Department of Tracks and Special Programs

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About Tracks and Special Programs

The Department of Tracks and Special Programs strives to develop additional learning opportunities for all RVU students. Any student in “Good Standing” is eligible and encouraged to apply to a track or enroll in an elective as these are fun and educational opportunities. These programs are aimed at enhancing the core curriculum. Currently, RVUCOM offers six 3.5-year tracks in Academic Medicine and Leadership, Global Medicine, Long Term Care Medicine, Military Medicine, Physician-Scientist, and Rural and Wilderness Medicine.

Single semester electives are also offered during the course of the year which cover topics such as Graphic Novels, Global Medical Outreach, History of Medicine, Integrative Medicine and Wellness, Inter-Professional Collaborative Practices, Medical Spanish, and Team Leadership.

These programs can vary by length and by the amount of hours spent in class, thus the credit hours will vary anywhere from 0 to 3 credits per course. All grades and credit hours are posted on the student transcript. All courses provide a detailed syllabus that has been approved by the RVU Institutional Curriculum Committee.

The Department of Tracks and Special Programs also offers:

- student one-year sabbaticals for off-campus additional degree earnings (e.g. MPH) or bench research,
- approval of all international rotation sites for clinical students, and
- medical outreach opportunities for all interested students.
Tracks

Tracks are 3.5-year programs outside of the core curriculum. Students may apply to one or more of the tracks towards the end of their first semester. However, they can only participate in one track. If accepted into a track, students are expected to attend all track classes and related labs, in addition to the core curriculum of RVUCOM.

Students in the Military will automatically be enrolled in the Military Medicine Track. Due the commitment to the Military, they have also committed to being a part of the Military Medicine Track. This is non-negotiable.

A student will stay in their chosen track through the duration of their education unless they withdraw voluntarily, are withdrawn due to violation of the track requirements, or are in violation of the “Code of Student Conduct and Academic Responsibility” as spelled out in the Student Handbook.

Applications for all tracks open in the fall (typically in October) and close towards the end of the semester. The tracks start in January each year and follow the course of the student’s education.

Tracks are graded on a Pass/Fail/Pass with Honors basis. Each track will have its own requirements for acceptance and what constitutes a Pass or Pass with Honors grade. Please refer to the track syllabus for the grading requirements.
The Academic Medicine and Leadership Track is a course that will provide students with specialized training in various areas of academics and leadership development.

With the expansion of medical schools and residency programs, there is a growing demand for well-trained academicians and faculty. Students in this specialty track will learn about various, multi-faceted topics in academics, medical education, organized medicine, health policy, and leadership development. The student will be trained in skills to be an effective public speaker, educator, and physician leader.
Global Medicine Track

The Global Medicine Track is for students who have a strong desire to serve in an international capacity, whether employed or as a volunteer. This service may be in many areas, such as medical care, research, or policy planning and assessment. This track provides a survey, exposure, and clinical education surrounding multiple aspects of global medicine.

During the first two years of medical school, students will pursue a minimum of 90 additional hours of global health education. Students are expected to be engaged in all class activities and assist with the presentation assigned topics. During the last two years, students are expected to successfully complete three global health-related rotations.

Students must be able to handle the extra workload and participation of all activities as expected, in order to Pass or Pass with Honors. Students must also be aware of the extra costs, estimated between $5,000 - $10,000 depending on location, for participating in international rotations during their clinical years.
The Long Term Care Medicine Track is a course which will provide students with specialized training and experience in longitudinal medical care. With the rapidly aging population and increasing needs for long term care resources, there is a growing demand for physicians to lead in quality management of longitudinal care services. Students in this specialty track will learn various, multi-faceted topics in continuity of Post-Acute Care, Long Term Care, End of Life Care, Palliative, and Hospice Care. Students will be assigned to a nursing home resident and will actively participate in his or her longitudinal care. Students will develop long term relationships as health advocates for wellness, and helping their patients achieve the healthiest, highest quality of life possible in their current stage of life.
Military Medicine Track

The Military Medicine Track is a track for students who are slated to enter active duty service with the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marines. This track provides an overview and introduction to military medicine.

The Military Medicine Track will incorporate immersion-based reality training, surgical simulation, information sessions and experiences related to Medical Corps Officer military obligations, leadership and discipline, harsh military environments and field exercises, disaster stabilization and evacuation, and triage in combat environments on land, sea, and air. This track will also function in conjunction with other special Tracks where synergies are evident and possible.

Expert guests, military officers, and appropriate civilian physician/faculty will be hosted at both campuses and elsewhere. There is no application process for this track; all military students are automatically enrolled. No exceptions will be made. A commitment to the armed forces during medical school is a commitment to the Military Medicine Track.
The Physician-Scientist Track is designed to provide curricular training to qualified and interested students, which will enhance their opportunities to pursue careers in academic medicine. There is a recognized need to increase the number of physician-scientists in all clinical fields, as biomedical research competencies continue to be underrepresented in osteopathic medical school curricula and training.

