

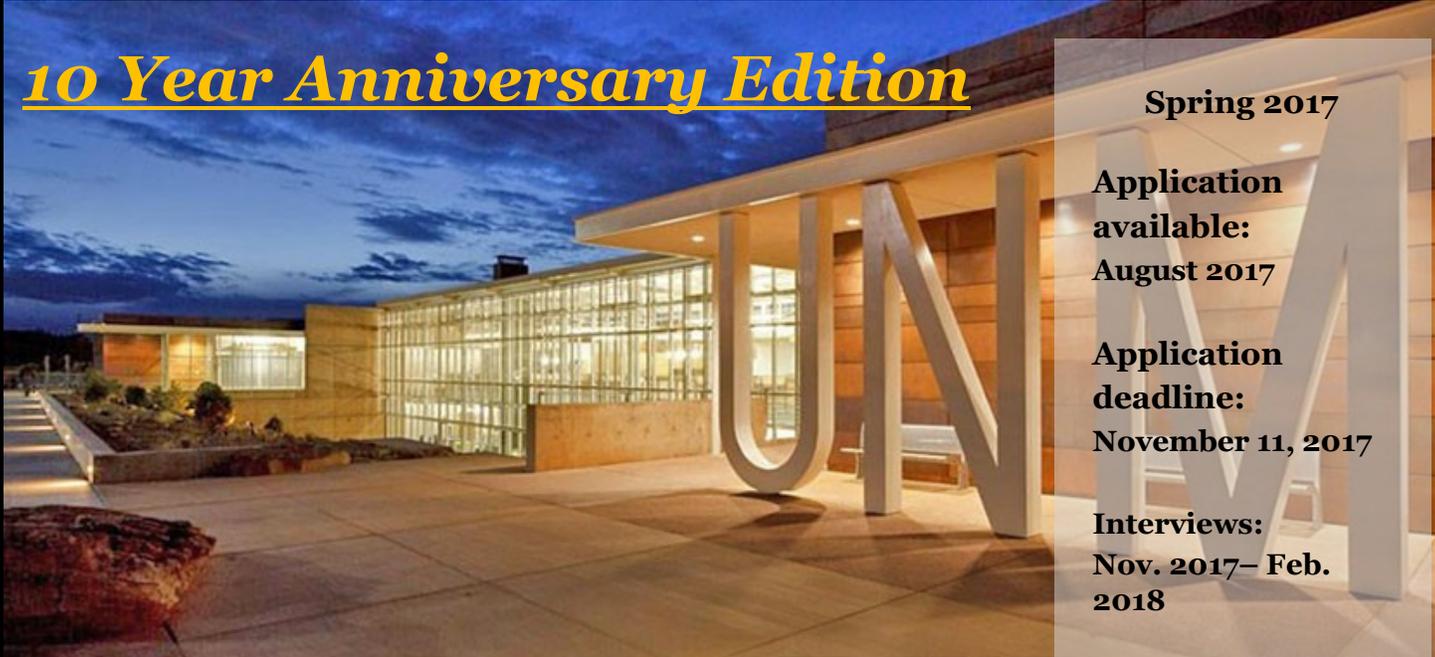


# THE UNIVERSITY *of* NEW MEXICO



## ***THE COMBINED BA/MD DEGREE PROGRAM***

### ***10 Year Anniversary Edition***



Spring 2017

**Application  
available:  
August 2017**

**Application  
deadline:  
November 11, 2017**

**Interviews:  
Nov. 2017– Feb.  
2018**



**Final decision Date:  
April 1, 2018**

**Application can be  
found online at:**

**[http://  
som.unm.edu/  
education/md/  
bamd/index.html](http://som.unm.edu/education/md/bamd/index.html)**



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UNM Combined BA/MD  
Degree Program

# Spring 2017 Combined BA/MD Degree Program Newsletter

*-10th Anniversary Edition*

## **ADDRESSING THE PHYSICIAN SHORTAGE IN NEW MEXICO**

The Combined BA/MD Degree Program is an eight-year degree partnership program between the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Medicine. It is designed to alleviate the physician shortage in New Mexico. The program began in 2006 and provides opportunities in medical education to New Mexico high school students, especially those from rural and underserved communities throughout the state. Every year a diverse class of 28 high school seniors who are committed to serving New Mexico communities with the greatest need are admitted into the Program in their pursuit to become medical doctors. Students gain unique rural medicine experience and public health preceptorship opportunities that begin in the undergraduate years and continue throughout medical school. The classroom curriculum for these rural medicine experiences emphasizes the public health perspective. The Program curriculum offers a strong foundation for practicing medicine with sensitivity to New Mexicans and their healthcare needs.

