

# OSA S.T.E.P.S. to Success



## November: OSA STEPS to Success

The OSA Steps to Success Career Advising Program is a longitudinal program designed to support your personal and professional growth on your journey to becoming a physician.

**OSA Career Advisors**—including Drs. Allen (Friedenwald), Flaherty (MGP), Lamos (ED), and Thom (LYT)—are here to support your self-exploration, personal growth, career planning, specialty choice, and navigation of medical school and the residency process. As you begin considering specialties, **Specialty Advisors** can offer specialty-specific guidance. The [Residency Application Manual](#) | [Specialty Advising](#) website lists each specialty along with its Faculty Advisor, OSA Advisor, and MS4 Student Ambassadors..

**Tools/Resources:** [Specialty Profiles](#) | [CiM aamc.org](#)

**Office of Student Affairs**  
[Studentaffairs@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:Studentaffairs@som.umaryland.edu)

### OSA Career Advising

### OSA STEPS to Success

- S. Self-Assessment
- T. Target Specialty
- E. Experience
- P. Preparation & Planning
- S. Strategy Execution

### OSA Student Handbook

- [Administrative Support](#)
- [Commitment to Professionalism](#)
- [Commitment to Wellbeing](#)
- [First Generation Students](#)
- [School Policies](#)

### AAMC Resources

[Four-phase career planning process](#)

### Mission/Brand

*A mission or brand is a clear statement of **who you are**, what you **value**, and how you **hope to grow** as a future physician.*

**It helps you:**

- **Stay focused** during medical school
- **Guides** the opportunities you choose
- Communicate a **consistent story** to mentors, letter writers, and residency programs
- Expect your Mission to grown/change as you do; reflect on this regularly.

### Tools/Resources

- [UMSOM Personal Growth Program](#)
- [My Purpose Statement](#) | [depaul.edu](#)

### Intro to Career Decisions

*Exploring career decisions is about **developing self-awareness**, understanding the **breadth of medical specialties**, and **identifying the values and interests** that will guide your professional path.*

It's common for medical students to change specialties—AAMC [data](#) show that up to **72% of medical students did not stick with their original specialty!**

### Tools/Resources

- [Careers in Medicine](#) | [aamc.org](#)
- [Medical Specialty Preference Inventory \(MSPI\)](#)
- [Physician Values in Practice Scale \(PVIPS\)](#)

## Self-Reflection

Carving out time to reflect on your values, strengths, and career interests can be difficult during the first two years of medical school, with its demanding workload and new environment. But self-exploration doesn't need to be time-consuming—brief moments of reflection can provide clarity and a welcome mental break. Gaining insight into who you are and what motivates you will help you make informed choices about your future and will be especially valuable during clinical rotations and PoM, when you encounter diverse specialties, patient populations, and care settings. Understanding yourself now can help you recognize what resonates most and guide your path forward with confidence and purpose.

## Mentoring

### **1. Mentorship is one of the strongest predictors of career satisfaction in medicine.**

Students with mentors report higher well-being, confidence, and sense of belonging in medical school.

### **2. Early mentorship improves specialty exploration and decision-making.**

Connecting with mentors early helps students understand the culture, lifestyle, and expectations of different specialties *before* dedicated clinical time begins.

### **3. First-year students don't need a perfect "career mentor" yet.**

At this stage, the most helpful mentors may be:

- near-peer mentors (MS2–MS4),
- faculty who can demystify school,
- and advisors who help with academic navigation. Career mentors often emerge later, naturally, through clinical exposure.

### **4. Multiple mentors may be more effective than one "ideal" mentor.**

Research supports the value of a mentorship network, including academic mentors, research mentors, personal mentors, and specialty mentors.

### **5. Mentorship boosts academic performance and research productivity.**

Students with structured mentoring are more likely to join research, earn scholarly productivity, and feel prepared for residency applications.

### **6. Good mentorship strongly reduces burnout risk.**

Supportive mentors help students develop coping strategies, normalize challenges, and promote healthier study–life balance.

### **7. Mentors accelerate professional identity formation.**

Mentors model how physicians think, communicate, problem-solve, and uphold ethical standards — critical to a first-year student's growth.

### **8. Mentoring relationships evolve.**

Early mentors may help with transition and foundational skills; later mentors guide specialty choice, research direction, and residency preparation.

- PMIDs: 20433727; 21414226; 23745087; 23425990; 35818612; 21531235; 31360814; 40253352
- [CiM | How medical students choose their specialty](#)

## OSA Insider Podcasts

### [Apple Podcasts](#)

E 101 Adaptive to Maladaptive  
E 85 Mentorship  
E 88 Mentorship  
E 72 Mission/Brand

## How Can OSA Help You?

### Registration

Brian Wynder

[Bwynder@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:Bwynder@som.umaryland.edu)

### OSA Career Advisors

#### [OSA Deans](#)

Kerri Thom, MD (LYT)

John Allen, MD (JF)

Marissa Flaherty, MD (MGP)

Elisabeth Lamos, MD (ED)

#### [Specialty Advisors](#)