

SYDNEY MEDICAL
SCHOOL

Our Canada connections



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

APRIL 2010



CANADA AND SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

Our relations with Canada are a major feature of our medical program. Canadians are our most numerous international students studying in the program. In 2009 we had a total of 111 Canadians studying medicine with us. Each year we hold our selection interviews in Canada in conjunction with the University of British Columbia. As a result we are well connected to things Canadian in Sydney.



CANADIAN CONSUL GENERAL JOINS STUDENTS

BY LOUISE FRECKELTON

With Canadian nationals accounting for close to two thirds of the Faculty's international medical students, it is no surprise that a recent reception organised by the Office of Global Health for Canadian Consul General based in Sydney, Mr Thomas MacDonald, was well attended.

"Canada and Australia lie on opposite sides of the globe, but we have a similar past and have developed along similar lines."

Students and staff across health faculties attended the reception, to hear Deputy Vice Chancellor (International) Professor John Hearn, and the Deans of Medicine and Dentistry, Professors Bruce Robinson and Eli Schwarz, and Mr MacDonald speak about the strength of ties.

Of the 179 international students across four years of Sydney's medical program, 111 are Canadian.

Mr MacDonald said he understood why Australia was a popular destination for Canadian students. With strong historical and cultural ties, Canadian students felt at home in Australia, he said.

"Canada and Australia lie on opposite sides of the globe, but we have a similar past and have developed along similar lines," he said. "That allows us to come together naturally, enjoy close ties and an enduring friendship."

Speaking at the reception, Professor Bruce Robinson noted the importance of international students to the medical program, for the different experiences and perspectives they brought and also for the connections developed between local and international students which pave the way for future clinical and research collaborations.

JUNE 2009

CANADA AND SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

CONT. FROM COVER

Should you want to touch base with home (or near home) while studying medicine with us we provide opportunities for you to apply for elective placements at Mc Master or UBC or at other universities in North America. Alternatively, you might want to take advantage of being in this part of the world to develop an understanding of the health issues in Australia's neighbourhood – Asia-Pacific.

As for staying in touch with all things Canadian while on the other side of the planet, our firm and friendly relations with the Canadian Consulate in Sydney ensure that our medical students are regularly informed of Canadian events such as the annual Canadian Film Festival and when Canadian performers and authors travel to Sydney to attend events such as

the Sydney Arts Festival and Sydney Writers Festival.

In Canada the University of Sydney has nearly 500 contactable alumni from all fields. SUGUNA (Sydney University Graduates of North America) is the Alumni Association that covers Canada and the rest of North America. SUGUNA has a newsletter that goes out with our alumni magazine SAM (Sydney Alumni Magazine) and holds an annual conference over three days.

We hope you find this little publication gives you some additional information about our program our students and our Canada relations and that this helps you with your decision - to join us in Sydney.

SOME STATISTICS

In 2009 we had a total of 111 Canadian students studying medicine with us.

The first degrees of our Canadians are widely varied. While a large percentage have come from biomedicine-type degrees, we have students from arts and humanities backgrounds, from music, economics and management, engineering, psychology and allied health.

Our students have completed degrees in 22 different Canadian and US universities, but the majority of our students have come from UBC, University of Toronto, McGill, McMaster and Western Ontario.



NETWORK CANADA

BY JONATHAN LERNER (ALUMNUS OF UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY, MCGILL UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO)

Network Canada is a fun professional networking group based in Sydney that's open to everyone, not just Canadians. From amazing events to travel advice around Australasia, Network Canada is here to help!

Network Canada began in 2002 as a social network for young Canadian expats living in Sydney with events called 'Canada Parties'. Not much has changed except that many of the events are now famous in the Sydney party scene. In fact, the parties have become so popular that companies have started sponsoring them. There are usually 5 to 7 events per year with anywhere from 150 to 3,000 people showing up depending on the occasion!

Some of our famous annual events include a huge Canada Day bash and the largest Halloween parties in Australian history. The parties can get pretty big but the goal of Network Canada always stays the same: friendly people hanging out with other friendly people.

You're guaranteed to be introduced to new people of all backgrounds and professions and have fun at the same time. It's free... just get on the mailing list by contacting us or join us on *Facebook* where you can also see photos of past events!

networkcanada.com.au

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GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON HEALTH - SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

BY LOUISE FRECKELTON

Health is an international field. Health professionals are in demand across the globe and health issues do not recognize national boundaries.