## **EARN A RESERVED SEAT AT THE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

BA/MD students earn both a Bachelor of Arts and a medical degree at UNM. Students first earn a baccalaureate degree through the College of Arts & Sciences in a challenging four-year curriculum specifically designed to prepare them for entering medical school. Upon successful completion of the undergraduate academic and eligibility requirements of the program, students will matriculate to the UNM School of Medicine to complete their Doctor of Medicine degree.



**BA/MD Certified**



## Fifteen Hours Ahead

Carlos Vargas-2013 Cohort



My plane left Albuquerque as the sun was rising and it landed just after the sun had set in Chengdu, the Chinese city where I was to spend a semester abroad. I felt anxiety, excitement, melancholy, but at the forefront of my mind was getting from the airport to the hotel in a country I've never been to and in a language I barely knew. This city, bigger than New York, was filled with never-ending skyscrapers and was incredibly modern. I was thousands of miles away from home and only knew one person. I had Chinese class Monday through Friday for 3 hours each morning. I also had Chinese culture classes in the afternoons. I took Chinese religions, kung fu, calligraphy, and Chinese-US relations.

Chinese "letters" are called characters, and they are actually not letters at all. Letters indicate sound, whereas Chinese characters are each unique and not phonetic. One must learn a minimum of 2,500 characters to reach BASIC literacy! While the task is daunting, the mystery of this writing system is part of what intrigued me to learn the language. I was walking with my friend and I saw the characters for "car" and "field" on a sign. Excitedly I proclaimed that that sign probably meant "parking lot". He turned to me and said, "I could have told you that based on all the cars that are parked here."

A hearty meal for 4 costs about \$15 in China. An average meal for me cost less than \$1.50. I was in Sichuan province, and Sichuan food is known for its flavor and spice. Panda Express is to Chinese food what Taco Bell is to Mexican food. There was steamed rice with every meal and lots of vegetables. Eating is a communal experience. You don't order an entrée for yourself. Rather everybody takes what they please from the dishes at center of the table.

The Chinese government blocks access to foreign websites like Facebook, the New York Times, Google, YouTube. This is colloquially known as The Great Firewall. In order to access these, you need a VPN, or a Virtual Private Network. This service masks your IP address and lets you surf the web as though you were outside the country.

Pollution is a recurring problem in China that poses severe health risks to its population. It's worth noting that the per capita CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in China are less than that of the US, their population just greatly exceeds ours. We need to be more conscious of our impact on the environment in order to live in a healthy society.

Being in China was like being in another world. Well, at least the other side of one. I was very fortunate to have funding from the BA/MD Program, the Gilman International Scholarship program, the Presidential Scholarship Program, a Pell Grant, the Lottery, and many others who supported me going abroad. Whether it be in Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa, or Australia, getting outside of the US is important for understanding the human experience beyond our own.





## The Journey is Worth It

Eliana Garcia- 2013 Cohort



I remember sitting in my advisor's office making my four-year academic plan. I was a freshman and did not really know what I wanted to major in, plus all the classes I had to take sounded extremely intimidating. The only thing I knew for sure was that I wanted to study abroad my senior year.

Looking back, I cannot believe that I am in my last semester of undergrad, and I'm about to graduate with two degrees! My classmates and I have surpassed so many obstacles-from trying to cram all the reagents in O-chem 2, trying to figure out how to use Excel to represent the data in Plant and Animal Biology Lab, to sacrificing weekend after weekend to take 8-hour MCAT practice exams. The past four years have been a lot of hard work; however, having the support of my classmates (who are my best friends), my professors, and the rest of the BA/MD staff made the experience incredible, fun, and honestly life changing.

