Welcome to Pritzker, and congratulations on the beginning of your medical career!

We’re Crystal Lin and Jill Baranowski, members of the entering class of 2017, and we’ll be serving as your peer Academic Co-Chairs. Our role as Academic Co-Chairs is to help you navigate the Pritzker Curriculum and put you in touch with the resources that will help you succeed here. The courses each quarter are different, and we hope to help you transition smoothly between them. At the beginning of each quarter, we will provide you with an overview of the upcoming classes, share tips, and offer an opportunity to ask questions.

During orientation, you will get an overview of the Pritzker curriculum, explaining how it is designed to guide you on your road to becoming a physician. It will set the tone for what will be expected of you as medical students and what you can expect from your peers and the faculty. Then, we will have a panel of students lined up for a Q&A discussion about what to expect in your first quarter and general advice for adjusting to your first year of medical school. We understand that orientation will be a whirlwind, so we’ll be here along the way to offer guidance and healthy perspective as you navigate this journey.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you transition to the medical school mindset and Pritzker culture.

1. **Trust the process!** While the Pritzker community is constantly improving our learning experience, they’ve been doing this for a long time. The system is set up for you to succeed. Anytime you catch yourself feeling overwhelmed, remember that there are generations of Pritzker students that came before you, many of whom will now be your instructors, that probably felt the same way and did just fine.

2. **Take responsibility for your own learning!** This is not meant to contradict point 1, but rather to set some context. Pass/Fail is a beautiful thing and (see point 1) has years of evidence to back it up. That said, the content that you will learn throughout medical school is intended to make you an excellent physician down the road. Take time to invest in yourself and your future patients.

3. **Don’t be afraid to experiment and figure out what works for you!** The learning environment in medical school may be significantly different than what you’re used to. You’ll find that there’s no shortage of resources, as in, more than you could ever use effectively. It’s important to figure out what works for you and not let it stress you out if other people take a different approach.

Now for more specifics about your first quarter: Hopefully you’ve had a chance to read the letter included in this mailing from *The Human Body* course director, Dr. Callum Ross. As a supplement to his letter and the list of required and recommended texts for the course, we wanted to provide you with some feedback from our classmates about helpful resources and general tips for success. Take some time to peruse the following before you buy resources, but keep in mind that everyone has their own unique learning style.

We hope what follows provides a helpful preview of autumn quarter and the year to come. Please email us with any questions or concerns regarding academics or the curriculum. It’s our job to make your transition into MS1s as fun and seamless as possible!

Enjoy your summer, and see you in August!

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We polled our classmates from the entering class of 2017, asking them a variety of questions about anatomy resources and general advice about transitioning to medical school. Here’s what they said.

**The Transition to Medical School**

First, some quick stats from the 37 respondents from our class:
- 43% came to med school “straight through”, while 57% took at least one year off.
- 73% had a traditionally “pre-med” major, while 27% did not.
- Only 16% had previously taken an anatomy course.
- 97% did NOT study over the summer before starting med school, and those who did reported that it wasn’t helpful.

The bottom line here is that if you took time off or didn’t follow a traditional path to medicine, you are not alone. This will not impede your ability to be successful. Just focus on enjoying your summer!

Additionally, regardless of your path to medicine, your study strategies may change. Our class learned to:
- **Spread out study time:** review a little material each day instead of cramming before exams
- **Effectively use class time:** come prepared and stay focused
- **Actively learn:** understand the big picture to prioritize the most relevant information

Above all else, medical school is a time to try new things, including learning styles. If you find your undergraduate studying strategies not working, switch it up. And there’s no better time than in anatomy.

**The Human Body: Anatomy**

The following is a list of common resources that students use in Anatomy along with descriptions of each and how they were used.

**Netter’s flash cards:** Frank Netter was an artist credited with rendering anatomical structures in a simple yet accurate way. The flashcards are organized by unit and follow the course fairly well. They’ll run you $30-40 online depending on edition, or you may be able to purchase used from an upperclassman.
- Percent of students who PURCHASED: 71%
- Percent of students who USED: 57%
- Comments on how it was used: Good resource to use at the beginning of each unit to familiarize yourself with structures prior to lecture. Most helpful for Head & Neck and Upper and Lower Limb units.
An Atlas of the Human Body: Atlases are visual and written descriptions of the human body usually divided regionally or by organ system. There is a lot of variation in the way they are organized as well as in price. Copies are available for use in lab.

- Percent of students who PURCHASED: 7%
- Percent of students who USED: 30%
- Comments on how it was used: Great as an extra reference in lab or when you just need another view of something that isn’t clicking from lecture.