No matter whether you decide to practice at home or abroad an understanding of the global burden of disease, how certain diseases link or are more prevalent according to ethnicity and how disease is changing across the globe due to modernization and climate change is imperative.

Sydney Medical School has taken seriously the global dimensions of health and has built this aspect into both the informal and formal curriculum. The University of Sydney Medical Program is committed to ensuring that its graduates are globally competent and globally mobile health professionals prepared in part to interact in that borderless world.

“In the modern multicultural worlds of Canada and Australia, even if students never leave the boundaries of their country to practice medicine, the diversity of our populations requires that an understanding of the different conditions

that affect different nationalities and the cultural angle on health and treatment is critical to contemporary health care” says Louise Freckelton, Manager of International Relations from the Office for Global Health with responsibility for relations with Canada. “And should you decide to take your medical degree into development and aid work, you will have been sensitized to many of the critical issues during both the formal and informal parts of the program.”

There are lots of ways that we aim to internationalize our students’ experiences.

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES

Naturally there is space in the program for electives and many of our students organise placements in far flung corners of the world organized by themselves. But we have also developed a number of special exchanges and international experiences with key partners.

These include opportunities to undertake an elective with some of the best universities in the world like Cornell and Columbia in the United States, Karolinska in Sweden and with Shanghai Jiao Tong in China. In addition, our focus on building strong international relationships in our region means that we have been able to secure elective experiences for our students in Cambodia, Timor Leste, Nepal and Vietnam.

“We are constantly growing these opportunity for students and this will also develop in-line with where our students come from and what the interests of our students are. Our Canadian students might find the elective placement with Mc Master University attractive on the other hand they may be drawn to a health experience in Australia’s neighborhood of Asia-Pacific”, says Associate Dean (International) and Director of the Office for Global Health, Associate Professor Lyndal Trevena. “Some of our students of Chinese or Indian origin reconnect with their heritage through an elective with our partners in Shanghai and Beijing and in Vellor and those with a Jewish heritage may find the opportunity provided by a placement at Technion in Haifa attractive. We are also developing new electives with the University of British Columbia, with the National University of Singapore.



THE GLOBAL HEALTH STREAM

The 'Global Health Stream' is a new initiative for students in the Sydney Medical Program to explore areas of interest in Global Health.

Students from all years meet approximately once a month to hear a speaker on an issue of Global Health importance. Each student is also encouraged to identify a project or specific area of interest to work on and this might include preparing for an overseas option or elective placement, advocating for global health issues or simply learning more about a particular health problem or country. Students are linked up with appropriate people and resources to help develop their ideas.

Members of the group participate in online discussion with Global Health events and links regularly posted via Facebook.

Here are some examples of recent Global Health Stream gatherings:

- *Andrew Hewitt, Executive Director Oxfam Australia*
Andrew addressed the 'perfect storm' of the global financial crisis, climate change and the food crisis currently facing the world and most severely affecting the health of those in the developing world.
- *A conversation with the Indian Consul General, His Excellency Amit Dasgupta*
The Indian Consul General spoke on the health challenges in this populous nation.
- *A focus on China*
With China as the most populous patient in the world, their health will inevitably impact globally. Dr David Bray spoke about the historical, political and social context of China's health in this age of reform.
- *Cultural Intelligence: How not to offend*
Dr Cynthia Hunter provided practical tips on culture and cultural awareness, particularly on how to make the most of a health placement abroad bearing cultural factors in mind.
- *Humanitarian and Emergency work in post-conflict countries*
Bronwen Blake enthralled us with stories about working with refugees in Africa and Asia. We heard about managing cholera outbreaks and delivering health services in incredibly challenging environments.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES - GLOBALHOME AND POSTCARDS FROM WHEREVER

Our medical students are passionate about global health issues and regularly hold student-run events on these themes. In 2010 GlobalHOME in conjunction with the Office for Global Health will hold a series of 9 lectures covering all aspects of global health. Our popular twice annual 'Postcards from wherever' evenings allow for short presentations by staff and students on their own global health experiences.



OFFICE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

Take a look at the Office for Global Health website to find out more about all these opportunities to position your medical degree for the world of global health.

www.sydney.edu.au/global-health

A NORTH AMERICAN IN PARIS (OF THE EAST) (APOLOGIES TO GERSHWIN)

一个加拿大人在上海

In 2009 Owen Lee undertook his Independent Learning Activity with one of our strongest international partners and one of China's elite universities – Shanghai Jiao Tong University and their affiliated hospital – Renji. Here is how he rated it...

