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NYMC Synapse Issue 33

School of Medicine Student Senate, New York Medical College

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NYMC Synapse

Transmitting news to the students of New York Medical College

November 2021, Issue 33

The NYMC Synapse is a newsletter published by the NYMC Student Senate for our classmates, faculty, administration and other students at NYMC. We highlight news from student senate, medical education, student affairs, and financial planning, give important updates for each class and highlight big events, outstanding students, and extraordinary professors.

Keep an eye out for these newsletters about once a month and don't miss out on the amazing things that are happening at NYMC!

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Upcoming Senate Initiatives and Updates:

- **M1 Friendsgiving will be taking place on Tuesday, November 9th, from 5 to 8PM**
- **The next monthly Senate Meeting will be occurring on Wednesday, November 17th at 5PM**
- **Office of Diversity & Inclusion Movie Night is planned for November 22nd: Cured with discussion moderated by students happening afterwards; follow-up discussion / Book Club occurring with the Library on December 9th**
- **NYMC Patagonia Orders have been collected and are currently being processed**

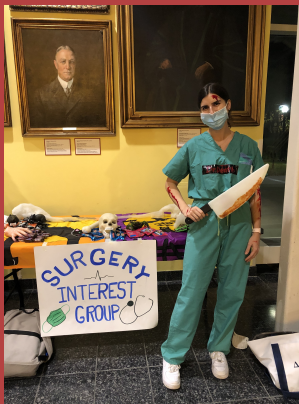
- Stay tuned for updates on upcoming Student-Alumni Events (e.g., Open House Mixers, Alumni Roundtable, etc.) currently being planned!

Event Highlights: NYMC Halloween Festival!

NYMC came into the full swing of Halloween with the Wellness Committee's Halloween festival hosted across the MEC lobby, cafeteria, and Nevins auditorium on October 28th. The night featured a plethora of events including a screening of the horror film "A Quiet Place", trick-or-treating, pumpkin and cookie decorating, and a photo booth! Clubs also signed up to compete in a table decorating contest for a \$100 donation to their charity of choice.



Congratulations Donate Life (Next Blood Drive is December 13th)! The students have deemed your table the winner! A huge shoutout to APAMSA as the runner up, with their "Squid Games" themed décor (remember to get those Pocky Grams!). We would also like to thank the Surgical Interest Group and Internal Medicine Interest Group for participating in the contest and bringing their spooky spirit!



Alice Zhang (M2), who spearheaded this event and has recently joined the Wellness Committee explains that she, "wanted to give a fun, de-stressing event for both M1 and M2s, which we [M2s] really missed out on last year given the pandemic." Alice was excited to report that she is, "super happy with the turnout, and people had a

great time!" Alice was supported by fellow Committee members Katie Yang (M2) and Victoria Maksymiuk (M2), along with Senate Treasurer Katie Lo and Outreach Coordinator Roy Miller.



As always, we would like to thank all of you who showed up and joined the fun! These events are made special by your participation, enthusiasm, and determination to continue coming together as a community. The Spooky Season definitely came back to NYMC, live and in person.



Stronger Together

By Rajkumar Pammal

Dear NYMC SOM Students,

We are a few months into the academic year and as expected, our student body has been as enthusiastic and productive as ever. Thanks to your efforts and working with faculty, the School of Medicine has been able to bring back in-person events such as the Annual Club Fair, Take-a-Breaks, Wellness Events, and unique opportunities ranging from gardening to culinary medicine. Importantly, students remain key contributors to curriculum redesign efforts, research initiatives, and career exploration and service opportunities. I am eager to continue seeing the innovative and exciting ways you all contribute to our vibrant NYMC community and make our medical school experience truly unique.

I wanted to share a recent experience I had in the clinic with a patient who has myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME), also known as chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS). ME is a complex illness that historically has been poorly understood, but today may be affecting upwards of 2 million Americans. It classically involves post-exertional malaise and debilitating fatigue, often preceded by an infectious episode (e.g., viral illness). I was fortunate to spend some time listening to this patient's account of their daily struggles with the condition, and methods used to cope with and overcome challenges. If you are interested in learning more about ME/CFS, I highly recommend watching [Unrest](#), a 2017 documentary by Jennifer Brea.