Gray’s Anatomy: The classic anatomy teaching tool! Gray’s is a book with images and detailed descriptions of human anatomy. Copies are available for students to share.

- Percent of students who PURCHASED: 4%
- Percent of students who USED: 16%
- Comments on how it was used: A good resource to use in lab or to prep for the practical exams.

Lecture Slides: Dr. Ross’s slides that he presents during lecture. Generally the tests will be aligned with his slides. Slides are posted online.

- Percent of students who USED: 97%
- Comments on how it was used: Not surprisingly, the lecture slides serve as most students’ primary study resource for the written exams. Strategies vary as to pre-reading before versus reviewing after lecture, but generally plan to spend a lot of time with the lecture slides.

Embryology.ch: This is a website that is especially helpful for visualizing structures in embryology that you will not be exposed to in the lab. It’s not the easiest to navigate, but don’t worry. Dr. Ross usually includes links to what is most relevant in his lecture slides.

- Percent of students who USED: 68%
- Comments on how it was used: This is a good resource to reference when something from lecture is not clear or you just need more detailed descriptions to solidify your understanding.

Thieme Dissector: You will get access to this online resource after setting up an account. You’ll get more details about how to do this once you’re here. The dissector includes step-by-step instructions on how to dissect and indentify structures. It has video descriptions and even quizzes to test your practical knowledge. Each day in lab, you will be working through specific sections of the dissector.

- Percent of students who USED: 78%
- Comments on how it was used: Many people found it helpful to review relevant sections in the dissector prior to lab, so they had an idea what was in store for that day. The videos and quizzes were also helpful in reviewing for practical exams.

vMicro: This is another online resource that Dr. Ross will reference in his slides, usually with links. You just have to be signed in with your university account to get access. The tool shows histology slides (images of stained human tissues captured under a microscope).

- Percent of students who USED: 49%
- Comments on how it was used: This is a good resource to study for the histology questions on exams, but really just for images that may not otherwise be clear.

Visible Body or Essential Anatomy: These are both apps that allow you to visualize in 3D, easily toggling on/off different structures. Visible Body is free through the University, while Essential Anatomy costs $20. Essential Anatomy comes highly recommended by those who purchased it.

- Percent of students who PURCHASED: 32%
- Percent of students who USED: 70%
- Comments on how it was used: These apps are great for use in a variety of ways, including use in lab, studying for osteology (bone) exams, studying for practical exams, and just generally understanding how things are spatially related.
Wheater's Histology: This is a book with pictures and descriptions of histology methods and interpretation. Dr. Ross uses a lot of Wheater’s images in his slides. A few copies will be available for students to reference.
- Percent of students who PURCHASED: 4%
- Percent of students who USED: 19%
- Comments on how it was used: A good resource for better understanding histology or if a concept is just not clicking.

The bottom line is that you don’t need to buy anything yet. You can check out some of these resources online if you’re interested, but don’t feel like you need to run out and buy all of these things. Almost 30% of our respondents didn’t buy any of the resources listed above, so it really is up to you.

Anatomy Lab
Anatomy lab is a special, yet potentially daunting place. Luckily, our class has some tips for success:
- Come prepared: a positive attitude and some basic knowledge can take you a long way.
- Learn from the cadavers: take a look around the lab! Teach each other!
- Never be afraid to ask for help: whether you’re asking for techniques or help locating a structure.

Overall, make this experience useful for you and your group!

Some Practical Advice:
- Anatomy lab SMELLS! We have plenty of old scrubs for you to use, but if you have old gym shoes and undergarments, bring them. Most people end up throwing these things away at the end, so don’t bring anything nice into the lab.
- The lab is kept pretty cold, so along the same lines, you may want to have an old long sleeve shirt to wear under your scrubs.
- Depending on your hair length and texture, you may want to invest in a cap to minimize the smell that your hair picks up. For long hair, you’ll definitely want to wear it up.

Overall First Year Advice
As we wrap up our final few days at MS1s, we asked our class to reflect on our first year. Here’s a few things they want to say, from our class to yours:
- Find balance: embrace your wellness, focus on what drives you to pursue medicine, and take a day off if you want.
- Take advantage of the time in first year: explore the city, jump into the lake, and try new restaurants.
- Reach out if you need ANYTHING: our class, the upperclassmen, the faculty, and the administration are all invested in your success and wellbeing - ask us anything.

Above all else, get to know each other, support each other, and build relationships that will last a lifetime.