

# DOMUS DOCTRINARUM

University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School  
Learning Community Fall 2021 Newsletter  
TRADITION EDITION

*Letter from the Editor:*

*Thank you so much for reading the Fall 2021 Edition of the UMass Med Learning Community Newsletter Domus Doctrinarum. The theme of this edition is **Traditions**.*

*UMass Chan is always growing and changing. Through embracing and celebrating change, it is special to recognize the traditions that stay with us. Please enjoy this celebration of LC Traditions with articles and pictures written by members from each House.*

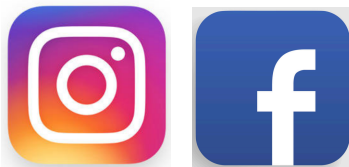
*Thank you and Enjoy!*

## LCxB UPDATES

We are thrilled to celebrate the newest Learning Community, **Grafton House**. Joining us 2022.

One of the 7 hills of Worcester, the Grafton neighborhood is home to numerous immigrant populations and working class families. This area is also home to many amazing small businesses, diverse cuisine, and a strong community.

The members of the newest LC will vote on their mascot next year. Once established, we are overjoyed to welcome the Grafton House and honor the richness the Grafton Neighborhood in our community.



Follow us on social media for weekly LC updates on events, news, and community information!  
**@umassmedlearningcommunities**

## The Learning Community Executive Board (LCxB) 2021-2022

**Senior Co-Chair** | Leslie Panella  
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## BLACKSTONE HOUSE

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### **BE THERE. BE A BEAR.**

By Nikita Joshi, MS1 Class of  
2025

**Despite these challenging times**, Blackstone has consistently shown up for each other and the community - eager to help, build connections, and unify the UMass Med community. With just half a year under their belt, the house members have demonstrated their passion and resilience to keep old traditions alive as well as begin new ones.

Kickstarting the fall with a quintessential tradition, Blackstone enjoyed Apple Picking with Tatnuck, bringing students across all four years together. It was a great bonding event for the MS1s to integrate themselves into their house as well as develop connections with the years above.



As the MS1s came together for their first bonding event of the year at MOE, Blackstone seemed hungry for the title of MOElympic Champions. Under the superb coaching of the MS2s, Blackstone MS1s claimed the title and set a new

precedent for the following years. It truly showed the deep connection and teamwork present within the house already. Keeping this hunger alive, the members placed all their energy into Minutes for Fitness, a House Cup wellness activity challenge. Aiding the house to victory was one of Blackstone's house reps, Madison Jones. "I was so proud of the Bears for pulling through for Minutes for Fitness. We definitely couldn't have done it without our fearless leader, Dr. Silk, who even strategized the number of minutes per day each person should complete in order for us to win. It was a huge team effort and I know I picked up a few good habits in the process!" stated Madison about the experience. This event was a testament to the dedication and synergy between the faculty and students to achieve what they put their minds to.



Keeping with building new traditions and bringing community together, Blackstone MS1s, Alex Lo and Kelly Kalagher, created a souvenir for their entire MS1 class to cherish - class Patagonias. Alex reflected on their undertaking: "Organizing the Patagonia orders with Kelly was an incredibly challenging but fulfilling experience. We wanted to organize this Patagonia order to celebrate our classmates

getting into Umass. I'm very proud to look at this jacket with my name and school on it because, to me, it serves as a little reminder of my journey to get here-- I'm willing to bet that my classmates have similar feelings. The whole process had its bumps and bruises, from constantly changing orders to mistakes by the companies we worked with, but seeing everyone with their jackets makes it all worth it! The Swagstone orders are in the works, so stay tuned :)" Seeing everyone wear their class Patagonias has brought a deeper sense of camaraderie on and off campus.



Building on past traditions, Blackstone has now expanded their annual Flag Football event to a House Cup Event involving a food drive for Worcester County Food Bank. It was “a great showing despite it being a pretty chilly day. Each house brought some heat and Blackstone had a couple of great plays (shoutout Alex Lo we had some sweet connections)” said Madison Jones, a

Blackstone MS1. She continued, “The food drive portion of our flag football event was a new factor this year. I wanted to alter the event a little so it included some community involvement. We ended up collecting an entire trunkful of food for the Worcester County Food Bank!”

New traditions have been made such as Pancake Art Making and Blackstone hosting a Tri-House Redemption Rock Game and Movie Night with Brightwood and Quinsig. Through these traditions, students celebrated the completion of their exams, bonded with other houses, but most importantly, supported each other and built a close-knit family in the process. With this tight family, the Blackstone bears look to continue building traditions like bringing home the House Cup.

Be there. Be a Bear.

