WHAT I DID LAST SUMMER

MS I's: Because this is posted in a public internet space, we removed full names, email addresses, and phone numbers. Ms.studentaffairs@uth.tmc.edu can provide additional contact information on request.

For the first month of summer I returned home to do research at the Mayo Clinic back in Arizona. However, the second month is the one I think students would be interested in. I spent a month living in Ecuador with a family through the Cachamsi Medical Spanish Program. The program put students in hospitals or clinics to allow them to shadow local physicians. I was matched in the emergency room of the general public hospital of Riobamba. Every weekday from 8am-12, I spent time in the ER learning from and observing the medical teams. In the evenings, the program had a 2 hour medical Spanish course with a professional instructor. On the weekends we were free to travel the country and be tourists. It was a great experience and I think that some of the MS1's may be interested in it. There were about 13 other students from UTH that also did the program during July, and several more during June.
C. Tillinghast

I did the Summer Research Training Program through the National Institute of Diabetes Digestive and Kidney Diseases at Vanderbilt University. It was 8-10 weeks of mentored research, clinical rounds, and symposium meetings ending with a NIDDK medical student research conference where I got to do a poster presentation of my research. Feel free to include my name and contact info. It was a great program and it's paid :) I did my research on obesity and the CNS but there are tons of options. Let me know if you need any more info from me. Thanks!
M. McKenney

Last summer, I went to Ecuador with a program called Cachamsi. It was focused on medical Spanish, with class for half the day, shadowing half the day and staying with a host family. I can send you more information if you like and you may include my name and email address to give to MS1's.
A. Grouls

Something that I did last summer was sponsored research through the Foundation for Anesthesia Education and Research (FAER). They have a medical student program whose application will be open Nov 15-Dec 15. If accepted into the program the student is matched to one of the five host institutions that he or she selected and is able to do research with some talented MDs or PhDs. There is a $3200 stipend for the 8 week program and 15% of the time is supposed to be clinical so students will actually get a chance to go into the OR and learn things in a clinical setting with attendings/fellows/residents. Lastly, acceptance into the program means students will get a chance to present their findings at the FAER medicals student symposium at the annual ASA conference which will be in New Orleans next year. FAER provides a $1000 stipend to cover conference related expenses.
A. Emerald

I did a Research Clerkship at NASA. Great opportunity and a stepping stone for those interested in Aerospace Medicine. The Program is only four weeks long and gives you an opportunity to do some research and still have time left over for other goals with your summer.
J. Mayberry

Last summer I did research for the first half and the second half of the summer I spent hiking and camping in the Himalayas while doing clinical work with unreached tribal population in the area. The group I went with was through Himalayan Health Exchange and one of the most well put together educational trips that I have ever been a part of. We were in the Northern region of India in the state of Himachael Pradesh, in the Lahaul Valley. We spent the days doing clinic work in different areas of the valley and rotated through the different medical tents, including triage, general
medicine, OBGYN, Pediatrics, pharmacy, dentistry. The trip was an amazing way to get to practice the skills I had learned throughout first year and I got to learn and practice some of the more focused clinical exam skills we are learning during second year. As medical students we did the full H&P and then presented the patients’ case to an ‘attending’ (Physicians or last year residents) and then talked through with them what we thought the diagnosis and plan for each patient should be. We usually worked from 9-3/4 with an hour for lunch and spent the afternoons at our campsite where we played cricket, slept, went on hikes, traveled to nearby villages/temples, etc. The crew was extensive (I think around 20 people) and served as our translators as well. Overall the experience was one of the best I’ve had thus far and if given the opportunity I would return to do it again in a heartbeat.

V. Bailey

I worked with 13-14 year old girls in three different summer camps involving MDA (muscular dystrophy), camp smiles (cerebral palsy), and camp rainbow connection (hematology/oncology). It was probably the most difficult, but most rewarding thing I have ever done in my life. Camp Smiles was definitely the most difficult because I was paired with a 14-year old girl who required tremendous amount of energy and attention. Each camp I was paired with a camper who I had to be a friend and caretaker for the entire week. I admit it drained a lot of my energy, but it is an experience I will never forget. I believe being immersed in the school work of 1st year makes you forget of why we even decided to enter medical school. These summer camps remind me and motivate me every day of why I want to someday be a doctor who will be able to help these kids. These camps are also a reality check for me, as I realize I take such simple things, like walking and talking, for granted.