After meeting all of the BA/MD curriculum milestones and passing my MCAT, I finally had more flexibility with my schedule allowing me to take all of my classes online my senior year. I spent most of my fall semester living with my family at home and hanging out with my little brother and sister. The rest of the semester, I spent traveling through seven countries in Europe with one of my best friends in the program, and went to visit my family in Colombia. I cannot put in words how amazing my experience abroad was. There is so much to explore in this beautiful world. Traveling was like taking a breath of fresh air and taught me to really enjoy and to be grateful for my surroundings. It made me appreciate New Mexico even more because I missed home. Overall, I came back refreshed, happy, and ready to take on the future hard work that will come with the challenging medical school curriculum.



It has been a long and difficult journey, but through my experience with BAMD, I have made lifelong friends, traveled to 17 countries and had the loving support of my family. I feel very content with how my undergraduate experience has shaped my life and I'm excited to continue on this journey to becoming a doctor. It is all worth it!



## The Night Before Med School

Jacqueline Cai - 2011 Cohort



It was the night before the first day of medical school (10:48pm to be precise) and I was laying in bed with my thoughts racing and my stomach churning. My first thoughts included "Why are you still awake?!" and progressed to "I wonder how scary medical school really is?!" I had dreamed of this day since I was young and I was filled with an array of emotions ranging from nervousness to excitement. The next day, as I traversed the crowd of mostly unfamiliar faces to find a seat in Domenici Auditorium, I felt a sense of uneasiness and uncertainty overwhelm me. I managed to find a seat in a row towards the middle of the auditorium and as I looked over to see who was sitting next to me, I experienced a startling moment of déjà vu. I recalled four years ago when it was the

first day of Dr. Knottenbelt's General Chemistry class and I remember looking at the faces of the students sharing the same table as me and realizing I knew absolutely no one. And while I found myself experiencing similar emotions this time, something was different. Sitting to my right were the 20+ people I had spent the last four years studying, laughing, crying, joking and building some of my fondest memories in life with my BA/MD family. We immediately exchanged our greetings and were quick to share our plethora of emotions and suddenly, there was an unspoken sense of comfort and calmness that had swept over us. Together, we had conquered General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, Biochemistry, the MCAT, and even our fair share of BA/MD Olympic losses – there was no reason we couldn't survive the daunting journey of medical school together. I recall spending the rest of my first day with a newfound confidence and rejuvenated spirit.

It's been nine months since the start of medical school and we've survived not just one, but several medical school quizzes, NBME's, clinical reasoning cases, and patient encounters with a little bit of grit and a whole lot of determination and humor along the way. We've learned that we are more resilient than we believe and that our passion for medicine and service continuously drives us every day. It's surreal to know that I am living out my dream. There are no words to express how thankful I am for each and every BA/MD professor, advisor, mentor, and friend I have met along the way who has enriched my life and helped prepared me for this adventure. Though I know that the next few years will be filled with never-ending change and new experiences, I find comfort in knowing that the family I have found within BA/MD will always stay constant. The camaraderie, support, and love found within this family is truly unparalleled and I hope to give back to the program that has helped shape who I am today through my service as a physician one day.





## Nighttime Abroad

Samuel MacDonald - 2013 Cohort



Sam S. suggests that we climb onto the roof, since this is the final night the three of us have together. Johannes believes it to be a grand idea; I do not think we're in any shape to attempt such a dangerous feat. Sam gives a rousing, eloquent, and ultimately convincing speech. I cave.

We run across the damp grass along the rear wall of the hotel. I am in my socks. We reach the bottom of the spiraling fire escape and climb quickly, furtively. Our ringing steps echo off of the surrounding buildings. At the top, Sam shows Johannes and I how to clamber over the railing, fingers wrapped around the slick gutter for stability. Four stories of *down* lie between the staircase and the flat, narrow windowsill on which he perches.

From the rooftop, the ocean is obscured by fog, but the sound of the waves breaking carries clearly. English rooftops extend in every direction, differentiated by small features: a satellite dish, an AC unit, a clothesline. A train can be heard to the north, driving eastward. It's coming from Portsmouth, maybe, or Shoreham-by-Sea. Sam hangs off a chimney and stares out at the avenue while Johannes hums Dire Straits defiantly into the still night. I fantasize rooftop chases, clandestine meetings, forbidden lovers caressing under moonlight.

Sam leaves tomorrow to Mercer, and Johannes to Munich, and myself to Albuquerque. I do not think we will see each other again, but if we do it will be on top of a run-down hotel, on a Thursday night in Hove.





