School *of* Medicine

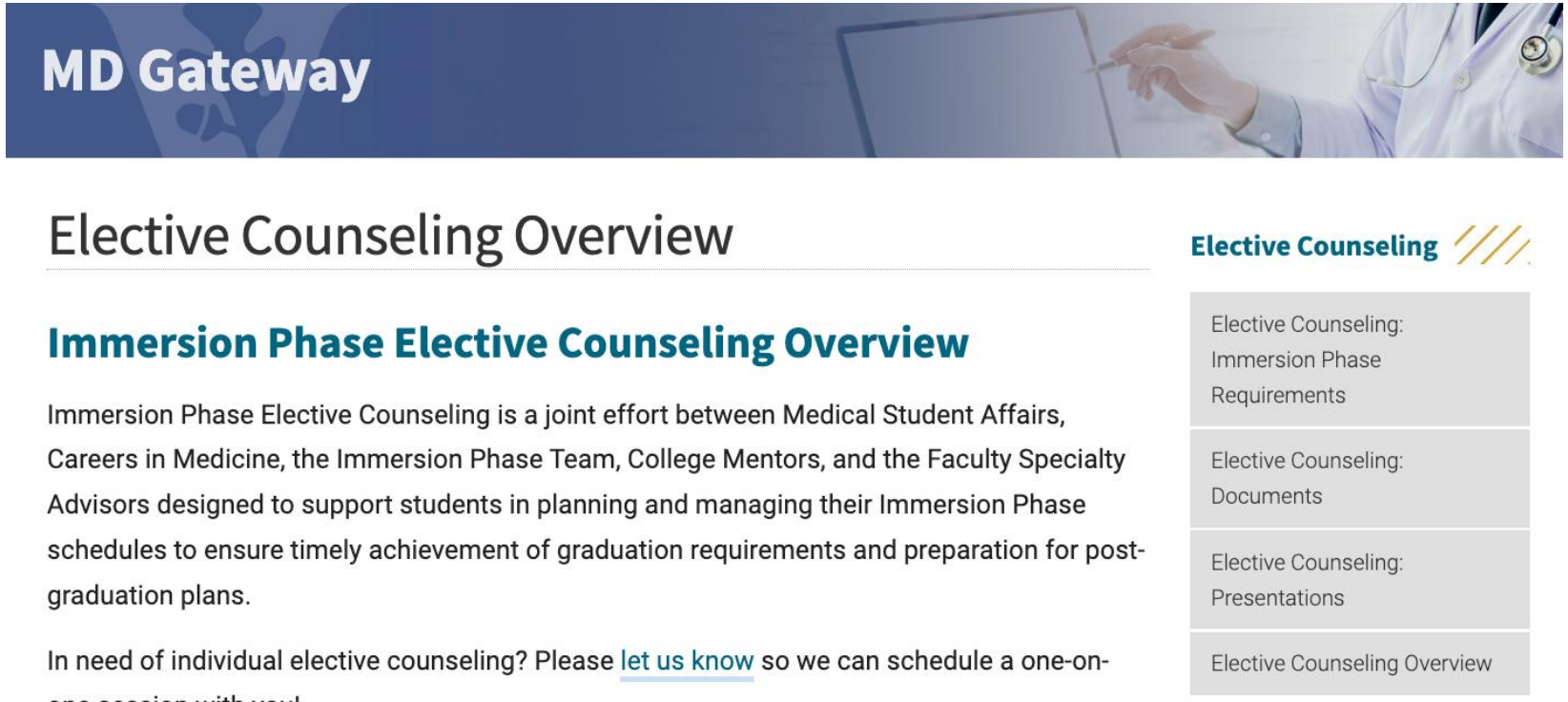
Elective Counseling: Acting Internship Info Session

December 3, 2025

This session is being recorded.