“As a well-travelled Canadian I have encountered health care systems from developed countries such as those in Canada, England, Hong Kong and Australia, where the standards of care are amongst the best in the world. With the tremendous development of its economy, I was curious to see how the health care system in China is and the Office for Global Health gave me the opportunity to find out just that, with an exchange program to Renji Hospital, an affiliated teaching hospital of the Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

I was lucky enough to be a medical student in the General Surgery, Orthopaedic Surgery, and Gastroenterology departments for a total of 4 weeks. The professors I was assigned with gave me a lot of freedom. The surgeons provided me with opportunities to scrub in to surgery with them. This way I could observe the operations closely. This was the first time I really had a chance to do this, and I gained a lot from it. In addition I also had the opportunity to be a part of the orthopaedics team on call in the emergency department.

In Shanghai, all the different medical and surgical specialties put a team in the emergency department, so when a patient has a particular concern, the nurse at the reception quickly assesses which specialty will be best suited to the condition, and you go directly to that room in the emergency department. Apparently on average, the patient only has to wait for about 10 minutes before they get medical attention, quite different from my

experience in Canada and Australia! However, patients also have to pay for most of their treatment, and that can be a bit of a problem when an important operation is too expensive.

During my week in gastroenterology, I had the opportunity to examine patients in the ward, help out in the out-patient clinic and watch doctors perform gastric endoscopies, and colonoscopies. As you can imagine there were many patients and doctors in the hospital. It was so busy!

Living in China was also quite an experience. Once you step out, you can sense how busy the country is. Construction sites everywhere, with busy traffic surrounding each block. Obviously I had a chance to eat a lot of cheap Shanghainese Chinese food, which was great. All in all, I felt lucky to be there, and it was a wonderful learning experience for me both medically, and culturally.”



SOME OF OUR CANADIAN STUDENTS



Jas Kambo - Mississauga, Ontario

Where did you do your UG degree?

UG – University of Toronto, Masters - UBC

What UG degree did you do?

Undergrad – Psychology and Masters - Neuroscience

Why did you want to do Medicine?

his is the most common question we get asked while applying for medical schools, but it's still the toughest one to answer without seeming like a pretentious narcissist trying to give the perfect answer to an admissions panel. I suppose it comes down to knowing who you are, who you want to be and how to get there. Medicine allows for so many opportunities for me to mature both academically and personally. Oh, and the episode of Scrubs where Turk joins an air band. Truly inspirational stuff.

How did you come to that decision?

By exposing myself to a number of fields (either through school or work) and finally finding one where I wasn't looking for a way to procrastinate within the first 10 minutes. I can get through about 20 minutes of medical

textbooks before I check email again. This may not seem like very long but any student who says otherwise is either a liar. Or a better student than me.

Why did you decide to come to Sydney?

Admittedly, I could have put more effort into applying for medical schools in Canada but I had already done two degrees and was ready to see the world beyond Canada. So I threw a dart at a map of the world and it landed on Sydney. Fortunately, Sydney has a reputable medical program that caters to a large number of international students (particularly Canadians).

What has been your experience so far of the program? Of Sydney?

The country is basically a warm version of Canada. Instead of ice hockey and baseball they have rugby and cricket. Instead of moose and polar bears they have massive spiders and the most venomous snakes in the world (you'll be fine). There are a few other subtle differences but the culture shock has been minimal. And with the large number of Canadians in the program

you'll always find someone who will tell you why the Maple Leafs are the greatest thing ever, or why the Maple Leafs are a poison on society. In case you get homesick.

It's hard to rate the program without having attended any other medical programs to compare to, but USyd generally has a good reputation and caters to students who don't need a ton of external motivation to study. As you progress through the program things start to become clearer and most graduates assure me that we'll be competent doctors by the time we're working independently.

What advice would you give to someone considering applying for medicine? For medicine at Sydney?

If you're considering applying to medicine, just make sure it's truly what you want to do. Once the glamour and excitement of getting into the program wears off, remember that medicine is a life long commitment to learning and evolving as a person. It's hard work, dedication and not nearly as glamorous as TV shows make it out to be. Dr House may be allowed to break into his patient's houses looking for clues, but we can't. It's against the law in Australia.

If you're applying to Sydney then make sure you understand what's required of you in order to return to Canada and what the prospects are of employment in Australia (internship policies are constantly changing). The school should be able to provide you with a liaison that can help in this regard.

Bryan Normandin - Calgary, Alberta

Where did you do your UG degree?

University of Waterloo

What UG degree did you do?

Chemical Engineering

Why did you want to do Medicine?

