



Welcome and Announcements: Transitions, Alumni Hosting, Financial Aid, Chiefs

- **Mistreatment**
 - Quarterly fourth-year survey so we can gather input from your class
 - Respond to the survey even if you have not experienced mistreatment so we can get a baseline denominator
- **Adam Cifu, MD—new role**
 - Associate Dean of Medical School Academics
 - Dr. Brukner’s old position before assuming the role of Dean for Medical Education
 - Here to be another support for students on the academic side of your progress through Pritzker
 - Official roles: chair Academic Progress Committee, Committee on Academic Promotions
 - Any problems you have fulfilling requirements or finishing your time up at Pritzker, feel free to reach out
 - Do not get freaked out if I reach out to you!
- **Medical & Biological Sciences Alumni Association (MBSAA)**
 - HOST: Helping Our Students Travel
 - Residency Interview Hosting: alumni can host you when you travel to their city for interviews
 - Fill out the [form on our website](#) (scroll down to Traveling for Residency: tinyurl.com/MBSAA-HOST) to help us match you with an alumnus/a who can host you when you travel to interview
 - Fill out one request per interview and only stay 1-2 nights
 - Try to give us 3 weeks' notice (less than 2 weeks' notice is too short a time to be fulfilled)
 - After we find a connection, we will reach out to you and connect you with the alumnus/a so you can discuss logistics
 - For the past 4 years, we have matched 75% of the request we’ve received
 - Bring a small (\$10) gift, take a selfie (tag #PritzkerHOST and send it to Jennifer Dettloff or Jamie Munson) and send them a thank-you note!
 - Remember the [UChicago Discount Program](#) for savings on car rentals and hotels too
- **Financial Aid**
 - Take some time to meet with Richard during the year either in person or online to discuss loan repayments, financial planning, and financial literacy
 - Email coming out tonight or tomorrow to set up a meeting with our office to discuss loan calculators, repayment options, and travel cost tips for interviews

- We can help you budget for residency travel—don't let financial barriers stop you from going on residency interviews!
- Part of your budget for MS4 year includes money for residency interview travel
- **Pritzker Chiefs**
 - Tuesday, 12:30—mentorship lunch
 - Please fill out your residency application survey! It is important for your career advising and will help us advise future classes
 - We now have office hours if you want to chat! We have chocolate!
- **Transition—Rebecca Silverman**
 - Rebecca Silverman's last day at Pritzker is October 11
 - She is moving to a position in the Department of Surgery and will miss you all!
 - Dana Levinson, Associate Dean for Medical School Administration, will be helping Dr. Woodruff in Rebecca's place; feel free to email her at dlevinso@bsd.uchicago.edu with any residency concerns or questions

INTERVIEWING FOR RESIDENCY PANEL DISCUSSION

Have you begun sending out invitations?

- **Dr. McConville:** Medicine people at Pritzker should've gotten an interview! The bulk go out in the second or third week in October.
- **Dr. Babcock:** EM programs have picked a common application date; ours is October 8. Once I figure out how to send out invitations, you will get yours! Mid-October for EM.
- **Dr. Dade:** Not yet. The MSPE is the key piece [October 1]. All medical schools do transcripts differently, so we rely on the MSPE to make other decisions. Everyone from Pritzker will get an interview.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Nope!
- **Dr. Simon:** We have a common application day too, on October 8.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** We will be looking in October and people in Ortho will hear in early November.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** Every program has their own process, so there is a fair amount of variability well into October and November for some specialties.

When should I start worrying if I haven't gotten an interview?

- **Dr. Babcock:** By Nov. 1, if you have not heard from an EM program you are interested in, reach out to us and we can help troubleshoot it. If you haven't gotten any interviews, expand your list of programs.
- **Dr. Tseng:** Mid-November to January are our interview dates, so if you haven't heard by your second week in November, get in touch with your mentor.
- **Dr. McConville:** By the second week of November, reach out. We have an active wait list that we act on in December and January.

