

## Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine (VTC SOM)

**Statement:** Career Planning and Mentoring

**Subject:** Student Affairs

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Deciding on a career path in medicine can be a long and sometimes unsettling process, one that evolves over the entire undergraduate medical school experience. To help students with this process, the Office of Student Affairs has developed a comprehensive career planning program that spans all four years. The Office of Student Affairs can assist students in contacting mentors and setting up personal time with the Senior Dean for Student Affairs, Director of Student Affairs, and other faculty for career counseling.

VTC SOM offers the following opportunities and resources throughout the four years of school for career planning and mentoring.

**Year 1:** Students are exposed to different specialties through their Patient Centered Curriculum. Faculty from various specialties participate in the weekly case wrap-ups. The Senior Dean for Student Affairs coordinates a series of meetings during Block 3 titled “Introduction to the Clinical Departments” where faculty representatives from the VTC SOM clinical departments share about specialty and sub-specialty career options in their discipline. During Block 2, interested students are encouraged to join or form specialty-specific interest groups (SIGs) and become involved in specialty societies/organizations. The Director of Student Affairs facilitates a student activities fair to allow first year students to become more acquainted with the opportunities for involvement in the SIGs and other student organizations. Beginning second semester, students are also encouraged to participate in the CiM LIVE (Careers in Medicine Limited Vocational Exploration) process. This is designed to allow students to spend time with physicians in clinical specialties for which they desire to gain exposure. Also in the first year, the Senior Dean for Student Affairs is available to meet with any interested student to discuss their academic performance, learn about his/her background and interests in medicine, answer questions, and suggest mentors with similar interests. Students are not assigned faculty mentors, but are encouraged to contact specific faculty as they have questions. The Senior Dean for Student Affairs may direct a student to a particular faculty for mentoring. As part of their clinical skills curriculum, each student will be assigned a LACE preceptor, with whom they will work for the first 2 years and who can also function as a clinical advisor. The students also have access to upper level students as well as the resident physicians from the Carilion Clinic Graduate Medical Education programs for career guidance and mentoring. Such connections can be facilitated by the Senior Dean for Student Affairs.

**Year 2:** In the second part of Phase 1, the emphasis in the Patient-Centered Curriculum is on pathobiology. The clinical medicine disciplines all participate in the presentation and discussion of these cases, offering both faculty and students the opportunity to explore clinical interests in many different disciplines. Involvement in specialty interest groups is encouraged and the CiM LIVE process continues. During the second year, students also form and meet with their research committee. This committee includes at least one clinician, and offers additional advising opportunities. Starting in Block VIII, students may choose a specialty faculty advisor. This process is guided by the Senior Dean for Student Affairs and assisted by other advisors including the PTLC leader and research mentors.

**Year 3:** Students during Phase 2 rotate in various clinical specialties, giving them first hand exposure to these disciplines, the training involved, and the “culture.” Students often change their career paths as a result of their experiences in the clinical years, and have the opportunity to discuss these changes with their various faculty mentors within or outside the specialty of interest. Specialty interest group meetings will continue to be encouraged to provide students contact with physicians in various clinical disciplines of interest. All students will be required to choose a specialty-specific faculty advisor by January of Year 3. The Senior Dean for Student Affairs, the Senior Dean for Academic Affairs, the Associate Dean for Clinical Science - Years 3 and 4, the Clerkship Directors, and the Department Chairs can assist in this process. Students can change this advisor should their career plans change. Students are encouraged to meet with their specialty-specific faculty advisor to discuss strategies for scheduling 4<sup>th</sup> year electives. The Senior Dean for Student Affairs is also available to provide guidance as needed. During the third year, students receive information from the Office of Student Affairs about the Visiting Student Application Service (VSAS), the Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS), the National Residency Match Program (NRMP), and the Fellowship and Residency Electronic Interactive Database Access (FREIDA).

**Year 4:** Clinical experiences, particularly “acting internships,” give students a more in-depth experience in a specialty that is potentially of interest to them. The specialty interest groups meetings are an opportunity for students to discuss with residents and faculty different programs around the country, how to interview, factors to consider in the decision making process, etc. Students will meet with their specialty advisor during the summer of Year 4 to discuss application and interview strategies. The Senior Dean for Student Affairs meets with each student early in the final year to answer questions and to discuss some of the information that is included in the Medical Student Performance Evaluation. The Director of Student Affairs meets with each student prior to ERAS application submission. Transition to Residency I and II are two-week required curricular experiences during the fourth year and includes discussions of career advice, financial planning, and residency life.

### **Specific Programs:**

#### **1. AAMC Careers in Medicine**

VTCSOM participates in the AAMC Careers in Medicine (CiM) program. During Year One, all students are required to create a personal profile at the “Careers in Medicine” online program sponsored by the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) at <https://www.aamc.org/cim/>.