Admission to the Physician-Scientist Track is by application, and requires an interest in a career in academic medicine and demonstration of academic ability by achieving a minimal 84% GPA during the first semester at RVUCOM. Applicants may also undergo an entrance interview by track faculty. Preferred qualifications include an undergraduate degree in a scientific discipline (biological or physical science); previous experience in a research laboratory; and/or previous experience in a graduate degree program in a discipline with relevance to the biomedical sciences. No more than eight students will be selected for each class and students must maintain an 84% minimal GPA to stay within the track.
Rural and Wilderness Medicine Track

The goals of the Rural and Wilderness Medicine Track are to identify and foster student interest in eventual medical practice in rural settings. In addition to the unique educational opportunities, there are significant obligations associated with each year of the track.

Students will be given a robust extracurricular education of procedural skills in medicine and surgery that will better prepare them for residency training and practice. Physicians practicing in a rural or wilderness setting must be skilled in stabilizing and transporting critically ill and injured patients to urban medical centers. Much of the track material will cover life- and limb-threatening emergencies.

Rural and Wilderness Medicine Track students participate in three capstone courses which include working with search and rescue services, ski patrollers, and at a ranch.

To be considered for the program, students must demonstrate a commitment to rural and remote practice and must be capable of handling the extra workload required by the track. Admission criteria includes an in-person interview by Rural and Wilderness Medicine Track students and faculty, along with a review of applicants’ grades and overall academic status.
Electives

Each semester, a selection of short electives may be offered at each campus to interested students. These electives may cover topics from the normal curriculum at greater depth and/or may involve current topics in medical training. All students in good academic standing are eligible to sign up for an elective after successful completion of their first semester in their first year. Course titles, descriptions, and registration information will be announced prior to the start of each semester. Classes will be approximately 8-16 hours in length, may occur at any time outside of the normal curriculum (i.e. evenings and weekends) and are graded Pass/Fail. A student whose grades drop to an unacceptable level may be asked to withdraw from an elective so as not to jeopardize their core education.

Not all electives will run every semester. A course director may choose to cancel an elective due to lack of student enrollment or other circumstance. Students can participate in only one elective at a time, but can participate in both an elective and a track at the same time. Any student registered for an elective that has been canceled will be notified by the course director prior to the first scheduled class. Students can then re-register for the course the following semester.
Global Medical Outreach

This is an RVUCOM medical outreach elective opportunity worth two credits. Open to all first- and second-year medical students. The goal of this course is to provide medical students with a cross-cultural medical education experience through study and work outside of the United States, allowing them to understand its challenges and to apply the knowledge learned to their practice of medicine.

The locations of this outreach service may be in Central America or South America. The medical outreach segment of the program will occupy one week. During this time, students will see patients under the supervision of faculty and other licensed healthcare providers. Students will provide diagnostic and patient care services, participate in preventive and public health events, and work in areas such as minor surgery, pharmacy, triage, and clinical laboratory settings.

Faculty will engage students in discussions of medical issues in a problem-solving format, while working with the patients. Students will hone their skills in presenting patients and in the assessment and treatment of patients under conditions of limited resources found in many rural settings and countries. Faculty and students will demonstrate a holistic, culturally sensitive, and osteopathic approach to the delivery of medical care while on site.

Students live, eat, work, and travel as a group. Anyone not adhering to the RVU Code of Conduct policy will be required to leave, be reported to the Student Progress Committee, and may forfeit any elective credits earned for participation in this course.
Graphic Novels and Medicine

This course has been designed to target the critical topic of humanism in medicine through a literary lens. Students will read a number of texts and discuss topics as a group. An informal structure, reminiscent of modern-day book clubs, has been chosen to allow each student to deeply engage with the material in a safe and supportive environment. As such, student engagement will be critical.

The course is specialized in the sense that it will focus specifically on graphic novels. Graphic novels tell an entire story in one volume and often have more detailed plots, reaching a deeper level of character development in a shorter amount of time than their comic book counterparts.
History of Medicine

This course series looks at the role of doctors, patients, diseases, and society’s reactions over time, asking how medicine, disease, and health, have been motors for change. Students will learn how contemporary medicine differs from, but is indelibly marked by, its past. Through directed use of primary and secondary sources, this course introduces students to the methods and tools of research in the history of medicine and encourages the critical analysis of differing historical interpretations, including the students’ own underlying beliefs.
Integrative Medicine and Wellness

This course is intended to introduce and familiarize the student to the many specific disciplines involved with integrative medicine. The overall course goals are to encourage students to become physicians who are knowledgeable about integrative care and to function as skilled guides/advisers to their patients. Secondly, the course aims to inspire students to become collaborative members of multidisciplinary patient care teams involved in integrative medicine.
Inter-Professional Collaborative Practices

Inter-Professional Collaborative Practice is a two-day elective designed to provide interactive, facilitated instruction to foster teamwork skills in health care practice. Individual sessions will address the importance of developing relationships for effective team function and to explore how personal traits can influence interactions. This course will explore the role of the individual working within an inter-professional team in creating a positive climate, as well as methods to promote a supportive culture.

