

## University of California, Los Angeles David Geffen School of Medicine

There is a quote that every medical student at UCLA hears: “The day you started medical school, you officially decided on your career as a physician. Or so you thought...” With this statement, the long road of medical school begins along with the most important decision of a student’s life. UCLA’s Student Affairs Office (SAO) and its nine advisors support its students as they begin to sort it all out. The SAO sponsors multiple programs available to students throughout his or her years in medical school.

**Resident Roundtable:** A set of open forum discussion sessions organized throughout the year. Residents provide a unique perspective about their personal career choices and the application process to residency. These talks are a chance for students to explore different careers outside of the classroom and clinic. To keep the dialogue open and honest, Resident Roundtables are only for students. .

**Virtual Advisor:** Advisors can be searched by specialty or area of interest; over 200 UCLA Faculty and Alumni can be accessed from the Virtual Advisor Database. Because both alumni and faculty are in the virtual advisor network, students may gain access to a group of advisors and mentors to which they would normally not be exposed. The Student Affairs Office strives to provide timelines to the advisors to give them an idea of what the current medical school curriculum looks like and what issues students are dealing with at specific time points throughout their four years. The Office also keeps track on the usage of the Virtual Advisor by students in each year in order to gain a better understanding of when students are beginning to seek advice.

**Brown Bag Lunch Lecture Series:** The sessions allow students in the first and second years to work with faculty advisors to showcase careers that have a high level of interest. While the college system helps facilitate this process, there is some difficulty organizing lectures between colleges at times; students continue to work at improving communication.

**MAA and SAO Career Conference:** The Medical Alumni Association teams up with the Student Affairs Office to put on a Career Conference where alumni and faculty present their perspectives on their careers. We include atypical careers in the panel. Past representatives have included CIA and FBI agents and representatives from industry and media.

UCLA’s students are organized in January of Year 3 into a College. The Colleges serve as a clearinghouse for one-on-one, specialty-specific advising. Specialties overlap, so students may affiliate with a College and still change their minds about their career. Each College represents a group of similar specialties that share common traits and goals. There are currently five Colleges within the College System:

- Acute Care College – time-based decision-making specialties
- Applied Anatomy College – anatomically-oriented specialties
- Medical Leadership College – dual degree seekers
- Medical Specialties College – sub-specialties focused on clinical reasoning and advanced fellowship training
- Primary Care – longitudinal care specialties

The Colleges are tasked with providing specialty-specific advising regarding fourth year elective scheduling, residency applications, and the scholarly project. In addition, they serve as a source of career advising.

Students are introduced to the College concept in the first and second year through selectives, Career Specialty Interest Groups (CSIGs) and College outreach to help them affiliate with a College. Each selective and CSIG is housed within the sponsoring College that the group or course relates to the most. The College Chairs assign selectives to the Colleges, while the Medical Student Council assigns CSIGs to a Sponsoring College. Each College is also responsible for providing outreach programming to introduce students in the first three years to the goals and ideals of the College.

The SAO remains a centralized resource for general advising. It deals with the mechanics of the application process and identifies sources of information outside of the colleges. The SAO also works closely with each College to insure that students are receiving equal opportunities regardless of the career they choose or the College to which they are [affiliated](#). As always, students are encouraged to use [Careers in Medicine](#) through the AAMC, as well as Roadmap to Residency (given to all students at the start of fourth year) to aid students in their career decisions.

### Contact Info:

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**Best thing about the program?**

“It’s very difficult to pinpoint [the] one ‘most important item’ of our career advising program. The strength of our career advising lies in the fact that the Student Affairs Office utilizes all of the resources that we have available and are constantly looking for ways to innovate our programming to meet the needs of our students. Our biggest and most important resource is our knowledgeable faculty and staff, and a successful program must utilize each individual’s unique talents to serve the student body.” – Student Affairs Office

“The student affairs office is responsive to our needs as students.” – OSR representative