



In His Own Words: Isaac Yang, M.D. '04

Teaching and advising UCLA medical students are among the most important academic tasks performed by alumni and faculty of the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Cultivating the best qualities in each of our medical students is important to maintaining the high level of skill, dedication and commitment required to carry on the legacy of the school, which is celebrating its 60th anniversary.

We must instill in students the highest ideals of medicine: that every day, no matter the healthcare environment, the insurance plan or the patient population, we doctors wake up to help our fellow man. UCLA medical students have been empowered to do the same: to reach out to our communities and make a difference in our world. Medicine has always been an apprenticeship through which compassionate and caring teachers and mentors provide education and training to our future doctors. Being a leader and an instructor in this field is the privilege of a lifetime. Those who take the time and make the effort to teach our UCLA medical students impart standards such as character, ability, purpose, disposition, morals, honor, a deep sense of personal responsibility and enthusiasm for hard work. Instructors' lectures, opportunities to observe or shadow and research involvement increase students' exposure to the wonders of UCLA medicine and alumni, and to the need to be role models, to reflect its core values and to encourage the development of mentor relationships. Think back to when you were a medical student. Most of us now probably will not remember discovering the latest cephalosporin, but we all recall our own UCLA mentors and the teachers who made an indelible impact that changed our lives and the lives of each patient we treat each day.

Two Student Testimonials

Dr. Isaac Yang is, simply put, an absolutely outstanding advisor. He happily offers invaluable advice about medical school, research, a career in neurosurgery, and life in general. Furthermore, he is always (literally 24/7) available in person, by email, or by phone. Not only is Dr. Yang an amazing mentor in the traditional sense of providing career advice, but he is genuinely engaged in my wellbeing, always asking, "How are things going?" with a big smile. Furthermore, he willingly shares his advice and knowledge through multiple talks for both the neurosurgery interest group and AMSA on how to succeed in medical school. Dr. Yang is truly an amazing mentor, researcher, and neurosurgeon.

As a result of Dr. Yang's guidance, I have a first-author paper that has been accepted by the *Journal of Neurosurgery*, and I am planning to present another project at the annual Congress of Neurological Surgeons meeting in October.

Brendan Fong
Class of 2013

Dr. Yang has been an outstanding mentor! I could not ask for a better experience. I am currently working in his lab, have shadowed him in the OR and clinic, and regularly meet with him to catch up. He has provided invaluable advice on topics from lab work to clinical experience to academics. Furthermore, he has cultivated a positive and productive environment in the lab. He has an exceptional ability to instill energy and excitement into his work; he motivates students to find what interests them and work toward it; and in doing so, he brings out the best in those around him. As a new professor at UCLA, he is a phenomenal addition. I have had a remarkable experience so far and look forward to keeping in touch with Dr. Yang for years to come.

Marko Spasic
Class of 2014

Call to Action

To volunteer as a virtual advisor, visit <http://www.medstudent.ucla.edu/VirtualAdvisor/>.