- **Dr. McQueen:** Same timeline; reach out to mentors if you haven't heard. It is preferred that you reach out to mentors here to troubleshoot your next steps instead of just cold calling the program. You might come off as annoying if you do.
- **Dr. Simon:** By Nov. 1.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** We have one weekend we do our interviews, so if you have not heard from Ortho programs by mid-November, start reaching out. A lot of communities are small and we all know each other, so we can always make an unofficial phone call. You don't want to be on an administrator's bad side.

Tips on attire?

- **Dr. Tseng:** For surgery, be conservative. This means muted colors; a little pop with a tie or blouse is fine, but nothing extreme. They want you to be serious about interview days, so stick to navies, blues, black, browns. You want to stand out due to your character and not your attire. Don't feel like you have to wear a skirt in January if it is cold. Wear comfortable shoes or a change of shoes because you'll be taken on tours. If you are running late at the airport, go up to the counter in a suit—it'll give you more credibility!
- **Dr. Simon:** Look clean and not disheveled. Make sure your hair is put together and your clothing is ironed.
- **Dr. Babcock:** Do carry-on because if your luggage is lost, you won't have an outfit. Keep an extra shirt with you in case of spills.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** Make sure your shoes are in carry-on too; I had to go on interviews in a suit and hiking boots once.

Some programs have dinners the night before interview day—should students take those invitations seriously?

- **McQueen:** Those dinners help you, not us. We don't keep track of who goes, but you will get a sense of the work culture and what the residents are like outside of the hospital. However, if you do something "boneheaded," it'll get back to us, so don't get drunk and continue to behave professionally.
- **Dr. Tseng:** There are some programs where the residents have a say in your ranking, so the way you behave at those dinners gets fed back to the discussion table when talking about candidates.
- **Dr. Babcock:** Work under the assumption that every person you meet may have some say in your candidacy. Treat everyone with respect and treat everyone politely. Our program coordinators will let us know if someone is rude to them.
- **Dr. Simon:** It's a hard balance because you want to be memorable but only for the right reasons. Use the dinner to make a connection with residents; our residents do give us feedback. For attire, the invitation will say. The residents may be in scrubs, but you should still be professional—be aware of how you look.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** You're not just an applicant to be a resident; you're going to be a member of their practice for a number of years. Doctors want to know that you are excited and invested

in the opportunity to be a part of that practice. Especially for smaller programs, commit to going to the dinner the night before.

Contact your career advisor!

- **Dr. Lee:** If you're at all concerned about the number of interviews you have, reach out to your career advisor!
- **Dr. Poston:** If you feel you have too many interviews, reach out to your advisor before you cancel any. If you are going to decline interviews, do that as soon as possible so someone else can get your spot—but don't do that without checking in with us. We have years of experience and can help you walk through this decision.

Are you supposed to respond when you get an invitation?

- **Dr. Babcock:** We all use different technology so sometimes you cannot respond.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** If additional communication is necessary, you can respond. But through ERAS or Interview Broker, there's not really an opportunity.

How much movement is there on wait lists?

- **Dr. McConville:** It depends on the specialty. We go 50-70 deep on our wait list, but that's probably different in smaller specialties that only have 1-2 interview days. If you're going to have someone reach out on your behalf, and you get an interview, you better be willing to get an interview invitation and spend the money to get out there even if you only have a few days' turnaround. That's a good way to triage your programs: are you willing to drop everything on 3-4 days' notice to go to that program?
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** Reach out to the ones you're super interested in to ask them to keep you on the wait list. If you have to change dates, do it quickly and don't cancel last minute because that will spread throughout the specialty.
- **Dr. Babcock:** Be careful about copying and pasting when emailing programs; we can tell because the font is different. Make that email unique.
- **Dr. Tseng:** The Program Coordinator is the one sending out logistical emails; don't email the PD if you have questions about where to store luggage.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** This is not the moment to narrow down your programs: for now, accept all offers that come your way, and if you end up with too many you can start to decline. Don't be picky now.
 - BE NICE TO THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR. They are the gatekeepers of the program. If you are professional and cordial with everyone involved in the team, that shows your integrity. PDs will remove people from their rank list if the coordinators tell them an applicant was rude to them. Also—try not to be too high-maintenance!

