



Perspective/Opinion

Becoming a Medical Student During a Pandemic

By Sarah Farhan, M1

Preparing myself to be a medical student has been a long, tedious journey overall, but I didn't think it would be such an impactful first experience. Firstly, there were many things we had to do even before the orientation week, which started solidifying the beginning of the process of acquaintance with this entirely new environment. I was personally more anxious than excited because it seemed to me that I was making a decision that would alter my life course for at least the next six years. When orientation finally started, this idea continued to grow bigger because just about everyone made sure to say how big of a deal it is to enter this realm and the sharing the challenges of being a part of it. Orientation was exciting in some ways because I got to meet (mainly virtually) all the students that will spend these next four years with me.

I was pleasantly surprised by how nice and welcoming everyone (students and faculty alike) was, and it eased a lot of the tension that was building up throughout the summer. I was still very overwhelmed by all these sudden commitments that presented themselves through events to attend and agreements to sign.

After the term officially started, I was happy to finally be in my academic comfort zone again where I would mostly study and pass exams, but this was obviously also very different than what I was used to. I was still in the process of wrapping my head around all the events that transpired during orientation, and all the names and faces of the people that I should be familiar with by now. I think a big part of the unfamiliar anxiety I was having was due to most things being virtual. I felt very restricted from getting a better perspective on the medical school environment because I was attending all these things from home, and I didn't feel like I was participating (in something that was already imposing itself in my life).

Overall, the first two weeks were very difficult because we were expected to be socially active even though most of us haven't been for the past year or so, but I still really appreciated all the efforts of the faculty and students and I truly think it worked for most people. Currently I'm more familiar with everything and I could even say I'm comfortable here, even though it has

only been about two months into the term. I like the class set up now because I can choose to attend lectures from home or in class. The times where I do have to attend a course or discussion is always facilitated to small groups, so I also feel comfortable, and the groups are always different and that way I get to meet most of my classmates but in a more natural classroom setting of small groups. As for the classes themselves, I think it goes as it always has for me, where I take the first round of exams and assess myself on how I can improve my routine. I must be much more sensitive to the passage of time now but that is also, like most things, a matter of habit rather than a skill.

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