



Graduate, Parent & Student Testimonials



Hope Medical Institute
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Amanthi Chandrasena, MD

Class of 2004

Medical University of Lublin,

Lublin, Poland

Board Certified in Family Practice, California

I have had a wonderful journey in pursuing my dream of becoming a physician. Joining the six year program in 1998, I started off in Debrecen, Hungary where I studied basic sciences for two years at the University Medical School of Debrecen. It was a culture shock at first, but I settled in quickly with the help of other HMI students. In that time, I learned so much! It was a big move for me at the age of 18, but a great opportunity to become independent. It was a great atmosphere to study, yet also to enjoy the European lifestyle. Learning of the opportunity to do clinical rotations in the United States, I decided to relocate to the **Medical University of Lublin, Poland**, and finish my medical education there.

Lublin was a pleasant surprise. The class sizes were smaller which improved teacher student contact and learning. The Polish people were warm and welcoming, and very hospitable for the most part. Student housing was exceptional, and close to the main teaching hospital. Although most of the day was spent in classes, the majority of learning happened by studying on your own. We had time to relax and to travel, which was the best part of studying abroad.

My last year I chose to do clinical rotations at Jackson Park Hospital in Chicago, IL. Once again, a great teaching facility which gave its students autonomy. Their residents were interested in teaching. What you got out of the experience depended upon how much you put into it. Chicago was a great choice to rotate in. Affordable apartments, and a beautiful city, with so much to do in your spare time.

I graduated medical school in 2004. I had no problems passing my USMLE's. This was one area which some people had difficulties. My advice to incoming students is, to place your education first! Study hard, and get help if needed, and don't get too caught up in the fun. Being a foreign medical graduate does not have to place you at a disadvantage. It is up to you to succeed. HMI gives us the opportunity. The rest is up to us!

I began a Family Medicine Residency in 2005 at the Western Pennsylvania hospital in Pittsburgh, PA, where I spent three years. I was chosen to be a Chief Resident in my final year. The title of "Foreign Medical Graduate" affects you only if you allow it. If you work hard, and study hard, and have a good code of ethics, you will rise above this title and prove to be just as qualified.

After having some difficulties in obtaining a California Medical license being an HMI student, everything worked out well. HMI is now considered an approved Foreign Medical school with an English curriculum. I am now Board Certified through the ABFM, and practicing Family medicine in a private practice here in California.

The Road was long and hard at times, but the support and encouragement of my family is what got me through it. Not to mention my friends and classmates! HMI is only as strong as its students. HMI is the stepping stone, so the rest is up to you! Good luck.

Ameeta Manhas, MD

Class of 2008

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

Pursuing a career in Medicine has been a dream of mine. However, I would have never imagined that this path would lead me to Poland. As I reflect to that short time spent in Europe, I am even more grateful for the wonderful opportunity that the Hope Medical Institute and the Medical University of Lublin has provided.

In the summer of 2003, I attended the annual HMI convention in Los Angeles, California. At that time, I was introduced to the HMI staff and students from various universities in Poland. From that short encounter, I was impressed with the professionalism and courtesy of the students and staff. The convention turned out to be extremely beneficial. It provided the new students with a plethora of information ranging from student experiences to the differences between the various campuses in Poland. I would be starting the 4-year program and my brother the 6-year program. We both interacted with many students from the various programs and learned about life in medical school in Poland. In the process, I developed several lifelong friendships.

The challenge of an international medical student is not only are you starting medical school, you are preparing for life in a country you know little about. So like anyone, I was nervous and anxious about the whole adventure. Nevertheless, I was excited about the opportunity to immerse myself in a new country and culture, and study medicine at the same time.

Before I could even fathom the experience, my brother and I walked off the plane in Warsaw, Poland. We were lucky enough to be accompanied by our parents, who were interested in seeing where we would be spending the next few years. At the Warsaw airport, the HMI staff was awaiting the arrival of each student. When every student arrived, we were bused to Lublin to begin our journey. Upon arriving in Lublin, there were people from the university and HMI that helped us settle into the city. They brought us to the dorms, the bank, shopping, and even gave us a tour of the city. Before long, I was very comfortable with what was to come.

Orientation week was over. It was now time to study and attend lectures. The schedule was not easy. There were many classes to take and plenty of material to be learned. We had regular exams to keep us busy throughout the year. In addition, we attended a polish language class biweekly that aided us with every day polish life.

I spent 2 years in Lublin where I completed my basic science courses, which assisted me in my preparation of the USMLE Step 1 examination. After completing the exam, I began my clinical rotations in New York, yet another wonderful opportunity.

Living in New York, I was able to gain clinical experience in the USA. I was able to see various pathologies and get hands on experience in managing many different patients. The work was challenging. In addition, it reinforced and allowed me to build on the knowledge accumulated from my basic sciences. During this time, HMI and the staff at Medical University of Lublin continued to be available for questions or concerns that I had transitioning to the clinical stage of my studies.

My mother once told me “life is a collection of experiences and that in every experience there is something unique to learn.” The experience of Poland was great. I was able to pursue my career in medicine, travel, develop friendships, and experience a new culture all at the same time, which was a learning experience in itself. I could not have asked for a better journey. My favorite part of studying in Poland was being able to travel across Europe during the occasional short breaks. I was able to visit various countries, such as Italy, Greece, Spain, Germany, France, Switzerland and Belgium.

At the end of 2007, I completed my clinical rotations in New York and in March, I matched into a residency program. Not only did HMI and the Medical University of Lublin help me fulfill my dream, the programmed in which I matched was my first choice. I am fulfilling my long-term goal and am forever grateful to HMI and the Medical University of Lublin for extending me the priceless gift of medical education.

Chirag Patel, MD

Class of 2008

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

As I sat there at the airport waiting for my flight to take off to Poland, countless thoughts were racing through my head. Would I be able to adjust to life in another country? Would the quality of teaching of the professors and the university be as good as what I have been use to? Would I make good friends like I had in high school? Would I be prepared for the rigorous demands of residency? These were the questions I was pondering as my flight approached Poland. My most important question was the first one addressed. Would I face the challenges of medical school alone? From the moment I landed in Warsaw, The HMI staff was there to receive me and make me feel at home. They not only were there for our orientation, but were available to us all hours of the day, 7 days a week, for all my years in Lublin. I immediately felt at ease, and was in eager anticipation for classes to begin so the rest of questions could be answered.

Coming from high school, I was amazed at how the curriculum of the 6 year program was tailored to have the perfect transition from pre-med courses to the more difficult medical courses. I felt like HMI and the university engineered a superb schedule for the 6 year program designed to incrementally challenge the student year after year, while building up not only knowledge but confidence as well. During my time in Poland, I had developed such meaningful relationships with my professors, that I still keep in contact with many of them today. While at a lot of universities, the teaching in left up to teacher's assistants to teach a class of more than 100 students with the professor only making a cameo from time to time. Here is where The Medical University of Lublin stands apart. All of our classes were personally taught by the professors, with most classes being taught by the heads and chairmen of their respective departments. Having pharmacology for example being taught every week by the Chief of Pharmacology at the medical school really gave us the opportunity to be taught by one of the leaders in the field. With class sizes of about 15 to 20 students per group, we also got the advantage of small class sizes, so no student would be left behind or overlooked. Not only were the professors knowledgeable and leaders in their fields, the most important thing is that they were available. They were always willing to stay after labs to provide additional help, or work with us even on

weekends for as long as necessary to ensure our success. Never before had I ever had such personalized attention from so many willing professors, and they gave new meaning to the term "above and beyond". The education I received from my professors allowed for my success in all of the medical licensing examinations.

As quickly as I was at ease with the education provided, I felt just as comfortable adjusting to life in Poland. We had assistance for anything that we needed, whether it was as simple as how to order a pizza or as serious as a sick classmate, we were never alone. One of the most comforting aspects of life in Poland was knowing we had our own doctor on call 24 hours a day only for students. During orientation we were shown how to use the local buses, commuting in cabs, ordering at all the restaurants, shopping at the grocery stores, the inside of university buildings, and everything else we would possibly need. In no time at all, we were zipping to classes on the bus, ordering in Chinese or calling on a cab to take us to dinner. We also found that the local restaurants to have every type of food that we were accustomed to back in America including several fast food chains like Subway, McDonald's, KFC, and Pizza Hut to name a few. In addition, there was an enormous number of Italian, Mexican, Chinese, Mediterranean, and other types of restaurants in Lublin. Grocery stores in Lublin were some of the most convenient that I have experienced. We found local mom and pop stores close to our apartments as well as mega-stores the size of Wal-Mart. The local population was very hospitable and receptive, and we made several polish friends during our years studying in Lublin. I not only made polish friends, but the fellow students in my class became some of my closest friends during our journey through medical school. Living in Europe provided us the added opportunity to travel, and we used our spring breaks or occasional long weekends to explore neighboring countries. Some of my fondest memories from Poland are the many places I traveled to with my friends. Learning from and immersing ourselves in different European cultures was an advantage that few students are fortunate enough to get. Going to school in Lublin was an amazing adventure in every sense of the word.

Even after I left Lublin for my clinical years in New York, HMI was there every step of the way to make sure I had no problems. I can recall talking to many students from other universities who had so many problems after they left the classroom years in scheduling the rotations they

wanted at the places they wanted. All of our rotations were scheduled without difficulty or delay and HMI was always there to advocate for their students. From learning about the basics of physical exams, to the learning the more technical aspects of patient care, the doctors taught us everything. Not only were the clinicals comprehensive, they were also designed to allow us for exposure to every different aspect of medicine to let us to make the best decision on which field suits our interests and what we wish to pursue for residency. The two years I completed in New York provided me with all the clinical skills I would need in residency.

All of these years of hard work came together as I applied to and received the residency position that I wanted. I realize that this would have been an impossible feat were it not for my professors' dedication, the university's support, and HMI's undying commitment. While it takes courage to leave your home and live in a foreign country for the pursuit of a lifelong dream, I found that the benefits far outweigh the initial fear, and that no step in this journey is taken alone, but instead with seasoned guide at every step. As I stand here about to embark on residency, I look back with complete satisfaction in my choice of medical school and I know I will be able to face any challenge that residency throws at me because of the solid foundation I received from the Medical University of Lublin and HMI's tireless efforts and encouragement.

Nisha Patel, MD

Class of 2008

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin Poland

“Stories are the creative conversion of life itself into a more powerful, clearer, more meaningful experience. They are the currency of human contact.” --Robert McKee

According to Merriam and Webster, a story is an account or history of events. A story is more than its meaning in the dictionary because each individual's story defines not only where they have been but where they plan to go and it reveals not only who they are but who they want to become. Over the years, I have come across a number of people each with their own story to tell. My story has a little bit of it all – laughter, struggle, tears, defeat, growth and triumph but nevertheless an exciting journey with a future of possibilities. Every story is unique and by sharing mine, I hope I can inspire someone to believe in themselves, to take a chance on an unconventional opportunity, and achieve their dreams.

I always had an interest in medicine from my first class in human anatomy in high school. When the time came to apply to schools, I decided to go abroad. The reasons that people choose are varied. Some students choose Poland for the chance to save time in accomplishing their goals with the six year program and for others they might have financial reasons by getting an education at an affordable cost while there are a number who have their own personal reasons like I did. My sister and cousins pioneered the way by going to school in Poland and I followed in their footsteps.

It seemed like an impossible task to fit my clothes, books, and a few reminders of home in just two bags and on top of that I had to do it all in the dark. It was the summer of 2003 and I had graduated from college. As I anxiously began packing for my trip to Poland, our town was hit by a very powerful and unexpected category five storm –Hurricane Isabel. This opened my eyes that time is fleeting and to go after the things you want in life. With this insight, I was committed more than before to leave the comforts of home and travel to a foreign country. I realized the fear I felt and the doubts I may have had could not compare to the beauty of the adventures that awaited me in this new land.

I still remember that day I landed at the airport and unknowingly met some of the people who would have a lasting impact on my life. From the beginning, we were greeted by friendly faces and I felt at ease. During orientation, my questions were answered and I learned where I would go to class, where I would live, where I would eat but I was still curious. Would I adapt to my new environment or would I just spend my time being homesick?

The adjustment to living in a new country was quite a transition but one in which over time allowed me to grow and mature as an individual. Our schedule was demanding first year but I learned to manage my time and become more efficient. The language barrier in the beginning was a challenge but I never felt alone. There were representatives there, a few of which were physicians themselves, that helped us every step of the way whether it was a question or concern we had with school, daily living, or even our own health. Our classes were located in town and were easily accessible by bus or cab. And, I was pleasantly surprised to find that we were able to find a diverse array of food cuisines, several of which delivered right to our apartments with many of the comforts of home such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut.

It was not long before I came to realize "people make a place." Poland became my second home – a home away from home. My class size was small of about thirty students but they were an eclectic and dynamic group that spanned from New York all the way to California. The friendships we formed became more like a family. Since we were away from everything familiar, we came to depend on each other and formed our own support system. On the weekends, we ate dinner, celebrated special holidays, birthdays, and even our heritage with cultural programs. The education we received was one of a kind! What other opportunity would give you the chance to study anatomy or pathology during the semester and explore Spain, Italy, or Greece during the breaks?

The Polish culture is one that is very hospitable and welcoming. The professors that taught our classes were well distinguished in their respective fields with scores of credentials as the majority had MD/PhD degrees. They were eager to teach and we would learn more from them than any textbook. We would come to appreciate the basics and to observe, question, and reason. The knowledge was the same as our colleagues back home or anywhere else in the world but their perspective and approach were different. We began to think globally and with this lesson came the awareness to think, examine, and investigate "outside the box."

As you read this and are about to embark on your own journey, I just want to impart some advice. From my life experiences, I have learned you must be determined to work hard because after all it is medical school and you should not expect that everything will be spoon fed to you. You must take what is being taught in the classroom and spend the time at home to expand on it and master the material. There will be challenges but if you have the right attitude, you will not only overcome them but grow from them. I arrived that first day anxious and timid but I left two years later confident and independent.

In 2005, I finished my basic sciences coursework with plans to begin my clinical rotations in the US. Now, it was time for the real test. Did the curriculum in Poland prepare me to battle the beast known as the USMLE? I was nervous as you imagine you would be before any major exam but I was comforted by just hearing about the countless success stories of students before me. I studied alongside many of my classmates that summer when we took a review course together. And at the end of it all, I took my exam and passed.

I began rotations at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York where I completed my core and elective rotations. The wide range of services the hospital provided its patient population allowed students to take advantage of gaining exposure to a number of fields and figure out which ones sparked our curiosity. It was here that I was able to see the textbook cases we once read about in class in Poland come to life in a hospital setting. The interactions with patients throughout my clinical training provided me with valuable insight into patient care and management as well as the skills and knowledge to do a proper and thorough history, physical examination, and work-up.

Now fast forward to 2008, I had passed my Step 2 CK and CS exams, submitted my application to the National Residency Matching Program, and was in the process of interviewing at a number of programs across the country. In March, I found out that I matched and in the field of my choice - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R).

In July, I will begin the first step in another chapter of my story. When I first began, I only dreamed that I would finish school and get a position in a good residency program. Now, that dream has become a reality. I attribute this to an opportunity I was fortunate to be given. All you need is one opportunity, just one person who is willing to believe in you to make all which seemed impossible become within your reach. And, I would like to thank the hard working staff at Hope Medical Institute and the dedicated faculty and staff at the Medical University of Lublin for the opportunity of a lifetime. This is not the ending but just a new beginning.

Raxit Patel, MD

Class of 2008

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

The thought of going abroad to pursue Medicine and leaving your family is really nerve wrecking. Among all going to a place, Poland, not commonly known for its medical education opportunity. I finished my undergraduate studies in U. S. after which I began applying to medical schools within U.S. But my success fell short of the expectations and competitive nature of U.S. medical schools. Despite that I did not give up my quest to pursue Medicine as a career. I was originally planning to apply to the Caribbean programs since they are highly advertized and popular among many U.S. citizens. But one of my friends at the time introduced me to this HOPE program which is similar to other programs.

At first, the idea of going to an unknown medical program sounded very bizarre. After having an extensive conversation with my family and friend, I decided to give the program a chance and applied. The transition between applying and getting accepted at HMI was more fast and straightforward than a blind date, and before I knew it, I was on a flight to Poland to pursue my medical career.

The medical curriculum at the Medical University of Silesia is similar to U.S. medical schools. The faculty at the university is not only fluent in English, but also has teaching experience at universities in London and Australia. The smaller class size promotes in-depth discussion and interactive learning on various medical topics. The faculty members can be easily approached by any student to address their questions or concerns.

All on campus housing consisted of studio apartments that are relatively inexpensive as compared to the U.S. Within walking distance there are cafés, bakeries, ice-cream parlors and a local mini market which offers variety of groceries, fresh fruits and vegetables. A Few miles away is the city center which has various restaurants, fast foods, movie theatre, and several other entertainment options. The vast network of public transportation in Poland offers convenient travel to a variety of places. Among the few places that I visited were Rome, Prague, Vienna, London, Budapest, and Egypt.

The diversity of students that come to pursue their dreams through HMI is enormous. This has led to organizing several extracurricular activities amongst the students such as International night, AMSA meetings, barbeques, as well as birthday parties. HMI not only gave me a chance to become a doctor but an actor as well. During our stay in Poland, there was a

Hindi film (Fanaa) shooting taking place which needed several Indian actors. Along with other students, I also took part in such a great experience of my life by working side by side with Aamir Khan, Tabu, and Kajol.

After finishing the last semester in Poland, it was time to head back home and to take a step further in my career. Upon coming to U.S., I began preparing for USMLE exam which would determine the continuity of my medical career. Once I passed USMLE, HMI processed clinical rotations application in no time and I was on my way to a true clinical experience at the hospitals.

The clinical rotations are an entirely different scenario from the academic medical school. In clinical rotations, you no longer sit in a room and listening to lectures or take tests, but rather you apply your acquired medical knowledge in real situations. Each clinical rotation introduces you to new challenges that a student will experience as a physician in the future. During clinical rotations, I learned how to perform thorough physical exams, history taking skills, procedures such as arterial blood gas, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, IV insertion, as well as fracture immobilization.

As a year of clinical rotations goes by, it's crunch time to prepare for 2nd part of USMLE in order to apply for residency positions. It is truly challenging to do clinical rotations and study for the exams at the same time. But HMI works alongside with you in scheduling time off to study for the exams as well as accommodate you with easier rotations. Also, HMI and Medical University of Silesia help you to prepare the appropriate documents needed to apply for residency. After getting done with residency applications, I went through several interviews for Internal Medicine residency. Then came the day of final judgment, Match day, the day I found out I matched at Mercer University for Internal Medicine residency program.

Through my journey with HMI and University of Silesia, I made many new life long friends with whom I not only explored medicine but Europe as well. Among those friends, I met Sweta who shared the same dreams as mine and became an important part of my life. Thanks to HMI for bringing us together and soon we will be getting married. Along with this, I would truly like to Thank Mr. Raj Patel, Mr. Jayesh Shah, Ms. Doreen Washington, Ms. Elizabeth Ritchard, Ms. Alicja Pilorz, Ms. Dina Crum, as well as Mr. Ananth Shinde, for their continuous support in making my journey smoother.

Ami V. Patel, MD
Class of 2007
Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, Poland

Time of My Life

LOT, Air France, KLM, British Airways or whatever means we used to get there, but we got there. We arrived with two pieces of luggage, a backpack, laptop bag and handbag in tow. Then we got on the buses on our way to our city. The city we were to call home for the next two to four years. We had arrived in Poland.

At first the sheer horror of what we called an airport and then the drive, was enough to make us buy a return ticket home. But then we met the student aids, and we realized “hey, this place won’t be that bad”, or “how bad can this be?” As we unpacked and settled into our dorm rooms, we began to realize we weren’t home anymore, but rather we were in Europe, and were about to start a new chapter in our lives.

As orientation week began, we got to know our new home, our new family and school. We began to become accustomed to a foreign way of life. Even though we didn’t know the language, at first, we weren’t lost. We had people willing to help us find our way, whether it be a fellow senior student, teacher, student aid, or even a local stranger. We found our way around town, to McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut or even Restaurant 13. This was home now and we were getting to know our home.

Time began to pass and we became parts of new families. We found apartments around our friends and became a part of something special. Whether it is planned dinners or

random 3 a.m. burrito cravings, someone was always there to share it with you. I made friends that weren't just friends, they became a part of my life, they became my family. Weekend breakfast, brunches and dinners were events we all looked forward to and planned. And then there were days that just happened, and those days became a part of our memories. From the week of the first exams, which were seven exams in one week, to the last Pathomorphology final of your Basic Sciences, a member of your new family was there. Helping you study, pulling all nighters, making you coffee, taking your mind off studying during breaks, and most of all, waiting outside the door for you after that test. The support and love I found during my time in Poland was unforgettable and most of all priceless.