One aspect of the patient's story that resonated with me was how much strength they found in the ME/CFS community and support groups. Frequently, the patient would rely on the support of peers, shared resources, and collective advocacy to navigate difficult circumstances. While the patient was sometimes met with implicit bias and a lack of empathy in health care interactions, they were comforted by the non-judgmental, humanistic support from peers. In fact, the patient urged me to look into research about COVID-19 "long-haulers," out of concern that these patients would progress into CFS patients, be at risk for misdiagnosis, and require similar support.

Reflecting on my encounter with this patient, I was reminded of the importance of community building and caring for one another. The mental health crisis in the medical profession, specifically amongst medical students, is well-known and has only been accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Medical school can be isolating; even though we take the same classes and rotate through the same clerkships, everyone's journey is different and informed by distinct perspective and experiences. However, there is so much that unifies us, from the oath we took at White Coat Ceremony to the one we will take at commencement, to our commitment to humanistic patient care, and of course, this pandemic we are all navigating. While there is no easy way to address

mental health issues, perhaps a key part of the puzzle is to advocate for one another and continue to remind ourselves that we are all in this together.

Best,
Rajkumar S. Pammal
Student Senate President
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Reflections from Block 1

By Miriam Katz

My Instagram feed is brimming with pumpkin patches, brewery trips, and Halloween parties, while I'm inside reviewing the cranial nerves for the millionth time. Feeling overtired and overworked, I can't help but be a little jealous of my friends in the outside world. In moments like these, I try to remind myself of how lucky I am to be here - how long I've dreamed of studying for medical exams. As we reach our first milestone of medical school, the completion of Block 1, I'm thinking back on what I've experienced in these past three months, how it's changed me, and how our class transformed from 211 strangers into a group of colleagues, and more importantly, friends.

Our White Coat Ceremony simultaneously feels like two days ago and two years ago. I was jittery and excited as I slipped my arms into my coat, thinking of all it would experience with me in the years to come. Our families were brimming with pride, but nothing compared to our own feelings of accomplishment: We did it. We got into medical school. If only it were that easy. We wore our coats proudly as we promised to uphold the values we deemed important as students and future physicians. And, just last week, we wore those coats for the very first time while taking a history from our first standardized patient. Even though it was just practice, making someone feel safe, heard, and cared for reminded me why I chose medicine.

Once classes started, they didn't stop. We were fortunate to hear from some experts about health systems science, then dove into the deep end with anatomy and histology. Like many others, I had mixed feelings about beginning dissection, but dozens of M2's volunteered their free time to introduce us to cadaveric dissection and answer our questions. A few days later, my lab group and I felt prepared to begin dissecting, appreciating the immense gift, privilege, and responsibility we had received. Last week, as we said goodbye to our cadaver for the final time, I thought about how much she had taught us. Not only do I now know more muscles, nerves, arteries, and

veins than I had ever imagined, but I became more comfortable and confident in myself as someone who could, one day, heal others. People describe the pace of medical school as like drinking out of a firehose, and while that may be true, I think we're all pleasantly surprised by how much information our brains can hold. As the exams went by, the content got harder, but we got smarter. With the support of our professors, deans, and academic staff, I know that we all have what it takes to succeed here.

When it came time for the club fair, our class did not shy away. We have more clubs this year than ever before, many of which were started by our classmates, and many others which now feature M1's on E-Boards and in other leadership roles. Between specialty interest groups, volunteer organizations, healthcare innovation clubs, advocacy initiatives, hobby groups, and much more, our class is working hard to make every avenue of exploration available to us. We also elected senators, house representatives, and course representatives, and within the senate, M1's are involved in wellness, resiliency, and curriculum committees. It's truly incredible to see our class so engaged and committed to making our experience enriching and memorable. Just weeks after walking into an entirely new situation, we're leading Mockticals and review sessions, bringing in speakers, and planning events for our class. I can't wait to see all that we accomplish in the coming years.

Speaking of events, I hope everyone's getting excited for Friendsgiving! On Tuesday November 9th, our class will be celebrating the community we've built together with food, games, music, and a photo booth. We will also be hearing from our favorite deans and toasting to our achievements this far. Come hungry and bring your friends (and lots of House pride!). Let's toast to our achievements and ring in Block 2 together!

Good luck with studying and don't forget to take care of yourselves!

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A ~Spooky~ ERAS Season

By Nancy Wei

It was the night before Halloween, and as the M4s put on their last costumes of medical school, an eerie thought crossed our minds: we were officially one month out from ERAS. It has been a stressful yet exciting time for us as we

prepare for the next step in our journey, and even though it has only been just one short month, here are a few things I have learned from the application process:

Prioritize the program qualities that are important to you. Whether that's location, proximity to a big city, academic versus community focus, surgical training and volume, clinical exposure, service for the underserved, or prioritizing matching with a partner. What do you care about? If you hate the cold and snow or can't stand city environments, think about if you are willing to sacrifice the next few years of your life for a program that is in a place you couldn't be your best self in.