I wanted to do medicine because I like working with a variety of people in a diverse environment. At the same



time, I enjoy problem solving and enjoy the science involved in looking at the human body as a system.

How did you come to that decision?

After finishing my undergrad degree, I was not certain what direction I wanted to take with my career. It wasn't until I had worked for a few years for a major engineering firm that I decided to pursue a career in medicine.

Why did you decide to come to Sydney?

I decided to come to Sydney because I was looking for a change pace and different environment. I also wanted to study at a medical school with a good reputation and solid resources to provide a quality education.

What has been your experience so far of the program? of Sydney?

Sydney Medical School offers a broad and diverse medical education. The program not only focuses on the basic science involved in medicine, but also explores global, biopsychosocial and professional aspects. The program excels in providing quality clinical education in a variety of settings. This has been the most enjoyable and rewarding part of the program.

Sydney is a beautiful city to live in. Regardless of what your interests are, there is plenty to do, things to see, and places to go. It offers a laid back lifestyle in a large urban centre. The weather isn't all that bad either.

What advice would you give to someone considering applying for medicine? For medicine at Sydney?

I would encourage anyone interested in applying for medicine to do their own research. Volunteer, talk to people who are working in the medical field, and really take a look to learn what medicine is all about. You are really making a commitment to a demanding yet rewarding profession. It's also important to pursue an undergraduate degree that interests you. Don't feel you are restricted to the sciences. Medicine benefits by having doctors from a variety of backgrounds and who have a variety of interests. At the same time, make sure that you explore all your options. There are many great medical schools. Do your research and apply to the schools that you feel you would get the most out of your medical education.

For Sydney Medical School, I would encourage potential applicants to focus on the MCAT(or GAMSAT). I would also encourage applicants to research the five clinical schools of Sydney Medical School. Each clinical school offers different and unique opportunities and, when it comes time in the application process, it is important to rank the clinical schools that will be able to satisfy your interests.



Jocelin Desjardins, Toronto, Ontario

Where did you do your UG degree?

McGill University

What UG degree did you do?

Bachelor of Science in Anatomy and Cell Biology

Why did you want to do medicine?

I think I was mostly drawn to medicine because of the diverse roles that doctors are called on to play, but also the wide range of opportunities offered by the medical profession.

How did you come to that decision?

I can't really pinpoint how I came to the decision, but it always seemed like it could be an interesting and challenging career that might turn out to be a good fit for me.

The flexibility, stability, and discipline that a career in medicine can provide also reinforced my decision because it allows for concurrent participation in sports, travel and other interesting pastimes that I wasn't willing to give up!

Why did you decide to come to Sydney?

My main reason for coming to Australia was to follow a boy (now my husband!) here. It's turned out to be one of the best decisions I've ever made - even though I'm not sure I would have had the nerve to do it if I wasn't 'forced' to!

I chose Sydney specifically because of its outstanding international reputation (both the university and the city!).

What has been your experience so far of the program? Of Sydney?

I've really enjoyed the program here so far. I feel like there has been a good balance of self-directed learning and lecture-based learning, on top of a lot of early hands-on experience. I think the program is well structured and the faculty is constantly asking for feedback so that they can adapt the program to meet our needs and prepare us for our future.

In addition, the lecturers, tutors, and supervisors on campus and at my clinical school are smart, inspiring and enthusiastic and my classmates are interesting and fun. It makes for a nice atmosphere and an excellent learning environment.

There are also several student groups that have been very helpful along the way. I got involved in the North American Medical Students Association (NAMSA) on my first day of my first year here. NAMSA has been a great way to meet other North Americans, to get information about options after graduating, to share books/notes, and to share advice about electives, rotations, licensing exams and residency options.

Although the program doesn't specifically prepare us for practicing in North America, they do provide assistance, encouragement and flexibility during the program which helps everyone end up where they want to be.

Other unique and amazing experiences that the program has offered me have been: a day with Royal Flying Doctors (through the Poche Clinic); a pediatric placement up in Lismore (near Byron Bay); and the flexibility to do several electives and rotations in Canada (Whistler, Collingwood and Toronto so far!).

Sydney is an amazing city with lots to do and see. I've been here for three

years and feel like I've barely scratched the surface. The weather is amazing and allows for year-round outdoor activities (which is not always easy to find in Canada). The beaches, parks, shows, festivals and exhibits, are non-stop and there always seems to be something to do.

What advice would you give to someone considering applying for medicine? For medicine at Sydney?