J. Kim

For the first few weeks of the summer, I spent time travelling outside of the country. The second part of my summer I spent during research in New York with the Memorial-Sloan Kettering Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship. I learned about the program through a Google search and I ended up applying over the winter holiday. The application was a fairly easy process and allowed students to read through the different projects being offered for the upcoming summer and also who were the prospective mentors/PIs. I worked under the Radiation Oncology Thoracic Team and had the privilege of working under 2 radiation oncologists. Memorial-Sloan Kettering is a large cancer center located in the Upper East Side of Manhattan. Although the program does not provide housing, they offer a generous stipend which was enough for me to cover my housing costs and have a good amount left over to enjoy the city. Overall, over the course of 8 weeks I was able to complete my project and present a poster, as well as shadow several disciplines within oncology including surgical oncology and pediatric neuro-oncology.

V. Adeseye

SMDEP is a program for undergrads who are pursuing a career in medicine or dentistry. They took all of the major core classes for their MCAT (organic, physics etc.) as well as some more medically oriented classes like anatomy and microbiology. Along with their classwork, the students also worked on their personal statements, interviewing skills and attended different workshops. Our roles as tutors/mentors was to facilitate all of this. We would tutor them in the various subjects, give them advice on how to apply to medical school and what they should be doing, hold mock interviews, help with their personal statements, teach anatomy sessions in the lab with specimens and pretty much anything else that needed to be done to make sure everything went smoothly. If you love teaching and helping those who are following us, I highly recommend being a part of SMDEP. The hours were pretty much 8-5, sometimes ending earlier and sometimes ending later. There was rarely any work that we would have to take home to get done. The students stay at the Rice dorms so we would go two at a time to RA for at least one week. During that week, you were "on-call" to deal with any problems (mostly students locking themselves out of their rooms). Our weekends were free unless you were "on-call" or tutoring any of the students. Also it’s a paid position, so that’s nice! If you have any more questions, please don't hesitate to send me an email, I would be happy to help.

M. Allen
I worked at a summer camp for high school students called Explo at Yale University in New Haven, CT. The summer camp is academic in nature and my job was to write the curriculum for and teach a class on first aid and a class on the anatomy and function of the heart. During the day I would teach for about 3 hours, eat great food, and hang out with high school students. On the weekends Explo sends its teachers on cool trips with the students (I saw a Broadway show, went paintballing, white water rafting, and to a Yankees game) for one day of the weekend and gives them the other weekend days off. Most teachers at the camp are also RAs and live with a group of students. The students are incredible and from all over the world and the people I got to work with were amazingly inspiring. Explo pays really well, and gives all of its employees 7 weeks of room and board on Yale's old campus. Visit the website to learn more! explo.org/360/yale

C. Reynolds

This summer I worked for the National Youth Leadership Forum on Medicine in Houston, a program that I myself participated in as a high school student. This 10-day program is for high school students interested in pursuing a career in health care, most of whom want to become physicians. Including training and our days off, the job lasted from June 30th to July 30th. We got a day or two off after training, and then another 4 days off between the two 10-day sessions. It was really nice having almost all of June off because I was able to unwind from school, go on vacation, and catch up on all the "normal people" things I had to put off during finals, like movies and novels. If you plan to be involved in any of the Retreat committees, you can definitely do that and work for NYLF. I was the committee head for Retreat registration, and I was able to do everything by working on it at night and on my days off.

