About Journeys....

One of the most common questions I get in advising is “What can I do with an MCB degree?” I have become pretty familiar with some of the more common paths of our alumni (medicine, research, education, sales, forensics, etc.), however I occasionally catch myself wondering not only about exactly what our students are doing after graduation, but also what that career or educational endeavor is really like. Even though there are common career pursuits among our former MCBers, I am a firm believer that everyone has a different and unique path in life. The purpose of this publication is to help share those life journeys among our alumni, as well as with our current undergraduate students in order to give them a better insight into what’s out there after graduation, or more importantly… what could be out there for them in a path that they’ve never imagined possible.

Because of this, I would like to strongly encourage all our MCB alumni to stay in touch. Your input is valuable! As unbelievable as it might sound, hearing about where our former students have gone truly does brighten my day (and those of our faculty). We look forward to hearing about your journey!

-Jennifer Cubeta

Here, There, and Everywhere: MCB’s Class of 2009

Here’s what our December 2008, May 2009, and August 2009 grads reported regarding what they’re doing right after graduation, based on 85 student responses (est. response rate = 51%):

- Entering a Professional/Doctoral Program in a Health-Related Field: 24%
- Obtained a Research Job: 11%
- Entering a Graduate/Doctoral Program in a Scientific Field: 8%
- Entering Law School or Law Internship: 5%
- Starting a Job in a Health or Pharmaceutical Field: 2%
- Education: 2%
- Entering Peace Corps: 2%
- Entering the U.S. Military: 2%
- Obtained a Job in Forensics: 1%
- Pursuing a Job or Schooling in an area unrelated to MCB: 12%
- Unsure: 31%
**ALUMNI IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS**

**John Gonzales, Class of 2007**  
*Medical Student (M.D.), Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX*

Advice to others interested in medical school: “I would suggest an in-depth research project like a senior honors thesis. This is the strength of [The University of Arizona’s College of Science] and it is wise to take full advantage.”

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, senior thesis (John conducted undergraduate research for 4 semesters). Courses he wishes he would have taken: physiology/anatomy, additional foreign language, virology.

**Linda Shuler, Class of 2007**  
*Medical Student (D.O.), A.T. Still University, School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona, Mesa, AZ*

Advice to others interested in medical school: “Take as many anatomy and other science as possible because all of it is helpful for medical school.” Linda spent a semester doing undergraduate research.

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: microbiology, physiology/anatomy.

**Barbora Nelson, Class of 2007**  
*Second year medical student (D.O.), Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine, Chicago, IL*

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, independent research (she worked 8 semesters in a lab). Courses she wishes she would have taken: microbiology, physiology/anatomy, virology.

**Carrieann Drenten, Class of 2007**  
*Second Year Medical Student (M.D.), University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ*

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: microbiology, physiology/anatomy, virology.

**Emily Edwards, Class of 2007**  
*Second Year Medical Student (D.O.), A.T. Still University, School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona, Mesa, AZ*

Emily’s update: “I am excited to be part of a program that focuses on providing health care to the underserved population.”

Emily’s advice to others: “Get involved as early as possible. Join clubs. If possible, get a position in a lab doing research. [Emily did independent research for 3 semesters of her undergraduate career.] Make connections. This is the advice everyone gives and early on in your undergrad, it may not seem that important, but it really does matter and makes a difference.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: physiology/anatomy, additional foreign language, virology.
Shaharyar Ashraf, Class of 2008  
First year dental student, University of Colorado, School of Dental Medicine, Denver, CO^2
shaharyar.ashraf@gmail.com

Shaharyar says: “I graduated in Spring '08 from UA. and now I’m a student attending Dental School in Denver. This is a four year program and will graduate with my doctoral degree in Spring '12. The education at UA has greatly prepared me for my current doctoral degree program.”

His advice to others: “Load up on science courses, but also be diverse and conduct science research. [Shaharyar worked 5 semesters in the lab during his undergraduate career.] Preferably do one that involves critical thinking AND using hands to improve your hand/eye coordination for manual dexterity.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, human physiology.

Martin Benjamin, Class of 2006  
Director, Grassroots Cancer Research Foundation, Tucson AZ^2
First year medical student (M.D.), University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ^2
Mabenji2@gmail.com

Martin is the director of a non-profit cancer research organization (GCRF, www.GrassrootsCancer.org) that seeks to help expedite cancer drug development and therapeutics by supporting cancer clinical trials. Grassroots Cancer Research Foundation is working with several corporate sponsors to help expand the organization nationwide.