Cancellation Etiquette

- **Dr. Conti Mica:** The minute you know, cancel. There's someone else on the wait list who wants that spot, so be respectful of that—the more time you give, the better.

- **Dr. McQueen:** As soon as you know. The worst you could do is cancel the night before.
 - Your first interview should probably not be your first choice; over time, you'll get a better sense of what you are looking for in a program and early on you will not have that knowledge. You may also have first-time jitters.
- **Dr. Babcock:** As a PD, I don't even know who is canceling because everyone schedules online. We lock out a week before, so if you have to cancel less than 7 days out, you call us.
 - Do NOT no-show. If you do, that means something bad happened to you. We have called medical schools about that because we are worried. That worry can turn into anger when they find out you are completely fine. Just call us and let us know.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Don't just send an email to ERAS if it is time-sensitive; get in contact with a human and call us if you have to cancel last-minute.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** When we get within 2 weeks of an interview, there had better be a good reason for you to cancel that interview. You're putting people in a difficult situation that reflects poorly on you and will impact you in the future.
- **Dr. McConville:** Add a line: "Please verify that you've received this" when you ask for confirmation of a confirmation. If you feel like you have to send an email to cancel in advance, make it short and sweet.
 - Medicine is trying to send invitations in the afternoon, give you a time period to respond, and not to offer more invitations than spots available.
- **Dr. Babcock:** We try to send out invitations in the evening so people don't have to drop something else to respond.

What are you looking for in the applicant when you meet them in person? What does the ideal candidate look like? Who is a "must-have"?

- **Dr. McQueen:** We can teach you medicine, but we cannot teach you how to be a good person or to have respect for other people, so we look for indicators of that.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** If you've gotten an interview, you've passed the test and we just want to know who you are and get to know you to see if we are a match. Five years is a long time, and we have to make sure we get along and we can provide the education you want. We want to have a conversation, go off on tangents, see what you like, because that will show we can work together as a team.
 - When we ask open-ended questions, don't give a yes or no answer. Guide us through a conversation of what you want us to know about you.
- **Dr. Simon:** Agree. We take seven residents per year, so every minute together we are like family. You have 15 minutes to make an impression on me. Did our conversation flow? Did we have a human connection? You probably want to see the same thing on your end. Are we people you can work with for 4 years?
- **Dr. McConville:** We interview more people, so we believe prior performance predicts future success so touch on your high points in your application. I also want you to take advantage of something here at the UChicago that you are passionate about—know about the place you're interviewing and have an idea as to why this institution is right for you.

Think about what you want to accomplish during your residency. There is no right answer; just be yourself.

- **Dr. Poston:** Honesty is important. As a PD, you have a good “BS-meter,” so don’t talk about research if you haven’t done a lot of research. Animate and put a face to what we see on your application; don’t try to reinvent yourself from what you’ve written.

What is your favorite question to ask applicants during an interview?

- **Dr. Babcock:** I only ask one question: what is unique or interesting to you that will add to the diversity here at UChicago? It allows people to tell me what they’re most proud of.
- **Dr. Tseng:** I always ask, “Why surgery?” I am looking for passion. Some people will ask, “Tell me about yourself,” so be prepared to answer that for 10-15 minutes.
- **Dr. McConville:** I often ask people if they have ever made a mistake or failed—and I want to hear about a real error. I will not hold it against you; I want to know if you have learned from it and grown from it.
- **Dr. McQueen:** What’s the hardest job you’ve ever had? I love this because it’s not necessarily about medicine and if they can’t answer it, that’s an important piece of information too.

Note from Dr. Woodruff: You will be given an opportunity over and over again to say bad things about your own medical school or hospital. It’s worth the time right now to think of constructive answers to those questions, because Program Directors will be looking for good team members, *not* people who are negative, as critical as possible, or who will use any opportunity to badmouth a program.

