end of the year.”
- “Busy schedule but here was my summer schedule and it made the tail end of my year amazing: June (Sub-I), July (month off for CK/CS), August (Elective), September (Away Rotation)”

### **VSLO**

- Registrar’s Office must issue VSLO authorization (‘tokens’)
- VSLO (previously known as VSAS) is the online forum used to apply for away rotations (domestic and global). VSLO website also provides information on of applying, timing, vaccine requirements, cost, appropriate behavior, etc.
  - With the new VSLO—the payment plan has changed. The first set of electives (up to three) you apply for will be covered by a base fee of \$40 USD. Each additional elective is \$15 USD.
- Talk with the department chair or a mentor in your specialty to decide if an away rotation is best for you. If you are in a competitive specialty or are specifically targeting one area of the country then it will likely be recommended to complete an away rotation in your location of interest.
- Get on VSLO ASAP. Find the programs you are interested and apply as soon as the their application opens. Some programs have a competitive selection process and multiple requirements (eg; letters of recommendation, personal statement, transcript, immunization records, etc).
- **Look out for:**
  - When each updated course catalog and application opens for your program of interest, this can range from Feb-April (you can set email reminders)

- Vaccine requirements: varies by program – start gathering information now and filling out the form, Coleman Hall is familiar with process and is a BIG HELP
- Time sensitive submission – remind the school if a transcript needs to be uploaded, may need to show proof of BLS certification and the expiration date
- Fees: varies by program. At times, the payment in full isn't required until acceptance. Again, know what the programs you are looking at want.
- Range from \$150-500
- Expenses: Travel/Housing is covered by you! Look for ways to finance this personally.
- Exit Interview: varies by program. May be allowed to use your exit interview as your interview for residency. Know this ahead of time as you may need to pack your suit.
- Chairman contact information: If you are truly interested in a program – then put the time in. Schedule a meeting with the chairman and make yourself known.
- If the dates of the rotation don't match in scheduling, can try to split an elective around the dates and will need to submit a SPECIAL ELECTIVE form prior to away rotation
- Consider your ENTIRE time at an away as an interview/audition. This could make/break your chance for residency at a particular program. Don't forget you are **always representing IUSM** and IU residency programs as well.
- Not all programs are on VSLO!

## OSCE

- TAKE HOME: Just need to pass it- so don't stress. It's very similar to CS so it's a good time to practice and see how to improve before taking CS.

## Step 2 Clinical Knowledge and Clinical Skills

- Do not delay on scheduling CK/CS, the good spots fill up rapidly
- Take by November 1, 2019-IU creates this regulation so that all scores are in by the time rank lists are certified
- In a 4th year survey most took CK in June/July
  - A majority believed they took at the RIGHT time or could have taken it earlier
  - Most required 1 month to study
  - Most took CS Sept - Nov
  - A majority could have taken it early or took it at just the right time
  - Some recommend to take it after EM clerkship
  - Most took 1 week to study
- Note: this response does not include the time to study for the OSCE, with 1-2 weeks for OSCE and 1-2 weeks for CS, should have 2-4 weeks of study time under your belt
- Step 2 CK MATTERS no matter what your Step 1 score is
- We have consistently heard that IUSM students take Step 2 later than most other medical students, it's now being used as a screening tool so get it done
- Step 2 CS offered in 5 cities: Chicago, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston
- Keep an eye on schedule once it opens to ensure that you get the city you want
- Use OSCE feedback to prepare

- Assess your skills, everyone should put prep time in, first aid CS is great study tool

## ERAS

- This is how you apply to residency (vs. NMRP which is how you rank programs for The Match). You use this forum to create your application and select all of the programs that you wish to apply to.
- Hopefully, you've been keeping track of all your med school activities for your ERAS application and CV, but if not, start compile that now
- Write down everything you are involved in, and if you have resident friends, have them look at it
- Start writing personal statement early
- Start ERAS early, even if it is putting in one activity per day on ERAS, do that – Opens June 6, 2018!
- Have many people look over it
- Submit mid-September

## ERAS

*Figuring out ERAS can appear very daunting, but actually it isn't that complicated or difficult. Writing your personal statement is probably the hardest task to complete because the rest of your application sort of fills itself out. The activities you've done aren't going to change by the time you're applying, your biographical data is straightforward, etc... Definitely pay attention to the "interests/hobbies" section in ERAS because the majority of my interviewers have actually been more interested in talking about what I wrote there than any other part of my application. Those few words you write about your hobbies is the rare opportunity for your interviewers to get to know you as a person rather than as a medical student. Lastly, this may seem obvious, but MAKE SURE your application is ready to submit by September 15. More and more residency programs download all the applications that have been submitted immediately on that date, and if you're still working on your application, chances of getting an interview date that works for you are slim to none.*

- **How many programs should you apply to?** Specialty dependent but for any specialty: Be realistic, know your strengths and weaknesses. Research programs and choose based on YOUR application.
- Talk to a mentor (preferably a department chair, program director or someone that works on residency selection committees) about how competitive your application is and the recommended number to apply to
- At the end of the day, apply to the amount of programs that will make you sleep at night

## Letters of Recommendation

- Schedule electives or Sub-I of interest early so you can get your letters (it is never too early to get letters and also have more letters than required)
- Don't be afraid to ask for letters of recommendation it is part of the attending's job to write it
- It is good to have a preliminary CV and personal statement

