We all know that question. Some of us can say, “Since I was born!” For me, it always takes a while to answer. Growing up, I thought of becoming a police officer, a pirate, an astronaut, Indiana Jones, and movie star (in no particular chronological order). I didn’t think too much about what realistic job I wanted. I knew I wanted to be admired, a hero of sorts. Sitting in career class in high school, I googled what the highest paying jobs were. The top result? Neurosurgeon. “Hey, that sounds cool. Jack from the T.V. show Lost is one of those. You get to fix people. They love you for it. Yeah, let’s do it.” I’m not kidding. This was my start into medicine.

A couple years of rigorous studying, volunteering, and club-leading later, I was the ideal high school “pre-pre-med.” College was the same story, except this time with harder, often less-enjoyable classes (e.g. organic chemistry and vertebrate physiology). I thought, “This is what you have to do though, right? This is how you become Dr. Zack. This is how you save lives and get respect.”

Those little things I used to love doing as a kid – making movies and reading about history – became inefficient and pointless to my idealized image of a physician. While making my med school application, I proudly included my GPA, when I first want to be a doctor?

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MCAT, extracurricular experiences, and letters of recommendation. Then came the personal statement: “Why do you want to be a doctor?” I just couldn’t answer it. I typed up and revised several rough drafts, sometimes even starting again from scratch. It wasn’t until draft #7 that I was ready to apply.

When Garland Jarmon came to my college to present Creighton, he shared things that stuck with me – most notably, “We’re not here to just train doctors, but train good people.” No other school had truly looked at me beyond the idealized doctor persona I put on my applications. I knew I had to apply to Creighton. Thankfully, I got in. Since the start of M1 year, it became evident that there is more to medicine than honor and compensation. There had to be. Otherwise, why would hundreds of young adults be willing to sit in windowless lecture halls or libraries for multiple hours a day? As late nights and early mornings of studying passed, I couldn’t shake that question, “Why do you want to be a doctor?” Some other students seemed to always know, and some were honoring in nearly every class. This comparison started to dig deep. How did I get here? Was this some mistake? They know this is their destiny. Yet I sit here just getting by in classes, often bored, and seemingly so far away from actually interacting with a patient face-to-face.

Then I realized maybe medical school wasn’t a mistake. Instead, it was a mistake coming to medical school to be someone else. I had spent the last several years of my life suppressing passions like writing and photography because they didn’t fit the model in my head of what a doctor “should” be. What they “should” do with their time. I didn’t believe they would give me the admiration I so desired, so I gave them up. Creighton has given me a completely different image of what it means to be a doctor. It doesn’t mean becoming some cookie-cutter ideal of a T.V. doctor. It means being disciplined and humble enough to always learn more. It means loving others beyond the job requirement. It means putting on a white coat and showing a vigor for life amidst all the hardship. It means becoming the best version of you that you can offer to this world.

I write this to anyone who might have woken up one day to find themselves in medical school, yet still not exactly sure how or why. I also write to those who might have lost sight of their goals, despite their efforts to get so far already. This is the beginning of your story, not the end. Yes, you get to wear a white coat and have an M.D. behind your name, but the similarity to others stops there. You get to bring your personal touch of life to patients, help your peers along the way, and maybe find yourself too. Also, it’s not too late to fulfill those childhood dreams either; I got a camera and started writing a book during those needed study breaks. We all make sacrifices for this vocation, but that doesn’t need to include sacrificing yourself. So, pick up the pen of your life story again, and start writing it as the doctor you are going to be.

Zack Beavis, M2
My Turtle and My Career
Briggs Hoyt, M3

Medicine is a lot like my turtle, Brian.

Brian has a hard shell and is often difficult to motivate.

In Medicine, patients can have hard shells and be difficult to motivate.

But we do our best to do what is best for our patients and our Brians.

