

Dear Entering Class of 2020,

We are in extraordinarily challenging times. As healthcare professionals, we are all fighting to save lives from a viral pandemic at the same time we are fighting systemic racism and to ensure high quality safe equitable care for our patients on the Southside of Chicago. However, as leaders of Scholarship and Discovery at the Pritzker School of Medicine, we also have an opportunity. It is critical that future physicians not only understand, but also have experience with how to produce high quality scientific knowledge to apply to these and many other problems affecting health of our populations. Interestingly, Covid presents the ultimate challenge for us to literally go from the bench (basic science virology/immunology research) to the bedside (vaccine trials as clinical research) to global health research (implementation science on how to get the vaccine to developing nations or marginalized communities) in rapid cycle. Likewise, our nation's struggles with equity challenge us to understand how to train health professionals to be free of bias (medical education research) and also how to work in the best ways possible to ensure that our African American and LatinX communities receive the necessary support and care they need to rebuild from a pandemic (community health research). Truly, we're all in this together.

Before you start with us, we want to also share some successes during this remarkably challenging time. Our transition to remote learning has been a remarkable success. Faculty mentors have been able to maintain robust research experiences for our students during the spring quarter and Summer Research Program for all students. While socially distanced, students have been able to complete research projects, submit publications, and develop posters for online conferences. The 74<sup>th</sup> annual Senior Scientific Session was virtual this year, a first, and an extraordinary event involving a diverse selection of projects and over \$3,000 in monetary awards disbursed. The virtual format allowed students, faculty, and staff to engage in rigorous discussion about student research, going beyond what would traditionally have been possible during an in-person conference. We are deeply grateful to our S&D team, Pritzker staff, and faculty for their help in swiftly and creatively adapting our programs for remote learning without sacrificing quality. As a result, we assure you we are ready for you.

While the goal of the S&D program is ultimately to gain expertise in a specific area of study and complete a mentored scholarly project before you graduate, the realization of that objective is four (action-packed) years away. The first step on this journey is to *discover your* interests. While some of you may arrive with predefined interests based on your college or post-college experiences, many of you will also be uncertain and ready to engage in new experiences. In fact, we anticipate that you will likely engage in a variety of activities during your first year that will inform your choice of a project, mentor, and track. For example, you may want to volunteer at one of several student-run free clinics, arrange an out-of-country healthcare experience, start a Quality Improvement project, PE (Peer Educator) a course, or conduct bench or clinical research. Formal 'class' time spent learning about scholarship does not compare to really getting out there and participating in these activities to decipher your true interests.

The S&D Team will be on hand throughout the fall quarter to introduce you to the basic concepts of scholarship; the core knowledge related to the scholarly tracks – Scientific Investigation (Basic/Translational Sciences, Clinical Research, and Health Services & Data Science), Community Health, Global Health, Medical Education, and Healthcare Delivery Improvement Sciences; the S&D milestones; and of course highlights of student successes with University of Chicago faculty mentors.

So, for the moment, relax and enjoy! Soon you will complete an Intake Assessment providing a comprehensive overview of your background experiences and interests; the S&D Team will carefully review your responses to craft a personalized feedback letter that you will receive during the MS1 S&D Symposium in October. We look forward to meeting you as you begin your scholarly journey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at [scholarshipanddiscovery@bsd.uchicago.edu](mailto:scholarshipanddiscovery@bsd.uchicago.edu). We look forward to being your new home for scholarly research and resources.

With warmest regards from the S&D Team,

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