If someone was to ask me today, after being back home in the United States, if I would do this all over again. Without a doubt in my mind I would say yes, and then say I don't regret a minute of it. The education was great, the place was heaven and the friends are irreplaceable. My experience in Poland and with the Hope Medical Institute made me a better person because it made me adapt to adversity and taught me different isn't always bad and scary.

As the plane took off from the Warsaw airport, I realized my time in Poland had come to an end and with that thought, tears rolled down my cheeks. But to the future I look for more memories to be made with my med school family.

I can truly say I had the time of my life.

Stellon Christian, MD

Class of 2007

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

I am Stellon Christian, a graduating student at the Medical University of Lublin, Poland. I am pleased to testify my educational experience with the Hope Medical Institute and the Medical University of Lublin, Poland.

There was a fear of going abroad for my medical studies in the beginning but I think HMI and the Medical University of Lublin offered me the best of the world's exceptional educational experience, guidance and help during my stay abroad.

The philosophy at HMI and the University is that the needs of the student come first. Hope Medical Institute and the Medical University of Lublin both made a big effort from day one to welcome and help me. The staff at HMI and the University was always ready to help me with whatever problem and issues I had.

The University has small class sizes, which is pretty unique compared to the Medical School's in the USA. It also has a very safe campus life. The University offers vast clinical resources, exceptional financial aid, extensive patient interactions, outstanding education, and dedicated a staff of Professors and Doctors who teach you to become very successful doctors. I received a lot of individual attention. They provided a lot of resources to learn and gave me individualized attention and help. There was a fair amount of lectures, tests, exams, laboratory work and one on one tutoring when needed. Professors took the time to help me understand concepts that I had difficulty with in detail.

I am very happy with my educational experience at the University of Lublin and at HMI. Not only was the education great but they offered me so many opportunities to study, learn and travel throughout Europe. Today I am much more competitive because the memorable life long experience HMI and the University have given. Lublin was a nice comfortable place to live and study. You could get all the amenities you think of in this beautiful small town.

The more I read and talked to people about the life of a physician, the more the study of medicine excites me. I recognize that tough study, long hours, physical exertion, emotional and mental strain and moral and legal responsibility are part of the medical student's, and later doctor's daily existence. I am excited by the opportunity to deal with people, to solve problems and continue the learning process. I believe I will make a good physician and practice of the art and science of medicine.

Finally I would like to give my best greetings and wish much success to all the prospective students considering studying at the University of Lublin and The Hope Medical Institute.

Sabana Pathan, MD

Hennepin County Medical Center, MN

Department of Family Medicine – First year Resident

Graduate of Medical University of Silesia - Katowice, Poland

Hope Medical Institute 2002-2006

I have always had a very inquisitive mind. I remember those days like yesterday. From elementary school until I graduated as a senior from high school, you would always find me at a science competition. My curiosity further blossomed after I took several biology courses in school. I was intrigued by the complexity and intricate details that govern the human body. It was not long before I knew I was paving my road into the field of medicine.

My curiosity and passion for the field of medicine brought me to Hope Medical Institute and landed me in Poland at the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. As many of you, both my parents and I were a little hesitant about going to a foreign land to study. My family attended the HMI convention and the entire HMI staff was very helpful and informative, making us feel more comfortable about our decision. I attended the Medical University of Silesia and there I began my journey toward my dream of becoming a Doctor.

HMI Staff: HMI has a very dedicated staff, lead by the leadership and guidance of Mr. Mahendra and Raj Patel. The staff is very willing to helpful, from the day you join until you graduate. During my years with HMI dedicated staff members such as, Mr. Arun Acharya, Mr. Anant Shinde, Mr. Vipul Patel, Ms. Doreen Washington and Ms. Rachel Chubb have always gave me advice and guidance and have also assisted in my clinical rotations.

Poland: Europe is a unique land, filled with endless excitement. I was fascinated by the idea of spending two years in Europe while studying medicine. However, you have to be ready to face some hardships, remember you are not in the United States any more. First semester is the toughest, because you are home sick. Once I made friends and slowly

picked up on the language, life got better. On the weekends a group of us would go grocery shopping, hang out at the mall, go bowling or to the movies. It was nice. There are also many good places to eat out – McDonalds, KFC, Pizza Hut, good Greek restaurants, and if you want something close to mom's home cooking, go to Bombay Tandoori. I do however, recommend that you take some dry food from here, like cookies, taco shells, and Indian spices if you cook.

Academics: This is the main reason you are in Poland. As with any graduate medical education program whether here in the US or abroad, it requires serious determination, constant hard-work, and most importantly the right attitude. You must remember why you are here? To Study Medicine and this requires a strong will. From day one I studied hard, asked lots of questions, and started collecting information about USMLE exams and residency from my senior students. Remember you are here only for a short period and it is vital that you gather the proper information. I personally set a timeline.

4 year program → 2 years of basic science → USMLE Step 1 → Clinical Rotations → Middle of 3rd to beginning of 4th year → USMLE Step 2 CK and CS → Apply for residency on September 1.

This may look and feel like a long time, but when you are studying, it is hard to keep track of time. Residency competition is very fierce, and it is vital that you pass all your USMLE exams with high scores and on first attempt.

The academic training in Poland is similar to US medical education. The only main difference I notice when I was studying there is the exam styles. Poland is now starting to focus their exams more toward clinical vignettes as tested on the USMLE exams. The professors are very willing to help and spend time extra time with students. The main key is that you must learn how to balance your time between academics and enjoying life. It is vital that you remain focused on your studies, but know how to manage stress and enjoy your free time.

My strong academic performance during my basic sciences allowed me to continue with clinical rotations at Forum Health Northside Medical Center in Youngstown, OH. Interacting with the attending physicians, residents, and other US medical students, I set high standards for myself. I always showed the enthusiasm and willingness to perform, whether it was a simple physical exam as a 3rd year student to writing a cardiology consult as a 4th year. I was ready for everything. The key is always be willing to perform the task, show your interest in the specialty, ask questions, read up on topics, and do case presentation. Ultimately, prove yourself and show your knowledge and clinical abilities. Also during my clinical rotations, I had the opportunity to participate in a Neurology Research study on stroke patients. During my clinical rotations, I found it easy to study for my USMLE Step 2 CK and CS. Though I was very busy all day and time management was very important, clinically I was able to witness a disease, management and treatment process, diagnostics workup, imaging studies, and medications administered. This allowed me to put the pieces of the puzzle together.

I can not stress the importance of the USMLE exams, it is the heart of your residency application and without a strong heart, the body of your application becomes weak. Start early, study hard, study Kaplan books, take Kaplan courses, do research, and show a strong performance during clinical rotations. This will get you into a strong and competitive residency.

This is what I did, and it has landed me in a very competitive Family Medicine Residency Program. I am a first year resident at Hennepin County Medical Center, a level 1 trauma center with 8 distinguished residency programs and the third largest Research hospitals in the heart of the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

HMI gave me hope and guidance as I made my journey through medical school. I thank God and my parents everyday for who I am and what I have become, and I can not thank HMI enough for allowing me to become a part of their program and helping me reach my dream of become a Doctor.

Sony John, MD

Class of 2006

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

When I was in elementary school, a teacher gave us an assignment to figure out what we all wanted to be when we were adults. I ran home and started writing all about how I fascinated I was with garbage trucks and that I wanted to be a garbage man. After a long conversation with my parents, my dreams of being a garbage man turned into my dreams of becoming a physician. This conversation marked the beginning of my quest for the medical degree. It has not been an easy road to travel, but thanks to Hope Medical Institute, I have stayed the course and reached my goals of becoming a physician.

A lot of people may be wondering why go to Poland for medical school? One of the major benefits of medical school in Poland is the vacation time. Europe is a very beautiful and exciting place to visit. I was blessed with the opportunity to travel to many European countries with a very good group of friends. Going to medical school in Poland gives you the opportunity to see the world.

Hope Medical Institute offers a unique opportunity to do your third and fourth years of medical school in the United States. This is a major advantage over other programs when it comes time for residency interviews. One of the questions I get asked during my interviews is where I did my rotations. They are happier when they know your training came from the United States and that you are familiar with US healthcare systems.

As a graduate from the University of Silesia, I can say that the faculty is very helpful. They are willing to match your effort to help you get through your courses. It is important to understand that you will only get from medical school what you are willing to put in. There are research opportunities in Poland that will be beneficial for all students. I was fortunate enough to do research in the anatomy department with two of the professors. As a result of this, I can say on my application that I have a published abstract in a German medical journal. A lot of residency programs require research and look for candidates with experience. This is another way HMI has made it easier for their students to get a residency spot in America.

For the benefit of the new students, HMI has taken the next step by starting an alumni association. Having connections in different residency programs will be a major help when it comes to getting interviews. Our graduates are starting to make HMI known across the country.

Currently I am applying to different family medicine programs with my fiancé who is also a graduate of Hope Medical Institute. I thank HMI for the opportunity to fulfill my dream of becoming a physician and I wish you all the best in your quest for excellence.

Ravin Batuk Talati, MD
Class of 2005
Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, Poland

Doctor I am

It was the summer of 2001 and I still had no idea what my future had in store for me. I always knew I had a dream of one day being called a doctor. It was in August 11 of 2001 that I found my destination. It was the day that I called Hope medical Institute for the first time. I must say that at first I was extremely skeptical; the idea of studying medicine in gorgeous Europe seemed like a fairytale more than reality. The first couple of weeks of communicating with HMI were great, they answered all my questions and were completely ready to answer any question I had for them no matter how silly or dumbfounded. The staff was knowledgeable and courteous to all my inquiries. It was within two weeks that I decided that finally my future looked bright and the excitement was overwhelming.

September 20th 2001, was the day that stepped into the beautiful country of Poland. I was excited and nervous. Was I doing the right thing? Was there even a legitimate University here? To my qualms everything was about to be answered. I disembarked from the plane and cleared customs. To my surprise there was a huge group of people standing there underneath a banner that read Welcome HMI students. What a sense of security that was to have guidance in a unknown country. The guides that were provided to us were with us every step of the way from getting us settled to even helping us find our classes.

The first time I laid my eyes on the University I was in total awe. The campus is surrounded by beautiful trees and is in the heart of the city. To my amusement they had several restaurants that were really familiar to me coming from America. I knew right away that nutrition was not going to be a problem (being a vegetarian that was a huge relief for me). The professors and the ancillary staff were great. All the professors are extremely knowledgeable in their fields many getting their training from the states. I quickly learned that this was a real medical school and that they had graduated thousand's of doctors many being the brightest and most known in their respectable fields.

I have known all my life that I was capable of being a physician and HMI and the University of Lublin has made my dreams come true. I am in residency with the Case Western Reserve system and on my way of fulfilling my dream of practicing medicine in America. Thank you HMI for you have made a difference in my life. I can proudly and with all pride say that I am a graduate of Hope Medical Institute and I will forever urge all students and their families to fulfill their dreams and make a difference.

Betsy Luka, MD

Class of 2005

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

My name is Betsy, and I graduated from the Medical University of Silesia, in Katowice, Poland. Like life, it has been a long journey, with its fill of ups and downs. Being able to attend medical school in Poland was a great experience. It helped me evolve into the person I am. I got to intermingle with different cultures, learn from knowledgeable professors, and work with high-quality doctors. With all the benefits of this experience, came maturity. Being thousands of miles away from home was a scary thought. But Hope Medical Institute (HMI) looked after us and was mindful of our needs. All the students knew that they could reach out to HMI for anything that was needed.

As a first and second year medical student, you will explore sciences relevant to medicine; understand Pathophysiology and the various mechanisms of disease. All courses feature a combination of lecture and small-group experiences, and some will require laboratory sessions. The school and professors will provide you with the skills and knowledge that you need to further your education, but you have to do your part and concentrate on understanding the materials and being engaged throughout the courses.

As a third and fourth year medical student, you will be introduced to clinical medicine and absorb the many dimensions of the patient-doctor relationship. Also, you will start to familiarize yourself to the principles of developing a management/treatment plan for various diagnoses. Keep in mind that there are support groups throughout the school to assist you in grasping these principles that may elude you initially. These mechanisms will help you in your rotations, whether in Poland or the United States.

I can say almost without exception that living abroad is the best way to broaden your horizons and increase your appreciation for other cultures and people. It is definitely a worthwhile journey and experience. I wanted to end this experience with a quote by Oprah Winfrey, "For every one of us that succeeds, it's because there's somebody there to show you the way out. The light doesn't always necessarily have to be in your family; for me it was teachers and school."

Thank you Hope Medical Institute for all that you have provided me with.

Good luck to all of you who choose this journey!

Rakesh K Sharma, MD, FACC, FACP, FSCAI

Interventional Cardiology

Adjunct Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine and cardiology

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

I am a physician and I practice interventional cardiology. I am a Clinical Associate professor of Medicine and Cardiology. I have been always fascinated by the research and clinical cardiology advances in Europe. We often had a discussion on this topic as I visited European universities for conferences and met the world famous researchers and clinicians. I was happy that my older son and my nephew who were at University of Florida, decided to study medicine in Europe and Hope Medical Institute presented this opportunity. Hope Medical Institute is an international institute, a well run organization, established to create opportunities for students to study medicine in Europe at reputable medical colleges and universities. We explored this opportunity and looked at the core curricula & program offered by Medical University of Lublin, Poland. It was very impressive program offered by excellent professors in an excellent environment.

My second son who was also at the University of Florida, decided to join this program through the Hope Medical Institute (HMI). Of course I had lot of interaction with all the HMI staff and I was excited to see such a dedicated team who are always there to help you with a smile. It certainly puts the parents at ease.

My wife and I had a personal experience to visit Medical University of Lublin, Poland in past 3 years and I am amazed to see the campus and facility. The teaching faculty is very knowledgeable and they teach in small personalized classes with excellent student-teacher ratio; providing a rigorous, responsible and supportive teaching environment.

As my two children were very happy in Lublin, HMI was always in our discussion. Now my daughter who is one of the top students in her class decides to look into this opportunity. She had an offer for undergraduate admission from several universities in USA. She went by herself to Medical University of Lublin, Poland to explore this opportunity as medical student. Her visit was coordinated by the HMI staff and on her return; she turned down all the offers here in US and applied for this unique opportunity through HMI. She already finished one year and I am pleased that they all are happy.

I believe, Medicine as a profession is very unique and learning medicine has no boundaries and one gets a better perspective about learning medicine. I congratulate HMI for offering such opportunities to the students. I wish I had my medical studies this way.

Bani Vir, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

Despite the fact that many students have the dream of becoming physicians in the U.S., many of us find it pretty difficult to enter a U.S. medical school. Admission criteria in the States have become increasingly tough, and as a result, an abundant number of foreign medical schools, geared toward attracting American students, have cropped up.

When I first decided to go to a foreign medical school, I went to India. After spending some time there, I decided that although the education I received there was solid, I needed clinical experience in the U.S. in order realize my dream of practicing there one day.

I began looking into medical schools in the Caribbean and applied to a number of them. Although I was accepted, I was astounded when I discovered the high price of their tuition. I was also disappointed to learn that none of the schools were willing to give me any credit for the work that I had done in India, which was quite substantial, and that they expected me to start all over again.

I almost agreed to these terms, from one of the most prestigious and well-recognized universities in the Caribbean, because I knew that this school would allow me to do complete my 3rd and 4th years (the clinical years) in a U.S. hospital. Thankfully, my father happened to come across a flyer for Hope Medical Institute, just in time. I called HMI and applied to the four-year program. I was thrilled to learn that not only were their tuition costs much less than those of the Caribbean schools, they were also willing to give me a year of credit and let me enter the Medical University of Silesia as a 2nd year medical student.

I decided to spend both my 2nd year, finishing up my basic science requirements, and my 3rd year, a clinical year, in Poland. I found that I enjoyed living there and that the cost of living and tuition were much easier on me than if I went to the States right away. This is another plus of the program that HMI offers. Students have the option of completing their basic science requirements in Poland and then finishing their clinical years in the States, or completing their entire medical education in Poland. The later option helps students for whom money is an issue, since the educational expenses in Poland are considerably less. Many Caribbean schools do not offer this option and their tuition costs are very high, even during their basic sciences.

When I began my academic classes in Poland, I was pleased to discover that the teachers taught us using the same text books that the students in American medical schools used. All of the professors were understanding about our adjustment to a new country and willing to help us in any

way they could. HMI also arranged for us to have extra courses specifically designed to help us pass our USMLE step 1 board exam, if we wished to enroll. The physicians and residents in the hospitals where we did our clinical rotations were also great to work with. They taught us in a very friendly, non-intimidating manner, and allowed us more hands-on training than we would ever have been able to have in the U.S., especially in surgery.

The living conditions in Poland were also a pleasant surprise. After having attended school in India, where conditions in my university and the surrounding city were bleak to say the least, I was charmed by the European lifestyle and standards of living. The Medical University of Silesia is located in the city of Katowice, which feels like a quaint small town enclosed by a big city. The University has large classrooms and lecture halls, beautiful administration offices, and an internet and medical library. Steps from the academic building, is the University hospital, and behind the school is a brand-new Pediatrics hospital, which is beautiful and well-equipped. Students remaining in Poland for their clinical years have the opportunity to rotate through these hospitals, amongst others.

The dormitories are just a 5-minute walk from the school. Each student has his or her own room, with a bathroom (with a shower---totally clean and modern) and kitchenette inside each room. All of the rooms are fully furnished, and each one has a balcony! There are even laundry facilities on each floor. All buildings are secured at night by a porter, and all guests must sign in and out upon visiting. Close by (via taxi or minibus) are modern grocery stores, malls, and the center of the city which is filled with cute restaurants and shops. There is even a gym, which has pretty good weight machines, treadmills, Stairmasters, and excellent aerobics classes! Everything is reasonably priced compared to the States.

The greatest thing about Katowice is its location within Europe. Historic (and fun!) cities like Prague, Vienna, and Budapest are only a train ride away! I worked hard at the Medical University of Silesia, but I also really enjoyed myself. How many people get to say they saw Europe while in medical school? Where else could you get this kind of opportunity?

I'm finishing my 4th year of medical school in New York and I can honestly say that I have had the benefit of being taught in hospitals all over the world. I'm not going to lie, it hasn't all been easy. It takes a lot of sacrifice, dedication, and grit to make it in any foreign medical school. But it also builds character and strengthens those individuals who go through it and succeed. My experiences have exposed me to different cultures and to different practices. I think that they have shaped me into becoming a better student, and hopefully a better future doctor.

I wholeheartedly thank Hope Medical Institute for helping me make my dreams come true.

Raj Dasgupta, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

I am aware that this is not your typical, generic, “brag about yourself” type essay, because I was not your typical medical student. I was raised in Los Angeles, California. Coming from a traditional Asian American family, where the medical profession is highly revered, created a self-imposed obligation to become biology major after graduating from high school. My college career began at the University of CA, Irvine, and after five strenuous years, I fulfilled the requirements to achieve a “Bachelor of Science”, in order to make the big step to medical school.

My decision to attend medical school led me to Poland, a country I knew nothing about until I bought my airplane ticket to attend school there. This wasn't an easy decision to make and see to fruition, as there were many extenuating factors: the distance from home, language barriers, and cultural differences to name but a few. These issues made me doubt the reasoning of attending medical school in a foreign country. However, after two years of hard work and perseverance, I came back to United States and attended a review course to prepare for my “USMLE step 1”.

After that course was over I came to realize two big things in my life: I needed to persevere- to have tenacity- to work harder than I have ever worked before, if I wanted to call myself a medical student with pride; and, medicine is absolutely the most interesting and surprisingly enjoyable thing I have ever studied.

Being around other medical students from all over the world instilled the desire to become the best medical student I could be – one who not only asks the questions, but who could also answer them.

After passing “Step 1”, the next component of my journey to become a skilled physician brought me to Queens, New York where I began my clinical rotations. From the first day on the floor I experienced a feeling that previously I had only dreamt about. I enjoyed interacting with a variety of patients, with staff, and with fellow students.

I have been quite proud of the fact that I tend to be aggressive with regard to my eagerness to learn from those willing to teach; to speak up when answering questions on rounds and never hesitating to ask questions. Before coming to New York, I obtained an emergency medical technician license, a phlebotomy license, and a certified nursing assistant license and was fortunate enough to be employed at Cedars Sinai hospital. This gave me the opportunity to begin interacting with patients prior to my clinical rotations. I saw it as a perfect opportunity to start practicing actual procedures so I wouldn't be the proverbial “fish out of water” in the hospitals.