The students participate in various simulations, have a chance to hear from physicians in many different specialties, and learn new skills, such as suturing and estimating a blood pressure. I loved getting to be a part of their learning process and see how much they grow in such a short amount of time. I also thought it was helpful to them that I am a medical student, so I was able to tell them about my experiences in medical school, some extra skills they might not have learned (like listening to breath and heart sounds with a stethoscope), and about my personal journey to medical school. It was also really fun to get to hear all their stories from high school and talk to them about applying for college and my personal study abroad experience in Italy. In addition to leading the high school students, I was able to meet and get to know about 20 other group leaders who participated in the Houston program with me. We all still keep in touch, and I was able to make many new friends from the program.

Some other nice perks of participating in NYLF: You get paid, we were flown out to D.C. and back for training, we stayed in a hotel in Houston for the full month, breakfast and dinner are provided daily and a daily $10 stipend is given for lunch, and meals are also provided during training. You also get to go everywhere with the students, including Moody Gardens and Kemah, and anytime they have a clinical site visit or med school visit, you get to participate as well! I even learned how to intubate a patient and perform a lumbar puncture as part of one of their clinical site visits to the Skills Center here at UT Houston.

Overall, it was a fantastic summer, and I had a wonderful time bonding with my two groups as well as with my fellow group leaders. Please feel free to email or Facebook message me if you want to know more!

M. Kaissi

Basically the HPSP, which stands for Health Professions Scholarship Program, is a scholarship offered by the branches of the military (I chose Army, because it's the best) to eligible students in the medical fields in which tuition, a monthly stipend, paid summer rotations at Army hospitals, and other benefits are all compensated for by the Army. After graduation and commission as a Captain, you complete a military residency just like civilians do and then are assigned a permanent duty station (PDS) to serve and practice as a physician for soldiers and their beneficiaries. There are many opportunities for deployment to overseas locations or active combat areas like Iraq and Afghanistan, which is what I hope to do as either a family or emergency physician pending on our country's engagements at the time. I had already
been planning to join the service but when this opportunity came up it fit my plans perfectly so I took the plunge, signed my life away, and couldn't be more satisfied with my decision thus far.

J.M. Bustos

I did the Medical Student Summer Research Program at UT-Southwestern. It was a great opportunity to do clinical research, while also getting the chance to meet people at a different medical institution. The director of the program worked really hard to make sure all of the summer research students were paired up with a mentor that fit their interests. I wanted to work with patients instead of doing bench research, so I was paired with physician whose research focused on clinical trials. I helped out with an NIH study of different diabetes management strategies. It was fun to work with patients and track their progress over a period of a couple of months. If you're interested in clinical or bench research, and want to see what it's like to be at a different medical center, I highly recommend the program! Applications are available sometime in January or February, and the program coordinator, Amanda Arista (amanda.arista@utsouthwestern.edu), is very responsive to questions about the program.

C. Yard

For the summer I worked at the National Youth Leadership Forum for Medicine in Houston. It's a program for high school students to learn about medical school and the medical field. I needed a job in order to cover my expenses during the summer, so I worked as a faculty advisor. I had 1 week paid training, then worked (2) ten day forums with 20-25 students. I taught a curriculum, chaperoned on field trips, and had other responsibilities all while staying at a Houston Double Tree Hotel. The days were long but we were paid an average of $1800 for about 1 month of work.

K. Lopez

Sure. I worked with a flight surgeon down at NASA, figuring out what it meant to be a doctor for astronauts. A lot of the work centered around nutrition for NASA retirees, medical requirements for astronaut applicants, and how to reverse atherosclerosis with exercise and nutrition. The project I most enjoyed working on was assessing sleep in astronauts. In zero gravity a normal night's sleep is difficult to come by. We did overnight studies with various sleep medications to determine the appropriate dosage to put astronauts to sleep, and wake them up urgently and see if they can still function.

I worked for at NASA each summer as an undergrad so I have a lot of different experiences. I worked twice for a flight surgeon, I know what it means to work in mission control during a mission, the exercise and nutrition requirements for astronauts, and the international collaboration that takes place in making sure our astronauts stay safe. I've also worked in space life science research for anyone that is looking for a more basic science approach (bone density studies, radiation, immunology). I'd love to talk to anyone that is interested in a career in space medicine.

N. Myers