- **Dr. Simon:** Tell me about a challenge—and don’t say, “My third year of medical school”! Because that tells me about your clinical skills. Think of something outside of medical school.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** You will certainly be asked, “What can I tell you about my program?”
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** “What’s the worst thing you’ve ever done?” It’s kind of tricky and for us it’s a little fun and a great story.

What are good questions for students to ask of interviewers?

- **Dr. Conti Mica:** What’s the biggest weakness of your program and how are you working to fix it? If a program says there’s nothing wrong with them, that’s as bad as you saying, “There’s nothing wrong with me and I’m the perfect applicant.” This question gives you a chance to be a part of the solution.
- **Dr. Babcock:** What are you most proud of in your program? This will tell you whether our program matches up with your desires.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Any question you really want to know about. Don’t just go down a list of questions; make it more conversational and not formulaic or part of a checklist you might have. Ask questions that show you are paying attention. The most interesting questions I’ve had are from applicants who asked about UChicago or our patient population or protests about the trauma center.

- Don't ask questions about scheduling or vacation or things you can find on our website.
- **Dr. McConville:** I've been here 25 years, so I like, "Why have you stayed?" Then I can tell you what about my program is unique and attractive to me. If you ask multiple people and get similar answers, you can start to believe it and trust what people are saying.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** Do your due-diligence, look on our website, see where we went to medical school, and learn about us. It'll make you look really good. [only works for smaller programs]
- **Dr. Woodruff:** Often, the very first question an interviewer will ask will be, "What questions do you have about our program?" You may be put on the spot first thing on the interview.

How do you respond when someone asks an "illegal" question? (Illegal by NRMP or federal definitions.)

Where else are you applying?

Where else did you do away rotations?

Are you planning on starting a family during residency?

Are you married?

Do you have any health problems?

Where do we stand on your rank list?

- **Dr. McQueen:** You are under no obligation to answer and you can say you're not comfortable answering. You can say "I keep my personal life and professional life separate."
 - Sometimes it's not out of spite but someone has just forgotten the rules or did not know them—they are just clueless. Reflect: was this a one-off interviewer with non-malicious intent or is it a signal of a hospital's culture? In that case, you can go back to your Career Advisor here, who can then call the PD at that place and notify them. Most PDs would want to know if this is happening with their faculty interviewers.
 - We want to know if our faculty are asking illegal questions, so feel free to tell Dr. Woodruff.
- **Dr. Simon:** It might not be malicious—sometimes it might come up in conversation with a resident about where else you are interviewing, and you don't have to answer.
- **Dr. McConville:** Only tell what you want to tell; it is OK to be evasive and give a generic, bland, short answer. We are going to give our applicants emails to the ombudspeople so they can anonymously reach out and give us feedback about who asked inappropriate questions, because we need to know and educate our faculty.
 - We can say that you're ranked to match, but we can't ask you where we are on your rank list.

How do we ask questions about family planning without really asking that?

- **Dr. Tseng:** Start with the residents.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** Start indirectly—ask how many people are married or currently have kids.
- **Dr. McConville:** There are institution-specific policies; there is a GME office leave policy that has the minimum family leave.
- **Dr. Simon:** "How family-friendly is the program?" [might not work in Ortho]

Pet Peeves?

- **Dr. Babcock:** People being on their phones. Your phones should be on silent and away. If you need to check a flight, go to the restroom.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** Don't "swarm" the department chair; get to know everyone in the department and not just the head.
- **Dr. McQueen:** This is Peds-specific, but don't be overly casual or playful with us; this is still a professional interview. Do not send me cartoons in emails or talk about babysitting.
- **Dr. Lee:** If you have something listed as a hobby, be ready to talk about it. If you like cooking or reading, tell me about a recipe or some books.

Couples' Matching

- **Dr. McConville:** If you get an interview but your partner doesn't, I will talk to other PDs if I am interested in you, and I will ask them if your partner is on their list. It is fair to talk to the PD about that.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Be mindful of timelines if you get an interview and your partner does not; you don't want interviews to be over by the time those calls are made.

What is appropriate post-interview communication?