One story that occurred during my rotations and will forever stay on my mind was when I was doing the morning rounds on September 11th with the attending physician on the tenth floor. Suddenly, during a discussion about a patient, one of the residents screamed causing us to all run to the window and witness the tragedy of the World Trade Center, firsthand. While our hospital did not treat any of the victims from inside the World Trade Center, I stayed all night long, helping innocent victims who came in for smoke inhalation, eye irritation, and other minor injuries as a result of being in close proximity to the disaster. To date, that was my proudest moment resulting from being a part of the elite member of the medical field.

My reasoning for choosing the specialty of “Internal Medicine,” is because I feel that it is a field in which my personality and communication skills could truly help patients feel better. I believe in the adage that states: “a patient should feel better after just talking to their doctor”. I am easy to get along with and I know how to communicate well. I developed these skills as a result of the many different jobs and experiences I have had in my life, including, but not limited to: sales person, teaching Japanese students English, serving as a member of student government, joining the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, and, of course, going to Poland for two years.

My communication skills, as I have previously mentioned, are one of my strengths. In addition, I can also relate quite well with people of different races, religions, and ages; this gift comes quiet naturally as a result of being half-Indian, half-Filipino who was born in Canada, raised in California.... who then lived and studied in Poland, is currently in New York, and will be moving to Michigan to start his residency. Those who did not know any better would suspect the Federal Witness Relocation Program!

I love interacting with people and feel that a residency in medicine will give me the opportunity to develop strong doctor-patient relationships which will directly improve patient compliance thereby causing both healthier and happier patients. I have high regard for using the knowledge I have built-up over the years and I feel that a medical residency will require broad and vast knowledge of all the disciplines, which, of course, yields an effective and well-rounded doctor.

With regard to my long term plans: my passion is teaching medicine to others, whether to a nurse or a patient, to a medical student, or my next-door neighbor. During medical school, I have tutored many individuals on the basic sciences of “Step 1” and the clinical knowledge of “Step2”. I look forward to continue teaching medical students as a resident and eventually teaching residents as an attending physician. I also hope to someday teach a “Kaplan –style” review course, because I feel that I can effectively teach others to become competent physicians.

Passing the “USMLE Step 2”, “CSA”, and “matching” with Michigan State University, Grand Rapids made me reflect upon my long journey: from the teenager who sought his parent’s approval, to the naïve pre-med college senior who jumped into an international medical school, from the man who decided to dedicate his life to becoming the best medical student possible, to the person who simply stated that he “really just wants to help people and to share his knowledge with others”.

On behalf of myself and the Hope Medical Institute, I hope this summary of my medical school experience motivates and encourages you to fulfill your dreams to one day obtaining your medical degree.

Saleem Umar, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

It's as if it were yesterday when I was just a young boy, helping in taking care of three of my grandparents. Parkinson's disease, diabetes, and heart disease; I had seen the kind of damage these diseases inflict first hand. Ever since this period in my childhood, my curiosity in the health sciences had begun to steadily grow. I knew that I wanted to help people who were ill when I grew up.

I crossed paths with Hope Medical Institute in 1997, when I was a sophomore double-majoring in English literature and biochemistry at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Little did I know that my life was about to completely change and take on a direction which I hadn't anticipated. After an extensive inquiry into Hope Medical Institute's 6 year medical program, I had decided that the program was right for me. It was a relatively nontraditional and quite unique route to take to pursue medicine, which is something that appealed to me. So I took the plunge, having made my decision with an unrelenting determination to succeed.

I vividly remember the day when I heard the pilot announce, "Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Budapest." I felt my stomach turn as it really hit me in that instant that I had actually journeyed all the way from Chicago to an eastern European country, which I would now adopt as my new home. I remember making my way through the crowded airport, dragging my suitcases filled with heavy textbooks, not being able to understand the looks from the crowds and the echoes of a different language ringing in my ears. Everything I was taking in, seemingly all at once during those initial hours, was merely the first chapter of what has turned out to be an odyssey.

A medical doctor, by definition, is an individual who is specially trained in the art of healing and is licensed to practice. To be a doctor however is not as simple as going through the motions of obtaining a degree upon completion of a few years of studies. I learned from my mentors in Europe that an aspiring physician must virtually embrace a new way of life, because the art and science of medicine is in itself a way of life. When a physician says "I practice medicine," the term "practice" undermines what the physician really does.. To practice medicine is to live, breathe, teach, and utilize the knowledge which the physician is so privileged to have mastery of. Moving aboard in the pursuit of becoming a doctor, my commitment to medicine did not involve solely this; six years later I can proudly say that I was fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to discover two beautiful countries, their peoples, cultures, and languages.

Coming back home to the United States for my final two years of medical school, the clinical years, after four years of studying the basic medical sciences in Europe, I was excited and a bit

apprehensive at the same time as I wondered if my medical knowledge base was up to par with the American standard. As I rotated through each of my clerkships, my anxiety was steadily relieved. Day by day my confidence grew as I realized that I had been preparing well over the past four years. Applying the theoretical knowledge that I had learned in Europe to actual patients for the first time was unforgettable. It was exhilarating to be able to recognize diverse pathologies associated with diseases and to know how to implement appropriate treatments. It was during such moments when I felt with absolute conviction that every hour I had taken away from precious sleep for the sake of studying had been well worth it.

Moving to Europe was a daunting and difficult decision to make. Looking back on the past six years, the road to becoming a doctor hasn't been an easy one. It has required a tremendous amount of sacrifice, patience, and effort to succeed. However, if I were to be asked if it was worth it in the end, I would say yes in a heartbeat. Besides achieving the goal I had set for myself since childhood, I have gained life-long friends in my classmates, the faculty at the Medical University of Silesia, and of course at Hope Medical Institute. When I was in the midst of making my decision in 1997, I had to choose between one of two roads-either stay and follow the steps of the many, or embark for Europe and do something that so few attempt to do. As Robert Frost wrote," Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

It is neither the prestige nor the monetary compensation for which I put my soul into the pursuit of my dream of becoming a doctor. Materialistic gain could never lure me enough to walk away from family and friends for four long years. What I strive to gain from a career in medicine is something much more meaningful and priceless to me- it is the non-paralleled personal satisfaction I feel when I know that I have played a positive role in improving the quality of life in another human being.

Sara Syeda, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

“Medicine is a noble profession that requires a lot of hard work either it be being on call day or night or to spend hours studying...” this is one of the sentences I had written in my personnel statement required upon admission to this school. At that moment I had written this sentence without honestly realizing how much effort I really did need to put in, however, NOW I DO. Trust me, when I say this that Medicine is a lot of late night hours. Studying for your medical school is just the tip of the iceberg. Going to Medical School in Poland has given me the experience of my life, both personally and educationally.

On the personal aspect, initially, due to the thought of being in a completely strange country where I knew not even a friendly soul, days before my departure and days after my arrival to Poland had become extremely dreadful for me. However, never had I imagined that I would walk away with three honest, trustworthy, sacrificing, medical school friends whom I will cherish and be friends with for the rest of my life. It was these friends, and my classmates company and support that helped me make it through my first two years of stay in Poland.

Educationally, the medical subject course work taught at this University is very much compatible with the material that should be known to take the USMLE exams. The Professors at the University of Silesia are masters of their domain who are exceptionally knowledgeable, down to earth, helpful and funny. While teaching they become one of your friends yet maintain the dignity of their profession making learning more fun and easy for a student. My personal favorites are Prof. Richard of Histology and Embryology and Prof. Ludmila of Biochemistry. Besides on an educational level I have also made a special bond especially with these two professors on a personal level as well. Under their and the rest of the professional educational guidance I have successfully passed all my USMLE steps in the first attempts and will be starting my Residence in June of 2003 at a Medical School Residency program that has been ranked #26 by US NEWS magazine.

Choosing a Medical School in Poland was a big step for me because I had never gone anywhere beyond my house fence or my undergrad college campus. And, now I am glad and I thank God for making me take this step as it has turned me in to a more independent, strong, and determined person who is not afraid of any challenges that comes her way. After all, Hope Medical Institute has not only kept its promise of making “world class physicians today for tomorrow’s world” but also making a strong willed person in the process.

Scott Woska, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

So you are passionately interested in the numerous sacrifices required to obtain a medical degree? But would that still be the case if you were afforded this opportunity in Poland? And how does Hope Medical Institute functionally position itself within this auspicious challenge in acquiring a medical education? What is the reputation of the Medical University of Silesia? Will I have the opportunity to return to my motherland and practice medicine upon completing my training in Poland? What are the significant advantages and disadvantages of going abroad for my medical degree?

If you find yourself asking many of these questions, and more, you are certainly not alone. It is clearly not as if you will be sashaying jauntily down the street from your parent's home to attend classes at the local college. This is a rather life altering experience. Would it not simply be much easier to root yourself nicely and comfortably within a city or town that you have grown up in your entire life? Absolutely! But the mere fact that you have entertained this exquisite opportunity is a salient indication that you are seriously interested in "spreading your wings". But you still feel much reservation about this whole endeavor!

This is the underlying importance of Hope Medical Institute (HMI). Your worries and concerns are truly warranted. However, the insatiable commitment of HMI to cater to your individual needs and concerns throughout your medical education are unparalleled. Moreover, HMI has positioned itself to assist your transition into Poland to be as comfortable and seamless as possible. With a genuinely congenial, knowledgeable, and professional administration, a student can be rest assured that their issues (regardless of the magnitude of importance) will be thoroughly and promptly addressed. Hope Medical Institute has additionally positioned two primary representatives living within the student housing complexes to be conveniently and immediately available to the students. These HMI associates (Dr. Omar and Dr. Sham) provide an exceptional profile to the quality of services offered by HMI. These two exceptionally personable associates have passionately worked as liaisons between HMI and the Medical University of Silesia since the conception of the American program, not to mention they are both exceedingly popular and highly influential physicians that pride themselves as Medical University of Silesia alumni.

Of course, every new Medical University of Silesia-bound student will have the opportunity to meet and intimately speak with Dr. Omar and Dr. Sham at the mandatory summer orientation. This three-day event is profoundly invaluable in specifically and thoroughly addressing every inquiry a

student or family member may have. This also affords the new student a wonderful opportunity to meet and foster bonds with fellow classmates. And there is truly no substitute for meeting seasoned students and recent alumni to inquire about personal idiosyncrasies and professional ideologies that only a mature student can effectively qualify! Additionally, you will have a prodigious opportunity to meet your academic Dean and all of the sincerely helpful administrative associates of the American academy from the Medical University of Silesia, whom every student will have a wealth of contact throughout their medical school career.

It is the resplendent quality of this entire team of HMI and Medical University of Silesia associates that will provide an enriched academic infrastructure for the success of every acidulous student. These same ambitious students will inevitably find a wealth of opportunities and resources available in acquiring various basic, technical, and clinical skill sets that are, in many instances, traditionally not acquired until the induction of a residency program. If, on the other hand, your career objective conforms to the philosophy of “high quality education being informed by high quality research” then you have at your disposal an enormous pageantry of extended research opportunities. Our cardio-thoracic surgery department, for example, recently was awarded top international honors in San Francisco for their research using robotics for invasive procedures. This is the same cardio-thoracic department that performed the world’s first heart transplantation! And a number of the gynecological and pediatric studies currently in progress are equally invigorating, as much emphasis has been generated in delineating the genetic importance and roles of various isoenzymes and immunological markers in more accurately and efficiently predicting complications well before presentation. Hence, the immense volume and quality to be intimately involved with internationally acclaimed professors that are often considered pioneers within their specialty.

Clearly, these are just a few of the myriad of unique opportunities afforded every disciplined student here in Poland. The academic platform provided at the Medical University of Silesia via the collaboration of HMI is most certainly a challenging experience. The arduous pursuit of a medical degree is unlike any other professional degree. You will almost certainly be challenged beyond any previous physical, psychological, emotional, and/or even spiritual endeavor. However, with the scrupulous support of HMI and the sanguinely competent administration at the Medical University of Silesia, your quest of a prestigious medical education becomes significantly less cumbersome. It truly is the goal of the team at HMI and the Medical University of Silesia to afford you with a most fulfilling, rewarding and memorable experience.

It is my personal contention that the worldly experiences acquired while simultaneously obtaining a medical degree in Europe will be arguably the most indelible memories of your life. The

monolith of experiences and expectations of every student will inevitably instill profound accolades of pride, maturity and accomplishment-an essential profile of every physician. Upon your decision to sojourn through an enduring chapter of your life that is deemed to provide challenges and experiences that are no less than awesome, take a moment to introspectively entertain what your personal goals, ambitions and expectations are before coming to Europe. Of course be cognizant of your limits, too. With this template in mind, I am exceedingly confident that you will maximize your medical school, and subsequently career, objectives. I full-heartedly believe that the quality of the medical academy and the limitless potential for extracurricular research, and thus the resplendent desideratum for authorship and publication in international journals, will far exceed your expectations. In cooperation with HMI, the Medical University of Silesia will ensure that your experiences in Poland are enjoyable, productive and profitable.

Scott Woska, M.D.

Tony Joseph, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

Wow what a journey, it feels like only yesterday I was still waiting for the school bus to take me to high school. Instead of a bus it has been replaced by a plane that carried a naïve nineteen-year-old to the other side of the world to explore his life and dreams. Every trip across the Atlantic was one-step closer to my dream of becoming a physician. From the shaky beginning to be able to stand in front of my own peers was a great accomplishment in my life. I know that each one of us has our own road to take and many times it is difficult but looking back it has made me a stronger person. For those that want to take a leap of faith, go ahead. I have faith that each of them will get through. Obstacles may confront all of us but being able to overcome them is what makes us great people and even great physicians.

Unlike some of my other classmates I transferred from a school in Hungary to go to Poland. There were many obstacles that I faced along the way especially with language, culture, environment, and most off all being so far from home. Knowing that I was there on my own was not so comforting; I had to rely on the group of students that came with me for support. Having these great friends on my journey helped me get through a lot of difficult times.

Once I got back to the states to do my rotations I had so many other people helping me along the way; from my friends as well as from people at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center. Even when I had to arrange time to take my exams and prepare for residency, people at HMI gave a lending hand. As you can see getting a Medical Degree is not done by your own merit but by those that help you along the journey. I know I had a great time getting here and the journey has just gotten interesting.

Zeiad Fakhouri, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

As a transfer student to Hope Medical Institute, I found that my choice of medical schools was a great one. From day one in Poland I realized that the English program in clinical medicine taught me more than my previous school.

HMI offered me a program to complete my medical education with their joint European affiliation with University of Silesia School of medicine. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Hope Medical Institute for giving me the option of superb medical knowledge and expertise I need to exceed in my career as a physician. The staff at HMI has been excellent throughout my journey there upon completion.

Along this journey I have learned many things. I learned that all the time consumed in travel, study etc., everyday I was smarter than the previous. I thought that studying in a different country would be a risk for me; however, I learned that it is the best choice I ever made. This taught me to be independent, more aware of my responsibilities, and to understand my conquest. Studying abroad really forced me to strap myself down and do nothing but study. Why? Because there wasn't too much one can do. HMI offers a well built campus and dormitories. I thought that was a very considerate option because not only are there security, and HMI employees at the dormitories 24 hours a day, but also there were friends around you who study with you and can give comfort when you are away from home.

However what I learned most was that in order to be the best physician/professional one can be, one must be disciplined. HMI and the new and improved staff are always looking to make things less of a hassle and more informative for me to obtain a well respected residency and continue on my journey to be a surgeon. Now I am graduating and I, once again would like to thank HMI and the new staff for their effort and hard work in helping me become who I am, and who I will become.

Charles Haigh, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

Choosing to study medicine in Poland was a difficult decision. I was uprooting and moving away from my family and friends to a country that only a decade ago had abandoned communism. Furthermore, I was heading to a country whose first language was most decidedly not English. Indeed, my greatest fears appeared to be confirmed from the first moment on the airplane; it seemed as though I was the only person on the flight speaking English.

However, my perception of Poland, and of studying medicine there, changed dramatically over the next years. Not only would I obtain the medical knowledge necessary to meet the first medical examination requirements for both Canada as well as The United states, but I would also make lasting friends and experience a radically different culture.

The medical curriculum offered to us in Poland was indeed very similar to that of North American schools of medicine. All the basic sciences were covered, and all but a few of the professors had teaching experience in North America. Furthermore, the faculty took a keen interest in our progression and was always willing and able to provide additional assistance. Ultimately, these basic sciences provided the foundation for the USMLE Step 1 medical examination as well as a smooth transition into clinical training in the United States.

But although my end points of graduating from medical school and matching into an American Medical Residency program were realized, it is not for these reasons I will remember Poland. Rather, it is the intangible experiences I had of the unique Polish culture that will forever remind me of my time spent there. Listing them all would be impossible. However, passing chimney sweeps, who were covered from head to toe in soot, on my way to school is a memory that immediately comes alive. Likewise, stories of tank brigade enforced curfews before the fall of the iron curtain will continue to echo in my mind many years from now. And finally, how does one describe the image of hundreds of Fiats, cars that would almost certainly be banned from major American freeways due to their tiny size, roaring to work everyday at seventy miles an hour?

Truly, the two years that I spent in Poland have allowed me to experience the radically different culture and have subsequently refined in me an openness and understanding of others that I likely would not have otherwise. Truly, I feel fortunate for this Polish chapter in my life.

As I relate story to any people who are intrigued by it, I feel that, while looking back in hindsight, I could not have made a better decision than to go to Poland for medical school. I feel fortunate to have learnt so much. Not the least of which was a medical education.

Sandeep Patel, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

As yet another chapter in my life comes to a close; I cannot help but ponder how this entire experience has changed me. Think about it. I was rejected from every medical school I applied to here in the good ole United States. There was a point in my life where I was actually considering a change in my career plans. I carried with me that bitter feeling of having to let go of a lifelong dream. Worse yet, I had the feeling that I was beaten by “the system”. Then, an idea was brought to my attention. Of course that idea involved me having to leave my friends and family for a couple of years and going to a foreign land where I did not know a single soul. That idea would force me to adjust to a new environment and learn to adapt to a new culture and way of life. That idea carried with it the burden of having to prove that I am indeed worthy of pursuing, and capable of achieving, my goals.

Going to Poland was never on my list of “things to do.” It was, rather, an unexpected detour I had to take to get to where I wanted to be. Sure this detour was filled with many unknown entities, but what choice did I have but to take it (or at least try it)? The bottom line was that I had a goal to reach-and I was willing to do anything to reach it. As time went by, however, I found this detour to be not only a means to reach a goal, it was also a road to making new friends along the way and to experience what Polish people and culture had to offer. In retrospect, I have to say that my two years in Lublin were among the best two years I have ever had. I made new friends with people that I know I will keep in touch with the rest of my life. I got to interact with Polish students, at least on a social level. I got to see a country which is rich in tradition and history. And of course, I got to study at a University which has a long-standing tradition of training future physicians and placing them all over the world.

The question stands: is giving up a couple of years of my life to go to Poland to study worth it? Let me answer that by asking: is doing what you want to do professionally the rest of your life not worth those two years? Things there work pretty much the same as they do here. Just do what you are required to do, and you will get closer to your goal one step at a time. Sure, it will be tough in the beginning. However, that’s where HMI and the staff and faculty in Poland come into play. They are there to ease the transition from being at home to going to a foreign land. They are there to make sure you are on the right path to achieving your dream of becoming a physician. I can honestly say that in Lublin, you will have all the help you need. From Dean Wielosz to Magda Rodak to other HMI representative’s on campus, people are there to address your concerns and to make sure you are

comfortable in the new environment. In addition, they are there to support you academically so that you come out successful and are prepared for whatever your future plans may be.

So where has all of this gotten me? In the grand scheme of things, where am I now? I finished my first two years in Lublin and am now about to complete the last few weeks of my second two years here in the good ole U.S.-the very country that thought it had me beat. The University and HMI have helped me in achieving my dream. In May, I will be an M.D. In July; I will actually be practicing medicine in my top choice residency program. This is proof that you can get to where you want to be. It takes a lot of sacrifice, motivation, and strength to go about getting there though. However, is it all worth it if it gets you to where you want to be the rest of your life? I'll leave it up to you to answer. And with that, another chapter in my life closes as another begins.....residency and MARRIAGE!!!!

I would like to dedicate this to my family for all of their love and support. I would also like to dedicate this to my fiancé, Sweta, for all of her support and understanding during this last year. Without all of you, I would not be where I am today. Thank you so much for everything. I love you all.

Poland and Back

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

“Please put your tray table back in their original position, and your seats back from their reclining position,” echoed through the tiny corridor of the German built plane. I had finally reached my final destination, “Warsaw, Poland.” I couldn’t believe that I finally made it 10 hours later. I am starting on an adventure that began a few months back sitting in my dorm room in Buffalo.

