

A photograph of two students, a man and a woman, sitting on a wooden bench outdoors. The man, on the left, is wearing a white button-down shirt and glasses, looking at a tablet held by the woman. The woman, on the right, is wearing a yellow t-shirt and a grey skirt, smiling as she looks at the tablet. In the background, there is a large, multi-story brick building with many windows, and a smaller, white building with columns and a pediment. A large potted plant with yellow and purple flowers is also visible. The sky is blue with some clouds.

Invest in our students

**School of Medicine and Dentistry
Scholarship Initiative**



At the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry (SMD), we are committed to setting the highest standards in medical education, serving as a model for innovation and continuous improvement.

Rochester's nationally recognized biopsychosocial model teaches physicians to understand the whole patient, considering the complex interactions of biological, psychological, and social factors. This approach has transformed medical education, research, and care. An SMD education also emphasizes community outreach and research, both locally and globally, in keeping with our University's mission to make the world ever better.

While the University of Rochester has always prepared well-rounded physicians, we acknowledge a new imperative to graduate physicians who are committed to transforming care for underserved populations. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are top priorities for SMD.

Our Equity and Anti-Racism Action Plan sets our course, which includes recruiting the most diverse students, faculty, and staff and providing the tools and support that encourage their success. Our students must reflect the communities we serve. We accomplish this by casting a wide net for the sharpest minds, then immersing them in an environment in which they learn to practice medicine with cultural humility. These students will go on to drive a national movement toward equitable, patient-centered health care.

As the cost of medical education continues to rise nationally, many of our peer institutions now offer scholarship programs that significantly reduce—and in some cases eliminate—student debt. To compete with these schools and ensure that the best and brightest students from a wide range of backgrounds can attend SMD, regardless of their financial circumstances, we must increase our available scholarship support.

“Scholarship support for our medical students is critical as we attract the brightest minds to become our next generation of physicians. Together, we can build a diverse medical workforce that upholds the values and responsibilities of our profession that is equipped to improve health disparities. By investing in our students, our benefactors are directly advancing health outcomes for everyone.”

— **DAVID C. LINEHAN**

*CEO, University of Rochester Medical Center
and UR Medicine*

Dean, School of Medicine and Dentistry



Consider this:



Nearly half of our medical students rely on scholarship support to afford pursuing their degree.



The median debt per student at SMD continues to be higher than the average educational debt for U.S. medical graduates. 67% of the Class of 2023 had educational debt over \$200,000. Scholarship support is essential to decrease student debt.



Debt can restrict career paths, force students to make decisions based on pay rather than their interests and passions, and leave lower-paying specialties scrambling for good candidates.

** Source: 2023 LCME Part 1-B Student Financial Aid Questionnaire*

Building a diverse and well-rounded student body:

- Just five percent of each year's applicants are accepted into SMD. We aim to maintain the selectivity that sets Rochester apart.
- One out of every four students in the class of 2025 is considered historically underrepresented in medicine.
- Recruiting a diverse student body exemplifies inclusion and helps educate well-rounded physicians who go on to provide equitable health care. Studies show that patients respond better to providers who can relate to their personal experiences.
- SMD is losing underrepresented students to peer institutions, due to our lack of full scholarships. In 2018, 59 percent of the underrepresented students who were accepted to SMD enrolled at another school, while 75 percent did so in 2021.



Fatima Bawany '15, '21M (MD)

- Scholarships break the barrier for many students who otherwise could not consider attending our school. This support allows us to succeed in the rigorous competition for the most talented students—especially those who come from non-traditional backgrounds.



“The journey through medical school was not easy, but the support of generous scholarship donors helped make it feasible. Now I’m the first physician in my family, a goal I have been chasing since childhood.”

— KORRY WIRTH '21M (MD)

Wirth received the Thomas R. Noonan Scholarship and the Dr. William C. Manchester Memorial Scholarship while attending the School of Medicine and Dentistry. He is now a general surgery resident at Strong Memorial Hospital.