Elective Counseling Resources

https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/elective-counseling-overview/



Session Objectives

- Describe the goals and objectives of the Acting Internship (AI)
- Describe the process for scheduling AIs
- Answer student questions regarding AI selection and scheduling

What to Expect in the Acting Internships (AIs)

Take on the roles and responsibilities of **an intern** during an intensive, in-patient experience.

- Perform H&Ps
- Interpret clinical information to formulate differentials and develop assessments and plans
- Write daily notes
- Discuss and enter patient orders for co-signature
- Perform patient care handovers
- Manage an increasing patient census

Timeline

	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June
Year 3	**Step Study**					**AI Info Session**	**AI Survey & Assignment**		**AIs Available**			
Year 4	**AIs Available**					**Fixed Flex Month for Interviews**		**AIs available for students who don't need prior to residency applications**			**Graduation**	

Date	Event
January 5	AI preference survey to VMS3s and MSTPs
January 18 EOD	AI preference survey closes
Late January	VMS3s/MSTPs notified of initial assigned AI
Late February	Enrollment visible in YES for current AY
Late April	Self-add/drop for AY26-27 AIs opens

AI Enrollment Process

- You'll receive your individual survey link on January 5
  - **Survey due by 11:59PM on January 18th**
  - AIs are NOT first-come, first-served
  - Take your time, but you must submit by the deadline
- On the survey, choose the department(s) for your AI and that will show the available AI(s)
  - Select at least 10 months in any combination of AI(s) you want to take
    - The survey will only show months each AI is available in
  - Rank your combined AI+month choices, keeping in mind that you should be just as happy with your 10th choice as your 1st choice

AI Survey
First, select your AI and month combinations; then rank them 1 to 10

Select your top choices below. Please choose 10 options.

	March 2026	April 2026	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Feb 2027	March 2027	April 2027
Medicine, VU	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐
Medicine, Hospitalist			☐	☐	☐	☐	☑		☐	☐	☐
Medicine, VAH	☐	☑	☐	☐		☐	☐		☐	☑	☐
Critical Care, VAH	☐	☐	☑	☐		☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐
Cardiology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐		☐	☐	☐
Cardiac Critical Care	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐		☐	☑	☐
Geriatric Medicine	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐			☐	☐

Please rank your choices.

(One selection allowed per column)	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice	7th Choice	8th Choice	9th Choice	10th Choice
Medicine, VU - March 2026 * must provide value	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○
Medicine, Hospitalist - September * must provide value	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○
Medicine, VAH - April 2026 * must provide value	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Medicine, VAH - March 2027 * must provide value	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Critical Care, VAH - May * must provide value	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Critical Care, VAH - September * must provide value	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○
Cardiology - July * must provide value	○	○	○	◉	○	○	○	○	○	○
Cardiac Critical Care - April 2026 * must provide value	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○	○
Cardiac Critical Care - March 2027 * must provide value	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉	○
Geriatric Medicine - August * must provide value	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	◉

reset

AI Enrollment Process

- You will be placed in your AIs based on a lottery system
- You will receive your placement by January 30th
- Tips for success
  - Submit on time: If you are late in submitting your survey, you will be placed at the end of the lottery
  - Make changes to your survey while it's open: Once the Immersion Team has started the placement process, you cannot make changes to your survey.
    - After AI placements are released, you can discuss potential changes with the Immersion Team. Changes cannot be guaranteed.
    - At the end of April, when registration opens for everyone, you can add/drop your AIs like any other course

How likely am I to get the AI I want?