## Oxygen Mask

Frankie Attiogbe—2013 Cohort



Isn't it a little ironic how as pre-med students, we pour so much time and energy into being able to take care of people in the future that we forget to take care of ourselves? Because of the rigorous nature of the pre-med curriculum, along with some false beliefs about rest that I had adopted along the way, I found myself falling into this mindset early on in college that anything apart from schoolwork and building my resume was non-essential and belonged on the back burner—including rest and things I enjoyed. So sophomore year, on top of my full schedule of classes and labs, I joined activities that were not only time-consuming, but were also things I did not enjoy, and worked myself until my mind and body simply could not work any longer. Two years later, I'm still dealing with the repercussions, and although it's been quite the journey, I've made some drastic changes in my life for both my mental and physical health.

I've learned to make time for writing, crafting, running, and other things I enjoy; as my pictures show, I've found and surrounded myself with a wonderful community of friends and mentors at my local church; and I've even made a compromise between building my resume and doing something I enjoy by working in childcare at my church. There is still progress to be made, but I am happy and healthy. I'm learning how to take care of and love myself a little bit more every day.

Of course, this is not to say I no longer think that school is important or that building your skill set is a bad idea, but rather that I've learned balance between those things instructions they ask you to put your own mask on first in case of oxygen shortage before siting others? Because you need to be well yourself before you can properly take care of others. "Although it's upsetting to me that this lesson was such a difficult one to learn, I'm thankful that I learned it before I begin the next challenging stage of my life, medical school, and I plan to keep putting on my oxygen mask so that I can truly help others be the best and healthiest versions of themselves, too.





## Our Semester Abroad in the U.K.

Cynthia Sanchez - 2013 Cohort



I can still remember the nervous and excited feeling Kyree and I shared as we boarded the plane that whisked us away from a country of familiarity to another filled with adventures and new experiences. After we landed in London, we were driven to The University of Hertfordshire, where we spent the next three months acclimating to British culture. At first, something as simple as grocery shopping was a small challenge to overcome. But by immersing ourselves in the University, we became more comfortable with our environment. Kyree joined the women's basketball team and dominated with her talent and agility and I joined the Pool and Snooker Society nurturing a new hobby. In both instances, we saw our skills improving.

We will never forget the feeling of pride in ourselves when we were finally able to navigate The Tube with ease. We could walk above and beneath the city with confidence, knowing we would eventually stop by Shake Shack, Nandos, or the Harry Potter opportunity to meet up with our BA/MD crew (shout out to Eliana, Nardos, and Sam) in Trafalgar Square where we shared stories of our travels. And despite our mother's warnings of going into London alone, we made it our own as we explored it day and night. We agree that our most valued memories that we share from our trip came from the



friendships we made with the International and British students we met while abroad.

We cultivated a bond with these incredible people through simply watching some karaoke and playing cards together at the pub on campus or packing our flat with people for pizza and dessert parties. Learning about cultures from all over the world including Australia, Singapore, Canada, and Portugal was an amazing gift and in return, Kyree and I cooked an American Thanksgiving dinner to commemorate the community that we had developed.

Though Kyree suffering an injury to her ankle was a small hiccup on the trip, she didn't let it slow her down as she experienced the British health care system and hobbled through London one last time. And throughout our trip, the nostalgia never broke our stride because even though we were an ocean away from home, we still had New Mexico with us, we had it in each other.





# UNM SOM

## Match Day 2017



### MATCH DAY

On Friday March 17 all UNM class of 2017 medical students, their families and SOM faculty and staff celebrated the discovery of where medical students will be attending their residency. This year the Combined BA/MD Degree had 18 Graduates from the school of Medicine.

We would like to congratulate all our 2017 BA/MD medical school grads:

**Julian Benavidez, M.D.**

*Los Lunas High School*

Pediatrics, U Colorado SOM

**Sarah Renee Cordova, M.D.**

*Sandia High School*

Internal Medicine, UNM SOM

**Griffin Ernst, M.D.**

*Valley High School*

Neurological Surgery, U Oklahoma COM

**Jordan Foreman, M.D.**

*Sandia High School*

Surgery - Preliminary/Urology, UNM SOM

**David Hernandez, M.D.**

*Loving High School*

Pediatrics, U Washington Affiliated Hospitals

**Katharine Juarez, M.D.**

*Hope Christian High School*

Emergency Medicine, Rutgers -

New Jersey Medical School

**Ryan Lurstema, M.D.**

*Cloudcroft High School*

Family Medicine, Texas Tech U Affiliated

**Cole Nelson, M.D.**

*Alamogordo High School*

Emergency Medicine, UC San Diego

**Hieu Nguyen M.D.**

*ABQ Academy*

Family Medicine, UNM SOM

**Aleksandra Polic, M.D.**

*ABQ Academy*

OB-GYN, U South Florida-

Morsani COM

**Patrick Ramirez, M.D.**

*Bernalillo High School*

Internal Medicine, Baylor - Scott & White

**Maura Ronquillo, M.D.**

*Gadsden High School*

OB-GYN, U South Florida-

Morsani COM

**Priya Shah, M.D.**

*Manzano High School*

Pediatrics, U Colorado SOM

**Whitney Terrell, M.D.**

*Ramah High School*

Medicine - Preliminary Radiology -

Diagnostic.

UNM SOM Integris Health

**Adam Tolar, M.D.**

*Silver City High School*

Emergency Medicine, UNM SOM

**Adam Ulibarri, M.D.**

*Belen High School*

Family Medicine, U Texas HSC

**Shawna Young, M.D.**

*Sandia High School*

Pediatrics, U of South Dakota-

Sanford SOM

**Daphne Olson, M.D.**

*Public Academy for*

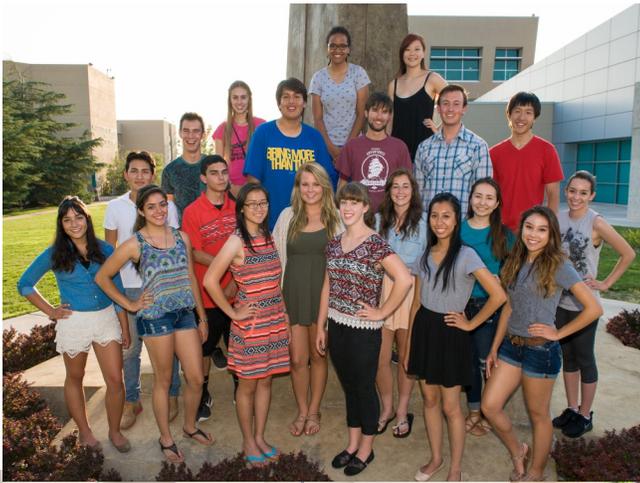
*Performing Arts*

Family Medicine, UNM SOM



**2006-2016  
BA/MD  
cohorts  
& staff**





## Application requirements

The UNM Combined BA/MD Degree Program considers all aspects of an applicant's background, experience and academic progress including:

- Academic excellence (ex. GPA, ACT/SAT scores, honors courses, advanced placement courses, and international baccalaureate courses)
- Community involvement
- Volunteer experience
- Commitment to practice medicine in New Mexico
- Honors and awards
- Extracurricular activities
- 3 Letters of recommendation
- Personal statement
- 2 Interviews

Minimum ACT or SAT Scores		
	ACT	SAT
<b>Math</b>	22	≥510
<b>Reading</b>	19	≥450
<b>Science</b>	19	
<b>English</b>	19	

\*Scores must be achieved prior to the application deadline.  
(SAT subject test scores are not accepted.)

## Eligibility

Application eligibility for the Combined BA/MD Degree Program requires that a student:

- Be a New Mexico resident at time of application.
- Be a current New Mexico high school senior (high school seniors outside New Mexico who are enrolled members of the Navajo Tribe and live in the Navajo Nation are also eligible)
- Have a personal commitment to pursue a medical career in New Mexico's rural or medically underserved areas.

## Application Timeline

- Application available: August, 2017
- Application deadline: November 11th, 2017
- Interviews: November 2016– February 2018
- Final decision notification: April 1, 2018
- Applicant commitment: May 1, 2018

The application can be found online at: <http://som.unm.edu/education/bamd>

## Contact us

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 AM– 5 PM

Physical Location: 2400 Tucker NE

Family Medicine Center, #248, Room 137

Phone: 505-925-4500 FAX 505-925-4004

Toll free: 1-877-977-BAMD (2263)

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Website: <http://som.unm.edu/education/bamd/index/html>

*Newsletters published twice a year by the UNM Combined BA/MD Degree Program.*

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