It was a few days before my graduation; the only thing running through my mind was what happens next. I always dreamed about becoming a doctor since I was little, but I couldn’t get past the thought that I was graduating college. Through many exams, papers, standardized exams, and my thesis, I realized that I was finally done and I needed to plan for the future. After talking to many people I found that going to medical school in the states would be an expensive and difficult goal, especially since everyone was applying for medicine that year. I then began my mission to look for other opportunities, and that is when Hope Medical Institute entered my life. I heard about HMI through friends of my parents, so I decided to get an application and apply. After a few months, the response came back from HMI and my dream to become a doctor began.

Poland was a country that I did not know much about except for what I learned in high school. I was quite naïve with their food, language, and customs, which made the trip even more nerve wracking. The HMI rep, who was a Polish citizen, came to the airport and a sense of security fell over me. The rep explained many things to me and told me a little about my future home, Katowice. We pulled into the gravel driveway that leads into my new home. My first thought was that I could never make it here and that I would be on that 10 hour flight back home. I took a deep breath and told myself to stay and give this a chance.

My academic experience was enlightening as well as stimulating. My curriculum was structured according to U.S. medical school standards and timeline. My first year was difficult not only because of “Gross Anatomy,” but also of being in a new place. My fears were relieved soon after I met many people who were just as scared as me. I found out that many of the students were from all over the U.S. and didn’t know much about Poland either. We fostered a relationship through our conversations and trips that continues till now. The professors I met in Poland were equivalent to U.S. professors in every way. They made it easy to talk to them and ask them questions, even with their busy schedule of research and teaching Polish students. I also had the opportunity to meet some of the doctors there that were teaching clinical rotations in the various hospitals.

After finishing my basic sciences, I was excited to use my knowledge towards treating patients. I decided to take the opportunity to do a year of clinical rotations in Poland. I was not surprised to see that the hospitals in Poland offered the same services we offer in the U.S. The doctors were eager to sharpen our physical exam skills and to integrate our knowledge with clinical practice. I especially remember my surgery experience, which dreaded all of us because of its intense curriculum. The surgeons were eager for us to get in to the OR and to assist with many varieties of cases including Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm repair and Coronary Artery Bypass Grafts. I learned a great deal about diagnostic tests and procedures that I felt ready to come back to the states and finish there.

My first day at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn reminded me of my first day in Poland. I was thrown into a whole new arena where everything was new except the country. I was eager to integrate my European teachings to American medical practices. I learned that there are minor differences between Poland and Brooklyn. The physicians and residents at Wyckoff were helpful and eager to make transition easier. I learned how to write SOAP notes, orders and admission notes, as well as phlebotomy. This transition was made even more comfortable with the help of the medical education department at Wyckoff. The staff made scheduling my rotations easy and was always there to answer my questions. After completing many weeks at Wyckoff, my journey finally came to an end.

Now a few days before my graduation, I can look back and say that the choice I made was a smart choice. I was given an opportunity to see another country and to experience things that I would never have seen in the states. I am happy to say that I am a doctor and that HMI made this possible. I like to thank my family, the staff at HMI, the staff at the University of Silesia, and the staff at Wyckoff for their help and support.

Subrao Shinde, M.D.

Class of 2003

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland.

I am about to finish my studies in medical school in a month's time and would like to share my experience at The Medical University of Silesia.

I had done my masters in physical therapy and was working as a director in physical therapy in Florida. I was doing very well but I always had a desire to become a physician. The physicians also encouraged me in the facility I was working in.

I started my medical studies in Debrecen Hungary and later transferred to Poland with the help of Mr. Patel. The HMI representatives in Poland made it easier to settle. Helping me with the visas, accommodation; showing me around and making me feel at home.

The professors at The Medical University of Silesia spoke good English and were very accommodating. We also had some lessons in Polish, which made it very easy to communicate with the patients. All the classes and clinicals really helped me in understanding, analyzing and interpreting the case diagnosis. The coaching provided at the university is excellent and I am glad I got an opportunity to study here. HMI representatives in the U.S. and Poland have always been very supportive and prompt in answering any difficulties faced.

Now that I am finishing I would sincerely like to thank Mr. Patel in helping me achieve my dreams and Hope Medical Institute is really a ray of hope for students striving to be physicians.

Medicine is such a noble profession and Mr. Patel has really provided this unique opportunity helping prepare students for lives of leadership and medical services.

I can confidently say that the program at The Medical University of Silesia is one of the finest and offers a strong medical foundation to build a career on.

Veejay N. Geria, M.D.
Class of 2003
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, Poland

It was the first tear I had ever seen him shed. My mother said the same, and she's been married to him for thirty years. I still remember the day as if it were yesterday. As I gave my mother one last hug, I looked over to my father as he tried to maintain his composure...the announcement of the flight attendant's last call for Flight 206 departing for Budapest, echoed through out the terminal. A firm handshake solidified our good-bye. As the flight took off, I thought to myself, the adventure I was embarking on would be etched in my memory forever, for I was about to begin medical school at just eighteen years of age.

Initially medical school was just a dream, a very expensive one. A dream, which I was discouraged from attaining, given the heavy financial burdens my family faced. At first, I considered giving up on my aspirations of becoming a doctor. With time however, these thoughts of financial inadequacy only drove me to work harder to research other options. Then one day I discovered Hope Medical Institute, which governed several internationally recognized medical universities in Europe, all of which were well established and had didactics offered in English. With its reasonable tuition in mind, I decided to attend HMI's annual convention in order to learn more about their six-year program. It was at that point that I had realized that Hope medical Institute was much more than just an institution, it was and still continues to be a family of quality individuals, all of them with the same intense passion and strong desire to pursue a career in the medical profession. I was thoroughly assured that HMI stood for everything I believed in, and with my desire to attend medical school, stronger than ever, I decided to go overseas.

My years spent in Europe had impacted my life in so many ways. It was an active, demanding challenge that I enjoyed not only for what I learned in medical school, but also for the strengths and abilities that I found within myself. In the beginning, my time spent there wasn't easy. I realized how much I missed my family, friends, and home. However what I noticed was that the HMI group that I had come with were all feeling the same way. What we didn't know was that this "group" of people would form some of the strongest friendships and deepest relationships that our souls could ever offer. We came to each other for anything and everything, helping each other along every step of the way, and over time our friendships grew to the point where we regarded one another as family.

I was able to balance my academic responsibilities with an active personal life. Each and every day was filled with such adventure and excitement as I was introduced to the theoretical aspects of medicine; I ventured to explore the cultural depth of the neighboring Eastern European

countries. It was through this environment and my experiences there, which enabled me to attain such a degree of individuality and personal growth. Towards the end of my time in Europe, I found myself mentally matured, physically healthy, and more responsible than ever, and was happy to realize that attending Hope Medical Institute was the best decision I could have made with regards to my medical education.

Currently, my career in Internal Medicine is about to begin. I have been accepted to a well-respected residency program in New Jersey, within the same town I was born and raised. As I embark on another stage of training and growth involving clinical practice, I am confident that my medical education has prepared me well for the tasks that lie before me. In retrospect, I believe that being in the company of such wonderful and caring people, being exposed to such a culturally diverse environment, receiving the guidance provided by such superb mentors, and gaining superior education from such well established professors have paved such a successful path towards achieving my ultimate dream of becoming an excellent physician.

Jatinder Aujla, M. D.

Class of 2002

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, POLAND

I won't bore those reading about the decision process that went into attending a foreign medical school, or to study medicine for that matter. When you look at it, it's basically a deed you sign and the work carries a lot of struggle, sacrifice, and the rest of the business I'm sure everyone's thought through. So, why Poland?

Why not? My class was the third that Hope Medical Institute brought to Lublin, and if you attend, give thanks, after all, we paved the way for you. If I wrote this 4 years ago, the tone would have sounded less optimistic and basically sunk. But that feeling only lasted a week, and intermittently after some exams. I lived in the dorm for 3 months, later a classmate and I moved out. At the time, some of the students drew worrisome images and security threats, however, for the most part everyone was happy to see us go. Needless to say, there were no problems and the seclusion did wonders for our academics. I miss Poland, if you decide to study there you'll be pleasantly surprised. Well, if you're one to embrace culture you'll have no problem, if you decide the best way is to lock yourself in your room, good luck. After all, this isn't England, you have to speak their language, Polish people are very proud and learning the language only scores you points in their books. On the practical side, you don't want to look stupid at the supermarket deli counter fumbling through different accents of "chicken".

If you decide to spend all four years, knowing some of the language will help you enormously in the hospital. Remember, patients prefer to understand the doctor examining them. In fact, your supervisors will be more trusting and willing to let you assist in operations if they see you're diligent, language and all. That's getting a bit ahead, try to pass the boards in your second year and you'll end up in the states. When it comes to studying, stick with review books, I'm sure a good list has been compiled. The trick to doing well is spending quality time studying, reading through a 400-page text the day before an exam doesn't cut it. For that matter, reading through high yield material will be more efficient with your time and mental state, somewhat. I understand the professors and staff are a lot more stricter these days, you can thank/curse us for that too.

Kenneth Chen, M. D.
Class of 2002
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Hello, my name is Kenneth Chen and I am a HMI graduate who will be starting my first year of residency in Pediatrics at Nassau University Medical Center in East Meadow, New York.

I just want to say a few words about the HMI program. I did my first two years at the Silesian Medical Academy in Katowice, Poland. I was part of the first group from the program to study there. When I first arrived there, I was not sure what to expect. It was a challenge to live in a foreign country and to be part of a different culture. But it turned out to be good. The Polish medical students welcomed us and helped us as much as they can during our adjustment to life in Poland. The professors were very helpful and they were willing to spend time with us when we had any problems with our studies. The professors considered it a challenge to teach classes in English but they welcomed it. The majority of the teachers speak very fluent English. Of course, there are some who are not as fluent, but nobody's perfect.

I did my last two years of medical school in the States. I did my 4th year at Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn. Doing rotations in the States is a good experience. As a foreign medical grad, doing rotations in the States helps because residencies would like you to have experience in a US medical setting. I am not saying that the Poland rotations are bad; it's just that in order to compete with US medical grads, it is important to have clinical training in the States. When you are applying for residencies, it is good to have recommendations from the US rotations.

With this program you get the best of both worlds. You get a European type medical education with clerkships in the States. The road to getting a MD is not an easy one. Once you finished medical school, you will feel so much better. That's how I felt when I finally finished. That feeling is short lived because I start residency soon!!!

Sandeep Garwin, M.D.
Class of 2002
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

An inherent desire to succeed distinguishes the individual from the rest. My story began a few years ago when I was working in an already successful career. Yet, that inherent desire to succeed, rather succeed further, indulged me to pursue a career in medicine. It was then I decided to research a path towards amassing my goal.

Hope Medical Institute (HMI) provided the essential ingredients for which I am grateful for today. It was with HMI that I developed an ongoing relationship in my journey to Lublin, Poland. They supplied an affordable, relatively straightforward and researched program in medicine. These essential ingredients confirmed my decision to pursue a career in medicine through HMI.

Leaving America, my home, my family, my friends and my job created an abyss of insecurities. Poland, a land I was completely unfamiliar with, would soon be my new home for the next four years. Nevertheless, I chased my dreams.

Upon arriving in Poland, I was greeted with an HMI representative and escorted to the medical university's housing facility. It was then, this new segment of my life began. I was introduced to a world that influenced me into who I am today. Through series of experiences, I grew as a student, a person, a friend and a future practitioner & educator. Although the road was bumpy at times, it was the matchless, cathartic journey of my life.

The challenges of studying medicine in Poland did pose some difficulties as a native English-speaking student, the obvious language barrier being first and foremost. The university allayed this obstacle by requiring all HMI students to study medical Polish for two years. To some, the Polish culture was a dramatic change. For me, it was the opportunity to assimilate with people, culture and tradition which I was curiously fond of at that time. Not surprisingly, an open mind and a sense of personal warmth encouraged new friendships and experiences.

The proximity of European cities and countries allowed for inexpensive and fun-filled excursions, an opportunity many people may never live out during their lifetime. An array of challenges and opportunities awaits in Poland.

The Medical University of Lublin employs accomplished, dedicated and pioneering physicians, surgeons & professional staff. The hospital's substantial size permits large teaching

facilities, specialized wards and occupies satellite medical institutions. The professors, as a whole, are enthusiastic about teaching and training HMI students and are quite receptive to personalized attention & constructive changes conveyed by its students. Many of the departments are primary innovating centers in the forefront of medicine not only in Poland, but in Europe itself. Pioneering research, American training and European molding comprise a few of the exemplary qualities of The Medical University of Lublin's medical staff.

Hope Medical Institute offers the first stepping stone towards the degree, Doctor of Medicine. It provides hope. It is the student, the individual, who must follow through after that point and make himself or herself a success! HMI's continued contact with their students and graduates ensures a relationship through medical school and onwards. Through proper communication, assertiveness, dedication and following through, HMI, The Medical University of Lublin & its students can constructively yield future physicians and surgeons.

In conclusion, the road to Lublin and therefore to Doctor of Medicine is not an easy one. It's a conquerable challenge that starts with hope, proceeds with personal effort & determination and ends with a future of new beginnings. Today, I've accomplished the degree of Doctor of Medicine, experienced the Polish culture, made some dear life-long friends and learned a great deal about myself as well as the world. In a nutshell, my life has just begun...

Rajesh Geria, M. D.

Class of 2001

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

“Welcome to Warsaw” the pilot said as he landed the plane that bitter cold October morning of 1996. I felt my stomach turn as I made my way through the crowded train station carrying my suitcase full of textbooks. I remember that day from the crowd, gypsies screaming and tugging at my clothes, and the echoes of a new language ringing in my ears. In spite of this, I remained focused on finding the train that would carry me to my medical school and ultimately to the dream I never imagined would come true. I thought to myself: “This was just one more obstacle I would have to face on the journey to becoming a physician.”

As classes begin, I was impressed at how well the professors spoke English and most of all their wealth of knowledge. Every lecture was focused on key points that were crucial for us to know for the USMLE exams. Although Polish exams are traditionally subjective (oral), our exams were specifically designed in multiple-choice format similar to what is used in U.S. medical schools.

Since I was part of the first group of international medical students to attend this school, it was difficult to blend in with the other Polish students and society in the beginning however these boundaries were crushed. Since there was a mandatory Polish language class I was able to pick up just enough Polish to get around well in town and make many good friends at the school. The Polish students and professors were always excited to learn about our language and culture as we learned more about them everyday.

As the 2 years went by, the thought of taking the USMLE Step 1 plagued my mind on a daily basis. I know that I had to pass the exam in order to get rotations back in the U.S. As I returned home and finally took the exam, I not only passed but also did very well! It seemed that everything I learned in Poland was right on the money. I then started my rotations in the U.S. and joined students from other medical schools in what turned out to be an excellent experience. My basic science foundation was more than adequate and I had no problem applying these principles to the clinical sciences under the mentorship of some of the best clinicians in N.Y. During my fourth year, I took and did well on my Step 2 USMLE exam.

To make a very long story short, I have always wanted to be an Emergency Medicine Physician. The specialty is well known for its highly competitive nature especially for foreign graduates. In fact, there were many people that discouraged me from applying to this field because my medical school was not very well known at the time. I am proud to say that I have achieved my biggest dream and am now an Emergency Medicine resident at one of the best hospitals in New York City.

The hard work and excellent education I received in Poland paid off. Studying overseas truly made me a well-rounded physician and in retrospect I would do it all over again if I could.

Kalyani Gavini, M. D.

Class of 2002

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

Medicine has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. I grew up in an extended family of physicians, including my father and my brother. I attended the University of Missouri and received my degree in Biology. I worked for the next several years in the Chemistry department for two different companies. I also attended night school and started to work on my Master's Degree in Molecular Biology. As I was completing my work, my mind turned towards a career in medicine. I found myself reflecting on what I wanted to do with my life. Although, I knew that I could be happy with a career in Molecular Biology, I knew that I would be truly fulfilled by a career in medicine. I was fortunate to be admitted to The Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. I received transfer credits for my first year of medical school from the prior education that I had received in my graduate work. I spent one year abroad and enjoyed a truly unique opportunity to experience the rich culture of Europe while attending school. As I completed my clinical rotations, I found myself enjoying every rotation. It was enlightening to find myself applying what up until now had only been read in a book to "the real world." The first time that I followed my own patient was a true milestone. It really meant a lot to me when I was able to contribute to the decisions about patient care. Going to medical school was the right choice for me. It was and continues to be a long difficult road, but it has been worth it.

Nutan Khosla, M. D.
Class of 2002
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

My name is Nutan Khosla and I'm from Port Clinton, Ohio. I graduated from Case Western Reserve University with a B.A. in psychology and a minor in chemistry. When I look back on my college undergraduate life, I see nothing but a positive experience! I entered my freshman year unsure of myself and my future, but I graduated my senior year, confident of a future full of hope and direction!

The only thing I regretted not doing in college was studying abroad my junior year. I knew I wanted to be a doctor. I also knew that once medical school started, it would be a big commitment on my part for several years. So when I saw that there was still a possibility of being able to study abroad and attend medical school at the same time, it was like an answer to prayer!

I attended the Silesian Medical Academy in Katowice, Poland, and it has been an experience of a lifetime! During our orientation week before classes started, we had a chance to travel around in our free time and we took day trips to Auschwitz, the concentration camp, to Warsaw, and to Krakow. Travel and food here are much cheaper compared with the U.S.A.! The Polish people are very helpful, as is the school staff. There is a definite language barrier when going off campus, but that gets better with time and effort put into learning the Polish language.

The school held a very nice inaugural ceremony for us to officially enter into the school. Classes are challenging and proper time management is the key to doing well. The professors are helpful and speak good English for the most part. There is a work-out room, small computer room, and library in the school. Downtown Katowice, which is easily accessible by bus, has most all of the facilities students look for, such as movie theaters, shops, clubs, coffee houses, fast-food restaurants (McDonald's, BK, Pizza Hut), and a sports arena to name a few.

My class consists of 19 students from all parts of the U.S.A., and even one from Canada. It's a great chance to meet people that you would never have met otherwise. At times it feels like we're one big happy family, helping each other when in need, and making fun of each other when we're not! The only drawback I face is being so far away from family, friends, and loved ones. But, at the same time, it has made me become more independent on my own. If you are looking for a plush school with everything provided for you on a silver platter, then this program isn't for you. However, if you enjoy traveling, meeting new people, experiencing different cultures, and are willing to face some challenges along the way, then you'll enjoy studying medicine here in Poland. DO WIDZENIA (that's GOOD-BYE in Polish)!

Joseph Korah, M. D.
Class of 2002
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Hi, I had the unique opportunity to complete my medical degree at The Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. As you might know, the road to attaining a M. D. is long and full of obstacles, but with the help of Hope Medical Institute, I was able to overcome these hurdles and achieve my goal.

I began my medical student career in the 6-year program at the University Medical School of Debrecen, Hungary. Even though that education was great, the university did not offer students the opportunity to perform more than 6 months of clinical training in the States. During my 2nd year, I realized that it was in my best interest to complete my clinical training in hospitals in the U.S. Fortunately HMI also realized this and with their help, I transferred to The Medical University of Silesia where I finished off my basic clinical training sciences. Then, I was able to return to the States and take advantage of the great learning experiences from the various teaching hospitals I rotated through.

As I sit writing this message with only a couple of weeks of medical school left and with the security that I have a residency in a great hospital to look forward to in July, I look back at the experiences and knowledge I have gained throughout the last 6 years of my life while I was in Europe. I must say that I don't regret a single moment of it. I have taken advantage of all that has been offered to me. My advice to you, the reader, is that if you choose to pursue your career in medicine through the assistance of HMI, you will not be disappointed. The road ahead will be tough, but if you have the determination and motivation to see it through, you will be able to attain a great residency while also enjoying all of what Europe has to offer you.

Trupti Kumbhojkar, M. D.
Class of 2002
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

My name is Ms. Trupti Kumbhojkar. I am a university graduate from The California State University, Northridge, U.S.A. I was working as a computer programmer in a pharmaceutical department with a great ambition to become a medical doctor.

It is very hard to become a doctor in America because of international competition and the heavy financial burden. Still, I didn't give up my hopes and waited for the opportunity. I am lucky as I met HMI in time and was selected for the medical education in Poland.

First of all I didn't have any idea about this country, people or language as I said to HMI. The HMI staff showed the maximum patience to convince not simply me; but my parents too, that medical education is equally competent in Poland. I like their way of arranging a seminar on a beautiful cruise to convince parents and students at the same time.

Still, I was worried about the new country, etc., and many other things; but now I can confidently say that there is nothing to be worried about. The highly qualified staff from here and HMI is more friendly and helpful than I could imagine. I am very much grateful to the staff of HMI for giving me this opportunity to become a medical doctor through this prestigious institution, The Silesian University School of Medicine at Katowice, Poland. This is the largest and best recognized medical university of Poland. The school has tremendous resources to help the students to achieve our objectives and fulfill our dreams. Some of the departments from here are so involved in many international research projects and they are world renowned. The teaching system over here is also entirely different than the system over in America. Every student from the class has been treated as if like a doctor and allowed to attend and watch the major operations in hospitals and meet with patients.