2025

- 93% of students received one of their top 3 choices
- 100% = top 7

2024

- 97% of students received one of their top 3 choices
- 100% = top 6

The IP team works hard to place students in their desired AIs

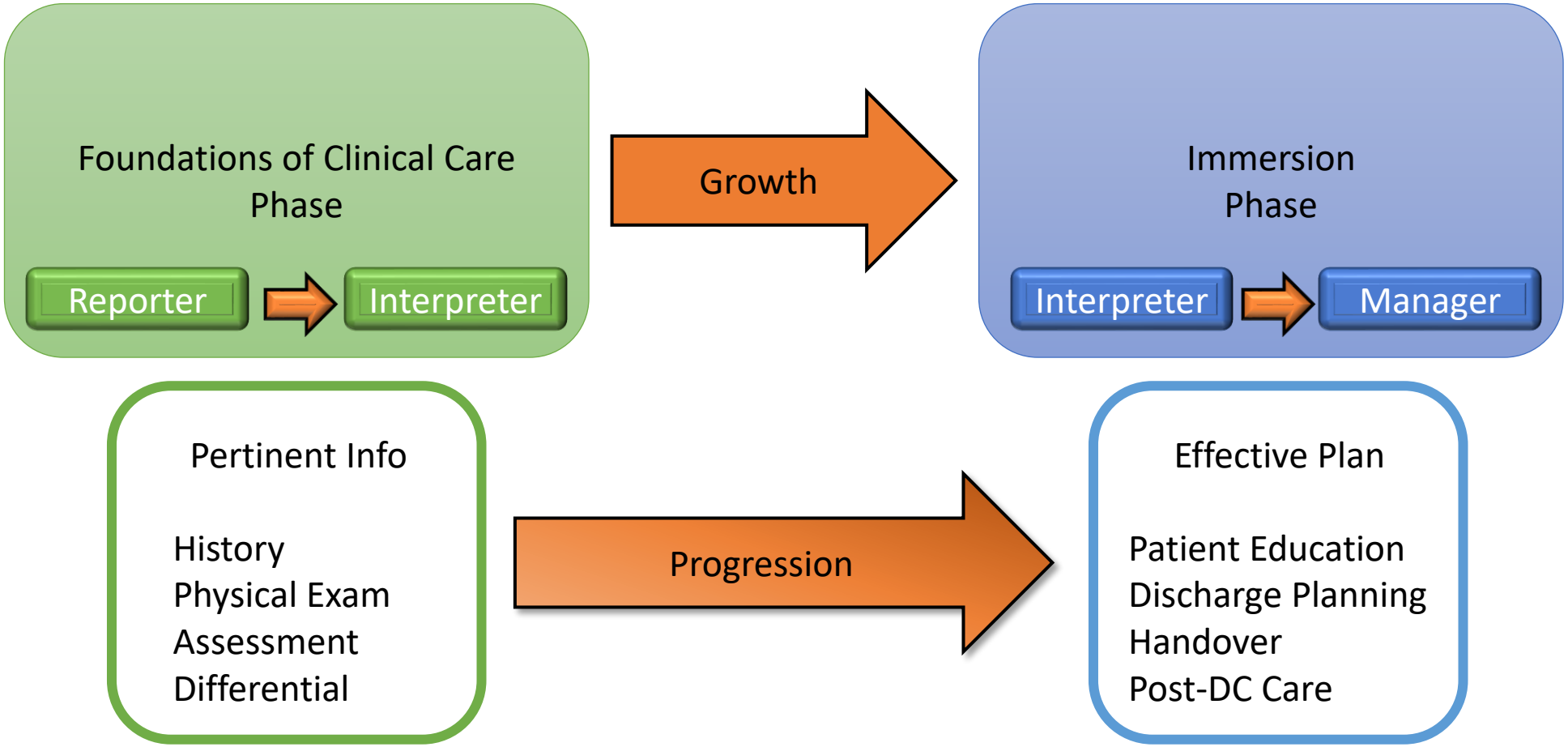
Reminders

- If you are planning a year out and doing your AI afterwards, please complete the survey. You'll be added to next year's survey list.
- Some AIs have prerequisites: Be sure you're able to complete these prior to your AI
- You cannot take any other courses during your AI (e.g., no Patient Safety and no Learning Communities)
- You do not get any VUSM holidays off during your AI

iMCT:
MCT Experiences in the Immersion Phase

iMCTs: MCTs in the Immersion Phase

- One of the most valuable learning tools in FCC is the Master Clinical Teacher experience
- Expanded to the Immersion Phase based on student feedback
- Occurs during AI, Acute Care, and Primary Care courses:
  - Maximal involvement in patient care
  - Guaranteed touchpoint for all students
- The AI iMCT focuses on skills that are key for preparing for residency


