

Dear Future Medical Laboratory Scientists,

Congratulations on your acceptance into the medical technology program here at UPMC! Buckle up because you are about to embark on one of the most challenging, frustrating, maddening, inspiring, exhilarating and rewarding journeys of your educational career. It can be overwhelming thinking about the year ahead but take a deep breath and think about all the amazing information you are about to learn. One of the first things you want to do is figure out your study environment. Finding a place where you can be productive and not disturbed is crucial as it will be your “home” for the next eleven and a half months. The first half of your time here is filled with classroom work and student lab which means lectures, homework and exams. There is an exam every week. Yes, you read that correctly, every week. This means studying, studying, studying and not much else. Accepting early on that your personal life moves to the back burner for the next year is in your best interest, do not try to fight it. Does this mean that you should cut off all communication and become a recluse in your apartment? Heck no! It just means you have to be diligent about prioritizing and staying focused on the end goal when planning your out time.

The material is difficult and takes time to learn; but, once it clicks you feel unstoppable! That Ah-Ha moment is real and happens a lot. Never be afraid to ask questions, I personally never held back any of my questions no matter how off the wall they were. Making sure you fully understand something before moving on is key to calling upon that information later during second rotation. If you don't understand it now you won't know it later. The second half of the year, you leave the comfort of the classroom and student lab to go out into the lab and work alongside the techs. Take advantage of their knowledge and experience. What they have to say is priceless information to someone in your position just starting out. Some of the techs, although they don't want to admit it, have been working in the lab for 30 plus years. Their stories and advice can open your eyes to things you never thought of. As you work out in the lab you begin to find yourself and develop your own style and skills that you will carry with you throughout your career. Not to mention the relationships you will build as well; the techs want you to do well and care about your success.

This year is by no means easy but let me tell you first hand that with determination and perseverance you will get through it. You will survive! Stay positive, even though sometimes it may be hard to do. Just give it your best. Come July, if you are not addicted to coffee, don't feel as though you could sleep for 2 months straight, and aren't yelling at the fake doctors on TV that they have no idea what they are talking about...you did this program all wrong ☺.

Best of Luck!

Stephanie, Class of 2018

SUNY Fredonia Graduate