

ELECTIVES TIME!!! – By: *Melanie Buba*

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR STREAMS

- Think about what you might want to be when you grow up and what kind of electives you want to do.
- Try to do that core rotation early in the year. The reason for this is that many schools will not take you for an elective if you've not completed that core rotation first.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR ELECTIVES

- Go to the CaRMS website and read the program descriptions for the programs you want, at the schools you want – pay close attention to whether the program requires you to do an elective at the school in order to be considered for an interview. If so, go there!
- It's my opinion that although some schools don't require you to do electives there to be considered for CaRMS, I think going there is to your benefit – how else will you honestly be able to see whether a program is a good fit for you?
- Check to see whether you need your core rotation to do an elective at the school or not.
- Make sure you do electives from at least 3 CaRMS categories – this is required and gives you an opportunity to explore different career options.
- You **MUST** do at least 2 weeks of family medicine – this counts as one of your 3 CaRMS categories.
- Do some electives outside of Northern Ontario to get a feel for the rest of the programs
- Get in touch with students who have done electives in the specialties/places you are considering – we can offer advice about preceptors, and what specialties/subspecialties are better for electives than others.

ELECTIVE APPLICATION PROCESS

- **BE AWARE OF APPLICATION DEADLINES** and apply early, especially for June-Aug electives. You, and every other med student, are fighting for electives – apply to popular programs early. Every school has different application deadlines – know them!
- Most schools have paper applications and require a NOSM seal for approval. Remember, you are on CCC – you will need to print/email the elective application to Sarena Knapik who will stamp and authorize it, and she will have to MAIL it back to you. This can take some time, and/or get lost in the mail – so give yourself lots of time to do this.
- Most schools need immunization forms filled out by a doctor. What this means is that you need a family doctor who can do all the titres and TB for you and fill out your forms. Most schools want the same immunizations, but some want weird ones (ie. HIV at Queens?). Again, it takes time to get your blood work done, get results back, and track down your physician to fill out your forms. It's a good idea to start this process early (ie. in the fall or early in the new year).
- It's a good idea to track your application packages when you mail them to the schools.
- Be aware of the fact that it can take 2-3 months to hear back about an elective from a school. This may happen close to, or even after, elective application deadlines have passed – always have a Plan B.
- If you have any other questions, ask someone who's gone through this process already – we're always here to help!

Good Luck!

Mel