“Careers in Medicine” is a four-phase career planning program that works in partnership with medical schools and is designed to help students select a medical specialty and apply to a residency program, starting in the first year of their medical school experience. Students create a personal profile by taking an online self-assessment to help them identify their values, interests, skills, personality and practice needs. This confidential personal information allows students to explore over one hundred specialties with a variety of references and decision-making tools that are designed to help students select a specialty and apply to residency programs to meet their career objectives.

#### **2. Careers in Medicine Limited Vocational Exploration (CiM LIVE)**

A Careers in Medicine Limited Vocational Exploration (CiM LIVE) is a voluntary opportunity for students to shadow and spend time with specific physicians in order to explore a clinical specialty and/or gain additional exposure to a clinical area of interest or potential interest. VTCSOM, in collaboration with

Carilion Clinic, is supportive of these activities. Such activities are separate and distinct from the student's Longitudinal Ambulatory Clinical Experience (LACE). As such, a CiM LIVE experience has distinct guidelines that must be followed.

Any student desiring to perform a CiM LIVE should contact the faculty member with whom they would like to spend time and inquire as to the faculty member's willingness to have the student observe. If the student is uncertain who they should contact, they should inquire with the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or Director of Student Affairs and he/she can help facilitate the initial contact. Once this contact is made and permission verified, the student should contact the clinician directly to make more specific arrangements with regard to date(s) and time(s). CiM Live opportunities must be scheduled around VTC classes and clinical rotations.

Once these specific arrangements have been made, it is the student's responsibility to contact the Director of Student Affairs via e-mail to provide the supervising physician and the date(s), time(s) and location of the CiM LIVE experience. Failure to do so could result in the student's being denied further CiM LIVE opportunities.

All VTCSOM and Carilion Clinic patient care policies and procedures for students are applicable during student CiM LIVE experiences. A student who is on academic or non-academic probation may not participate in the CiM LIVE program.

### 3. Introduction to Medical Specialties

The "Careers in Medicine: Introduction to Medical Careers" is an 10 session series facilitated by the 9 VTCSOM Clinical Departments and the VTCSOM Office of Student Affairs. The purpose of the series is to provide the opportunity for the M1 students to meet representatives from those departments and receive an overview of the career possibilities available to those who choose to train in the various discipline/s included in that clinical department.

The series is held over lunch during Blocks III and IV. The VTCSOM Clinical Department Chairs will choose representative leaders from their department (can include the Chair) to meet with the students (9 sessions). There will be one session with representatives from specialties with a stand-alone residency but not a separate Carilion Clinic clinical department (anesthesiology, neurology, dermatology, etc).

The following is an outline of some of the items that are recommended to be covered during the gathering:

- Overview the particular discipline/specialty/department
  - Why does it exist?
  - What makes it unique?
  - What encompasses the specialties represented in the department?
- Some important history of the specialty
- The specialty in the context of Carilion Clinic
- Present status and future trends for the specialty locally and nationally
- Answering the question, "Why would one choose to go into this discipline/specialty?"
- Answering the question, "Why might students choose to not go into this discipline/specialty?"

#### 4. Specialty-Specific Advisors

The specialty specific advisors are exemplary professional and personal role models who embody the character and skills desired of our VTCSOM graduates. Each M3 student will be asked to identify specialty(ies) of interest by January. At that point, they will be assigned specialty-specific advisor(s) who have been trained by the Senior Dean for Student Affairs. All VTCSOM faculty are eligible to be informal specialty advisors. The primary role of the specialty specific advisor is to assist students with decisions about specialty choice. In addition, specialty specific advisors play a role, in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Clinical Sciences- Years 3 & 4 and the Clerkship Directors, in academic advising of students during the clinical years. Specifically, the specialty specific advisor will:

- Complete yearly training given by the Senior Dean for Student Affairs.
- Inquire of advisee(s) as to how they are handling the workload of the M3 year and provide guidance and resources for those who are having difficulty adjusting.
- Honestly assess how well advisee(s) qualifications match the specialty they are considering and offer suggested alternate options for the advisee(s) deemed less competitive.
- Meet with advisee(s) in the winter of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year, prior to the M4 elective lottery to advise the student(s) on elective choices.
- Assist advisee(s) on the application for extramural electives.
- Assist the advisee(s) with preparation for USMLE Step 2 CK and CS.
- Meet with advisee(s) in the early summer to assist with preparation of the ERAS application.
- Advise on the ideal individuals to write letters of recommendation.
- Read and provide guidance on the personal statement.
- Arrange for a Mock Interview.
- Assist advisee(s) with scheduling interviews.
- Assist advisee(s) in completing a rank list.