Moments in Tomorrow
Treve Icenoggle, M2

“I’m sorry darling. I’m not living for tonight, not when I still have tomorrow”

“The problem with tomorrow is that there will always be another. There is only one present gifted in this moment”

“I wish I could follow. But the issue with moments is that they never last and all you are left with is what has come to pass. You seem to forget that every present was once a today’s tomorrow”

“But you’ll never have tomorrow, don’t you see? You’ll always be searching for sunsets during sunrise. And eventually, the sun will set a final time, never again being able to rise”

“But think of all the tomorrows we’d lay to waste, thinking all we had was one long forever chase. What about the time it takes from here to there?”

“Time is irrelevant and relative. There must be a now before there can be a then. And even then, does a now ever become a then?”

“You need the dark to notice the light? But isn’t there a distinction between day and night? I need that to make me feel alright”

“I just want what’s right. To let all tomorrows become forgotten moments and for all moments to be never-approaching tomorrows”

“Can’t we just simply have forever?”

“Only if forever begins tonight”
Just one more step. The height of the volcano, Muhabura, was daunting at first. Seeing no change between us and the peak after hours of climbing was enough to make anyone want to sit down and cry. Just one more step. I resigned myself to staring at the same set of calves (Evan wore grey sweatpants with a small hole just above the ankle) in front of me for the foreseeable eternity. Our group leader told us it was between a 3000 and 4000-foot climb to the top. In actuality, it turned out to be closer to 6500 feet. We were unprepared.

Once we had left the forest at the base, the monotony of the climb set in. There were no longer any chances of seeing gorillas and elephants. It was just a straightforward climb, or so I thought. Then we had our first break; for the first time, we stopped, turned around, and looked out across the sprawling countryside of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We were staggered by how high we had climbed already. The surrounding area already looked fake – the cars were Hot Wheels-sized, and the people were barely visible. It was beautiful, and our backs had been to it this entire time as we stewed in our depressing thoughts. We had lost perspective and found it again in the span of a few hours. The rest of the journey up was arduous and the breaks we took were short – this was so we could make it back down in time, before dark. From that point on, we were more receptive to the milestones that we passed, such as when we hit the cloud line, or when the plants we saw along the way changed. Each of these gave new vigor to our steps, and we kept going. Our summit of this mountain was more a testament to our stubbornness than our fitness, a statement I am proud to say.

The metaphor, I’m sure, escaped us at the time, but I’ve since come to appreciate how blunt it is. As medical students, it’s easy to get into a mode of only seeing the next step (no pun intended) in front of you. Perspective – a peek downwards to see how far you have come, or a peek up to see how little is left – is key. However, too much time spent looking in either direction will stagnate your progress and impact your ability to summit. I found CURA to be the most important continuing education program at Creighton so far for both medical knowledge and well-being. We spent an incredible four weeks in southern Uganda, and we are going to be better physicians for it.
USMLE Step 1, “For and With Others”: An Open Letter to M2s

Emily Patton, M3

Students entering medical education today are no strangers to a few recurring themes: social determinants of health, physician burnout, “systemic” problems, and “changing the culture” of medicine. These themes deal with big-picture change, and their respective discussions live in a realm we will barely even touch during our medical student careers. However, there are a few student-specific issues that still require our attention. After reflecting on my first two years of medical school, I think no place in our medical student system needs a “change of culture” more than how students think about the USMLE Step 1. M2s, this one is for you:

Personally, last year was a whirlwind of many not-so-great circumstances. I will spare you the details, but I found myself in a circumstance of stepping back to observe the transformative power of Step 1 stress. Some people embraced being around other students out of necessity for social support. Some people went into states of isolation – with varying levels of enthusiasm about it. Others admitted to becoming people they did not even recognize – good or bad.

How can we, as a medical student collective, change our culture of support in times of stress? How do we practice our humanity in a way that benefits our entire student community? How do we act as students “for and with others?”

Regardless of how much you prefer studying alone, humans are social beings – we know this. I think the key to answering the aforementioned questions lies in being mindful of how we relate to one another, both verbally and non-verbally. Here are just a few of my personal thoughts on how to change our student culture of support:

• Change starts with YOU, so get your metaphorical house in order. The time before “dedicated study” is the perfect time to practice coping with stress. Your response to stress is within your control, so why not put in the work now? You, your classmates, and those you will affect in the future (*ahem* PATIENTS) will reap the many benefits of your labors. If you find yourself frustrated or struggling, be sure to reach out sooner rather than later.