Advice to others: “Get involved in their community through research and education.”

Most useful MCB courses: molecular biology, cell biology, independent research, senior thesis. Courses he wishes he would have taken: physiology/anatomy, additional foreign language, writing, business.

Dan Combs, Class of 2007  
Second year medical student (M.D.), University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ^2
combs89@yahoo.com

Dan’s advice: “Get involved with research you are actually interested in.”

Most useful MCB courses: molecular biology, cell biology, independent research (worked 8 semesters in a lab), senior thesis. Courses he wishes he would have taken: virology.

Zachary Pfau, Class of 2007  
Optometry student (D.O.), Southern California College of Optometry, Fullerton, CA^2
zakpfau@msn.com

Advice to others interested in a similar position: “Get good grades early. Know what you need to do at least 2 years ahead of graduation.”

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, molecular biology. Courses he wishes he would have taken: microbiology, physiology/anatomy.
Silvija Gottesman, Class of 2007
First Year Medical Student (M.D.), University of Arizona, College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ
silvygottesman@hotmail.com

Advice to others interested in medical school: “Study Hard. Volunteer Often. Research, explore, and love what you do.”

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, independent research (she worked 6 semesters in a lab). Courses she wishes she would have taken: physiology/anatomy.

Daniel Vadillo, Class of 2007
Patient Care Technician, St. Mary’s Hospital, Tucson, AZ
d.vadillo@yahoo.com

At the present, Daniel is working in health care and taking a few classes, waiting to hear back from grad schools. His ultimately goal is to pursue a PhD in Nursing.

Advice to others: “Talk to as many people as you can in order to learn all possibilities. I wish I would have explored more careers and talked to more people to give myself a better understanding [before graduation].”

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology.

Stephanie Hartz, Class of 2007
Medical Student (M.D.), University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ

Advice to others interested in medical school: “Stay in touch with and get to know professors that you like, even if they teach your first semester class; they may be able to write you a great letter of recommendation. Take the MCATs very seriously and try not to take it twice.”

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, independent research, senior thesis (she worked 6 semesters in a lab). Courses she wishes she would have taken: microbiology, physiology/anatomy, virology.

Anindita Das, Class of 2008
Middle School Math Teacher, South Tucson
Starting M.D. program at University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ, Fall 2009
das1@email.arizona.edu

Anindita is entering the UA College of Medicine’s Class of 2013 in August 2009. During her year off, she is working as a middle school math teacher in a south Tucson school. On the weekends and evenings she is also a program staff coordinator for Chapel Haven West, a program assisting young adults with autism and Asperger syndrome to live independently.

Advice for students: “Volunteer, obtain research and clinical experiences, and maintain a strong academic record.”

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry. Courses she wishes she would have taken: anatomy.
Rabia Ahmad, Class of 2007  
MCAT Instructor and Medical Student (M.D.), University of Arizona College of Medicine, Tucson, AZ
rabia@email.arizona.edu

Rabia just finished her 2nd year at the UA College of Medicine and will graduate with an M.D. in May of 2011. She reports that a degree in MCB was infinitely helpful during her basic science years, and she was glad to have that background as she prepares to start her clinical experience this summer.

Advice to others: “In short: get involved as a student, a researcher, and in your community. Take classes you wouldn't normally take and broaden your horizons. I got a B.A. in Political Science alongside my B.S. in MCB, and I honestly feel that it made my college experience invaluable. I was able to have my 4 years encompass both of my interests. When else in life will you have that opportunity? Med schools love to see that you have a diverse background and a variety of interests. Second, get involved in research. [Rabia conducted 8 semesters of research as an undergrad.] You don’t have to do a lot, but at least explore that side of medicine, too. Lastly, get lots of clinical experience. Whether at a hospital, nursing home, hospice, free clinic, or whatever. Make sure you understand what the practice of medicine is all about. It’ll increase your passion and make you a better candidate from the perspective of a med school admissions committee.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, senior thesis. Courses she wishes she would have taken: microbiology, anatomy, and virology.

Sonja Evans, Class of 2008  
First Year Dental Student, Boston University School of Dentistry, Boston, MA
sonjae@bu.edu

In Fall 2009, Sonja will be a first year student at Boston University School of Dentistry.