- Ask sooner rather than later. It's often helpful to ask in person while on rotation and then follow-up (repeatedly) via email (with CV and deadline included)
- If you do an away rotation – ask for a letter while you are there. These are usually great letters that truly reflect your strengths in new/challenging situations. Use this to your advantage.
- Most programs tend to prefer more clinical than research letters (unless it was a big commitment during medical school). Know what your programs want.
- Have a CV and personal statement ready when you ask

### **Couples Match**

- VERY COUPLE DEPENDENT- decide what works for your couple (ie, whether or not you're okay with different cities, if you're okay if only one of you matches, your preferences on how high your individual programs are ranked nationally, etc)
- Recommended Game Plan:
- Accept all of the interview offers that you get.
- Attempt to prioritize places you think you'll both receive offers from/will like and schedule those first
- NOTE: Half of the couple may have to start interviews before the other half receives offers.
- Then, after your couple has the bulk of your offers - make a new list of the overlapping places and start canceling the other interviews.
- Check out big cities-- they may have more than one program so it'll increase your chance of matching in the same location (if that's what you want) - for example: Los Angeles has 4+ pediatric programs and at least 2 plastic surgery programs
- Make your rank list based on the preferences of your couple (can't say this enough). Know if you're OK living in different cities and know if you're OK if 1/2 of your couple may not match (super scary thought - but very important discussion)
- Have an idea if you intend to do a fellowship. If you're 100% then make sure you prioritize places that offer that fellowship, especially, if there is a length discrepancy between your and the specialty that your S/O chooses
- FYI: REACH OUT TO PROGRAMS - call or email if one of you has heard back. It can make a difference.

### **ERAS Submission and Beyond**

- IUSM will support you during this process
- Take advantage of the mock interview opportunities
- Don't be afraid to reach out to any programs that you haven't heard from. If it is outside of the Midwest, you might have to show them you are actually interested in going there
- There is too much information floating around about The Match and ERAS and such so I would recommend finding one or two people in your specialty that did well and are willing to help you so you can get reliable information from them
- Rotations like EM, Radiology, and your Sub-I will only be as beneficial as the time you commit to them. Dive in and get the most out of them.

### **Basic/Brief Interview Info**

- You can do an optional mock interview through IU. GREAT practice for FREE.
- Google lists of common interview questions and make sure you have answers to them in your head.
- Rotatingroom.com – find an affordable place to stay during interviews and much more
- BE YOURSELF.

#### **Extras**

- Everyone says this, but it's so true that I'll say it again – don't be afraid to help out and be nice to your fellow students on clerkships or away rotations with you!
- Keep your hobbies alive (and put them on your CV), not only for your mental/spiritual health (also because interviewers seem to love asking about them)
- To save money on interview travel, open a Southwest credit card in Aug/Sept – you will get 40K miles and you might not have to pay a cent on an interview flight
- Utilize the IUSM HOST program! You will hear about it later. It saves lots of money on hotels & you can meet awesome alumni
- **Good Luck!**

## 4<sup>th</sup> Year Volunteers

Feel to reach out to the following MS4s with any specialty specific questions, concerns, inquiries for general advice. We are happy to help!

### **Anesthesiology**

Ben Stivers – [bdstiver@umail.iu.edu](mailto:bdstiver@umail.iu.edu)

Ryan Graham

Derek Rohlfing –

### **Dermatology**

Kishan Shah – [kmshah@indiana.edu](mailto:kmshah@indiana.edu)

Gabrielle Duprat

### **Diagnostic Radiology**

Allison Crone

Danielle Yin – [jdyin@iupui.edu](mailto:jdyin@iupui.edu)

### **Emergency Medicine**

Dan Schloss – [daschloss@iupui.edu](mailto:daschloss@iupui.edu)

Ryan DesCamp – [rdescamp@iu.edu](mailto:rdescamp@iu.edu)

Analisa Stewart – [anamgonz@iu.edu](mailto:anamgonz@iu.edu)

Shelby Biel –

### **Family Medicine**

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Lindsay Ogle –

### **General Surgery**

Kyle Lewellen – [kalewell@iu.edu](mailto:kalewell@iu.edu)

### **Internal Medicine**

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Eddie Stephens – [edmastep@iu.edu](mailto:edmastep@iu.edu)

Jessica Wehr – [jemwehr@iu.edu](mailto:jemwehr@iu.edu)

### **Internal Medicine/Pediatrics**

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Katie Krause – [kekrause@iu.edu](mailto:kekrause@iu.edu)

### **Interventional Radiology**

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### **Neurosurgery**

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### **Neurology**

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### **Obstetrics and Gynecology**

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Rana Torabi

### **Orthopedic Surgery**

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### **Pathology**

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### **Pediatrics**

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### **Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**

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### **Plastic Surgery**

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### **Psychiatry**

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Rebecca Schwab

### **Radiation Oncology**

Samantha Freije

Donna Edwards

### **Thoracic Surgery**

Aaron Clark

### **Triple Board**

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### **Urology**

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### **Vascular Surgery**

### **Couples Match**

Min Qiao, Neurology + IR/DR

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### **Military Match**

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