Foundations of Clinical Care Phase
Reporter
Interpreter
Growth
Immersion Phase
Interpreter
Manager
Pertinent Info
History
Physical Exam
Assessment
Differential
Progression
Effective Plan
Patient Education
Discharge Planning
Handover
Post-DC Care

iMCT Logistics

- Schedule in conjunction with the MCTs to minimize disruption of patient care duties
- AI Course Director does not have access to the iMCT assessment
  - iMCT assessment is not used in grading
- Take full advantage of learning

Questions?

Acting Internships

AI: Addiction Psychiatry

Reid Finlayson, MD and Kris Kast, MD
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Develop comfort in assessment and acute treatment of substance use disorders (Motivational Interviewing) across specialties and levels-of-care

- Patients with co-occurring psychiatric disorders and addictions, opioid stabilization and complex alcohol withdrawal management
- Teams: Co-occurring Disorders Unit, Addiction Consult Service
- Specialties: Psych, IM, EM, Ob-Gyn, Surgery (all Subs), WHERE NOT?!
- Responsibility: Function as a PGY1, caseload sufficient for residency skills

AI: Cardiac Critical Care

Lynn Punnoose, MD
lynn.r.punnoose@vumc.org

Opportunity to take care of critically ill, unstable patients

- Patients: Inpatients with STEMI, cardiogenic shock, unstable arrhythmia, requiring temporary mechanical support
- Teams: Work with residents and fellows
- Specialties: Ideal for those considering internal medicine, emergency medicine, critical care, anesthesia
- Responsibility: Be the primary physician for your patients, and learn how to create/present management plans on rounds, work with consultants

AI: Cardiology

Lynn Punnoose, MD
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Enjoy diverse pathology and opportunity to
work with multiple faculty members

- Patients: Inpatients presenting with arrhythmias, ACS, heart failure
- Teams: Work with residents and interns
- Specialties: Ideal for those considering internal medicine, emergency medicine
- Responsibility: Be the primary physician for your patients, and learn how to create/present management plans, place orders

AI: Critical Care, VAH

David Meoli, MD, PhD
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Students enjoy the fast pace of an ICU with a range of acuity

- Patients: High-risk and critically ill medical and cardiac patients
- Teams: Work closely with interns, residents, pulmonary/critical care and cardiology fellows and attendings
- Specialties: Medicine, Anesthesia, Critical Care, Emergency
- Responsibility: Encourage autonomy – first to see patient, enter orders, field nursing calls, provide sign-out/handovers

AI: Geriatric Medicine

Rachael Petry, MD
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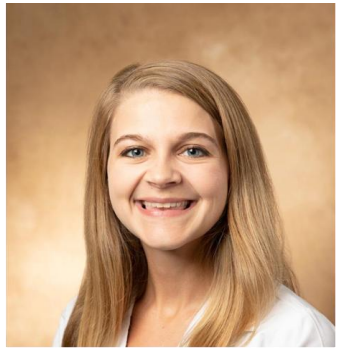
Join us on the ACE Unit (7 round wing) a nationally recognized age-friendly unit!