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: business, art/drawing.

“Greatness is not found in possessions, power, position, or prestige. It is discovered in goodness, humility, service, and character.”  
- William Arthur Ward
Elyssia Steinwinter, Class of 2007
Second Year PhD. Student in Chemistry, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ
elyssias@email.arizona.edu

Elyssia’s advice to others: “I suggest that they get involved in research as early as possible.”

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology, senior thesis (she worked in a lab for a total of 5 semesters), neurobiology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: additional chemistry, writing.

Shuang Chen, Class of 2007
PhD Student in Development Biology, Washington University, St. Louis, MO
ichowlett@gmail.com

Advice to others interested in a similar position: “Lab experience is extremely important, and some level of exposure to graduate course helps too.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, molecular biology, cell biology, independent research and thesis, graduate courses in developmental biology and cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: physiology/anatomy, writing, virology.

Iris Howlett, Class of 2007
Second year PhD Student, University of California at Berkeley, Berkeley, CA
ichowlett@gmail.com

Iris is currently a second year grad student at Berkeley in Molecular and Cellular Biology. She is working in a lab that uses Drosophila as a model for epilepsy and seizure disorders.

Advice to others interested in a similar position: “Find a position in a lab, even if it’s just doing basic work such as solution making and routine lab chores. Make it clear to the lab that you would like to do research, even if only during the summers.”

Most useful MCB courses: Molecular Biology, Cell Biology, independent research (Iris conducted research over the course of 4 semesters during her undergraduate career), MCB 422 (Problem Solving with Genetic Tools).

Laura Hall, Class of 2007
PhD Student in Biochemistry, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC

Advice to students interested in graduate school in the sciences: “Start preparing your personal statement early. Do not go to more than 4 graduate school interviews. Don't worry about the GRE and make sure you start research as soon as possible.”

Most useful courses: biochemistry, independent research (Laura spent 3 semesters doing undergraduate research).
Kristin Sikkink, Class of 2007
PhD Student in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Oregon
ksikkink@uoregon.edu

Kristin’s advice to others: “Get involved in a lab as soon as possible, and take advantage of any opportunity to work on a research project independently.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, molecular biology, senior thesis (she worked in a lab for a total of 6 semesters). Courses she wishes she would have taken: additional math.

“One way to get the most out of life is to look upon it as an adventure.”
- William Feather
**ALUMNI IN A VARIETY OF FIELDS**

**Tara Luckau, Class of 2006**  
*Research Specialist, Arizona Research Laboratories, University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ*

Tara works at Arizona Research Laboratories' Human Origins Genotyping Laboratory. She manages the third-tier microsatellite assay, which involves sample tracking, DNA extraction, and quantification and data analysis. She also manages and trains about 20 high school students and undergraduates. Tara’s future goal is to pursue either a Master’s or PhD in Conservation Genetics or Herpetology.

Tara’s advice to others interested in a similar position: “Excel in coursework, of course, but mostly find some labs you're interested in and start emailing anyone in that lab. [Tara worked 8 semesters in the lab during her undergraduate career.] If you don't get a response, you probably don't want to work in that sort of environment. Find another lab.”

Most useful MCB courses: genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: math.

**Varada Datar, Class of 2007**  
*Manufacturing Associate, Applied Biosystems*

Varada is currently working for Applied Biosystems, a company that conducts pharmaceutical and biotechnological research. She eventually hopes to pursue either an MD degree or a PhD degree in molecular biology.

Advice to others interested in a similar position: “Take some business-oriented classes along with the MCB classes. It’s very important to know how science translates into business for major companies and how much profit one can make just by knowing science and business in equal parts. One class I would recommend for regulatory type exposure is PL 495D taught by Lindy Brigham. It helped me a lot in my current job position.”

Most useful MCB courses: molecular biology, cell biology, independent research (Varada spent 8 semesters doing undergraduate research). Courses she wishes she would have taken: business.

**Karina Flores, Class of 2007**  
*International Regulatory Specialist, Gowan Company, Yuma, AZ*

As an International Regulatory Specialist, Karina is responsible for international product submission and registration activities. Regulatory support and assisting in meeting various government regulations for Latin America, Asia, the Southern Hemisphere, the Middle East, and North Africa. Karina is also serving as a laboratory assistant for a microbiology course at Arizona Western College, helping students to better their microbiological lab techniques.