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## BRIGHTWOOD HOUSE

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### ON THE ROAD TO SPRINGFIELD

By Maddy Schwartz, MS1 PURCH  
Class of 2025

As an incoming first year medical student in the PURCH track, one of my biggest concerns was making the trek to Springfield every other week, away from our home base in Worcester. Getting on the road every Thursday morning and heading west to Springfield seemed tiring, especially amongst all our exams, studying, and due dates. However, for years Brightwood class members have been piling into cars together, forming coveted “carpool groups” and making the best of the two hours spent driving down I-90. Before my first PURCH day this past September, I had a few classmates reach out to me asking if I’d want to join them for the drive. To this day, we still drive together.



Stella Barth and Derrick Tonto  
(Class of 2025)

Time away from lectures and the library is hard to come by in medical school. Often, we only interact with our peers in a strictly academic

setting. Therefore, those two hours in the car on Thursday mornings and evenings have provided PURCH students with some essential time to unwind, debrief the day, and make valuable connections with classmates. During these carpool sessions I feel less alone, more understood and seen. Driving home after a difficult day in clinic, or after an emotional lecture or discussion with our group, we can share these experiences and find connection in these challenges. This camaraderie has become a foundational Brightwood value.



Victor Bacelar, Derrick Tonto, and  
Siva Narasimhadevara (Class of 2025)

Laura Labb (Brightwood, MS2) carools each week with her anatomy group, a different spin on the tradition. She reflects, “Carpooling to PURCH days has given my anatomy group a space to grow together as a group. The time we spend together listening to music in the mornings and decompressing on the rides home has allowed us to foster a relationship that is closer than most other anatomy groups.”



Annie Geiger, Hope Koene, and Sam Stone (Class of 2025)

The Brightwood faculty have capitalized on these carpool sessions as well, providing us with a new “CAR-iculum” each week. The CAR-iculum is a 10–15-minute podcast related to one of the social determinants of health that we’ll be discussing that day at PURCH. If we are feeling sleepy in the morning, which is frequently, we can put on the CAR-iculum and listen, while we wake up and set the tone for the day. My favorite was a TedTalk given by Mary Basset on “Why Doctors Should Care About Social Justice.”



Melanie Barbini and Michela Oster (Class of 2025)

Through the ups and downs of pre-clinical years, Brightwood students have found a way to make the most out of our transient dual citizenship, in both Springfield and Worcester. Knowing someone is there to pick you up (for PURCH day!), has made the Brightwood community feel even more like home.

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## BURNCOAT HOUSE

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### BURNCOAT BREWS

By: Amanda Leonhard & Nadine Kridli, MS1 Class of 2025

**Burncoat Brews is a fun new tradition** we just started this year! Thankfully, this year's MS1s have the chance to be in person for a lot of school and house events. To take advantage of that, and after a year of dreadful isolation, we decided to start a small weekly tradition to make the house space feel more like a home. We wanted people to feel as though they were not only welcome, but a part of a community that would be with them through the next four years.



A small way we thought to achieve this was through a weekly brew - hence the name, Burncoat Brews. While it is a small gesture, it brings in people to stop by the Burncoat house every Thursday to study or hang out with coffee and snacks. Although it started with just the house representatives supplying the brew, other Burncoat members soon started bringing in treats of their own to share with everyone! Burncoat

Brews has thus been a way feel more connected to one another and our learning community space.



**Photo 1:** Burncoat Brews “logo” (Amanda Leonhard)

**Photo 2:** October 3, 2021; pictured: Emily Meara '25; mentioned: Clara Cabot '25

**Photo 3:** November 4, 2021; pictured left: Louis Beers '25, right: Shridhar Singh '25

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## KELLEY HOUSE

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### GO GREEN WITH KELLEY

By Talia Feldman, MS1 Class of 2025

**This year, Kelley House** continued our legacy project of increasing sustainability-related awareness and action through Go Green with Kelley! From November 28th to December 5th, Kelley House hosted a weeklong inter-house competition encouraging students to engage in earth friendly habits. Examples of actions students could perform for house points included using reusable straws and grocery bags, going meatless for the day, carpooling, shortening showers to conserve water, and engaging politically regarding climate change. We also sent out informational links on these topics so students could learn about how implementing small habits can make a large difference! This tradition gave students a chance to engage with their local and global communities through action while fostering friendly competition between houses. Many students engaged politically by reaching out to our local Massachusetts Senate representatives, urging them to pass the Build Back Better Act, which plans to allocate roughly \$600 billion towards investments in climate action. As medical students, we have been taught to consider the many social determinants of health in our evaluation of patients, and the environment is one that is undoubtedly critical to physical and mental wellbeing.