• Create space in conversations for everyone. It is perfectly acceptable to vent, but be mindful of letting others vent too. Conversations are meant to go both ways, and everyone’s feelings are valid portrayals of how they are experiencing this time of stress. However early or late your exam date, there is no excuse for not hearing someone out.

• If an acquaintance shares that they pushed their test date back, don’t end the conversation. Things happen. Whether they share their story or not, check in with them in a few days. The gap between when most students take the exam and an acquaintance’s delayed date may create a period of isolation, especially as people begin leaving for Phoenix or vacations. A quick text could be just what they need to keep momentum as their surroundings change. You don’t have to know the details, but you can still be there for them.

• Remind yourself and friends: you are more than a student. You are a person. You were chosen to be here, and you are capable. Surround yourself with people who will freely give and receive these statements. At the very least, surround yourself with people who will help you realize that there is life beyond Step 1.

Practicing mindfulness toward the personal and social implications of Step 1 stress will “change the culture” of our student-student support in a positive way. It is so tempting to fall into the antics of a “you-do-you” perspective in this chapter of life, but there are numerous opportunities to fight back and practice being good colleagues NOW. It begins with developing effective stress management, personal wellness, and space for supportive conversation. Remember, you are more than a student. You are a person. You were chosen to be here, and you are capable.
The Power of the Mindset

A recent book entitled “Mindset: The New Psychology of Success” by Carol Dweck, PhD, speaks to the power of a person’s mindset in determining an approach to life. A mindset is a set of attitudes and assumptions that creates a framework for viewing ourselves and the world. Dweck has identified two mindsets that impact success in all areas of our lives. The first is a fixed mindset, where qualities are carved in stone and can’t be changed (e.g. “I am a failure,” “The world is out to get me”). In contrast, the growth mindset is characterized by viewing ourselves and the world as changeable; our abilities and qualities can be changed with effort (e.g. “I'm going to study harder for my next test”).

Fixed mindsets, on one hand, represent rigid thinking – fear of judgment and failure, as well as an identification with static qualities that allow no room for growth or learning. Malcolm Gladwell, author of several bestselling books like “The Outliers,” suggested that we tend to value natural accomplishment over achievement resulting from effort. He says, “It’s as if Midori popped out of the womb fiddling, Michael Jordan dribbling and Picasso doodling.” This attitude discounts the countless hours of hard work invested in nurturing their abilities to the point where they look natural and effortless.

Growth mindsets, on the other hand, are the bases for real learning and accomplishment – putting the learner into the creator role with the ability to create change with effort. Jackson Pollack, one of the greatest American painters of the twentieth century, had no intrinsic artistic talent. He fell in love with art and just started doing it, finding others to mentor him and working until he found his style. A growth mindset is the belief that the brain is like a muscle that can grow stronger through hard work and determination. However, growth is not just a product of trying, but trying in a way that integrates a strategy for improving. Obstacles and failures do not provide proof that you cannot do something, but opportunities to figure out what you need to do in order to be successful.

The two types of mindsets can be contrasted in the following ways:

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<tr>
<th>Fixed Mindset</th>
<th>Growth Mindset</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Failure defines me</td>
<td>Failure challenges me</td>
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<tr>
<td>Either I have an ability or I don’t</td>
<td>Abilities can be nurtured and learned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criticism is unwelcome and devastating</td>
<td>Criticism is not fun, but helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligence is a fixed trait</td>
<td>Intelligence can be enhanced and increased</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obstacles inhibit advancement</td>
<td>Obstacles create opportunity for growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compete with others</td>
<td>Collaborate with others</td>
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We all have some of both mindsets, but one may tend to come to the forefront most often. The good news is that a mindset is changeable; it just takes a decision to approach something differently. For example, if I receive some negative feedback, I can choose not to become defensive and instead learn from what others have to share with me. Or, if I blow a quiz, it’s not due to lack of intelligence, but perhaps I need to try a different approach to studying.

