

MD/PhD Program Events: Opportunities for Student and Faculty Interaction

- **Yearly Retreat** in August
- **MD/PhD Dinner Seminars**—held six times each academic year (typically three times per semester), these meetings alternate between an informal faculty presentation, a presentation by residents or fellows, and a visiting faculty lecture. The Events Chair of the Student Council is responsible for scheduling speakers and selecting food. These sessions represent outstanding opportunities for students to interact in a scientific, collegial forum. Students are expected to attend at least 2 sessions each semester as detailed in the Student Council Guidelines (page 9). Some sessions are devoted to career choices. A popular forum from past years is a round table discussion with faculty and fellows at different career stages discussing their integration of research and clinical training.
- **Medical Scientist Research Symposium (MSRS) and Revisit Weekend**—our MD/PhD students play a very active role in recruiting potential matriculants through their extensive involvement with hosting applicants, and planning/participating in both the MSRS and Revisit Weekend activities. Attendance at the half-day MSRS symposium is mandatory unless excused by Dr. O'Banion. Specific MSRS/Revisit Weekend activities include a combined luncheon and poster session by current MD/PhD students, as well as an elegant dinner at a historic mansion that is attended by a large number of faculty, program directors and administrators.
- **Local and National Meetings**—in addition to attending meetings in their specific fields, our students take advantage of opportunities to interact with MD/PhD students from other programs. Locally, Drs. O'Banion, Steiner and MD/PhD students attend the Annual Tri-Institutional MD/PhD Research Conference, held jointly with MD/PhD students from Syracuse and Buffalo. We also send 6 students to the National MD/PhD Student's Conference in Colorado each summer and encourage attendance at the American Physician Scientists Association Annual meeting held in Chicago each April. These represent outstanding opportunities to learn about other programs, current research, and career options. Details about student travel support are provided in the next section.
- **Longitudinal Rounds Course**— throughout their graduate years, MSTP students are required to participate in Longitudinal Clerkship Experiences. During each academic year, the MSTP hosts a Longitudinal Rounds Course once a month, which allows all graduate students currently in a Clerkship Experience to present medical cases with current faculty, and their fellow trainees. Students must attend a minimum of three (3) LR sessions and present at least one (1) patient encounter during the course of each LCE.
- **Social Events**—throughout the year, MSTP students organize events about every other month. These include outdoor activities such as white-water rafting or downhill skiing, an annual maple sugar pancake excursion, holiday parties, and dinner or brunch for students graduating from the program in May. These are always well attended and enjoyed by spouses, significant others, program directors and our administrators.

Support for MD/PhD Students at the University of Rochester

Funds supporting MD/PhD students come from a variety of sources. Our MSTP grant provides tuition and stipend support for a set number of students (currently 14) as well as some additional funds for programmatic and student expenses. Some students also receive support as Clinical Translational Science Award Fellows. Medical School Dean's funds cover a larger portion of support, including funds from the Graduate Program for the first 21 months of graduate training. Following this period, stipend support for students in the graduate phases is derived from departmentally based training grants, individual investigator (R01) or program project (P01) grants, or individual predoctoral fellowships obtained by the student. All MD/PhD students are encouraged to apply for these prestigious awards and should take the MSTP Grant-Writing Course in the graduate school years, as well as talk to departmental, thesis and program advisors to learn about these opportunities. **Because of new limits imposed by NIH, applications for MD/PhD (F30) NRSA Fellowships must be made before the student has been in the program for 48 months (note that this time includes summer rotations started before medical school and any graduate school or medical school training prior to entering the MD/PhD program). Thus, it is critical to plan applications for such fellowships early in graduate training, ideally near the beginning of the G2 year.**

Students are fully funded for their entire tenure in the MD/PhD Program. Specific items that are covered include:

- Tuition (for academic year 2021-2022 it is \$64,000 for medical students; \$57,088 for graduate students) estimated to increase 4% in future years.
- Stipend throughout both medical and graduate school. The stipend level for academic year 2021-22 is \$30,761. The University is committed to maintaining a competitive stipend for its students, so this amount will likely increase in future years.
- Health Fees and Disability Insurance. Note that current policies, in compliance with the policies of the National Institutes of Health, allow us to cover health fees for students only. Health insurance coverage for spouses and minor dependents of our students will be available to purchase through the University, although this is a fairly expensive option. Fortunately, New York State has inexpensive or free coverage that most families should qualify for (Family Health Plus / Healthy New York and Child Health Plus or Medicaid).
- Technology fees in all years of Medical School (approximately \$575/year)

Importantly, Student Activity and Service Fees (approximately \$1,400 in Year 1, \$310 in Year 2, \$575 in Year 3, \$925 in Year 4 medical school and \$200 in graduate school; subject to modest change) are NOT covered by the Program. In addition, a one-time fee of approximately \$550, collected prior to the start of medical school, covers purchase of equipment required to conduct physical exams. An additional fee relating to graduation is also billed during the fourth year of medical school.