Students will identify their own personality characteristics and practice effective communication strategies to model effective team function. The overall scope of this elective is focused on introducing participants to the fundamentals of effective teamwork with the long-term goal of promoting and improving patient care through the action of inter-professional health care teams. To support this outcome, all sessions will include students from medicine, nursing, and physician assistant programs.

This is not a credited course, but will appear on official transcripts.
Medical Spanish

This course introduces the practical language skills used in clinical settings to assist with the interaction of Spanish-speaking patients. This includes an emphasis on the common medical vocabulary that health care workers may encounter in the workplace. The goals are:

- To help those in the health professions overcome language barriers they may face when dealing with Spanish-speaking patients.
- To question patients and obtain “yes” and “no” responses about health status or complaints.
- To inform or instruct patients using professional vocabulary.
- To recognize cultural differences among Spanish-speaking groups and the common health remedies practiced by each group.

¿Hablas español?
¿Te gustaría aprender?
¡Déjanos ayudarte!

Entonces puedes venir con nosotros a Ecuador o Guatemala.

También puedes usar español aquí en los Estados Unidos ya que el español se está convirtiendo en un segundo idioma.
IPCNP Team Leadership

The Inter-Professional Collaborative Practice (IPCP) Team Leadership course is a highly experiential student leadership development elective, intended to give an overview of team leadership skills that provide a foundation for students to lead future IPCP teams. This three-day elective is divided into separate one-day sessions to be held throughout the fall semester. Within the elective, students will have the opportunity to explore their personal characteristics, as well as methods to enhance inter-professional relationships. The mechanics of teamwork will be explored and multiple strategies will be proposed to build effective teams. All work will be accomplished in an inter-disciplinary team setting.

This is not a credited course, but will appear on the student’s official transcript.
Global Medical Outreach

This is an RVUCOM medical outreach elective opportunity that is open to all medical students. The goal of these outreaches is to provide medical students with a cross-cultural medical education experience through study and work outside of the United States, to understand global challenges, and to apply the knowledge learned to their practice of medicine. All students must undergo an academic and site approval process and complete a travel file with the Department of Global Medicine.

RVUCOM works in conjunction with the Hands for Health Foundation to coordinate trips to Ecuador, Guatemala, Kenya, and Nepal. These trips are undertaken at the student’s own expense.

www.handsforhealthfoundation.org

Ecuador

This is a one-week trip during the first-year students’ spring break. This trip is open to any first-year student as a two-credit elective. First-year students are joined by third and fourth-year students on Clinical Rotations, as well as community doctors and RVU facilitators.

This trip is set up in such a way that the first-year student should be able to participate in all aspects of the medical experience. Students will not be asked to work outside of their knowledgebase and will be supervised at all times.
Guatemala

This is a one-week trip during the second-year students’ spring break. This trip is open to any second-year student as a two-credit elective. Second-year students are joined by third and fourth-year students on Clinical Rotations, as well as community doctors and RVU facilitators.

This trip is set up in such a way that the second-year student should be able to participate in all aspects of the medical experience. Students will not be asked to work outside of their knowledge base and will be supervised at all times.

Kenya

This is a one-month trip typically in January. This trip is open to third- and fourth-year students as an elective family medicine rotation. Students are joined by community doctors and RVU facilitators.

Nepal

This is a two-and-a-half-week trip typically in March/April. This trip is open to third- and fourth-year students as an elective family medicine rotation. Students are joined by community doctors and RVU facilitators.

**Actual sites and dates may vary from year to year.**
International Clinical Rotations

All third- and fourth-year RVUCOM students are encouraged to participate in at least one international rotation, 2-4 weeks in length, during their clinical years. In fact, about 40% of each graduating class has completed some form of international medical training experience during their time at medical school. Students may participate in one of the RVUCOM sponsored medical outreach trips or set up their own. *All students must undergo an academic and site approval process and complete a travel file with the Department of Global Medicine.*

Sabbatical Program

Students wishing to work on an additional health-related degree while attending RVUCOM may do so. They may apply for a one-year fellowship, starting sometime after the successful completion of their second year and maintain good academic standing throughout their time at RVU. This fellowship year will allow them the time to matriculate full-time at another institution where they have been accepted into a master degree program in a health-related field, such as Public Health or Population Medicine. They are responsible for finishing the requirements as posted through the other institution for the master degree. Interested students should meet with the Chair of the Department of Tracks and Specialty Programs during their first year for further information and guidance. The sabbatical is during or directly after the clinical years and will postpone graduation by one year.
For all questions regarding the tracks, electives, global opportunities or special programs offered at Rocky Vista University, please contact:

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