Do it! It's a bit scary when you think about the commitment to lifelong learning and the time involved, but it's interesting and worth it. And there's always time for a life outside medicine (except maybe for the week before the barrier exams).

Going to medical school in Sydney has been an amazing opportunity to live and learn in one of the most exciting cities in the world. It's given me the opportunity to travel around the 'other side of the world' and to experience what it's like to live in another country.

It's a big commitment and a big step to move away from your family and friends, but it's an incredible experience and one which I'd recommend to everyone. At the end of it all you'll have an internationally respected medical degree that allows you the freedom to work in a huge variety of disciplines and countries around the world.

DID YOU KNOW? AUSTRALIA AND CANADA

"I think Canada is a place where you can re-experience Australia again." AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR - DAVID MALOUF

"...you have two countries where the details may be different but the essence is the same."

CANADIAN JOURNALIST - JEFFREY SIMPSON

Things we know about Australia and Canada

- We are both big countries with (relative to land size) small and multicultural populations. Much of both of our countries is pretty difficult to live in – it's either too hot or too cold!
- Both are members of the Commonwealth, both using the Westminster parliamentary system.
- Both are middle-sized nations in international affairs with clout only around the edges. And historically, both have forged strong alliances with the United States in defense and trade
- Both our capitals are in places you wouldn't normally suspect – Canberra and Ottawa.

But did you know?

- Canadian rebels were sentenced to transportation to Australia for their part in the political uprisings in Upper Canada (now Ontario) and Lower Canada (now Quebec) in 1837-38. A total of 154 Canadian state prisoners were sent to Australian shores.

- Many figures from our colonial pasts show up in the history texts of both countries, including Captain James Cook, Sir John Franklin (Governor of Van Dieman's Land now Tasmania and North-West Passage explorer) and Sir George Arthur (Governor of Van Dieman's Land and Upper Canada) to name a few.
- Canada and Australia have served together in war and peacekeeping missions. Our soldiers fought side by side in both World Wars including in the WWI battle of Passchendaele. Canada joined Australia in the peacekeeping missions in Timor Leste.
- We share Consular facilities. Canadians can use Australian consulates in over 20 countries where Canada is not represented and Australians can use Canadian Consulates in the same way in 23 countries.
- Our per capita GDP is almost identical



STUDYING AT SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

Sydney Medical School is Australia's largest and oldest. At Sydney Medical School our aim is to develop caring, clear-thinking, clinically outstanding, research capable and globally engaged graduates who have the capabilities to become leaders in medicine, public health and research. Ranked by the Times Higher Education Supplement as 15th in the world for Life and Biosciences, you can be sure that our programs are world-class.

Sydney Medical School offers programs in a large number of disciplines critical to contemporary health care. These include:

Graduate-entry studies in:

- Medicine (MBBS)

Postgraduate study in:

- Biostatistics
- Brain and Mind Sciences
- Clinical Epidemiology
- Health Policy
- Indigenous Health Promotion
- Indigenous Health (Substance Use)
- Infection and Immunity
- International Ophthalmology
- International Public Health
- Medical Education
- Medical Humanities
- Ophthalmic Science
- Paediatric Medicine
- Pain Management

- Psychotherapy
- Public Health
- Qualitative Health Research
- Refractive Surgery
- Reproductive Health Sciences and Human Genetics
- Sexually Transmitted Diseases/HIV
- Sleep Medicine
- Surgery

And research programs in any medical field.

www.sydney.edu.au/medicine

AUSTRALEARN



AustraLearn and Sydney Medical School are working together to facilitate applications from Canada for Sydney Medical School Programs

Contact AustraLearn

In Canada:

canada@degreesoverseas.com
1.800.980.0033

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LOUISE FRECKELTON

Ms Louise Freckelton is the Manager – International Relations with responsibility for Canada. Louise is responsible for developing key strategic relationships in Canada in regards to research and innovation, teaching and learning, the student experience and community engagement. Louise also provides advice to Sydney Medical School including information on current and potential partners, funding and research opportunities. Louise also provides analysis, program development, support and advice on relationships with partners in East Asia, selected countries in South-East Asia and The Americas.

OFFICE FOR GLOBAL HEALTH

The Office for Global Health works closely with the University's Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (International). The Office for Global Health is part of Sydney Medical School and aims to internationalise the research we undertake, the experience of our students and staff, and our approaches to learning and teaching. We also aim to contribute to the health and wellbeing of our region by engaging in health projects with some of our nearest neighbours.

Find out more about the activities of our office by visiting our website: www.sydney.edu.au/global-health

SYDNEY MEDICAL SCHOOL

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