Student Travel, Training and Research Funds Overview

The principal source of funding for travel and research related expenses of graduate students lies with their research laboratory. Recognizing the special situation of dual degree training, additional funds are provided by the MSTP in support of its students. These funds are meant to provide MSTP students with more flexibility, early on when they have not yet chosen a laboratory and later for travel, research or training related expenses that are not directly provided for by the thesis advisor's grants. Each student will receive a budget of \$2400 (\$1200 for each four years that they are matriculated in the MSTP). Unspent funds can be carried over from one 4-year period to the next. However no single expenditure can exceed \$1000 and the total aggregate amount of funds available will not exceed \$2400 per student. All spending is limited to expenses related to a student's travel, training, or research and is subject to the approval of the Program Director.

Participation in national conferences is a critical component of career development. Use of funds for the purpose of attending scientific conferences is therefore strongly encouraged. Travel related expenses include but are not limited to registration fees, airline tickets, car rental, food and lodging. Students wishing travel to participate in a conference, course or instructional program directly related to their thesis research may do so with prior approval from the thesis advisor. Students are strongly encouraged to use the MSTP funds to supplement or leverage travel funds from other sources (see below).

Research funds may also be used for purchase of research related equipment and services, software, scientific books or scientific periodicals (not available in the laboratory or University library). Funds cannot be used for travel, application materials, or examinations related to residency selection. A student wishing to purchase a computer may apply research funds towards 1/2 the cost, but may use no more than \$1000; however students may only use research funds towards the purchase of one computer (one purchase of a desktop, laptop, or tablet) during their tenure, and if ISD support is desired, the computer must be purchased through the University Computer Store. There are no restrictions on the type of computer. Photocopying, or printing services that reasonably are needed for study, research and preparation of the thesis (e.g. poster printing, article requests, etc.) may also be covered.

Program Specific Travel Opportunities

National MD/PhD Student Conference in Colorado

Organized by the University of Colorado MSTP, this conference provides an opportunity for MD/PhD students to present their research to and interact with other MD/PhD students and prominent scientific investigators from across the nation. During one's tenure, every student will receive an invitation from the Program Director to represent the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry at the National MD/PhD Student Conference in Colorado. Expenses related to travel and attendance at the National MD/PhD Students' Meeting are completely covered by the MSTP, and are not counted toward the invited student's \$2400 budget.

American Physician Scientists Association (APSA) Annual Meeting

The annual meeting held jointly with the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the Association of American Physicians, provides an extraordinary opportunity for MD/PhD students to present their research, address career development and gain invaluable perspectives on possible career paths. Because of this focus, preference will be given to more senior students who are nearing completion of their graduate work as well as to students who participate as institutional APSA representatives. Students wishing to attend this meeting should speak to the Program Director. Expenses related to travel and attendance at the APSA Annual Meeting are 50% covered by the MSTP; the remaining 50% can be covered by a portion of the student's \$2400 budget. Expenses incurred by our institutional representatives to APSA are completely covered and are not counted toward the invited student's \$2400 budget.

Tri-Institutional MD/PhD Conference

All students, regardless of year in training, are encouraged to attend the annual Tri-Institutional MD/PhD Conference which is hosted on a rotating basis by the MD/PhD Programs at Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester. The program will cover all reasonable expenses for travel to this meeting.

ABRCMS, SACNAS, and other Recruitment Conferences

The MSTP routinely participates in recruiting opportunities at national meetings and will invite current students to serve as program representatives. Travel costs are fully covered by the program.

Additional Resources for Students

Students are strongly encouraged to utilize all resources available for travel to conferences and participation in special courses. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- Application for travel awards from associations sponsoring the meeting or course. Our students have been particularly successful in competing for such awards.
- Travel supplements offered by the medical school
- Travel funds available as part of an individual (e.g. F30) or institutional training grant
- Departmental travel supplements