- **Patients:** adults aged >75 with bread & butter Internal Medicine conditions (pneumonia, diabetes complications, heart failure, COPD exacerbations, endocarditis, etc) and those >65 with "Geriatric syndromes" (delirium, falls with trauma/fractures, frailty, dementia with BPSD), occasional zebras
- **Team:** Made up of IM intern, IM resident, geriatrics fellow, attending (Geriatric Division Faculty), and IDT (pharmacist, PT/OT, PFN, CM, SW, RN) closely integrated
- **Specialties:** Appropriate for IM, FM, EM, psych, neuro, surgery, ophtho or anyone with aging family members

GERI AI GRAD SPOTLIGHT →



Meredith Balbach, PGY2
Career Plans: IM
Match Results: Vanderbilt

Adam Stark, PGY1
Career Plans: Psychiatry
Match Results: Bringham & Women's Hospital (Harvard)

Sean Luong, MS4
Career Plans: Family Medicine
Match Results: Pending military match

- **Special Features:** Dedicated video-based curriculum focused on clinical skills, enthusiastic (Geriatric Medicine trained) attendings, COMPLEX patient population

Preview curriculum here

AI: GI/Lap Surgery

Jason Samuels, MD
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Students assimilate into the team caring for a diverse group of general surgery patients

- Patients: Bariatric, Foregut, and Hernia/General Surgery Patients
- Teams: GI/Lap Surgery Service
- Specialties: Good for any general or subspecialty surgical interests
- Responsibility: Students will function alongside intern and varying level of residents, participate in rounds, clinic, and open, lap, and robotic cases

AI: Hepatobiliary (Surgery and Liver Transplantation)

M. Ameen Rauf, MD, FACS
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Full exposure to abdominal surgical anatomy.
Lot of operating room experience

- Patients: Some of the most ill patients in the hospital with end-stage liver disease and variety of hepatobiliary diseases.
- Teams: Hepatobiliary Surgery and Liver Transplantation.
- Specialties: General surgery, hepatology
- Responsibility: Students work side by side with a surgical intern.

AI: Maternal Fetal Medicine

Soha S. Patel, MD, MSPH
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You will quickly become integrated into the inpatient high risk OB service.

- Patients: Round on 3-5 inpatients per day and follow both low-risk and high-risk patients in labor. You will attend vaginal deliveries and scrub c-sections with the high-risk OB team.
- Teams: MFM antepartum service, Inpatient Labor and Delivery teams
- Specialties: Pediatrics, Anesthesia, Emergency Medicine, Family Medicine, Internal Medicine
- Responsibility: Similar to that of an intern with the exception of direct order entry. We cannot give you a pager but will ask you to return/assist with pages.

AI: Medicine, Hospitalist

Eleanor Weaver, MD
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Work directly with attendings to take care of internal medicine patients

- Patients: Students will care for a wide range of patients admitted to the medicine service
- Teams: Students will be assigned to a Riven team (internal medicine hospitalist team)
- Specialties: Good for students considering internal medicine
- Responsibility: Students will have a very high level of responsibility- students should be ready to be self directed and develop plans independently and should

AI: Medicine, VU

Eleanor Weaver, MD
eleanor.weaver@vumc.org

A great opportunity to learn more medicine and prepare for intern year

- Patients: Students will care for a wide range of patients admitted to the medicine service
- Teams: Students will be assigned to a Morgan team (internal medicine teaching team)
- Specialties: Good for students considering internal medicine or any specialty that might do a medicine prelim year. Also great for undecided students
- Responsibility: Increased responsibility compared to clerkship: entering orders, answering pages, acting as the primary point of contact for 4-8 patients

AI: Medicine, VAH

Ian Campbell, MD
ian.s.campbell@vumc.org

A rich, practical learning experience in a unique setting:

America's largest integrated healthcare system, the VA!

- Patients: "Generalist" acute care model; fewer subspeciality primary services → greater case diversity for internal medicine teams
  - Cardiac, renal, GI/liver, infectious, oncologic, etc.; significant underserved and homeless populations
- Teams: Students will be assigned a primary team but will also work closely with clinical consultants, nursing staff, pharmacists, social workers, physical and occupational therapists
- Specialties: The clinical framework and knowledge content is generally applicable; this AI is suited not only for students interested in internal medicine and its subspecialities but also for students of other clinical specialties, neurology, psychiatry, anesthesia, etc.
- Responsibility: Students will function at the level of interns (seriously!)