The Hope Medical Institute has maintained a full time staff over here to take care of our needs and help us in all respects; that is why I have no doubt that I can become a medical doctor. I strongly recommend HMI to all the deserving students, if anyone is seriously thinking about an education in the medical profession.

Heemanshi Lakshmin, M. D.
Class of 2001
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

As I was graduating from college and gathering my information regarding US and foreign medical schools, I came across a multitude of information regarding different medical schools. It was me and my best friend, both of us applied to Caribbean schools. I was also fascinated by the idea of spending two years in Europe with a wonderful opportunity to study medicine and learning a new culture so I went an extra stretch and applied to Hope Medical Institute. I was accepted to both Hope Medical Institute and one of the Caribbean schools with my best friend. I chose to go to Poland.

Schooling in Poland gave us the opportunity to learn the wonderful world of medicine and a new culture in its entirety. I still remember the first time I landed on Polish soil and we took a six hour bus ride to our dorms. It was a complete culture shock for us and the natives. Being the first class of only 8 students, it was very intimidating at first but soon we began to feel at ease as we became familiar with surroundings. The next two years went flying by as we soon engrossed ourselves in medicine.

Going to Poland also gave us the chance to tour Europe and learn a great deal of European culture. Our professors were great and prepared us very well for what lay ahead. Of course every program has a glitch and so did ours. Being the first class and having no security of our clinical rotations was very stressful and was one of the toughest hurdles that we had to cross. Despite all hurdles, we secured clinical rotations at different hospitals throughout the state. We managed to complete our rotations and then came the next step securing residencies. It can be very intimidating as a foreign graduate, but as all other medical schools you were in the same boat as Ross University, Saba University, St. Georges University, etc. Despite all the bickering, we all made it through and are in one of the most well respected profession.

Here I am today finishing up my first year of internship in Internal Medicine and looking forward to second year. Internship is a very tough year and I think going to Poland especially as the pioneer class prepared me well for what lies ahead. I will always remember our potlucks and mini squabbles and will always cherish my days in Poland.

My first thought about Poland is what a wonderful time it was, the opportunity to obtain a medical education, to immerse yourself in a new culture and to interact with new people. Understandably, being the first class had it educational ups and downs. In the beginning there were some language barriers and curriculum confusion, but, as the time went on before leaving to do my third and fourth year rotations, there was always the effort to improve both the teaching styles and curriculum. On the whole after returning here to do my rotations and residency, I find that our knowledge base is on par with the majority of students and residents here. As a word of advice for the future classes, make the most of your opportunity to get a good medical education and take advantage of this chance to also enjoy traveling and visiting through Europe - it is a learning experience in itself.

Anna Niegowska, M.D.

Alumni

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, POLAND

TO ALL FUTURE STUDENTS OF LUBLIN MEDICAL COLLEGE:

I welcome you. I would like to assure you that Lublin Medical College, which is considered one of the best in Poland, has everything to make you a good doctor. I am a living proof of this. I am a foreign medical graduate who received a M.D. degree from Lublin Medical College, came to United States, and successfully completed required examinations. Then, I completed my residency at Flushing Hospital Medical Center, affiliated with Cornell University.

I am looking forward to meeting with you in the future.

Best wishes.

Rakesh Patel, M.D.

Class of 2002

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, POLAND

Poland is a country that is taking great strides in making itself known to the free world as a country with positive growth. As a student at the Medical Academy in Lublin, I have noticed such growth - new buildings, new sidewalks, new streets, and even a newer bus system. Given a few more years, I feel that Polish cities will be comparable to other major cities in Europe. This and many other things makes Poland one of the must see places in Europe. Even with all its growth, it still preserves its old architecture and castles. More important to me is its value of education.

Most of my teachers are very knowledgeable in what they teach. I could say almost all of my teachers are equal to or even better than teachers in the states. They are so eager to teach us and help in every way they can. Whenever I have a problem, they always try to make time for me in their busy schedules. The workload is enough to make one busy most of the time. I have learned a great deal about not only the other American students there, but also about Polish students. Many of them know English and are always ready to help us. Coming to Poland has changed me in positive ways. It has taught me to be independent and have an open mind about other cultures. It has been the greatest learning experience in my life so far.

Sonal Patel, M. D.

Class of 2002

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

While many of you wonder whether you will get residency in America if you go to a foreign medical school, let me tell you my story. I went to Hungary initially to join a six-year medical program that was taught in English and followed an American medical school curriculum. Soon enough, I learned that I would only be able to do about six months of clinical rotations in America out of the two required years of clinical rotations. So, then with the help of HMI, myself and many other medical students transferred to The Medical University of Silesia, in Katowice, Poland. Though it was a big change and life was not as good as expected, things definitely turned out for the better. The medical office helped out with many of the problems we came across, and HMI had two doctors who spoke English helping us out with every step of the way from getting visas and housing to showing us around the city and making sure we were comfortable. All of the professors taught in English and were usually quite accommodating. As soon as basic sciences were done here, I left to go back to America to take my USMLE Step 1 and start clinical rotations. All of the rotations I did were in America except for one. And as I moved along the path from a third year medical student to a fourth year, I took my USMLE Step 2 and applied for residency. Time flew by so quickly and now I am back in Poland again....by choice. I recently found out that I got my first choice in residency at a hospital in Manhattan, New York. I completed pretty much all graduation requirements and now I am in Poland to finish my last rotation, do some traveling, and take care of diploma issues. It was not mandatory to come back, but a few friends and I wanted to come and visit Europe once more.

The majority of foreign graduates that I know have gotten residency. I am not saying it's all cut out for you, because nothing ever is... but it is also far from impossible. As in every situation, there are pros and cons to coming to a foreign school for residency. I look back and see some struggles, but mainly I see the experiences I had, the traveling I did, and the independence that I gained. In the end, I even got the residency of my choice. If you are willing to put in the effort, I assure you that you will get something back.

Jasjit Singh, M. D.

Class of 2002

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

Medical Doctor. The ultimate goal of many, but attained by a select few. When I decided to go to medical school, Hope Medical Institute provided me with an alternative way of obtaining a medical degree. By providing its students with a medical school that has been established for hundreds of years, it gave the security of a solid foundation that many other medical schools that cater to American students do not have. Also, by being in Poland, it allowed access to its students to learn more about the world and its cultures, which is a rare opportunity at any medical school in the United States. Seeing those two major advantages, I took a chance. That's what it was for me, because I was part of the first graduating class that Hope sent to Katowice, Poland. Here is my perspective as of now-a graduate of The Medical University of Silesia and a first-year medical resident of Louisiana State University.

Sure, I hesitated when I thought I had to live in Poland. Of all the European countries, the medical school I went to had to be in Poland. I always thought of Poland as a backwards and dreary place with single-minded people who had no concept of other cultures. Actually, it was just the opposite. The people in Poland gave our class a healthy environment to accomplish our goals in becoming doctors, along with the patience in our trying to discover and understand the Polish culture. The Polish people consistently helped us in any way possible to make our transition in their society easier. Even the Polish medical students eased our transition by trying to get us involved in different activities that took part on campus. It also worked the other way, as well. Our class held an Indian/American Cultural Nite, in order for our Polish classmates, teachers, and other friends to learn about the different cultures where we came from. They were very receptive and even helped in making it a resounding success.

Poland provided an easy access to both the Western and Eastern European countries. This was a plus, since sometimes we would only get a couple days break between class sessions; which, actually, was more than ample time to go discover a whole new country. Our class took trips to Eastern European cities like Prague and Budapest, as well as Western Europe cities such as Salzburg, Munich, and Vienna. There never was a shortage of places to discover.

My first thought about Poland is what a wonderful time it was, the opportunity to obtain a medical education, to immerse yourself in a new culture and to interact with new people. Understandably, being the first class had it educational ups and downs. In the beginning there were some language barriers and curriculum confusion, but, as the time went on before leaving to do my third and fourth year rotations,

there was always the effort to improve both the teaching styles and curriculum. On the whole after returning here to do my rotations and residency, I find that our knowledge base is on par with the majority of students and residents here. As a word of advice for the future classes, make the most of your opportunity to get a good medical education and take advantage of this chance to also enjoy traveling and visiting through Europe - it is a learning experience in itself.

Poland, itself, had remarkable cities for our class to discover, such as Aushwitz and Warsaw.

The school, itself, proved to be one of the best in Europe. They realized we were there for the sole purpose of becoming doctors. They built our foundation as doctors, by providing ample class and lab time, as well as easy access to the professors. They used American text books, which was essential in preparing us for the USMLE exams we would have to take in order to practice in the United States.

The living arrangement was also another plus in the program. Poland was not as expensive as other European countries, which was great because we could spend those extra dollars on luxury items such as televisions or save it for a trip we would be taking. The location of the medical school was also very convenient. It provided just enough distance from the city for us to concentrate on studying and lead a hassle free learning environment. It was also close enough to the residence halls making it easier by allowing more studying time and less traveling time.

After approximately two years of medical school in Poland, Hope Medical Institute was able to set up rotations in the United States. By being a part of the first class to do rotations through Hope Medical Institute, most of us were apprehensive on how the clinical rotations would be set up and on whether we would get the advantages other medical schools in the United States did. Most of all, did our Polish medical school prepare us enough to be competitive with the other students? The answer was yes.

I did my rotations at two very different hospitals. One was an inner city hospital in Chicago, which gave me the opportunity to interact with a prevalent patient population that one would see during residency. I was able to create contacts with the Chicago medical community which proved to be helpful when it came to applying for residency positions. The other hospital was in a smaller town in Ohio.

This hospital was unique in the fact that most foreign medical graduates usually do not get a change to work at the smaller, more teaching intensive hospitals. The hospital program gave the one on one interaction with the doctors, as well as, the close interaction with American medical students. Both the interactions combined proved to be an enormous learning experience.

The one thing to remember in all this is that each person's experience going through Hope Medical Institute is different. Hope Medical Institute provides one with all the opportunity to

succeed, yet it cannot just hand you the medical degree on a silver platter. I had to work hard and always be alert of opportunities that may help me attain my goals. Yes, I probably had to work harder than American medical school graduates in passing the USMLE exams, getting through the clinical rotations, and getting a residency, but which foreign medical school graduate does not have to? By being in Europe for basic sciences and then having done the clinical rotations in the United States, I feel like I gained much more than other medical students. I learned about other cultures and societies (a chance most people do not have in general, much less, in medical school). The fact of being exposed to a whole different part of the world makes me a more mature and understanding person. Then, I got to apply all that knowledge here in the United States and use it in my clinical rotations. Most of all, I achieved my life-long goal. I became a medical doctor.

Jasjit Singh, M. D.

Sonia Thakur, M.D.

Class of 2001

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

My name is Sonia Thakur. I am a Canadian citizen with a foreign medical degree (The Medical University of Silesia) currently in Internal Medicine residency at Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY. To state the previous sentence seemed like impossibility 5 years ago.

I was college graduate (Bachelor of Science-Anatomy) applying to the local medical school in my home town. As a result of unsuccessful attempts for admission, I turned to the alternative, foreign medical schools.

It was a difficult decision to join HMI's medical program in Poland. The idea of leaving home to foreign surroundings was not an issue but rather the chance of entering the North American medical system successfully became a recurrent thought for the rest of my days in Poland.

I am sure that many of you within the program are thinking this way. How about some of these questions? Are my answers relatively similar to yours? Keep in mind that your own underlying issues will determine the answer that is unique to you.

“What do you need to do to get back?”

(High scoring USMLE marks on the first attempt; and pass the CSA and TOEFL exam)

“Who can you trust to help you academically...emotionally?”

(Maybe someone who is a local medical student. My brother, a Canadian medical graduate currently working in Seattle as a nephrologist, was my confidant.)

“You know your strengths but what about your weaknesses?”

(You are keen to learn the material but have problems retaining it. Perhaps forming study groups is not such a bad idea...HINT HINT)

“Who is the competition and how do you compare?”

(There are thousands of eligible FMGs in the world what advantage or disadvantage do you have over them?)

As you can see, I haven't discussed anything about ECFMG certification or KAPLAN courses or books to read because you already have access to that information (and if you don't, I would learn NOW). Again, it is only information. How you use it is totally up to you.

So far, I have had positive outcomes starting from medical school up to the present time. There have been uncertain times but I have persevered.

You will too.

Anita Zachariah, M. D.
Class of 2001
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

My name is Anita Zachariah. I live in Denver, Colorado. I attended the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor where I received a Bachelor's of Science in Psychology.

My initial reasoning for calling HMI in the first place was to attend medical school. I was, in fact, struggling to get into medical school when I discovered an advertisement for HMI with an opportunity to study in Europe as well as attend medical school. It seemed too good to be true. But by attending the convention, I realized that this was a legitimate program because I met successful doctors now practicing in the states who attended the Academic University of Medicine in Lublin who told me that this school was the finest in the country.

I was not sure what to expect of Poland, but I was amazed at how little time it took me to adjust to things here. On one hand, I was happy to see the "golden arches of McDonalds," as well as Burger King, KFC, and Pizza Hut. I was also put at ease when I found that most everything I needed for studying, setting up my room, and eating were all attainable. On the other hand, Poland has a lot of deep-rooted history on its own that cannot be experienced in America. The first semester I was here, the schedule was lighter than the rest to give us some time for adjustment. This created ample time for finding out where everything was, becoming used to language, and even getting some sightseeing done.

Although life here is very different, school always remains the same.... basically "what you put in is what you will get in the end." I found that to be the same in college as for here. By coming from a big school, it's comforting that here we have such small class sizes where teachers know us by name. It is also nice to know that some of our teachers are willing to help us with anything because some of them are not only our professors, but are also our advisors. On the other hand, it is also good because the professors expect a lot. Having the Dean of the University as our Pharmacology professor, for example, encourages me to study even more.

HMI staff is available here for our needs. In fact, we have one of them living on our hallway in our dorms. They have helped us from everything to getting our visas to helping make up our academic schedules to also helping out our social lives by introducing us to some of our Polish friends, social events, and what to do in our free time.

Reflecting back to when I first came here, I now realize the best thing I did was keeping an open mind, making sure I remembered why I came here, and last but not least, making sure to enjoy the time in Europe.

Anokhi Patel

Class of 2012

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

Hi, my name is Anokhi Patel, and I am a 3rd of 6 student, at Medical University of Silesia. Being a student straight out of high school, I had started my medical career as a 1st of 6 student in Poland, through the help and support of Hope Medical Institute.

When I first got to Poland, my first impression was that Poland was a lot different than America. However, as the weeks went on and I made friends, discovered the surroundings, and I began to enjoy it! The first thing I loved about being there was that I made so many friends, and so many that I'm close to that they have become my family. I never felt the absence of a family in Poland because my friends and I treated each other as family. In addition to studying, we would always cook together, celebrate holidays together, travel together, pretty much do everything together.

As I mentioned earlier, traveling is one of the best parts of being in Poland. You work hard at school, but when you get a few days off it's nice to be able to go somewhere with your friends. In my past 2 yrs, I received several opportunities to travel and made the most of it. I went to Budapest, London, Spain, and Warsaw. There are several cities that are very close by; you can just take a train and be there in no time. In addition, there are people there, right in our dorm buildings that can help you plan a trip somewhere if you don't know where you want to go or the most convenient way to get there. I love the traveling part of being in Europe and have had many unforgettable memories.

Furthermore, the studying part of Poland is great as well. All of the professors speak in English. We also get to learn Polish as part of our curriculum so that we are able to get around and communicate with others. With several of our professors we were able to tell them what we wanted to learn, and they incorporated it into the class. This past year in Outpatient Care we wanted to learn how to draw blood, and the next class, the Doctor we work with called in his nurse and we learned how to draw blood. From the very first year, you get a lot of hands on experience.

As for the getting around in Poland, it's a lot simpler than it seems. You can either take the bus or take a cab, and both are readily accessible. There are a lot of activities to do in Katowice as well. There is Silesia City Center, which is a mall. In addition to all the shopping that we do, there is also TESCO, where we get our groceries from; and there is Fun City which has a bowling alley, arcade games, pool tables, etc. During the spring time there are carnivals and the zoo that you can also go to.

The students are all also very helpful and try to host events so that students can get together. This year, as a part of AMSA, we hosted a Navratri Garba, hosted a Halloween party, held a clothing drive during the Christmas holidays, took part in International Night hosted by Lublin, and students attended a Bollywood Night which was hosted by an Indian restaurant near us.

Being in Poland has been a great experience for me. I have loved the last two years I have spent there, and am looking forward to the upcoming years.

Gaurav Jaswal

Class of 2013

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

"The greatest gifts you can give your children are the roots of responsibility and the wings of independence" – Denis Waitley

My parents always taught me a sense of responsibility. They taught me that in order to get through life's difficult situations I must be able to assess each and every one of them with rational thoughts and in a responsible manner. What I never learned living at home was independence. It wasn't until I moved to Poland last September that I learned the true test of responsibility is to be responsible without the guidance of parents. It was the test of independence.

I won't go in to detail about all the fears fostered inside of me before coming to Poland. I was anxious and nervous like any other student was. The thought of independence was an exciting one, yet a very scary one. There was no longer anyone to wake me up for school, or have my dinner ready when I got home. There was no one to remind me of doctor's appointments and there was no one to make sure my laundry was done. Worst of all, there was no one there to manage my money. I was all alone, and I had to take care of all my responsibilities on my own. Like I said earlier, my parents taught me responsibility but I didn't know it could be so hard when they weren't around.

I struggled through my first few months in Poland. I had been late to a class or two because I was not used to waking up on my own, I spent quite a few nights eating take out because I was still learning how to cook. For the first time in my life I learned how to hand wash clothes, I had no choice. I had to phone my parents a few times because I went over my weekly budget. What I'm trying to say is that I made mistakes and I learned from them. I am now able to proudly tell my parents that they did a fine job in raising me. They taught me all the necessary skills I needed in order to live out there in the world without them. Their effort to send me to school in Poland has helped me to mature as a student and as human being. I am grateful that I was accepted into the program, I made many friends and I have learned so much. Studying in Poland has given me a safe environment to make mistakes and grow from them. Even though I

don't have my parents there with me, I have friends that are no different from family and I have a variety of professors and staff that I can call at any time of day should I encounter a problem.

Poland has given me a new outlook on life; I now know what I am capable of accomplishing. I always wanted to become a physician but I didn't know that it was in such close reach. Two years ago at this time, I was thinking about medical school and now I am there. I am glad I have chosen this route, all those at Hope Medical Institute and staff at the Medical University of Lublin have helped me in two very important transitions in my life. They helped me go from regular student to medical student and they have helped me transform from boy to responsible and independent man. These two transitions are the most important ones in my life as of now and I am very happy I was able to make them early on.

James Hwe

Class of 2010

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

After many years of hard work, in retrospect, I'm happy to be where I am right now. My pursuit of medicine began in High School upon attending Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School. The school gave me many opportunities such as the Science Technology and Research (STAR) program at USC that helped build my basic scientific foundation. At the age of 14, I began my first experience in a hospital environment as a Junior Volunteer at Los Angeles County + USC Medical Center.

After graduation, I joined my colleagues at Medical University of Silesia as a 1st yr in their 6 yr program in 2004. My first year was a very memorable one. I had many questions regarding the program, the school, medicine, and a life in another country. In the end, I came to a certain conclusion, that success can be attained anywhere as long as the will and the ability is present. After absolving all doubt in my mind, I tread forward past my first year and continued my medical education. I not only studied vigilantly during the school year, but I kept my summers productive. In the summer of 2005, I joined the physician assistant helper (PAH) program at the LAC+USC medical center's ER. In the summer of 2006, I completed a Emergency Medical Technician B certification (EMT-B) and toured various hospitals worldwide including the newly founded Shanghai East International Medical Center. In the summer of 2007, I was a Collegiate Medical Volunteer at LAC+USC Medical Center. In the present 2008 summer, I am thoroughly preparing for my USMLE Step 1. I believe that building up a momentum and continuing at a set pace is key to success.

The education at the Medical University of Silesia is very difficult. The professors are all excellent specialists in their own respective fields. They are very supportive and understanding of our varying situations and often times try to accommodate our needs. The teaching staff varies from the deans of the school and their research staff to the international staff. Food is easily assessable by phone call, you're able to order from virtually every restaurant in the city by cell phone and have it delivered to your room.

Traveling Europe is very cheap and easy from Silesia. Many students travel to varying countries by bus, train and plane. Some noteworthy spots visited by students are Cairo, Paris, London, Edinburgh, Prague, Vienna, and Rome at discount prices at travel agencies. Studying in Europe is not only about pursuing medicine, but establishing a greater and broader cultural understanding of various ethnic communities. As I student of Medical University of Silesia, I am a prospective physician, a European backpacker, a representative of my country, my culture, and my school.

