

# A Day in the Life of a Med Student

Third-year medical student Curtis McKnight anticipates how a first-year student's day might play out at the Sorrell Center. McKnight, from Fremont, Neb., is president of the UNMC Students Senate and serves as UNMC's student representative on the University of Nebraska Board of Regents.

## 8:03 a.m.

I step into the Michael F. Sorrell Center for Health Science Education or "Sorrell" as we call it. I'm amazed by its size and presence. I'm running a bit late, but still stop by the second-floor coffee shop before my first lecture of the day. (It is Monday morning after all!)

## 8:05 a.m.

I slip into one of two, 220-seat amphitheatres named after renowned UNMC internist, Fred Paustian and his wife, Mary Ann. Dr. James Turpen is presenting the embryologic origins of structures of the face. The theater-sized screen makes it easy to see the detailed layers of cells that compose the face.

## 8:47 a.m.

The lecture ends and I meet up with friends on the 42nd Street skywalk that leads to Wittson Hall and my next class. We talk about upcoming exams and make plans to study together.

## 9:02 a.m.

Downstairs, in the newly renovated gross anatomy lab, my group works together to dissect our cadaver – a 68-year-old female who, by generously gifting her body, teaches us the fundamentals of medicine. While Carrie and I dissect fascia, Steve projects online images of nerves, muscles and blood vessels on our 50-inch screen. Ryan and Leslie scour textbooks for the answer to Dr. Robert Binhammer's question of the day.

## 10:56 a.m.

My class heads back to Sorrell's interaction rooms for PBL (Problem-Based Learning). I have a few minutes, so I check my student mailbox on the third floor of the northeast corner of Sorrell.

## 10:59 a.m.

Outside one of the 22 interaction rooms, I scan the high-tech display screens to see where my group will meet today. I find the room and walk in as Dr. John Benson outlines the day's case study: a 40-year-old male with chest pain. Further history reveals it is a tearing chest pain that began abruptly. The patient also has two brothers who have had dissecting aortic aneurysms repaired.

## 12:10 p.m.

PBL finishes a little late, but it was an interesting case and I didn't even notice the time. I head over to one of the Paustian amphitheatres for a presentation and lunch by the Family Medicine Interest group. Today's topic: A smoking cessation outreach program, called Tar Wars. Students can volunteer to give 30-minute presentations to fifth-graders on the hazards of smoking. I drift in and out of the presentation as I eat a turkey sandwich and read lecture notes on ethics in medicine for this afternoon's Integrated



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Clinical Experience (ICE). Before leaving, a classmate and I sign up to give a presentation in the Westside Community Schools.

**12:49 p.m.**

I have about 10 minutes to hang out and talk with friends before ICE begins. Someone mentions that the Student Alliance for Global Health is selling fair trade coffee to raise money for student medical service trips abroad, so I head over to the skywalk and buy some. I return to the Paustian amphitheater just in time for ICE.

**2:08 p.m.**

I head over to the interaction rooms on the east side of the building and again scan the display screens to see where my ICE group will discuss the afternoon's lectures.

**3:15 p.m.**

After an intense discussion of ethics in medicine, I walk over to the Center for Healthy Living for a pick up game of basketball.

**4:58 p.m.**

After a quick shower, I'm off to the Nebraska Café for dinner before heading back to Sorrell to study.

**5:34 p.m.**

Surveying the student plaza, I pick a quiet corner to study a seemingly endless volume of material. With wireless Internet, I review the day's dissection info and several pages of notes, trying to understand and memorize everything for Saturday's exam.

**9:25 p.m.**

I call it a day and glance once more around this impressive building. A minute later, I hear laughter from the Alumni Commons, where second-year medical students interrupt their studies to chat and peer in the convenience store. Coins click into the nearby vending machine to quiet growling stomachs. My guess: They're studying late. As I wave goodbye to Sorrell, I promise myself to set my alarm earlier so I can get the best seat for tomorrow's lecture.