AI: Neonatology

Meaghan Ransom, MD, MPH
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Gain exposure to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

- Patients: See a wide variety of pathology including prematurity, congenital heart disease, neonatal encephalopathy, sepsis, congenital anomalies, and more
- Teams: Students will work with on the Red Team or Green Team which consist of a neonatologist, neonatology fellow, neonatal nurse practitioner, pediatric residents and is supported by a multidisciplinary team
- Specialties: Anyone interested in pediatrics, neonatology, genetics, neurology, critical care, pediatric surgery
- Responsibility: Students will act as an intern with supervision from the senior resident, fellow, and neonatologist

AI: Operative Gynecology

Howard Curlin, MD
howard.curlin@vumc.org

Spend a lot of time in the OR with opportunities to perform varied technical skills.

- Participate in a variety of gynecologic surgeries, including pre-operative and post-operative care.
- See common Gyn conditions that present through the ED or from other inpatient services requesting consultation.
- Teams: Students are integrated into the Gyn team, which includes 4 residents and 2nd year VUSM students doing their core rotation.
- Responsibility: The goal is for students to be performing tasks at the intern level by the end of the rotation (i.e., routine post-op care, assisting in surgery, seeing consults from the ED or other inpatient services, performing patient hand-offs, answering pages, completing discharge summaries, entering orders)
- Specialties: This course has the most overlap with Gynecology, Urology, General Surgery, and Emergency Medicine.

AI: Orthopedic Surgery

Joshua Lawrenz, MD, MSCI, and Phillip Mitchell, MD, MSCI
joshua.lawrenz@vumc.org

- Patients: Orthopedic trauma service
- Teams: Work closely with the orthopedic surgery residents, interns, APPs, faculty, fellows, and nursing teams
- Responsibility: Surgical floor care, pre-operative evaluation, and medical management of surgical patients
- Schedule: M-F 3:30am-4pm; 1 weekend day per week 3:30am-12pm

AI: Pediatric Medicine

Maya Neeley, MD
maya.neeley@vumc.org

Pros: as close to functioning as an intern as possible, spending time with children and their families

Cons: none

Teams/Services: interdisciplinary (SW/OT/PT/SLP/consultants), inpatient Teams A, B

Population: varied ages/stages of development/medical complexity

Responsibility: you own your patient (carrying a pager, admitting patients, routine management, patient-centered communication, placing orders, responding to pages, handover, night shifts)

Who: Pediatrics! Med-Peds! Family medicine! Psychiatry! Anyone who wants an awesome month!

AI: Pediatric Surgery

Irving J. Zamora, MD, MPH
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Immersive experience to the full breadth and wide scope of pediatric surgery

- Patients: AI students will get to work with pediatric patients of all ages, from neonates to 21 years old, spanning the diverse disciplines including common outpatient cases, acute care surgery, trauma, congenital anomalies, endocrine and oncology
- Teams: Interact with a wide variety of services throughout the hospital including the ED, PICU, NICU, ECMO, Trauma, Oncology, Orthopedics, ENT, Urology and our perioperative team
- Responsibility: Students will follow a structured 4-week schedule that will provide exposure to all facets of our service including inpatient, outpatient, OR and acute care surgery/trauma. Throughout the rotation students will work closely with the resident team and be expected to function as an intern. They will also scrub all index cases during their rotation
- Specialties: This rotation is best for those interested in Surgical subspecialties, Pediatrics, and Emergency Medicine

AI: Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation

Lauren Massey, MD
lauren.massey@vumc.org

Team approach to patient care with a multidisciplinary approach working alongside physical therapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, and case managers with the main goal of optimizing function

- Patients: Post-acute rehabilitation of patients with spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI), polytrauma, and/or post-op care
- Teams/services: SCI, TBI, or general neurorehabilitation
- Specialties: Adult surgical sub-specialties, Neurology. Allows for a better understanding of what acute inpatient rehabilitation can offer after discharge from the acute hospital setting
- Responsibility: Medical management of patients with new injury and/or chronic disability, presenting to the medical team, clinical documentation, helping coordinate care with different healthcare teams

