

Dear future MLS student,

I want to begin by saying that it's nearly impossible to capture what this program year has meant to me in just one page. This clinical year has been the most challenging—and yet the most rewarding—experience of my life. Don't let that statement intimidate you, though. I truly believe that anyone who is committed, focused, and willing to put in the effort can make it through this year. With perseverance and determination, you *will* succeed. That said, expect plenty of blood, sweat, and MANY tears along the way.

I could give you an endless list of tips that helped me survive this program, but I'll stick to the most important ones. First: **do not procrastinate**. Falling behind in this program means you'll pay for it later, and trust me, it's not worth the stress. Come into this year knowing that studying is nonnegotiable. Find the study method that works best for you and commit to it. I personally studied a set number of hours each evening so I could still protect some of my weekends. You will spend a LOT of time studying, but the material is fascinating—and by the end, you'll feel like a mini doctor.

As a Type A person, my next piece of advice was the hardest lesson for me to learn: **you have to go with the flow**. Things won't always go your way. You might fail a test, burn yourself out, or feel like you're constantly trying to outrun the fear of falling behind. It's uncomfortable. Really uncomfortable. But there is no growth without discomfort, and I'm incredibly grateful that I pushed myself out of my comfort zone this year.

Another survival tip: **find things to look forward to**—daily, weekly, monthly, whatever works for you. There were times when it felt like this program would never end and the “light at the end of the tunnel” was completely imaginary. But when Michele and Kyle say this will be the longest yet shortest year of your life, they aren't exaggerating. You'll understand once you're on the other side of it. To get through the tougher moments, I made sure to schedule things that brought me joy. I joined a Wednesday night soccer league during first rotation, and it became the highlight of my week. I planned weekly date nights with my fiancé. Sometimes, the only thing getting me through the day was knowing I had a sweet treat waiting for me at home. Whatever keeps you going—embrace it.

One of the biggest keys to surviving this program is **finding a support group**. I was incredibly lucky that my classmates became mine. We saw each other every day, and they truly carried me through this year. Without them, I would not have made it. We supported each other emotionally and academically—study groups before every test, hours spent creating ridiculous mnemonics, and so many shared moments that we crossed the line into delusion more than once. As strange as it sounds, I'm genuinely going to miss this program and all the memories we created. I am so grateful to have spent 335 days with Michele, Kyle, and my amazing classmates.

Lastly, **never hesitate to reach out to Kyle or Michele** when you're struggling. They may not be licensed counselors, but with their years of experience running this program, they have seen it all and understand exactly what you're going through. They are there to help you.

Take care of yourself this year—and don't forget to invest in good coffee, a reliable pen, and a sense of humor. Because trust me: at some point, you will spill the coffee, lose the pen, and question every life decision you've ever made... all while memorizing gram positive cocci at 2 a.m!

Best regards,
Laura, Class of 2026
SUNY Fredonia graduate