Get a head start on your personal statement before September hits. People will say this time and time again—and maybe next time will be the time I personally listen lol—but try, TRY to get a draft done early so you aren't panicking like me in September... A good personal statement will more often than not need many iterations and edits. The hardest part is getting started, but try putting pen to paper and even if your first edit isn't your last, maybe an idea will pop up that guides you to that perfect story!

Be organized! For people applying to specialties still using a traditional rolling interview system, research programs' interview dates early so you have a good idea of which dates you would want to schedule when you start hearing back. I always thought that responding immediately to an interview invitation email was a myth, but it seems that spots for interview days really do fill up quickly. Stay ahead of the game and plan ahead so you can avoid scheduling conflicts for programs you care about. And once you start getting those invites, put them on a Google calendar that you are always able to access so you can make sure you know which dates you're free.

Have someone you can talk to during this time. Hearing back from programs is a rollercoaster of emotions. Sometimes you will score that invite you've been dreaming of and other times you might not get the answer you were hoping for. There will unfortunately be a lot of ups and downs in this process, and having a friend to talk to about your experience can really help. It has certainly gotten me through the rough days.

And most importantly, remember how far you've come and how far you're going to go! You've made it this far and you are so close! Be proud of your achievements and all of the hard work you've dedicated to yourself. You've got this 😊

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Fall in Westchester

By Abigail Marriott

Hey NYMC! We all know that having fun during medical school is as equal a priority as our studies, so we thought we'd take a minute to highlight some of the amazing things going on in Westchester County this Fall to provide some ideas for your study breaks. Since most of us are no stranger to NYC and all the fun it has to offer, we thought it most fitting to include things to do in our own backyard, aka somethings you may not be aware of already. *Full disclaimer* we will not be stepping on Tony Sozzo's toes: for all things Fall foliage, please address your attention to his comprehensive emails! (Thanks, Tony!)

Hudson Valley Restaurant Week: November 1st-November 14th

Restaurant Week is here! Annually, over 100 restaurants in the Hudson Valley including restaurants in Westchester, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, and Ulster counties participate in this event. Participating restaurants offer a special three-course dinner for \$35.95 per person. Reservations can be made via Open Table or by calling any location of interest. If you are a foodie (like me) this is a great way to check out some of the restaurants in the area! Some personal favorite restaurants of mine participating this year: Gigante Restaurant and Bar in Eastchester, Mulino's of Westchester in White Plains, Rivermarket Bar & Kitchen in Tarrytown, and X2O Xavier's on the Hudson in Yonkers. For a full list of restaurants participating, you can visit valleytable.com/hvrw.

YOFIFEST 2021: November 5th-November 21st

A name that combines its full description, Yonkers Film Festival, is in its sixth year and has continuously been highly rated and recommended as a "can't miss" opportunity in Westchester County. The festival is described by its creators as "all about connections and conversations" AKA something we could all use (safely) after the past two years we've experienced with social distancing. Watch films, engage in Q&As with directors and filmmakers, and if filmmaking is your long-lost hobby, you can even attend a series of classes on film making! The festival itself takes place steps from the Yonkers Metro North train station and the Yonkers Waterfront. Hey, maybe you can even combine an evening with a film and then head to X2O Xavier's on the Hudson for restaurant week! For details, pricing, and a full schedule of events, visit yofifest.com.

The Great Jack O'Lantern Blaze: November 1st-November 21st

I would be remiss to not include this event on this list, as it is so cool and so close. People travel from ALL OVER to be able to see this annually. And hey, who cares if Halloween has already passed? We could all use a reason to celebrate, anyway! This display includes more than 7,000 jack o'lanterns. Walk

through the exhibits with views of Manhattan and the Hudson River included. Even better? Our fellow Valhalla friends over at Captain Lawrence are sponsoring the event this year so enjoy your favorite libations from a place that is essentially an NYMC tradition at this point! For tickets and information, visit hudsonvalley.org/events/blaze/.

I could write a book on things going on locally this Fall, but to keep it short and sweet I'll leave it at this! There is so much else going on in our area and a quick Google search will spill out ample recommendations. Take some time to enjoy...you've earned it!

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