Karina’s advice to others who want to obtain a similar position: “In addition to the chemistry and biology courses required, in order to prepare for a similar position, students should enroll in several agriculture as well as business classes.”

Karina’s future goal: To perform regulatory work for a cosmetics company.

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: additional foreign language, business, toxicology.
Emily Sambrone, Class of 2007
Veterinary Technician, Canada Hills Animal Hospital, Tucson, AZ

Emily worked at the Canada Hills Animal Hospital immediately after graduation, but will attend graduate school in Fall 2008. Her ultimately goal is to obtain her PhD in Molecular Biology/Virology. Emily conducted 3 semesters of independent research as an undergraduate.

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, genetics, biochemistry, molecular biology, cell biology. Courses she wishes she would have taken: physiology/anatomy, virology.

Renita Ho, Class of 2007
Science and Math Teacher, Mountain Rose Academy, Tucson, AZ

Renita is currently working at Mountain Rose Academy, a local public charter school affiliated with The Rose Academies. Renita eventually hopes to pursue an MD program.

Advice to students interested in science education: “Preceptor or work as a teaching assistant for introductory science courses.” Renita also spent 8 semesters doing undergraduate research.

Most useful MCB course: introductory biology (MCB 181R/L and ECOL 182R/L). Courses she wishes she would have taken: physiology/anatomy, additional math courses.

Kudzaishe Mutsaka, Class of 2007
Student, Pima Community College, Tucson, AZ

Kudzaishe is currently taking courses at Pima Community College in preparation for going to graduate school. She feels she needs several business classes (or at least to know a little about accounting and business) to verify if she would like to pursue a Master's program in Applied Biosciences. She will soon be starting work in a microbiology lab part-time.

Most useful MCB courses: molecular biology, independent research, senior thesis (she did 4 semesters of undergraduate research). Courses she wishes she would have taken: business, microbiology.

William Rogers, Class of 2007
Research Technician, University of Arizona – MCB, Tucson, AZ
wer@email.arizona.edu

William is currently working in the U of A’s Medical Research Building as a research technician with the department of Molecular and Cellular Biology. His future goal is to pursue a PhD in Biochemistry.

Advice to others interested in a similar position: “Focus on learning how to learn. At the level of a graduating undergraduate you will not know what you need to know to work in the field. The most valuable thing that you bring to the table is the ability to quickly and efficiently learn the information that is required for you to do your job effectively.” William also spent a semester doing independent research as an undergraduate.

Most useful MCB courses: biochemistry, cell biology, and MCB 466 (Biochemistry of Nucleic Acids). Courses he wishes he would have taken: virology.

Emily Sambrone, Class of 2007
Veterinary Technician, Canada Hills Animal Hospital, Tucson, AZ
Raquel recently married Jeremiah Brinkman, who will be graduating as a Doctor in Pharmacy from the University of Arizona class of 2009. In the fall, they will be relocating to Willow Grove, PA where he will be serving as a pharmacist for the United States Navy. There, she will continue her career in pharmaceuticals or higher education. (She is not positive which path yet.)

Advice to students interested in working as a pharmaceutical representative: “Get drilled in interviewing [and] communication [skills], and also start networking early. Take a class on drug classes. Volunteering at your local hospital or pharmacy can never hurt either.”

Most useful MCB courses: introductory biology, biochemistry, molecular biology, independent research (Raquel conducted independent research for 4 semesters). Courses she wishes she would have taken: anatomy, virology, additional foreign language, business.
Other information for alumni...

- One very useful, free tool that is available to UA alumni is the Alumni Association’s Online Community. (Visit http://www.arizonaalumni.com/ and click on “Online Community.”) The Community offers a permanent e-mail forwarding address, a career networking site, an alumni directory, and social networking.

- UA Career Services also offers individualized career counseling and on-campus interviewing for alumni for up to two years past graduation: http://www.career.arizona.edu/Alumni/.

- Need a copy of your transcript, or an extra copy of your diploma? You can get them through our Registrar’s Office: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/.

- ...And don’t forget Homecoming (November 5—7, 2009)! Alumni are welcome to return to cheer on the Wildcats as Alumni feedback is invaluable! To update your profile, or to let us know where you’re at in the world, please e-mail Jennifer Cubeta at cubeta@email.arizona.edu.

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Check out the MCB website: Www.mcb.arizona.edu