

In this issue:



Hospital Day



White Coat Ceremony



Student Advocates Association



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Hospital Day: A Look to the Future

By Chris Moser, OMS-II

More than 70 hospitals, rotation sites and residency programs from various locations throughout the southeastern United States visited ACOM for the second annual Hospital Day on Friday, October 17, 2014.

Utilizing the third floor shelf space, the representatives set up tables, booths and posters to give prospective students information about their programs. Labeled pens, luggage tags, and hand sanitizers abounded as the students moved from booth to booth networking and greeting the representatives.

"I felt like [hospital day] was a great opportunity to see what our future rotation sites would look like," said first year osteopathic medical student Kaitlin Larson. "I particularly liked the representative from Tennessee, his enthusiasm for his program was contagious."

The majority of the programs focused on family medicine and rural tracks, and available slots varied from two students to over 100. Most of the programs sent administrators and current residents to give a students take on what future prospects could expect from their program.

"[Hospital day] gave me a great idea of where I want to go to prepare for a residency," said second year osteopathic medical student Garrett Harrison. "It was a good networking opportunity and I made some great contacts to utilize as I head towards my audition rotations."

For the second year students, the day was only beginning. Wallace College in north Dothan played host for the first annual Interprofessional Collaboration with their nursing students. Dr. Jaishree Patel of ACOM introduced the presenting faculty, and led a laugh-filled case communication activity.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity to see how important communications are between healthcare professionals and how information can be gained and lost through the doctor-nurse pipeline," said Dr. Patel. "We had a lot of fun hearing the variations in cases at the end of the chain."

The students then split into groups to discuss a case study and build a structure using spaghetti noodles, string, tape and a marshmallow.

"We tried to tie a bunch of spaghetti noodles together and run them straight up the middle. Popped the marshmallow on top, and down it went," said second year osteopathic medical student Mike Wong. "Watching the video after, we definitely didn't do it as well as the kindergarteners."

The session wrapped up with a TED talk video about the marshmallow game, and closing remarks from Dean of Students Dr. Philip Reynolds and ACOM Dean Dr. Craig Lenz.



Dean Weich, OMS-II, considers all of his options as he plans for his third year rotation sites.

White Hot: White Coat Ceremony 2014

By Robin Conley, OMS-II

October brings with it sprays of turning leaves, cool weather, and pumpkin-flavored everything. It also brings about a number of traditions started here at Alabama College of Osteopathic Medicine, with perhaps the most important tradition being the 2nd Annual White Coat Ceremony in honor of the first-year class.

The formal coating ceremony isn't just a tradition here, it is a rite of passage done by many medical institutions to celebrate and distinguish those called to pursue medicine as a career. It is a reminder to the student that he or she is working towards a greater goal (*and a longer jacket!*). It provides a clue to patients that we are professionals-in-training and that we will uphold our values as professionals for the remainder of our lives.

ACOM's white coat ceremony was conducted in the only way we know how to do things—BIG! Let's start with the very large OMS-I class. There are over 150 members of the first-year class. Since ACOM has nearly 300 students with supportive family and friends, faculty, staff, and support staff, we needed space to accommodate everyone in attendance. Thus, it was held at the downtown Dothan Civic Center, which can hold as many as 3000 guests.

The keynote speaker, our beloved Dr. Gregory Thompson, gave an encouraging speech focusing on the art of attentiveness to patients and treating them with human decency. One of the greatest sentiments he shared with the audience is that in medicine one must remain humble. He mentioned the Jewish tradition of Yom Kippur in which they practice humility by asking those they have wronged for forgiveness and clean the slate for the year. He also spoke about his personal journey with humility- he could never get his grandmother to stop telling others he is an "O.D"! He laughed at the voodoo doll given to him by his family to congratulate him on getting into "O.D. school". "C'mon, What do they think we do!" he says. It's important to know that although DOs practice worldwide some people still don't know or understand what it is that we do. In true Dr. Thompson fashion, the day would not have been complete without a death by katana threat should any ACOM student ever treat a patient without using basic primary clinical skills including introducing himself properly and ensuring patient comfort.