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Those with a fixed mindset might think, “I’m successful because I am smart.” Problems then arise when something comes along that creates failure (or an obstacle) that derails feeling successful. The “fixed mindset” brain then thinks, “I am not smart enough to be successful in this task.” There may also be a concern with keeping up the image of “looking smart” that may keep them afraid of making mistakes, taking risks or asking for help. Those with a growth mindset will realize that failure is not proof of their inability to do something; through effort to problem-solve, learn, and grow, they can be resilient and come back to overcome the obstacle before them.

This journey to become a physician is not an easy one. The academic and professional challenges may either become obstacles or opportunities for growth that happen through effort and experience. The approach you choose can make a difference. What will it be, a fixed mindset or a growth mindset?

Michele Millard, Ph.D., LMPH, CPC

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Running Outdoors in the SnOwmaha
Valerie Teano, M2

After living in San Diego for 4 years, I had a hard time adjusting from running next to the sunny Pacific to the frigid Missouri River. I even stopped running altogether in M1 year because I personally would rather eat a real mud pie sprinkled with worms than run inside or on the treadmill. So this year, I was determined to figure out how to continue running outside through the winter. I found that a few winter gear essentials were key, and extremely simple to obtain (even if you’re balling on a budget).

1. **Fleece-lined pants**: The bougie version is the “Polartec” pant from Athleta for $89. Or, you can save that bread and go for the “Built-In Warm Plush-Knit Leggings” from Old Navy for $34 (I got mine on sale for $29, don’t let your dreams be dreams people).

2. **Wool Socks**: A 6 pack from Costco is $17.99 for men and $19.99 for women. But I’m guessing you all already have these since you’re living in SnOwmaha…

3. **Base layers**: Costco also has wool tops for $17.99 each. And for you brand name lovers, Nike has some good stuff ranging from $35-$75. Honestly though, both work equally for me.

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4. **Ear warmer or hat:** I wear an ear warmer called the “Thermarator” from Columbia for $16. Works great for all winter activities.

5. **Top Layer:** When the weather is in the 40 degree range, a base layer with a vest is enough. I got my vest from Nike for $50, but they’re usually $100 (perks of being from Portland – the Employee Store sells everything half off). You want something down or synthetic down – Amazon Essentials has one for $39.

   + **Running Gloves:** Costco for $14.99, bless.

6. **Super Top Layer:** When it gets below 40 degrees, you want a jacket over your base. Anything that keeps the warmth in and the wind out, but is still breathable. Again, mine is from the Nike Employee Store so it was a steal, but they usually cost around $100. I also have a “Track Jacket” from Target, Champion brand, for $35 that works just as well.

7. **Super Duper Top Layer:** When it gets below 25 degrees, you want a base layer and running/track jacket, with a vest over. Or a base layer with a light down jacket. I have the Patagonia Nanopuff which goes for an MI-inducing $199 (mine was on sale during Black Friday for $139 though; I’m kind of a superstar – *not a big deal*). It’s super lightweight and great for everyday wear outside of working out, so I felt it was worth the splurge.

   + **Ski Buff:** necessary at this temperature. Amazon. Enough said. For those who also have asthma, this really helps if the cold air exacerbates your symptoms.

Now you’ve got no excuses! Get out there and live by words of Michael Scott (*The Office*): “The only time I set the bar low is for limbo.”

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**THE BEST CUP OF COFFEE IN OMAHA**

John Eisenga, M3

“I think the answer is we all need a little help, and the coffee’s a little help with everything – social, energy, don’t know what to do next, don’t know how to start my day, don’t know how to get through this afternoon, don’t know how to stay alert. We want to do a lot of stuff; we’re not in great shape. We didn't get a good night’s sleep. We’re a little depressed. Coffee solves all these problems in one delightful cup.” – Jerry Seinfeld

Starting an article with a quote is quite possibly the first lesson in ‘Things Not To Do In Writing,’ but when you find something that encapsulates your thoughts, it’s hard not to indulge. Us medical students stay up too late, wake up too early, and overcommit our free time – but coffee makes everything we do possible.