Climate change is a public health crisis that affects humans worldwide, affecting the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. Kelley House students appreciating the outdoors during a trip to the Apple Orchard this fall

We are also taught to be rooted in evidence-based medicine, and the evidence is clear that climate change is not only disastrous to our health, but affects people of different socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial backgrounds to varying degrees. In the Kelley House, we believe that it is our duty as medical students to take initiative towards mending this problem through both local, national, and global measures.

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## TATNUCK HOUSE

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### TATNUCK: A HOUSE OF NEW TRADITION

By Alex Neamtu, MS1 Class of 2025

The Tatnuck Tigers are a fiercely proud and involved group of medical students. Every year, there are annual events that are passed down from generation to generation of tiger cubs. Many of these hold a special place in the heart of all those who bleed orange.



However, this year, a house representative by the name of Cara Berg was looking to do something new—to start afresh.

With determination in her mind and heart, she set out to create a brand NEW Tatnuck House tradition. With Halloween around the corner, Cara decided that it would be a fun idea to decorate the pediatric unit at UMass Medical Center in time for the holiday.

Now this was no small task. She had to organize supplies, labor, and communicate with some of the staff in the pediatric unit to make this special surprise happen. Luckily, Cara was up for the challenge. She quickly was able to get in contact

with Kendra through the Child Life Program, who was very enthusiastic at the idea. Things then began to fall into place. Cara recruited the help of 13 volunteers mostly comprising of first year medical students, took a trip to the store and bought countless Halloween decorations, and led the charge to Pediatric Unit 5E to begin the



festivities.

It only took about an hour, but the floor was completely transformed from a normal hospital to a Halloween Wonderland. Orange and black streamers, ghosts, and other friendly creatures hung from every door in the unit. As they decorated, some of the children currently residing in the hospital beamed with joy as they saw their space transformed.





Kendra and the rest of her team were ecstatic. The children were overjoyed. The medical student volunteers were equally pleased. The event was a success!

The beauty of tradition is that it celebrates the old and welcomes the new. Thanks to the ideas of house representatives like Cara Berg, we can continue to bring in new traditions that will live on in the spirit of the Tatnuck Tiger for many years to come!

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## QUINSIGAMOND HOUSE

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### REFLECTIONS ON QUINSIGAMOND TRADITIONS

By: Mallika Purandare, MS1 Class  
of 2025

I remember applying to UMass Med and being told about the wonderful traditions and tight-knit community here – and I have to say – I didn't believe it until I got here.

Quinsigamond House has been no different. For the past many years, we have been hosting squid specialty advisor nights, group picnics at Green Hill park, and of course, WRAP for WRAP – our legacy project. The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly created challenges with keeping these precious traditions alive, but despite this, our peers and faculty squids have never let our MS1 class feel any dearth of support or community. They are really there for us when we need them. Together, we quickly adapted and moved advice nights online, celebrated the cloaking of our first and second year classes through social media, and we held many social events (both in person, and virtually) to cultivate a strong sense of community.

Here's what some of our students had to say about their favorite traditions:

*“Starting medical school can be a huge adjustment, and I know many of us have had moments of self-doubt, especially at the beginning. Having support from my learning community has been priceless in giving me a*

*boost of encouragement and a whole network of peers and senior colleagues to lean on.”*

- Karishma Patel, MS1



*“I really enjoy the house cup events because they really boost competitive spirit! Go squids!!”*

- Arpan Bose, MS1

*“My favorite tradition so far has definitely been the after party for our BWCT exam where the 2nd years cheered us on as we walked out the doors. It was really nice to feel that support from our 2nd year buddies and to celebrate that moment!”*

- Aastha Pokharel, MS1

*“I thought the whole house sorting process during MOE was a nice touch to the overall learning community tradition. It was a really fun way to be welcomed into your learning community, and I think it builds camaraderie between students as you cheer on each new addition to the group.”*

- Matt Covello, MS1



*“As corny as it sounds, Quinsig truly feels like home base. Whether I’m at a planned house event, hanging in the LC after a physical diagnosis session, or waiting for DCS to start, I am surrounded by people I feel so comfortable with. It’s relieving to have such a familiar group to go through the ups and downs of first year with and to have wise and kind second years to reach out to.”*

- Toireasa Raffert-Millett, MS1

*“My favorite “tradition” is really when new house reps come in and bring a new energy/creativity to LC events. Especially with the pandemic, we haven’t been able to hold the exact same events every year, but I think that helps us stay flexible with creating new possible traditions and catering towards the interests of each incoming class while still keeping up the same community spirit!”*

- Olivia Hanron, MS2