The day ended with a street-fest on Foster in Downtown Dothan to commemorate the event. The restaurants and shops opened up just to serve our students and their families. Dean Lenz, Dr. Reynolds, and many of the Class of 2017 came out to enjoy the live band as well as the Bite Club food truck eats. As all ACOM-hosted events go, all who attended had a great time. We're looking forward to what next year's ceremony will bring!



Greg Thompson, D.O. delivers a cutting-edge keynote speech to the ACOM Class of 2018 during the White Coat Ceremony.



The clubs and interest groups of ACOM put on engaging displays during the Osteogenesis event.

Osteogenesis: An Opportunity to Get Involved

By Michael Wheat, OMS-II

On Friday, September 26, first and second year students had the opportunity to participate in ACOM's first annual Osteogenesis. The event granted the different clubs and interest groups on campus the ability to market what they have to offer to students on campus. The event was held in third floor shell space, with accompanying festivities on the side lawn. The event was rolling full-steam by the time students were finished with their afternoon anatomy labs.

Osteogenesis had a huge turnout despite an early exam for the second years and a long lab for ACOM's newest students. The food, provided by Chick-Fil-A, was quickly devoured, and many of the groups had a crowd until the end. The emergency medicine photo booth was a fan favorite, and the pediatrics club looked fantastic with their super hero theme. Two of the larger groups, American Medical Student Association (AMSA) and Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA), held contests for study materials.

"I really liked the opportunity to see all of the various interest groups that presented themselves at the event. It gave me a broad picture of the options available to me without the pressure to join. I also really liked the inflatable slide!" said first year osteopathic medical student Stef Mader.

The Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine Club had an OMT table set up, and treated students and faculty alike, answering questions and taking suggestions for a t-shirt design. Finally, the Ob/Gyn interest group (GO-BIG) may have had the most humorous booth at the event, combining anatomy with the southern game of cornhole. See second year osteopathic student Haley Martinez for photos of their exhibit.

After finishing up on the third floor, many students and their families made their way downstairs and enjoyed a little stress relief via the 22 foot inflatable slide and jousting ring. Popcorn and shaved ice was available for the festivities outside.

Student Advocates Association—The Support Behind the Student Physicians

By Jake Washofsky

The Student Advocates Association (SAA) was formed in the Spring of 2014 to provide an organized way for the significant others and families of ACOM students to communicate and get to know one another. Our mission is to provide support and education to the families of ACOM students and faculty; to support the entire ACOM student body, and to promote knowledge, understanding, and positive regard for osteopathic medicine in the Dothan area.

Our organization was founded by a group of significant others who felt that more could be done to help spouses, partners, and families adjust not only to life in Dothan (as many ACOM's students come from outside of the Wiregrass area), but more generally to life as the family of a medical student. Beginning with new applicants' interviews, we serve as a point of information for families, spouses, and significant others, addressing questions about life in Dothan like "What supermarkets are in Dothan?" and "How and when do I need to register my car or get a new driver's license?" Additionally, we help families navigate through some of the difficulties of medical school, including helping spouses and significant others gain a better understanding of the student loan process; learn better financial planning strategies; and serve as a conduit for official communication and unofficial experience about life in 3rd and 4th years.

In addition to serving our own membership, the SAA also strives to do as much as possible for the ACOM student body (including those with whom we're not in love)! During the spring semester, the SAA organized two snack days to coincide with one of the most grueling weeks of testing to date. With great support from local businesses, including Atlanta Bread Company, SAM's Club, Tib-A-Dor's Station BBQ, Chick-fil-A, Recovery Room, and La Bamba, we were able to provide a quick study break for all of ACOM's students during one of their toughest weeks of first year.

Lastly, the Student Advocates Association serves as a launching pad for social gatherings, philanthropic efforts, and community outreach. Since our establishment, we have hosted social mixers for the spouses of '17 and '18 students to meet; organized regular lunch groups, happy hours, and book club meetings; and served as a conduit for members to organize their own events (family park days and movie nights).

We are in the process of organizing our first two philanthropy events: ACOM SAA Fall Festival (mark your calendars for November 8th!) and the ACOM SAA Wish Tree. Fall Fest will not only serve as a fun, family-oriented farm day, but also benefit the Dothan Food Bank by asking attendees to bring a non-perishable food item; the Wish Tree will hopefully go up in early December and will aim to help make Christmas wishes come true for children in the pediatric wards of our two area hospitals (providing the ACOM community another avenue to engage with others in the Dothan area).