In my experience, where there is a will, there is a way. All goals within reason are attainable as long as one puts forth the effort to achieve it. I set becoming an anesthesiologist as my goal, and I will thoroughly try my best to accomplish this goal. What once was a dream (pursuing medicine), is now reality, what once was a faint hope (completing MD), is now very much within reach. In retrospect, I have no regrets in my life. I only wish to continue to use the skills and experience that everyone has helped in providing me, and to one day fulfill the expectations of my professors, my parents, and myself.....thanks to the Hope Medical Institute (HMI)

Janushe Patel

Class of 2012

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

Aside from getting accustomed to the European lifestyle and overcoming the language barrier, I believe traveling abroad to Poland for education is the best thing that has happened to me. Every student adjusts in their own way to the foreign way of life, but being in a place where you are not constantly pampered nor fed the common college expectations is what helps you grow as a person and create a stronger personality. I can confidently say that the person I am now compared to the person I was two years ago, prior to joining the Medical University of Silesia, are two completely different people. Living away from home is of course tough at first, but in order to fully experience the depth of how the rest of the world works only comes from throwing yourself in a foreign environment. HMI helped extend that invitation to growth by setting up such a program open to high school and college graduates. Making the most of what surrounds you and what the professors have to offer is how you obtain more persistency and diligence. In all honesty, there are pros and cons for attending a foreign medical school but where can you find a place that doesn't have its perks and downfalls? If you are ready to have one of the most influential experiences that can bring out the strength and independence in you then joining HMI and attending the University is the right step to take. The professors are experienced, well trained, and approachable to those students that show dedication and willingness. Just like any medical school, there will be tough exams and obstacles but the professors also know where you are coming from, which creates the opportunity for second chances- something not given to very many medical students in the US. Some may think that coming to Poland will close all doors to resources compared to the States, but there are grocery stores, department stores, and of course European fashion surrounding you in close proximity making it extremely easy to settle in. With the help of affable students willing to help settle new students in, there are no complaints about not being able to make your apartment your home. In fact, helping students settle in last year was a great accomplishment after seeing how they picked up enough Polish to get them traveling all over the city in just a few weeks. I have seen great friendships spawn from being stuck together for so many years in a foreign country and through those friendships you also learn how to group study, help each other settle and even solve each other's difficulties. Yes of course the saying goes, there's no place like home but it's up to you to create a home away from yours.

Jerry Kakkanad

2nd Year of the 4-Year Program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

When I became aware of the possibility of studying medicine in Europe through HMI, I jumped at the chance. This was an opportunity to benefit from the advantages of a Continental education.

During the first few weeks, it became abundantly clear that the professors had a sincere desire to help us succeed. They would work with us to ensure that we understood the material. They often went beyond my expectations for medical school instructors. This spurred me to put extra effort into studying and understanding the material.

In addition, the faculty is always looking to include students in their research projects. Last year, I worked with Dr. Staśkiewicz to evaluate the severity of pulmonary embolisms using CT. Nearly two dozen of my colleagues conducted research with other professors in a variety of departments. Our participating in research added to our professional acumen and will bolster our residency applications. The opportunity to conduct meaningful research is hard to come by in most medical schools but is widely available in Poland.

To be clear, my time in Poland has not been all sunshine, rainbows, and gumdrops. It takes time to acclimate to a foreign culture and for that culture to adjust to you. I have struggled in some of my classes and the language continues to vex me. However, these difficulties are overshadowed by the benefits I have accrued. I have a thorough medical education, I have lived in a foreign country for an extended period of time, and I have made wonderful friends. I look back at the last eighteen months and I am glad to have spent them in Poland.

Jignesh Patel

3rd year of 6 year program

Class of 2012

Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland

When I decided to go abroad for medical school I picked HMI because of the reputation and the positive comments from my friends which are also former HMI students. I thought that HMI would be a great program because it would give me a opportunity to not only finish medical school quicker but also get a chance to be independent and tour Europe which I wanted to do since I was in middle school. HMI and the Medical University of Silesia have helped me become who I am today with their full support. I know picking HMI and going abroad for medical school was a scary thing at first, but I been through it and I can say that it was a great decision for me, because I don't regret anything and the best thing is I am further in Medical school then any of my other friends that went to school here in the States.

I know the first questions that comes to our minds and our parents mind is " how is the schooling, and do they speak English ?" Well let me tell you a little about the school. It is much like here in the states. It has a large campus with a cafeteria , great places to hang out outside under the trees and is minutes within the dorms so between classes you can go home to eat or sneak in a little nap. The teachers are great, every teacher speaks English (and is very good at it also) and many of the teachers I had also had taught in the States so they were use to American students. The best thing is that each classroom has a small number of students, which makes it great for the teachers to give you more one on one time. Many of the classes have the schedules like the American school where there is a exam once a week , and there is a final . Most of the classes like American Colleges are every other day so you get a day in between to study.

I know many of the students are wondering about the entertainment or fun part of Poland. Well we have many restaurants like Pizza Hut , KFC and many other American style places to go eat and relax. Im a vegetarian and I have no trouble in eating. There are many of places to eat and also many places to buy many vegetables to make a great dish. Katowice also has a huge mall which includes a food court American name brand shops and a place to bowl or play pool, there is also a great theater for those who love American movies , and yes they are in English. For the guys there is a basketball court right in front of the dorms where many of the guys play every day and for the girls there is a park right next to the dorm for a nice walk. And there are many corner stores where you can pick up pretty much anything you need. And the best part is that Poland is conveniently located to many other large cities like Paris, Budapest, Greece and Prague

that its a great trip for the weekend. You can get a ticket to Paris for about \$90USD round trip. I was lucky to go to HMI and Medical University of Silesia that I got the opportunity to visit 5 different courtiers in my two years I spent there, the best part is that it's very cheap to travel.

In conclusion choosing HMI and the Medical University of Silesia was a great choice for me. Not only is it a great Medical University but I also got a chance to be independent and grow. Coming to Katowice also gave a chance to tour Europe where if I was in the States I would have only dreamed to have done, and I got a chance to meet some great friends along the way. And the best thing overall is that I'll be done with medical school while my other friends are just about to start their medical school.

Kavitha Tirumalasetti

2nd year of the 4 year program

Class of 2011

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

When I decided to leave midway through my junior year of college to start medical school in a country halfway across the world, I was not sure if I was making the right decision. I was uprooting a life well established with comfort, family and a lot of great friends, to start a life without any of that. Since I started in the spring semester (the BIS program), I was aware that it was winter there, and to expect a lot of snow and ice upon reaching Poland. Once we arrived in Warsaw, we were met by HMI staff and volunteers from the University, and they ensured our comfortable transport to Lublin. They didn't leave anything to chance and provided us with snacks and phone calls to home. By the time we reached Lublin it was night, so I was amazed to see many other fellow students come out and help all of us with our luggage through the snow and ice.

Although my father accompanied me for the first week during orientation, I remember crying every single day I woke up that week. Every day was cloudy and dreary, I didn't know anyone, and most of all, I did not know what to expect. My father reminded me that every single student in the class was in the same situation I was in, but that still didn't change how I felt. During orientation, we walked through the academic buildings (Collegium Anatomicum and Collegium Universum are impressive facilities), met with enthusiastic professors and students (one of the striking things about the professors is that many of them are clinically active physicians), and ate some lunches at places like Pizza Hut and KFC— something that felt like home. We also went grocery shopping, and I was pleased to see that (although in a different language), many of the foods and snacks I liked and brands I was familiar with were sold at local supermarkets. Once classes started I had developed friendships with many of the students in my class, which was also comforting. However, diving into medical school left me quite overwhelmed. Studying for college classes and studying for medical classes were two entirely different approaches. It was not just studying Monday through Friday and then enjoying my weekends like in college; for me, weekends suddenly became crucial to catching up on reading or taking notes. I fought a personal battle with Anatomy class throughout my first semester, and it wasn't until the end of the semester when a classmate of mine took me into a Collegium Anatomicum study room, sat me facing the wall, and we read for close to 10 hours there, did I finally understand what it took to

stay in medical school. Since then, I've completed first year earlier this spring, and now, halfway through my second year, I can say that although the classes became more challenging, it's generally been smooth sailing for me.

Of course that's not to say I enjoy zero leisure activity while abroad. Friday nights I usually have no desire to study because I find myself burnt out from the week, so I'll spend that time with my friends, whether it's going to dinner downtown in Old Town, shopping or catching a movie at Lublin Plaza, the local mall, or spending the night out on the town. Some of my classmates became my closest friends abroad, considering we spend the majority of our time together in class, at the library, or hanging out. We have such a tight bond with one another that at times, it feels like we're all fellow brothers and sisters. I really admire them, and throughout my time there they have all given me so much advice, encouragement, and support and that has led to our closeness.

Being a student in Poland has also given me many different types of opportunities. Academically, I was given the chance to work on research with one of my Anatomy professors, Dr. Anna Torres. That has been such a tremendous experience for me, especially in that I was able to present the research at a student conference at the medical school in Warsaw. One of the most exciting yet nerve-wracking experiences of my life, it is definitely a milestone in my (very, very short) medical career. Dr. Torres and other professors at the Medical University of Lublin are such busy individuals yet many of them engage in research, and enjoy having students help them. Traveling is another wonderful opportunity I had because the country is situated in such a convenient spot in Europe, where it's easy to travel out west to Milan, down to Cairo, or closer by to Prague. Poland itself is a country rich with history and great places to see, whether it's up by the Baltic Sea to Gdansk or south to Krakow; and of course, Lublin itself is never more beautiful than it is in the spring and fall.

To this day, I don't know if any of the decisions I have made in my life were ever right or wrong. They have all simply been decisions that have shaped my life. However, I can say that HMI gave me the wonderful opportunity to begin my medical career early, and their staff has been so supporting throughout my time with them that they also are like family to me. I have always had a lot of passion for medicine, but along with it a lot of apprehension about how good of a physician I could really be. Now I have realized that every bit of a physician that I could be is

entirely up to me— how much effort I put into the discipline and how much faith I have in myself. Since starting school at the Medical University of Lublin, I have grown more confidence in myself as a student of medicine and I am very lucky to have the support of my family, friends, professors, and HMI throughout this journey.

My father once told me that, “To be a doctor, you really have to be a ‘nerd’— you have to be so engrossed with what you are reading and eager to keep learning whatever medicine has to offer, and just keep going, never give up.” I never fully understood this statement until my turning point during that 10- hour day of Anatomy reading. Now, I keep his simple words with me as I continue on my path to become a physician.

Keval Patel

3rd year of 6 year Program

Class of 2012

Medical University of Silesia,

Katowice, Poland

I think every student has a different reason for choosing to go to medical school abroad. As a student coming straight from high school, I think my reason had to have been the chance to complete this medical program in just 6 years. I think studying abroad is one of the best decisions I have ever made in my life. I am a much stronger and more independent person than I ever was two years ago, and I think HMI and Medical University of Silesia have played a big part in that. Being in a place where you are way from all the amenities and constant reliance on friends and family to push you through gives a person a chance to grow and establish who they are in life. Attending medical school itself is a big decision in a person's life, in which they choose where to study very extensive, but the program that HMI has set up is very much focused and well planned. Almost every decision you make in life has its ups and downs, but I think if you are focused on what you want to accomplish then HMI will help you achieve it. Now, let's talk a little about the school and the surrounding? First, the polish culture is one that is very hospitable and welcoming. The professors that teach our classes are well distinguished in their respective fields with scores of credentials as the majority of them have MD/PhD degrees. Unlike most professors in the states, they are always ready to teach and help those that are eager and willing. They are even willing to stay after class to answer questions and help students that might need extra help along with the standard curriculum. The smaller class size makes it easier for us to learn and discuss more about the topics of the week. Exams are rigorous and very time demanding as one would expect in any medical school but the professor and fellow classmates are always there to help. Students get their own rooms along with a bathroom which is one of the best things about the dormitories. This way a student can chose to decorate his or her room to fit their personalities to help establish better living and studying conditions. The school is walking distance from the dorm which eliminates the time consuming transportation aspect of their day. You are also in walking distance from cafés, bakeries, ice-cream parlors and a local mini market which is very useful to students during exam times. Just a taxi ride away is the mall and downtown area which has various restaurants, fast foods, movie theatre, and several other entertainment options. The vast network of public transportation in Poland offers convenient travel to a variety of places. This makes a great way to spend small holidays with friends in

Europe instead of traveling back to the states for like a week. Among the few places that I visited so far are Prague, Budapest, Greece, London, and Spain. One of the greatest things I have achieved so far from studying abroad along with the knowledge is the friends that I have made. Being in such proximity with your classmates has helped me establish some of the greatest friendships, which I will hold on to forever. Every day we grow closer and closer together as friends as we help each other with study and through our ups and downs. To conclude, in all honestly every student will have a different experience from the school and the program it's just the matter of how they chose to approach it. But, if you are ready to have one of the most prominent experiences that will bring out the strength and self-determination in you then joining HMI and attending the this program is the right step to take.

Kunal Patel

3rd of 6 Year program

Class of 2012

Medical University of Lublin,

Lublin, Poland

My educational experience in Poland

From the beginning, I was very apprehensive of moving to such a faraway place like Poland. The decision to enroll into medical school was a very late one on my part, so I did not have the chance to completely mentally prepare myself. Becoming a doctor was always a dream of mine so I figured this was a great opportunity to get started.

Before going to Poland, I did not know much about the country or the customs. I was very nervous but excited at the same time to start this new journey in my life. Upon arriving at the airport in Poland, I was met by someone who was going to take me to Lublin. When I reached Lublin, I was taken to the dorm in which I was going to live for the next year. I found the dorm to be more similar to an apartment with a very relaxed living environment. The dorm building is comprised mainly of students from the Hope Medical program. The dorm has everything that is necessary to live and study comfortably. The biggest advantage of living in the dorm is that you have all of your classmates to help you whenever you need it. I was then met by a Hope Medical Institute representative who personally took me to get pictures taken for my school documents. The rep was very helpful, and explained some important things that would enable me to get settled more quickly. Getting to classes is not a problem; you can walk, take a bus, or call a taxi.

Most people worry about whether or not they are going to like the food wherever they are going. Lublin is not one of those places. The city has food to satisfy anyone's taste buds. Most food is available for delivery so you don't even have to leave the dorm to eat. Many things are available and with new restaurants opening up, there is always something new to try. You can also find some of the more familiar fast food chains like Pizza Hut, KFC, Mc Donalds, and even Subway. Along with this is a very new mall that has opened up and offers shopping from many famous name brand stores as well as a new movie theater that's plays new American movies. All in all, food was not really a big problem as you can pretty much find anything. Getting around the city usually can be done by bus and is the cheapest way to travel. After hours travelling must be done by taxi and is the safest alternative, rather than walking.

The next biggest challenge for me was getting used to the climate. Being from Texas I am used to extremely hot summers and mild winters so going to a place known for a frigid climate was a little unnerving. However I found out later that the weather is nothing to really worry about. The weather is very nice from September till November and starts to get colder in December. The winters so far have not been that cold and with heating in every building and dorm it's not really that big of a problem. By March/April, the weather starts to warm up and the city really livens up. Spring and summer are the most enjoyable times in Lublin.

Now the most important for which I am even there in the first place, school. The school is more than I expected when I initially applied. The majority of buildings in which the classes take place are fairly new. The classroom settings are similar to what you would find in America, and consist of lectures and labs with assigned groups. There is regular testing and in some classes weekly quizzes. The format of tests is very similar to tests that you would find in U.S colleges. The teachers are very helpful and are available at many times during their office hours for extra help or questions that the students may have. The class sizes and teacher to student ratios make it an ideal place to learn. There are libraries and special classrooms in the buildings that are open for quiet study during the year and especially during finals. There is always help available from fellow students and students from the year ahead of you who will guide you and show you what you really need to focus on. Many people are concerned with whether or not they will be able to communicate with native people, but for that, students take Polish classes twice a week.

Aside from school, we have occasional breaks that are too short to go back home but long enough to make a nice little trip to a European country. Since travel within Europe is easy and in many cases affordable, it is a great way to see many places that you normally would not be able to visit studying in the states. It is a great opportunity to explore other cultures and overall helps you when dealing with patients of different backgrounds in your future medical practice. These are some of the advantages of studying abroad versus staying in America.

Overall, I feel that going to Poland was a very good decision for me. I have successfully completed 2 years and have really adjusted to living in Poland. I have formed very close bonds with friends that have become more like family to me. Homesickness is not really an issue anymore, and in many cases now that it is summertime I miss just being in Poland with my friends. It is a great environment to learn and live and I feel that it will really add to my experiences in life, which in turn will help mold my future as a physician.

Maharshi Bhakta

4th of 6 year program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

I started my medical carrier straight out of high school when I was admitted to the six year program at Medical University of Lublin. Being in a six year medical school program outweighed all other factors that I would take into account. The thought of going to Poland sounded bizarre at first, but that bizarre thought soon turned into an ordinary circumstance that many people encounter in their lives. Being in Poland has taught me to see the world in different perspective. I have learned different culture and understood the mentality of people with different nationality. Poland has molded me into a thorough character, It has showed me to work hard under many conditions and has trained me to encounter and beat any competition that I may run into in the future. I have learned essential lessons in life and there is nothing that I would exchange for those lessons.

As I started my first year I kept my priorities in mind at all times. I maintained high grades in all my courses. I made sure my objectives in life and to take life in a positive manner. Sure, there have been ups and downs but I know at the end of my career in Poland I will end up higher than I started and that ascend has become apparent as I merge into my 4th and final year in Poland. Apart from school I have been part of AMSA board and started a volunteering work for the American program at the university hospital here in Lublin. Currently, I am going to be in my final year here in Poland and it felt like I first came to Poland yesterday.

Nalin Patel

Class of 2011

Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

“When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us” – Alexander Graham Bell

My career at the University of North Carolina had come to an end. As I sat there on my bed staring at my empty dorm room wall, I realized I had no idea what I wanted to do with my life. I had majored in biology and psychology. Maybe I should go into a health science or medical science field I thought. Maybe I should try to become a psychiatrist. Unsure of what to do, my mother told me about an opportunity in Europe through HMI to study medicine and to get to travel as well.

September 17th, 2006, I landed in Katowice, Poland after a long exhausting flight only to realize that my luggage had not arrived and neither had my brother's. Expecting to have a real hard time communicating with the claims department, I was surprised that the Hope Medical Institute's representative came to our rescue. He spent over an hour with us making sure we would receive it as soon as possible. This is only one of the numbers of times an HMI representative has helped me.

The first week in Poland was very difficult for me. I had a hard time situating with the change in environment. However, the new students I met were all going through the same adjusting phase making it easy for us to bond. The older students were also very helpful and willing to make sure we were comfortable. The students I met in the first week are now some of my closest friends.

I really did not know what to expect on my first day of classes. I heard that the teachers had strong accents and I was worried about the language barrier. To my astonishment, I did not have a hard time understanding them in lectures or in labs. The teachers are very qualified and are some of the top professors in their respective field.

I enjoy traveling. This opportunity to travel across a different continent has been amazing. I have been to several countries now to which I never imagined seeing. I am truly grateful that my mother told me about the Medical University of Silesia and the Hope Medical Institute. This experience has helped me become more independent and taught me how to manage my life without my family and friends around for support.

Pritesh Patel

Class of 2009

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

I believe that each one of us has a path that our lives are meant to follow. It seems, however, that the farther we stray from this path, the harder our life becomes. In 2005, I was a person who decided to stop running from my path of being a physician and finally embrace it. It had been five years since I left the University of California Los Angeles and every school I contacted, in the US and Caribbean, told me my MCAT scores were too old, and that I might need to retake some of my science classes. Discouraged, I contacted this school, which my mother had seen on Indian television. Four months later I left my wife, two children, and business in the US and began my path in Lublin, Poland.

In my mind medical education in Europe has several advantages. The universities in Poland are part of the European Union, which allows graduates to practice medicine anywhere in the world. It is my dream to live in Australia some day, and my degree will allow me to do so! Unlike other institutions that only have facilities for the basic science years and ship you elsewhere, the Polish universities are full academic institutions with world known physician-professors, and a myriad of research projects underway at any time. I had amazing opportunities to do research in Poland and present my findings at student conferences in the European Union. Of course the best part about studying in Europe was **living** in Europe. Whether it was spending St. Patrick's Day in Dublin, or wintertime in Prague, all of Europe was open to visit while I was in Poland. In short a medical education in Poland should be on the list for anyone seriously considering studying outside the US.

I am very thankful to HMI for the opportunity I was given. My only advice to future students is to take medical education seriously, because it is not for the faint of heart. However, a student with discipline, focus, a good work ethic, and a winning attitude has a chance to be very successful with the opportunity the Hope Medical Institute provides.