There are few things in life that I indulge in, but a quality cup of coffee in the morning is one of them. In all honesty, I will drink any cup that is hot and strong; on any road trip, I’ll forgo Red Bull or Five Hour Energy for something that has been sitting on a warmer for far too long. Now that I think about it, I’m probably not the best person to write a review of coffee shops. I’ve never Yelped, checked in, or posted a Google review. I also haven’t ordered anything other than black coffee for so long I can’t remember, but I do think I can tell a good cup from a bad one. With that said, here are my ratings for the best coffee shops in Omaha. My ratings are strictly based on a simple order, one large black coffee, and do not reflect the best places to study (although I will mention them in the review). And so, with too long of an introduction, away we go.

(continued on page 9)
1. **Amateur Coffee (3913 Cuming St.)** – Simply the best cup of coffee I’ve had in Omaha. This vegan shop, an upstart in Omaha, has put down roots quickly. Amateur Coffee supplies the beans for Saddle Creek Breakfast Club, another hot ticket in Omaha. Everything is roasted in-house and everything is superb. From the floral African beans to the more mellow South and Central American beans, you can’t get anything bad here. It’s a small shop with subpar parking, and is admittedly not the best place to study, but the quality here is unmatched. Pull up, find a spot, and sit down for the best coffee in Omaha.

2. **Rally Coffee (749 N 14th St.)** – The newest shop in Omaha is not that new after all. Changing names from Beansmith and moving locations from the Old Market to NODO, nothing has been lost in transition. Among the best things about this shop are the baristas – they know their stuff, and will point you in the right direction if you’re unfamiliar with the offerings. They shine in South American beans, where the smoothness and full flavor of the coffee stand out. Rally is a good place to study as well – quiet and lots of tables.

3. **Muglife (2452 ½ Harney St.)** – A personal favorite that holds a special place in my heart. They specialize in lighter roasts, which might suit some tastes better than the other shops on the list. They make their batches in large pour-overs, and that attention to detail does not go unnoticed. All the coffee here is more floral and lighter in body, but it packs a punch. If you’re looking for something to perk you up before an MDQ, look no further. Muglife is also my favorite place to study. They expanded last year to include more room, tables, and (most importantly) outlets for your chargers. The staff is also amazing and great to talk to when you need a break.

4. **Archetype (3926 Farnam St., 1419 S 13th St.)** – A stalwart in the Omaha coffee scene, Archetype has been brewing a great cup of coffee for quite some time. With multiple locations around Omaha, you shouldn’t be too far from one either. They do everything well here. It’s hard to put them this far down the list, because everything is just good, but I believe the other shops stand a bit above them in terms of coffee. That being said, I have never had a bad cup of coffee here. One of my personal favorites is their Ethiopian brew – light and floral, but with enough body to balance it out. The location in Blackstone is a great place to study as well, provided you can find parking. It’s quiet and roomy enough to spend a lot of time hitting the books. The new shop in Little is fantastic as well, definitely worth a drive to check out if you don’t live close.

5. **Hardy Coffee (6051 Maple St., 2112 N 30th St., 1033 Jones St.)** – Solid is the best word to describe Hardy. I know what I’m getting each and every time I walk in. The coffee here is what you think coffee should taste like in the morning – strong and full-bodied. It’s simple and hits the right notes for a cup. I would like to see a little more variety from them though. The shop in the Old Market is a great place to study as well, especially since they are open later than the other shops on the list.

6. **Zen Coffee (230 S 25th St.)** – One of the newer places in Omaha, Zen seems to have found their niche with Creighton students. Every time I’m there, I see all sorts of Creighton gear. The coffee here is strong and flavorful, and they do have quite a few offerings in terms of pour-overs, but the fact that they don’t roast their own beans placed them further down the list. It is a great place to study and has plenty of parking out front, which is a rarity in Omaha it seems.

7. **Roast (1904 S 67th St.)** – If the coffee scene in Omaha hadn’t exploded over the past few years, Roast would have placed much higher on the list. Just solid cups with a traditional coffee profile. Personally, the coffee here does not have the punchiness that I like, but I do know people who swear by Roast. It is a fantastic place to study – plenty of room and easy parking.