The ACOM SAA is associated with the national Student Advocates Association, the student-level of the Advocates for the American Osteopathic Association (AAOA). At each level, these organizations represent family, friends, and supporters of Osteopathic medicine, its students, and its physicians.

The ACOM SAA is an independent non-profit organization and can be reached at ACOMSAA@gmail.com. Be sure to keep up with our happenings at ACOMSAA.Blogspot.com.



The Student Advocates Association provides many fun ways for spouses and significant others of medical students to get involved.

How The Flu Vaccine Benefits You and Your Community

By Christine Dascalu, OMS-II

Falling leaves, a cool breeze, pumpkin spice lattes and boots can only mean one thing, right? It's flu season! Even though we currently find ourselves in the midst of an Ebola outbreak, Influenza and vaccinations will always be a topic of great discussion and debate. No matter what your stance is on the topic, the purpose of this article is to discuss the reasoning behind the influenza vaccination and its effects on the community.

As our society evolves, more emphasis is being placed on individuality and less on the community. However, we cannot forget that maintaining a sense of community has its benefits. One such benefit is the "herd immunity."

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) defines "herd immunity" (also known as "the herd effect" or "community immunity") as

"A situation in which a sufficient proportion of a population is immune to an infectious disease (through vaccination and/or prior illness) to make its spread from person to person unlikely. Even individuals not vaccinated (such as newborns and those with chronic illnesses) are offered some protection because the disease has little opportunity to spread within the community." For those of you thinking, "Well, why should I get vaccinated if herd immunity will protect me?" The truth is, the herd effect starts being effective only when 80-90% of the population is immune with the remaining 10-20% being those that cannot or will not be vaccinated. How is a baby under 6 months old that cannot be vaccinated protect itself from viruses that their body is too undeveloped to fight? What about those that cannot be vaccinated due to life-threatening allergies or medical conditions? How will they be protected from the flu this season?

That's where you come in.

Even though the emphasis of this discussion is the health of the community, it is clear that the herd effect cannot be achieved without the action of the individual. Part of the description of a healthy community as defined by The World Health Organization (WHO), is that it "offers access to health care services which focus on prevention and staying healthy." The essential component of a healthy community is prevention, as it is the key to keeping the mentioned at risk groups protected.

Some healthy individuals will choose to opt out of influenza vaccination this year, and while they may recover fairly quickly, they are still contagious and can spread the virus to those less equipped to handle it. The bottom line is that individual immunization extends much further than just benefitting the person. It is a prevention method that offers protection to the community, because the more people are vaccinated, the less the flu spreads.

ACOM Events Calendar

By Tiffanie Mann, OMS-II



Save the Date!

SUMMERFIELD SQUARE

Corvias campus living

Christmas Pajama Party
PANCAKES AND FRUIT FOR DINNER

DO NOT MISS THE FUN
Mickey's Twice Upon a Christmas and special Christmas crafts!

Details Coming Soon!

Summerfield Square Clubhouse
Children of all ages welcome

WEDNESDAY
Nov 26

55°F
33°

Sunny

THURSDAY
Thanksgiving

59°
43°

Sunny

FRIDAY
Nov 28

59°
28°

Partly Cloudy

Angel Tree

"For many kids, gifts donated through Angel Tree will be the only gifts they open on Christmas Day!"

Adopt an Angel

Sign up at ACOM
November 11-13th, 18th, 21st
or
December 3-4th

ALL GIFTS DUE DEC 4th!

Summerfield Christmas Party
December 9th

amsa
American Medical Student Association

ACOM PEDIATRICS

WE BELIEVE EVERY CHILD DESERVES A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Alabama Baptist CHILDREN'S HOMES & Family Ministries

Date: Friday 11/21/14
Location: District Ultra Lounge
158 N. Foster St
Dothan, AL

Time: 7pm-12am
Dress Code: Cocktail attire

ACOM SGA Presents...

CASINO NIGHT

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation

And Date Auction
To Benefit the **Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**

Tickets = \$10 Donation
(Event is open to guests)