- **Dr. Babcock:** You don't need to send a thank-you note. If you must, emails are fine. Do not expect any post-interview communications.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Better off not to send anything so you don't make any mistakes. Don't update us when you have news about your publications; it doesn't really help.
- **Dr. McConville:** IM discourages post-interview communication. We have too many applicants; I'm interviewing 400 people. Programs will tell you explicitly whether they expect communication.
- **Dr. Conti Mica:** We have already turned in our lists by January because we do our interviews in one weekend, so a note probably won't sway us.
- **Dr. Poston:** Don't get caught up in trying to interpret vague emails after the interview. Make your rank list using other information.

Do you tell a program you are ranking them #1?

- **Dr. Babcock:** Don't say that if it isn't true. Some fields are small, so do not tell multiple programs they are your #1. You get one.
- **Dr. McConville:** If you must do a post-interview communication, tell ONE program they are #1. It can be 2 lines long.
- **Dr. McQueen:** Do NOT say "I am ranking you very highly," because then we know we are not your first choice.

BONUS TRANSCRIPT: Q&A FROM PREVIOUS YEARS**How to respond to "What can I tell you about my program?"**

- **Dr. McQueen:** Think about which questions you really have and make them specific to the program (and not about scheduling or things that are already on the website). We got a lot of questions about the trauma center for adults and those were really interesting to answer.
- **Dr. Babcock:** Your questions might not be about the program but about the community, and that's fine too. Logistics questions are not really for faculty.
- **Dr. Dade:** Asking about call schedule and vacations is not really appropriate for faculty, but you can ask about our Family Planning Program, or other facets of our training. Be prepared to answer, "Did anything surprise you today about our program?"
- **Dr. Bielski:** If you have info from residents, you can say, "I was discussing X with your residents and they seem to enjoy it. Do you think that will change? Or what is the philosophy behind that?" Make it positive.
- **Dr. McConville:** Start with one of your interests and see how it ties into the program. "I was really involved in Maria Shelter volunteering when I was at Pritzker; how does that tie into XYZ program here?" If you know the faculty member has been there a long time, you can ask, "What has kept you here throughout the years?" Or if not, "Why did you choose to come here?" You can verify what they say with what the residents say.

Is it weird to apply to a program now, after September 15?

- **Dr. Humphrey:** No, it's not too late. Cast that very wide net.
- **Dr. Babcock:** Lots of places wait for the MSPE. Also, we haven't started looking at our applications yet so I wouldn't know if you applied on 9/15 or today.
- **Dr. Woodruff:** We are going to be following your progress as long as you keep updating your interview survey. Timelines vary by specialty, so we can't give you one date where you should "start worrying," but we will communicate with you if we feel we need to change your strategy. This is all a statistical gamble and we are trying to play the odds in making the best guesses. Every program has a different way of going about application season, and we cannot necessarily tell where their processes are at this point in time.

Second looks

- **Dr. McQueen:** Interview season is very busy for programs, and second looks are a lot of work to coordinate. There should be an important reason to have them, and I have not yet seen an important reason in second look applicants.
- **Dr. Blanchard:** Do not do second looks. It does not necessarily help your application and can only hurt you. Even be careful in emails after and do not come off as too casual. Shine on interview day and let that be the end of it.
- **Q: Some programs say on their website they encourage second looks. What about those?**
 - If a program sends that signal, pay attention to that and take that opportunity. If a program reaches out to you, say yes and be responsive!

- **Dr. McConville:** No.
- **Dr. Babcock:** It has such a high risk of hurting you, so do not do it.

Location, Location, Location: Is it reasonable for candidates to discuss where they want to be during an interview?

- **Dr. McConville:** Don't just say, "I want to be in LA because my family is here." Lead with something about the program: "I want to be at UCLA because of XYZ. In addition, my family is here."
- **Dr. Babcock:** If you've lived your whole life in the Midwest and want to leave, make sure you tell people that (in different words). Say, "I would be thrilled to move to San Francisco and join your program" or something.
- **Dr. Bielski:** We cannot ask about your partner, but if you bring up that your partner has to be in a certain city, you can tell us about that.