"The way to greatness is to find a way to serve the many, for service to many leads to greatness." – Jim Rohn

Puneet Bhalrhu

3rd of 6 year program

Class of 2012

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

The First Step

“The distance is nothing; it is only the first step that is difficult.” – Marie de Vichy

“The vision must be followed by the venture. It is not enough to stair up the steps; we must step up the stairs.” – Vance Havner.

Throughout my short yet experienced twenty four years of life, I have found that the first step toward completing any task is always the hardest. It doesn't matter whether the goal has to do with academics or personal life; it's always that initial step that takes the most out of us. I am grateful for the opportunity to tell you about my experience making that first step, the adjustments I made in moving to Poland and the benefits I have already begun to see.

It took me two years to make a final decision on whether or not to attend school in Poland. My cousins had been to the school and were trying to convince me since the end of their first year to come to the school; it wasn't until they started their fourth year that I decided to give medical school a try. It took two years of convincing, two years of weighing the pros and cons in my head and physically on paper until I decided the answer to my own question. Will I make the necessary sacrifices and go to school in Poland to begin my mission and dream of becoming a physician? I knew in my head that to strive to take up a profession so selfless and a profession that takes so much schooling one must not only be undoubtedly determined but one must also sacrifice to a certain degree. As a young woman at age twenty two, I wasn't sure if I was ready to make those sacrifices. In Poland, we not only sacrifice the same things as medical students in the United States sacrifice but we also sacrifice our own language, the food we normally eat, and the environment were used to but after two years I already benefit from these minor sacrifices. I wouldn't change my decision to attend school in Poland for anything in the world. I made the first step and I was ready for the challenge.

Before I even got on the plane to go to Poland for the first time, I was already worried about what I would eat, how I would effectively communicate with Polish people, how I would get around...etc. The worries seemed endless and very major to me at the time. I felt a huge amount of anxiety and I didn't know if I had made the right decision. All of this before I had even landed in Warsaw. Upon landing in Warsaw, I was greeted by students of upper years,

faculty and staff of our school. I had already taken a sigh of relief. The school had set up transportation for us to get to Lublin, which is approximately two hours away from the airport in Warsaw, and the staff had sandwiches and water for us. When we got to the dormitory in Lublin, the staff and older students helped us settle in and ordered pizza for us to have for dinner. The first day wasn't bad at all, to my surprise it turned out to be a very good day. I met all my classmates and immediately I felt comfortable with my surroundings. It helped to know that I wasn't the only one to feel the way I did. The next day we started orientation and the entire week we were taken throughout the town. We were taken to different buildings where we were shown exactly what class we would have and where. We were taken to grocery stores, restaurants, and we were taught basic Polish words to help us get around. Our orientation leaders taught us how to buy bus tickets, how to call cabs, and how to order take out. They told of their experiences first coming to Poland which really helped to alleviate me of my worries and anxiety. Everyday was more and more informative and before I knew it I was getting around myself, ordering take out without anyone's help and walking to my classes without getting lost. All of my major worries turned out to be minor experiences. Everyday seemed to get easier and easier and now being in Poland is like second nature for me. The benefits I have encountered as a result of leaving the comfort of my country, my family and friends and everything I know have absolutely been overwhelming and some of which I had never expected. I have met a group of lifelong friends who share the same passion and drive that I do to become outstanding physicians. I have learned to appreciate every single thing about the human body through various courses my first two years. There is nothing more exciting than to learn the parts and functions of the body and realize that there is a God who put us together so intricately with unimaginable precision and accuracy. The drive to want to become a physician more and more each day is a benefit that is worth any sacrifice I have ever made. I would never have gained the drive to this extent unless I had made that first step to go to school in Poland.

Going into my third year, I am on the path to success. Every time I read another chapter of my physiology book to learn how the body works, or look at the structure of the human body in my anatomy book I realized what I am doing is taking steps. I have everyone to thank who pushed me toward the decision to go to medical school but ultimately I must make it on my own. After taking that first step, I know that I can and will succeed in my field of interest, medicine. I strongly encourage all who are interested in this field to attend the Medical University of Lublin with the help of all of those at Hope Medical Institute. The name fits the standard, they truly gave me the hope I needed to succeed.

Raj Patel

4th year of the 6-year program

Class of 2011

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, Poland

My name is Raj Patel. I am currently in the 4th year of the 6-year program at the Medical University of Silesia. It has been my lifelong dream to become a doctor, and Hope Medical is helping me achieve my dream. Let me start from the beginning of my overall experience. I first found out about HMI through one of my family friends. Going to Poland would also save me 1 year, since I did a year of college first before deciding to come to HMI. It also saved me from the headache that comes with applying to medical schools in US. It would also give me a chance to learn all the essentials to be an independent person.

Sure, I hesitated when I thought I had to live in Poland. Of all the European countries, the medical school I went to had to be in Poland. After arriving the Hope Medical staff was there to greet us and take us to our apartments. We started the week with an Orientation week which was very helpful, as we were new to the country. They took us to the grocery stores, furniture stores, like IKEA, and to the mall. It was very helpful as we would have never found these places on our own. They set up a tour of the school and also helping us get cell phones during the orientation week. At the end of orientation week, they took us to the city of Krakow, which is approx. 45 min away.

One of the other reasons I chose to come to Poland was the location since I love to travel. Poland has let me visit countries in Eastern Europe as well as in Western Europe. During a break it is very easy just to go on a trip. You can fly, drive, or take the train to various destinations. I have had the great opportunity here to visit cities such as: Athens, Krakow, Warsaw, Vienna, Prague, Rome, Barcelona, and Egypt. There are travel agents to help you plan the perfect break or you can always just book it yourself on the internet from one of the very cheap airlines Europe has to offer.

This is my fourth year here and adapting to the surroundings has taken little to no effort. The dorms are spacious and give you the much needed privacy one needs for studying. With internet in all the rooms, I can stay well in touch with friends and family back in the US. The campus has a library, modern lecture halls, a cafeteria, and copy centers. The small class size allows the professors to be involved with the students on an individual basis. Also the staff in the

Dean's office in Silesia and HMI staff are ready and willing to help should any problems arise during your stay here.

HMI has opened up a world of opportunities and offered me a new path to fulfill my goals. Studying in Europe has been an amazing experience, one that most people will never have the opportunity to enjoy. I have made great friends that I will continue to stay in contact with once I come back to the USA. Today, I realize that I could not have made a better decision. I am very glad that I decided to attend school in Poland and am very grateful to HMI for offering me a chance to achieve my goal of becoming a physician.

Rajesh Sood

4th year of 6 year program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

As most students are when they first come to a new place, I was somewhat nervous about coming to Lublin for the first time. I would soon find out, however, that Lublin and the Medical University are much like college cities and medical schools back at home, respectively. With many students located in and around the city, I realized that it was easy to do many of the things that I enjoy doing back at home. From going to watch newly released movies in the brand new mall to playing basketball with my classmates in the local gym, I was able to rapidly adjust to my new surroundings within the first few weeks of living in Lublin. Also, I was very grateful to live in a city that is similar to my hometown of Austin. Lublin is a beautiful historic city that is not small, but does not have the “big city” feel to it. It is a very elegant, quaint, and clean city.

Most parents worry about their children when they go off to school, especially those whose children are going off to school in a foreign country. My parents were concerned with how I would be managed if a certain health-related problem occurred. Well unfortunately for me, a minor problem did occur my first year. After talking to my parents, HMI contacted local doctors for me here in Lublin and arranged for me to be seen. I was treated with the utmost care and respect by doctors and nursing staff in the hospital. No one wants their children to go through any sort of problem while they are here in Lublin but because of HMI’s swift actions and extended care, I was able to get through this issue in the best possible way I could have.

Before coming to Lublin, I was curious about how my professors would be compared to my experiences with teachers in America. After the first month of classes, I was able to tell my parents the teachers in Lublin were very good, if not better, than my professors from back home. From the very first day of lectures, my Lublin professors made a significant effort to show us they are ready to assist in the learning process and that they are available for us to come and ask questions whenever we need. I felt that a few of my professors made a greater attempt to develop a one-on-one relationship with the students than American professors. I was extremely happy to see that my life in Lublin would not be drastically different from my life back at home and that this is what would allow me to continue on this path to become a successful doctor. As students we must realize that this is our ultimate reason for coming to Lublin.

Rohan Mankikar

2nd year of 4 year program

Class of 2011

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

"Congratulations on the completion of your second year sir. I hope your time in Lublin was worthwhile and it was a pleasure having you as a student in this un---" was abruptly interrupted by "Welcome to Newark, New Jersey please remove your seatbelts when the fasten seat belt sign turns off..." We had descended...I opened my eyes, blinked twice, and realized those words of admiration would echo wherever I stepped foot. Flying from Poland to New Jersey was only an eight hour direct journey; my time in Lublin was a two year flight where several connections were made. Let me tell you about how I took the opportunity of a lifetime and turned it into my eternal resume.

My first semester gave me a good understanding on different approaches to the core classes. Once I felt comfortable with the information, I found that I had more time to work with the more challenging classes. Conceptual flow charts are of great aid so making pathways with mnemonics to help you remember is an excellent way to learn. Clonidine, Cardiomyopathy, Cushing's, Clonazepam...the list can go on with a plethora of words that start with the same letter. By the time you're fourth semester is finished...your mind will be a mental rolodex full of medical terminology.

Now you're probably wondering what extracurricular activities are available for a busy medical student. Let me give you the assurance that if work is prioritized, you will have plenty of free time for rest and recreation. I took up the prospect of research along with a few of my classmates and worked with the Anatomy Department. We were also given the opportunity to travel and be frugal about it at the same time.

Time will fly right before your eyes so make the best of it. In this journey of medicine, Poland was an excursion full of memories, strife, and hard work. Nothing was more gratifying than hearing "Congratulations on the completion of your second year sir. I hope your time in Poland was worthwhile and it was a pleasure having you as a student in this university..."

Sachin Patel

2nd of 4 year program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

Studying Medicine in Poland, this at times can be a difficult concept to grasp; being far from home, being away from the North American lifestyle and the language barrier, these can make for a difficult time. However, I do not regret my time at the Medical University of Lublin; it has been a great learning experience and one more challenge that I can say I overcame.

Prior to applying through HMI, I was enrolled in a Caribbean Medical school whose satellite campus was located in London, UK. After attending a full semester and completing course exams the campus was shut down and I along with my classmates were left stranded. After many inquiries into other Medical schools, I decided to choose HMI and the Medical University of Lublin. The HMI staff was very helpful and understanding of my plight, and helped me with my application for the Spring Admission class, also known as the BIS class.

Now when I arrived in Poland I remember thinking to myself, 'this is going to be easy, it's Poland, how hard can this really be.' Well, I was wrong. This was not the walk in the park that I thought it was going to be. I had to find a balance between work and play, and I had to find it quickly; luckily I did manage to find that balance. There is no easy way out of this, this is graduate school; walking a path to become a Doctor, there needs to be self discipline to perform at the required level to succeed. There is a lot of material to cover, and the professors cover some subject matter in lecture and lab, but the onus is on the student to learn the material, and this is the hardest part. There is no babying here, the professors will not hold your hand; to succeed you need to put the time and effort in.

Besides the everyday routine of classes, I am privileged to be a member of the Students Research Society and actually be involved with a research project under the Human Anatomy Department. Along with being a great addition to a residency application, it is a great experience. In April (2008), I was actually able to present a portion of our research project at an international congress in Warsaw.

Academics aside, there are many opportunities to relax. Your in Europe, go and explore; this is the perfect opportunity to travel throughout Europe. During breaks, you can make trips to Germany, Prague, Hungary, Austria and many other countries that are a train ride or flight away. If you cannot make it out of Poland, then explore Poland. There is so much history, visit the beautiful city of Cracow or enjoy a day in Warsaw. Work hard, and there are many ways that you can reward yourself.

After a turbulent start to my Medical Education, I am truly grateful to HMI and the Medical University of Lublin for assisting me in my endeavor to attain my MD.

Sachin Patel

II of IV BIS

Toronto, Canada

Sangita Patel

2nd year of 4-year program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

Over the past year and a half, I have truly experienced what it is like to attend medical school in a foreign country. When I first arrived in Poland, I was uneasy about coming to a country so far away from home to live and go to school. Since I had arrived to Poland a week later, due to my late decision of joining HMI to pursue my career in medicine, I had missed orientation for my class. I was not only scared to be living in a country where English was not the language spoken, but sad to be leaving my family and all that I have ever known thousands of miles away. The day I arrived in Lublin, HMI representatives assisted me to make sure I was comfortable and had everything I needed. The staff helped me settle in the dorms and introduced me to my roommates, who were also my classmates. Since day one, HMI staff has always been there for me whether it was when I first arrived at the dorms, or when I needed them later in dealing with my Polish landlord for my apartment. The HMI staff has been completely reliable and supportive during my stay in Lublin.

Once I started classes, I found the courses and curriculum challenging and overwhelming. I did not fully understand the demands that medical school required until I was actually in my first semester. I felt my days were fully scheduled with classes and my nights were spent studying and catching up on material presented during lectures. As the semester progressed, my time management skills improved and I found myself balancing my days much better. Now, being in my second year, I have learned what to focus on in classes, which makes studying an easier task.

The professors, who taught my classes, majority of them physicians themselves, were knowledgeable and passionate of their respective fields. Also, most professors, like our Anatomy professors, Dr. Torres and Dr. Greg, have been of great help when students have an illness. They have given the students advice and prescriptions for medications if they became ill. In addition, whenever I had a difficult time in classes, whether it was trouble comprehending the material or keeping up with the course, the teachers have always been encouraging and motivating. This has helped build my self - confidence and inspired me to continue trying my best in courses no matter how impossible they seem at hand. The professors have not only been our teachers and mentors, but have become our friends over time.

Living abroad in Poland has been an interesting and exciting experience. One advantage of going to medical school in Europe is having the opportunity to travel to neighboring countries within the European continent. During my time in Poland, I have had the chance to travel to multicultural cities like Rome, Krakow, and Warsaw. Another benefit of staying in Lublin is learning a different culture, language, and tradition. I am truly amazed at the Polish culture since it is unlike my own. Learning the Polish language has been intriguing as well as challenging. As time progressed, it has become easier to speak and communicate with the locals of Lublin, which has led me to meet some friendly Polish people.

I believe moving to Poland to pursue my career in medicine has been a decision I will not regret. Through the past year and a half, I have become more confident and independent. In the beginning, like any new change in life, living abroad is not easy. I missed my family and friends everyday, but as I adjusted to life in Poland, I met some amazing people in my class, who have now become some of my closest friends. Without HMI, I wouldn't have even dreamt of coming to Poland to study medicine. Through HMI, I have had the opportunity to meet some of the most brilliant people, make incredible friends, and gain a once in a lifetime experience of studying abroad.

Shalene Amin

3rd of 6 year program

Class of 2012

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

Student Life in Poland

My decision to apply to the Medical University of Lublin was an instinctive one. The university had been recommended to me by a friend who had previously graduated from there. As he spoke about his experiences and reminisced about the “best years of his life”, I was persuaded to apply. I was initially skeptical, but he convinced me the decision would soon be the best one I would ever make. Upon receiving the acceptance letter from the university, I realized that I had not prepared myself for the big change I was about to encounter. However, I ignored all pessimistic thoughts and just hoped it would be as good as I had heard.

My first observation was how helpful the older students were. From the moment I landed at the airport, these friendly “strangers” treated me as though I had known them for years. They understood my frustration, and eased every negative thought. That night, upon reaching Lublin, they were kind enough to walk me around the Old town, explaining the city’s history, and showing me the castle and other landmarks. Surprisingly, when I went to bed that night, I did not feel overwhelmed. With all the wonderful people around, home did not seem so distant. The experience was already shaping up to be an unforgettable one.

New students reside in an apartment building conveniently located near the university, mall, and restaurants. Each apartment has 5 bedrooms, a spacious kitchen and two bathrooms. The bedrooms have adequate storage and closet space and include a desk, chair and bed. The nice part about living in these apartments is that each student is in close proximity to other students and can offer each other help and support through each day of this adventurous journey. Living together and overcoming day to day obstacles, such as communication problems, form strong bonds between classmates that last for many years to come.

One of the primary concerns of students that consider studying abroad is the language barrier. I was amazed to hear how well the polish professors spoke English. The professors are extremely helpful and never reluctant to repeat anything not understood. They are understanding and fun to keep classes interesting, but enforce strict guidelines to maintain discipline. Classes are very similar to the ones in U.S universities. Each class is divided into smaller groups for lab sessions so that each student is given complete attention. Class Syllabi provide the grading scale, test dates, and a list of topics which will be covered during each class for early preparation. Professors also list office hours, phone numbers and an email address so they may be contacted any time. In addition, the school website is extremely useful to check test grades, schedule changes and any upcoming events. Most of the universities’ buildings are new with large classrooms and the latest equipment and teaching tools allowing a better learning environment. Libraries are within walking distance from the university, and classrooms are open until late for students who wish to study alone. On the contrary, study groups and review sessions are common amongst classmates and prove to be effective and enjoyable. Coffee shops are popular

places for revising students before an exam. Reading the text books ensures a passing grade on the test but experience in hospitals is a virtue for full comprehension.

Some of the most inspiring moments in student life occur during classes in the hospital. The Medical University of Lublin offers classes which grant all students, including first and second year students, the opportunity to shadow doctors in each department and work with their patients. Patient examinations occur frequently but in some cases, surgeons even allow student participation during surgeries. Times can become pretty intense, but there are always places to go that help you unwind.

Medical school can be tormenting, which is why a balanced life is vital to enhance academic performance. To compensate for the hours of hard work invested during the weekdays, there are many forms of entertainment available for the weekend. Students looking for excitement can find it at a newly built mall offering a vast selection of brand name shops, a colossal cinema playing the latest films in English, and an immense bowling alley with an arcade, dance floor and pool tables. Once outside the mall, Lublin presents a beautiful historic town, accentuated with rows of delightful coffee shops, restaurants, and pubs to those students who prefer calm atmospheres. Finally, for those who feel the need to really set free...Lublin has its own share of upscale nightclubs. Traveling from Poland to neighbouring countries by air or train is inexpensive. Short holidays of three to four days give enough time to enjoy the beauty, charm and history of any European city. Skiing is one of the main attractions during these breaks. For longer holidays, students generally visit North African countries, such as Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia.

Studying in Poland is beneficial in many ways. Exceptional professors account for quality education, friends are loyal and irreplaceable, and travel opportunities present a once in a lifetime chance to see a spectacular part of the world. Different languages are learned, and alternate customs and beliefs acquired. Living abroad gives access to new opportunities and moulds you into a confident and vibrant person. Looking back over the past year, I realize that I have a "home away from home", and these will definitely be the "best years of my life".

Shamil Rupani

3rd of 4 year program

Class of 2010

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

My name is Shamil Rupani and I have recently completed the pre-clinical section of my education at Medical University of Lublin.

This two year chapter of my life will never be forgotten. I am currently studying to take my USMLE Step One exam, at a Kaplan course and am constantly reminded of how well the education we received is. Subjects such as Pharmacology and Pathology are core subjects and are key for this exam; all of the students in my position are finding that we have a decent basis to go on and conquer this huge step of our medical career.

Another part of my overall experience in Lublin, consisted of academic research, which is key for obtaining a decent residency . Last year we created the Student Research Society, under Dr Ania Torres, which enabled us to increase the opportunities available to the foreign students for various projects at this institution. I was able to evaluate the feasibility of MSCT-ECG in the assessment of distensibility of the thoracic aorta in patients with Marfan syndrome. Overlooked by Dr Grzegorz Staskiewicz, our team was able to present this research at various medical conferences around Poland.

Obviously, there was a certain amount of anxiety before I came to Poland, however after a few weeks of absorbing the academic strengths of the university and the eastern European culture, this feeling was gone. The Medical University of Lublin is a fantastic establishment and the Hope Medical Institute has definitely helped me fulfill a lifelong dream.

Shamil Rupani

Medical University of Lublin.

Shivangi Gupta

2nd of 6 year program

Class of 2013

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

The Past Year of My Life...