So, there you have it, my list of the best coffee spots in Omaha. When I sat down to write this, I thought the list would be much easier to make. This was a good problem to have, as the coffee scene in Omaha is growing strong and every place on this list is great in its own way. This list is not all-encompassing, and certainly only reflects my opinions. However, I hope this list gets you to explore the many shops in Omaha. And as a final plea if you’re not a coffee drinker: give it a try, life is better with coffee!
I remember the first time I felt it. I was a senior at the University of Florida. It was Valentine’s Day, and my roommates and I had decided to have our girlfriends over for a nice dinner. We had chicken parmigiana, red wine, and an overabundance of chocolate. I used to love eating those dark chocolate-covered blueberries that you buy at CVS, and I had sooooo many of them. Later that night, I was lying down in my bed and my chest started to hurt. I was sure I was having some heart problems. I called my mom, freaking out, and she told me she thought I was having heartburn.

“Mom, I’m 21. I definitely don’t have heartburn.”
“Well, what did you eat today?”
The truth is, I ate so many things responsible for heartburn. The entire meal was like pouring gasoline into my stomach; the alcohol and dark chocolate afterwards acted like a lit match.

Heartburn occurs when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus. When this acid reflux becomes excessive, symptoms begin to occur. Many people describe these symptoms as a feeling of burning discomfort located right behind the sternum. This discomfort can radiate up to the neck and throat. Sometimes, people can have a bitter or sour taste in the back of their mouths. Most people experience heartburn at one point or another. However, it needs to be checked out by a physician if the symptoms become common.

During the holiday season, heartburn is particularly common. Since we are highly stressed medical students, it is even more common for us! Here are some DOs and DON’Ts to follow this time of year to help with your heartburn issues:

**DO**
1. **Go to the student health clinic:** It is free and right on campus. You can see it as a nice study break while you are cramming for finals. Untreated heartburn can lead to serious complications, so it is very important to talk to a physician if you are consistently experiencing symptoms.
2. **Manage your stress levels as best as possible:** Stress is a very common cause of heartburn symptoms. Exercise can help with reducing stress. In addition, exercise can help you lose weight, which has been shown to decrease heartburn exacerbations.
3. **Eat foods that will help reduce your symptoms:** Some foods like oatmeal, ginger, and kale have been shown to help reduce stomach acid content and heartburn symptoms. From personal experience, ginger tea has helped my heartburn immensely.
4. **Try an OTC medication:** Are you concerned that you have heartburn, but are not completely sure? A pretty easy way to find out is to try an OTC heartburn medication. It sounds like common sense, but if you take some TUMS and it helps your symptoms, you probably are having heartburn. Medications like Nexium and Prilosec take 1-4 days to begin working, so these aren’t the best for just checking heartburn presence. Look for antacids like TUMS, or Histamine-2 Blockers like Zantac.

**DON’T**
1. **Overeat:** I am extremely guilty of this, especially this time of year. I eat so much food, many times to the point where I feel uncomfortable (Hey Thanksgiving). However, this is NOT GOOD for heartburn. When we overeat, we can’t digest everything in a timely manner, so we get reflux back into the esophagus. If you’re feeling full, save the rest for leftovers.
2. **Eat right before bedtime:** Another difficult thing to do in medical school because of our hours. Lying down shortly after eating gives acid an opportunity to slide into the esophagus. Remember, gravity is one of digestion’s best friends.
3. **Eat heartburn trigger foods:** This is probably the most difficult thing to avoid. We often don’t think about the consequences various things we consume might lead to. Try to find out what foods are responsible for your heartburn and avoid them as much as possible. Here are some foods that are known to be common triggers of heartburn:
   a. Alcohol, particularly red wine
   b. Spicy foods (for all you Salween lovers)
   c. Chocolate, especially dark chocolate
   d. Citrus fruits like oranges, lemons, and limes
   e. Coffee (and caffeine in general)
   f. Tomatoes
   g. Peppermint