Realizing a dream

Bianca Audrey Duah's family came from Ghana, West Africa. She grew up in New York City and was always encouraged to become a doctor, lawyer, engineer, or nurse, as were so many of her friends and neighbors.

"As the children of immigrants, it's often impressed upon us that these are the specific careers that will provide us social and economic mobility and security," says Duah, a third-year medical student at SMD. "And, that's what our parents want for us—to have a better life than they did."

"When patients and their families talk about dealing with something really hard, I can relate to them," she says, noting that she's been the primary care provider in her family. "I know what it's like to hustle, persevere, and wait, which happens so often when you are personally dealing with illness, diagnosis, and treatment." She adds that SMD's biopsychosocial model—an approach rooted in understanding and treating the whole person—resonated with her from the very beginning.

"Medical school is a distinctive experience—you can't work another job, and you have to rely on others



Bianca Audrey Duah '24M (MD)

to help out financially," she says.

"I owe so much to my medical school scholarship donors, who are making it possible for people like me to become physicians."

Duah is the recipient of the Alice and Stewart Espey Scholarship Fund, the Dr. Robert P. Gulick '57M (MD) Endowed Scholarship, and the Dr. Robert F. and Isobel P. Murray Scholarship.

READ MORE AT uofr.us/BiancaDuah



Join us

Increasing scholarship support is imperative—it is consistent with our mission and our commitment to access and opportunity. Philanthropy helps us recognize outstanding scholars, recruit diverse candidates, and compete with institutions across the country for the very best students.

Options are available for donors who wish to designate their support toward scholarships at SMD. Please consider the following opportunities. We can work with you to develop a scholarship that reflects the impact you want to make. Your gift can also honor or name someone important to you.

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP GIFTS are invested and managed by the University in perpetuity, ensuring that resources will always exist for the best students. A portion of the investment earnings is spent, while the original gift is preserved as principal. A gift of \$100,000 or more can establish an endowed scholarship. A gift of \$1,000,000 or more can endow a full scholarship for one student.

GEORGE EASTMAN CIRCLE SCHOLARSHIPS provide current-use funds that can be disbursed as soon as the following academic year. A pledge of \$5,000 or more annually for five years helps cover tuition and cost of living expenses for deserving medical students.

For information on supporting our students, please contact Melissa Head, executive director of URM Academic Programs, at melissa.head@rochester.edu or (585) 273-2890.

“ Although I’ve always supported the Medical School through its annual fund, I came away from my 50th reunion a few years ago with a wish to do something more for the institution. I reconnected with friends I hadn’t seen in decades and I walked through spaces that held significant meaning for me. All of this rekindled feelings of loyalty and affection and prompted me to reflect on what I learned during medical school and how important that time was in my life and career.



I established an endowed scholarship—along with current use funds to get it started quickly—to make an impact on an individual level. I was attracted to the idea of having a special connection to students. I encourage other alumni to reflect on what their medical school experience has meant to them over the course of their careers. Then, if they are thinking about making a gift, do what feels right to help nurture the values and expertise that are synonymous with the school.

My wish for all medical students is to find honorable and satisfying careers in medicine. In addition to the benefits of the rigorous academic program at SMD, I’m hopeful Olanrewaju and future beneficiaries of this scholarship become exposed to and take advantage of the hallmarks of a Rochester education. ”

— **STEPHEN PLUME '69M (MD), '75M (RES)**

Emeritus Professor of Surgery, Community and Family Medicine, and The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth College

READ MORE AT uofr.us/Plume



“ Without Dr. Plume’s support, I truly do not envision myself sitting alongside my peers at the University of Rochester today. Because of his generosity, I am here, at the School of Medicine and Dentistry—my top choice for medical school—and I do not have the financial constraints that often limit others with comparable backgrounds. I will be forever grateful to him. ”

— **OLANREWAJU AKANDE**

First-year medical student and the first recipient of the Stephen K. Plume, III '69M (MD), '75M (Res) Scholarship



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