AI: Plastic Surgery

Shady Elmaraghi, MD
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High-volume surgical acting internship with
broad exposure and procedural focus

- Patients: Broad exposure from outpatient cancer reconstruction to emergency trauma patients to elective cosmetic surgery
- Teams/services: Students will manage patients from our teams that include craniofacial/pediatric, extremity/hand, reconstructive, and breast/aesthetic specialties
- Specialties: Plastic Surgery, Orthopedics, ENT, OMFS, Urology, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, Emergency Medicine
- Responsibility: Surgical floor care, pre-operative evaluation, medical management of surgical patients

AI: Stroke

Katie Sourbeer, MD and Andrew Giritharan, MD
katharine.n.sourbeer@vumc.org

HUGE range of patients from those with mild disease to those with life-ending strokes. You get to be part of all of it!

- Patients: Ischemic stroke, hemorrhagic stroke, TIA
- Teams: Stroke team, Neurology consult team, Neuro ICU, Neurosurgery, PT, OT, SLP
- Specialties: Neurology, Neurosurgery, Internal Medicine, PM&R
- Primary responsibility for 4-5 patients

AI: Surgical Oncology and Endocrine Surgery

Christina Bailey, MD, MSCI, FACS
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Exposure to both minimally invasive and open
surgical procedures, opportunities for surgical skill acquisition

- Patients: Diverse exposure to GI, breast, endocrine and skin and soft tissue malignancies
- Teams: Students will be a part of the surgical oncology multidisciplinary care team which includes medical oncology, radiation oncology, radiology, pathology, interventional radiology
- Specialties: General Surgery, medical oncology, radiation oncology, pathology, interventional radiology
- Responsibility: Students will round with the team and present their own patients. They also will be expected to know basic anatomy of the surgical procedure that they are involved in and the pathophysiology of the surgical disease.

AI: Surgery, VAH

Shannon McChesney, MD
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Very hands-on rotation where you are an integral part of the surgery team. Our goal is to boost your independence and autonomy!

- Patients: Adult veterans; broad-based general surgery and surgical oncology
- Team: Surgery residents, medical students, RN, PAs, a variety of surgeons including breast, HPB, critical care, MIS, surg onc, colorectal and general: we are very diverse and collaborative!
- Specialties: Perfect for those entering any surgical specialty
- Responsibility: Intern-level responsibility from the wards to the OR to the clinic

AI: Trauma

Stephen Gadomski, MD
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Fast-paced and high acuity. Learn to take care of the sickest patients in the hospital in time pressured situations.

- Patients: See Level 1/2/3 trauma patients with a wide variety of injuries. Vandy is a Top 5 trauma center in the U.S.
- Teams: Work with a multidisciplinary team — Trauma, EM, Anesthesia, Ortho, Neurosurgery, ENT, Plastics, Urology, Geriatrics, Nephro
- Specialties: Trauma AI great for students going into any surgical specialty, anesthesia, EM, and PMR
- Responsibility: AI students expected to function as interns on ICU/ward, do procedures (supervised chest tubes, art lines, suturing), trauma junior in the bay and independently see consults

AI: Vascular Surgery

C. Louis Garrard, MD
louis.garrard@vumc.org

Integrally involved student experience with intern level responsibilities on a very busy vascular service.

- Patients: Entire spectrum of vascular patient care from outpatient endovascular procedures to extensive hybrid aortic reconstruction
- Teams: Our team consist of eight attending surgeons, two fellows, 2 interns and 3 physician extenders caring for 20-25 inpatients and consults
- Specialties: Vascular Surgery, IR, Cardiology, but we also work with Trauma, Oncology, Orthopedics, Otolaryngology, Urology and others
- Responsibility: Function as an intern with rounding and consult responsibilities, see consults, assist/operate in the OR , clinic with attendings