Has been amazing, spontaneous, adventurous, and a fulfilling experience. No amount of feelings can describe all the emotions I've had since the very first day I applied into the HMI program. It all started from one phone call from HMI, telling me the news I had been waiting for, the phone call that I had been accepted! I felt so happy and had a million questions running through my mind, my life was going to change so fast, and so soon. I ran to my papa, hugged him, and thanked him because he had pushed me to look into this program, and to tell him that I had been accepted. After a couple of weeks, the convention came around. My parents were not able to come with me, so I went alone and was very nervous and scared to meet my fellow colleagues. When I got there, so many students who were volunteers greeted me. They always had a smile on their face and were more than willing to answer the million questions I had. All the volunteers made me feel so comfortable and even MORE excited to go to Poland! I even met some new friends who I planned to room with, we exchanged numbers and I was relieved that I would have friends that I know when I reach Poland. When I got back to my house, the volunteers I had met all stayed in touch with email and I even talked to some over the phone, and they helped me to get all the necessities I would need for Poland. Soon after the convention, it was already time for my departure to Poland, and my orientation week. With my mom next to me, I felt confident, that I had her with me this time, and as soon as we walked out of the airport doors, we were greeted by many representatives, and camera men were taking pictures. I felt like a celebrity! Everyone greeted my mom, and me. I felt so happy that I made this choice about going to Poland. All the volunteer's I had met were standing there waiting for me. I felt like I knew everyone already and introduced my new friends to my mom. We had delicious samosa's and Indian snacks, it was very comforting to have things that made me feel more at home. I didn't feel like a stranger as I thought I would. Orientation week was amazing; I met so many people, saw so many new places, learned how to call a taxi to my dorm, and had my own room mates! I had so many happy feelings running through my body I forgot that I am so far away from home. Those first couple of weeks flew by extremely fast. I met my new teachers, went to my new classes, it was a new experience for me. The teachers were all very nice and

willing to help us understand the way they teach. My favorite teacher and class, was polish. Never in my life that I thought would I be learning POLISH! My teacher went through daily life objects and taught us how to pronounce and speak in correct order in polish. It was very interesting and I am improving every day in my polish speaking skills. My biggest struggle was one of my classes General Chemistry, my prior base on this subject was not too strong and I failed this class. It was extremely disheartening to me that I failed a class, and was even worse to tell my parents. I had never felt this much disappointment in my life before because it was my first time ever failing a subject. At this point I was a little depressed and wanted to go back home, but I knew that I just have to work harder and quitting wont get me anywhere. Some other struggles were the food; my mom's home cooked meals were no longer available! I had to cook on my own and learned how very quickly. I was very proud when I came back because I now I can make dinner for my papa and mom and they are so amazed that I picked up so fast all on my own. Another struggle was not being at home for all the festivities like diwali and holi, but that turned out a lot different then I thought. My roommates and I actually made hand made diya's and set up a whole puja area with pictures of god's we had and organized a diwali puja. Many people showed up and we were all dressed in our Indian clothes. It felt just like home. When I told my parents this, they had tears in their eyes to see me and my friends organize this and stick to the roots they want us to always have. I have grown so much through out this experience; I have learned so many things about other people, my self, my nationality, and my religion by opening up to a completely new life. More and more people are learning about HMI, and when they hear I am also in the school, I feel proud to be a part of the institution. Overall, now that I look over life experiences, one of the smartest choices I have made so far in my life was to go to Medical University of Lublin with the HMI program.

Shrooja Patel

2nd year of the 4 year program

Class of 2011

Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

I spent three extremely hard years of devotion as a Longhorn Mechanical Engineer at the University of Texas at Austin. I took summer school and loaded up my schedule with classes. I hoped that, as I found internships, everything I had worked for would come together and I would find some unimaginable joy turning my ideas into inventions further advancing technology. But I had no such luck. I fell into a cubicle and stared at a computer screen all day.

After spending my summer, miserable, I turned to my parents for guidance. They had seen a commercial for Hope Medical Institute on television and wrote down the phone number and gave it to me. I summoned up enough courage to pick up the phone. A conversation later, with an HMI representative, I felt more hopeful that there was a way out of engineering.

Now, three years later, I am confident that I made a decision of a lifetime to pick up the phone. I have completed my pre medical requirements and MS1 so far and I am now doing my required summer clerkships. These clerkships are the most fun I have had in years. I have built a network with a large group of doctors in my area that are willing to help me succeed. I have learned so much from them and love what I am doing. I have never been so enthusiastic and competitive to attain more knowledge and information. I believe that I was born to help people and heal the sick. This is really what I want to do for the rest of my life.

Along the way I have met so many wonderful people from different places in the U.S. I have made friends that I know I will keep forever because we all have so much in common and similar backgrounds. I have gotten closer to my culture with friends and feel more in control of my future. Living together in a foreign place, I really feel that we become a family regardless of any reservations anyone had when they first got to Poland.

I cannot thank HMI enough for what happiness I have found in my career. I really believe that Hope Medical Institute can make a difference for any hardworking student struggling to find their place in the world.

Mr. Viral Rabara

5th year of 6 year program

Class of 2010

The Medical University of Lublin

Lublin, Poland

My name is Viral Rabara. I'm in 5th year of the 6 year program, currently doing clerkship rotations in Chicago. I am a student of Medical University of Lublin.

It has been my lifelong dream to become a doctor, and Hope Medical has helped me achieve my dream. Let me start from the beginning of my overall experience. I first found out about HMI through one of my family friends, who at that time just got into a residency. This cleared my biggest question, is this a legitimate program? If so many students have already gotten into residency, there is no question about its legitimacy. Going to Poland would also save me 2 years and a big headache that comes with applying to medical schools in US. It would also give me a chance to learn all the essentials to be an independent person.

Although I could write pages and pages of my experience, I will keep it to most important information. Once arriving at Warsaw airport, I still had no idea what the real life would be like here, although I did get a lot of information during convention, but it's never enough until you experience for yourself. At the airport, HMI had already made arrangements for us to be picked up. We also conveniently received our dorms that same night we arrived in the city. For next couple of days, they gave us a tour of Lublin, including all the campus buildings, shopping areas, bank, restaurants and tourism spots.

I had a pleasant time during my 4 years of study in Lublin. The professors were good, who were willing to help you out regarding any issues of their subject. But like any other medical school, your education is never complete until you do your part of studying. I found Lublin office staff very helpful, they always were on top of things like visas, loans and other new changes that took place within the university. Being in Poland also gave me a chance to visit a lot of European countries, which otherwise I would have never been able to visit. I have a lot of happy memories about Poland, made lots of lifelong friends, and learned to be a more mature and better person.

After Poland I began my preparation for USMLE STEP 1. I took the Kaplan course to narrow down the most important material that I needed to learn for STEP 1. As with anything in life, it required lots of hard work, time and lots and lots of sacrifice. In the end all the hard work paid off, and I am now a step closer to achieving my dream.

Miss Lekha Adiani

2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

“I don’t want to go” were the first words that came to my head when my parents asked me if I wanted to go abroad and study. Now a few years later, I am glad that I did not listen to the fear I felt. Coming to school here has been not only a wonderful experience for me, but also it has taught me new things in life.

The classes here at The Medical University of Silesia in Katowice are held in a small school composed of a caring and intellectual faculty. The classes are not too big so there is a lot of one-on-one help if you need it. This one-on-one help is a luxury that you hardly find at a university back home.

People you meet here are from many races and religions. You become part of a family you never expected to have abroad. You form a bond with your classmates that will carry you through your medical studies not only here in Poland, but also when you go back home.

Yes, I agree that your primary wish is to go to a medical school near your home. I used to feel the same way too. But if you want a little excitement in your life, a chance to meet many different people, and get a good education for a decent price think about this program to study abroad and see what there is in store for you. So put all your fears aside and just try. Remember it’s never too late for anyone.

Mr. Sam Babu

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

My name is Sam Babu. I'm currently in my final two years of medical school. I started off going to medical school at the Medical University of Debrecen in Debrecen, Hungary. After completing my pre-med and the first two years of my medical program, I found out that it was very difficult to finish school there due to the decreased percentage of US affiliated hospitals accepting foreign medical graduates. I felt as though I needed other doors to open up for me.

HMI gave me a great opportunity to broaden my options by allowing students to transfer to Poland from other medical schools and finish off their final two years of clinical rotations in America. Being part of the first batch that transferred to Poland from Hungary, I took a chance at this one-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

When I arrived to Katowice, I was amazed by the warm welcome that was presented to me. Among the welcoming committee were HMI representatives Dr. Sham, Dr. Omar and Vice-Dean Dr. Kucharz. They not only made it easier for me to fit in, but they also allowed me to feel as though I was part of a special family.

Throughout my years in Poland, I have achieved great expectations. Not only have I completed my first two years of a four year program, I also have an opportunity to finish my medical education in America.

After being so far away from home, my parents have seen a great level of maturity, responsibility and independence progress in me. This opportunity helps prepare students for lives of leadership and medical services in a constantly changing world. And with these opportunities, you will begin to discover yourself, dream the impossible and set life goals. Because of my parent's constant prayers, the support that HMI has shown, and above and beyond all, for God's countless blessings I have an opportunity to fulfill my goals.

I also have a brother, Stanley Babu, who has finished his USMLE Step I boards, and is currently attending Wyckoff Heights Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. HMI has given quality assurance and support for my brother and me. With your hard work and HMI's support, you can accomplish your life's dream in the medical field. Thank you HMI! Take care and God Bless!

Miss Manpreet Bains

2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Two years ago, I was devastated when despite graduating from the University of California, Berkeley with an excellent academic background, I was not accepted into a US medical school. I was very upset and disappointed. I knew I was equally qualified as many of the other students, but denied due to the intense competition. It was a sheer stroke of luck that I heard about Hope Medical Institute from a former student. As I learned more about HMI and the opportunities it offered, I realized that I could still fulfill my dream of earning a medical degree.

At the time, the idea of studying for 2 years in a foreign country was extremely frightening. But today as I finish my second year curriculum, I realize that the time has flown by very quickly. Life in Poland while not easy has been made easier by the helpful advisors and the supportive professors. I am now looking forward to starting my clinical rotations next year in the United States after passing my USMLE Step I exam this summer.

HMI opened up a world of closed doors and offered me a new path to fulfill my goals. Studying in Europe has been an enriching experience, one that most people will never have the opportunity to enjoy. Today, I realize that I could not have made a better decision. I am thankful that I decided to attend school in Poland and am very grateful to HMI for offering me a chance to achieve my goal of becoming a physician.

Mr. Rishi Bala

3rd year of the 6-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

After graduating from James Madison University with a major in Health Sciences and a minor in Biology, I had one main question to ask myself, “where to go from here?” I was not accepted into medical school and realized that I would need to work in the field for a year or so to gain experience and gain entry to a US medical school. This was what I had to do in order to accomplish my life goal of becoming a doctor, at least, until my father luckily thumbing through a paper came across an advertisement for Hope Medical Institute. Being a little skeptical at first by what I read and heard, that I could do two years abroad and then transfer back to the US for the next two, I decided to research this a little more. After acquiring all the facts, I realized that not only would I be able to save a year or more of my life, but I would also be indulging into my medical career in the heart of Europe. I decided to undertake the opportunity and haven’t regretted my decision once.

Katowice, Poland is a bustling town, which nurtures your every need and has many amenities that many back home entail. With its range of fast food (McDonalds, KFC and Pizza Hut) to its much more traditional and national restaurants (Polish, Italian, Mexican, Greek and Indian restaurants to name a few) all for half of what you would pay back home, your taste buds will never miss home. If it is home cooked meals that you are into, the super grocery store will fulfill all the ingredients you can imagine.

This is my second year here and adapting to the surroundings has taken little to no effort. The Medical University of Silesia is the largest medical school in Poland. The dorms are spacious and give you the much needed privacy one needs for studying. With optional Internet in the rooms, I stay well in touch with the world. The campus has a library with ample resources (with public internet), modern lecture halls, a cafeteria, a gym and copy centers. The teachers give help and resources on an individual basis and teach in a way that is geared just for the USMLE. Also the incredible staff in the Dean’s office in Silesia and HMI staff are ready and willing to help should any problems arise during your stay here.

While studying in the heart of Europe there is also plenty of time on weekends and breaks to envelope yourself in the rich history of your surroundings and enjoy a view of many diverse lifestyles in the world. The trains around Europe are very cheap which make traveling accessible to everyone. As to date I have personally seen Budapest, Prague, most of Italy and Paris along with local Polish treasures such as Krakow and Warsaw along with Auschwitz (main concentration camp). My best wishes to all who read this and hope to see you soon.

Mr. Samarth Beri

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

“Poland?” exclaimed Vanessa. “Yeah” I said. It had been a few years since we had crossed paths at the university level. I came across her walking the streets of Downtown New York City, shopping at my favorite locations. We had ended up talking for hours over coffee, about our past, present and future. “It was great,” I replied. “At times cold, but the summers were simply beautiful. I attended a program through HMI (Hope Medical Institute), and they linked us to my school in Lublin, Poland.”

“Classes?” The classes were all in English of course and the Professors (most of whom were highly respected in their individual fields of specialty or research) were apt to give us a helping hand while maintaining a positive learning environment. After another cup of cappuccino, I continued: “I must say I have met some very interesting individuals while in Poland; besides where else would I have the opportunity to go abroad, immerse myself in another culture, while being so close to several other gorgeous, rich and vibrant places such as Prague, Berlin, Spain and the other exuberant places Poland herself has. Most people might say that they would travel, but how many **actually** do it, while obtaining their medical degree at a great university. This was an opportunity to follow my dreams. I arrived at a point in my life where I can fulfill medical credentials to achieve my goal of becoming a great physician.”

Vanessa interrupted “Sami, now that sounds wonderful, but how many can afford medical school, plus dormitory and books and travel expenses.” “Well, it’s not all that expensive... in fact it’s not even half of what it would cost in the United States or the Caribbean, all costs inclusive. Besides, I prefer Eastern Europe. In addition, excellent loan programs are available for students as a financial resource.”

I also mentioned that students can even continue, if they chose to, their clinical experience in the United States at one of the hospitals affiliated through HMI. Vanessa looked at me and said “I had been contemplating attending a medical program after completing my undergraduate degree... you have enabled me to begin my educational endeavor...where could I apply and get all of my questions answered?” Well I said, “there is an annual convention sponsored through HMI in the United States usually in the summer. At this event, there are opportunities to meet with the faculty, students, as well as the great staff of HMI---I highly recommend it.”

Mr. Sumeer Bhalla

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

My name is Sumeer Bhalla and I am currently in my third year of medical school at The Medical University of Silesia in Poland.

I obtained my BSc and subsequently, I wished to become a physician. I was involved in medical research for a period of one year. During this time I applied to local medical schools. Unfortunately, I found it very difficult to acquire admission to a medical school in North America.

I was fortunate enough to learn about the Hope Medical Institute. With this institution's help, I was able to acquire admission into The Medical University of Silesia in Poland. This school is well known in Europe and their graduates are located all over the world. In addition, this school has an excellent teaching staff and multiple facilities.

Besides providing me with a wonderful medical education, this school allowed me to experience and appreciate a different culture. I was able to have the unique opportunity to travel within Europe during my study breaks.

Mr. Konrad Chmiel

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

My name is Konrad and I am attending The Medical University of Lublin in Poland through Hope Medical Institute in which I am currently a third year student of the four-year medical degree program. Originally born in Poland yet I completed all my education from grade school on in the United States until I was offered the opportunity to study medicine abroad.

Studying in Poland gave me great opportunity for education, medical experience, and to see the culture of a country from which I once came from but at the same time was a stranger to. Once exposed to the culture, I have come to realize that the culture has evolved with a very fast pace with strong traditional roots and a highly westernized spin. I believe that whoever decides to take this opportunity with no doubt in my mind will expose oneself to a place without limitation, be it academically or personally.

The Medical University of Lublin has limitless boundaries with opportunities of not just excelling in education, but gaining the hands-on-experience by dealing with patients directly. Practice of medicine in local hospitals is strongly encouraged to students by the professors of the university and very helpful through direct application of learned material. The professors are excellent in conveying information to the students with ample extra attention for help with any questions. The small class size allows the professors to be involved per individual basis with students. The administration of the medical university is always available to answer questions regarding concerns of the students.

I would like to conclude that by attending The Medical University of Lublin in Poland a person not only will receive a valuable education to make them excellent physicians but also expand greater understanding of people, which is crucial in becoming a successful physician.

Mr. Tony D. Eleventhinkal

2nd year of the 4-year program

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

At a certain point in everyone's life, that abstract feeling between want and need of one's stable future becomes a realization rather than just a notion. In my case, it is no different. The choice of becoming a doctor started for myself as just a ponder until I came to a realization. Now merely two years away from the title of M.D., I look back and am now able to view my notion turned into reality from realization. What made my need and want tangible is The Medical University of Silesia.

The meticulous task of helping students mastering the art of medicine has been carefully arranged to perfection. Any student with true intentions on their way to Silesia is well off on the right track to becoming an excellent master of medicine. The University and its affiliated hospitals offer a variety of opportunities that may not be accessible to medical students in the United States. The professors of our university are highly articulate and knowledgeable in their respective subjects and pay attention to the needs of every student just as done in any good American Medical School. The disciplines in the first two years of medical studies are taught well, after which students can transfer to American teaching hospitals affiliated with The Medical University of Silesia through Hope Medical Institute. American students from the east to the west coast reside in the dorms and are very friendly and readily offer their assistance to new comers. Our university is conveniently located, no more than 45 minutes away from the beautiful city of Krakow and about 3 hours away from the magnificent capital, Warsaw. Restaurants including Greek, Italian, Indian and variety of fast food chains are present in the city center, so no one loses a taste of home even though they are away.

My experience in Poland will be cherished and never forgotten. It has given me a new perspective on life, and in achieving my career goals. If I can accomplish this task, so can you. Let's not forget the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Bring your deepest desire to become a physician and let Hope Medical Institute turn your hopes into a reality.

Miss Ditina Ghetia

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

These three years of my medical school have been a wonderful experience of my life. I still remember the day when I received the acceptance letter from HMI. I had mixed feelings of happiness and a fear of the unknown. The uncertainties presented a big challenge. I didn't know anything about Poland; all I knew was I am going to Poland to study medicine for two years. At the time, I was also confused about the HMI program and the school because all the information I had received so far about the program sounded too good to be true. I had many doubtful questions in my head and didn't know what to do. I had this wonderful opportunity presented to me but didn't know whether it was real or a scam. But then I did not want to waste my time by staying in USA and waiting to get into medical school. So after a lot of thinking and weighing my options, I decided to take the risk and grabbed this opportunity.

I finally arrived to Poland on September 25, 1999. I didn't know anyone, didn't know the place or the language and for the first time was miles away from home. Back at home, I had lived in the dorms during my undergraduate away from how, but it was different. Whenever I needed something, my father was always there, and if I missed home, I just took my car, or train and came home to see my family. However being in a foreign country, I couldn't expect my family or friends to be here in Poland whenever I needed them or felt lonely. I had to do everything on my own whether I was sick or had an exam. Besides, I had to deal with social life, take care of my financial paperwork and so many other little things that needed to be taken care of. I have realized to live in a foreign country is very challenging. After what I have been through, I understood the meaning of the term "real world" and started to appreciate what my family has given me over the years. At times the schoolwork and the social life were overwhelming, but the HMI staff and professors were there to help me. Mr. Raj Patel calls to make sure everything is fine with us. He even visits us once or twice a year to check our living situation, dormitory among many other things. He is very understanding and tries to help us in anyway he can. Whenever someone is sick, a HMI doctor comes to examine and bring us medicine. If it's severe, then our professor comes to give a special visit. The Dean is always there to listen to the student's personal issues and try to help them.

My family is really proud of me. I can honestly say that I am blessed by God and HMI who provided me with an opportunity to become a doctor. Being in medical school has changed my life. I am not officially a doctor yet, but the kind of respect I get from my relatives and friends is amazing. I am very thankful to Mr. Raj Patel who helped me to get into this program and being on top of things to process all of my paperwork as well as being supportive and understanding the students. He always said, "don't worry beta, I'll take care of everything, you just pay attention in your studies and get good grades." He's like our godfather who treated everyone like part of a big family, and made sure that we were on the right path. When I look back, I can truly say that coming to Poland was the best decision I have ever made in my life.

Mr. Jerry Jacob

3rd year of the 6-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Let me first start out by expressing my feelings as to which I am so glad to be amongst all you new students, as a voice of all those who are rowing ahead successfully in their studies at the Universities in Poland under the auspices of the Hope Medical Institute. You are becoming a member of a family that has touched many lives out there from various parts of the world, from various countries, ethnicities and cultures. The guidance and help we have been enjoying from this family that you are entering “The Hope Medical Institute” is so abundant without which I wouldn’t be able to express today. The leadership, enthusiasm, and affection as well as the exemplary expertise in guiding us all to the direction of success are not from anywhere else but from our very own good hearted Mr. Mahendra Patel and Mr. Raj Patel who with the help of their staff have brought me so far as to where I am today as a student at The Medical University of Silesia.

It is worth to mention here that the efforts of all those students currently undergoing their education at The Medical University of Silesia, Katowice is not in vain. Well-organized curriculum and teaching techniques are in fact playing an integral part in our achievements.

The close-knit team of our instructors is indeed an asset of the Hope Medical Institute who vigorously affronts us, the students, in every walk of our path to lead us to our destiny.

The primary goal of HMI is to help make our dreams come true. That is to get that Medical Degree by creating opportunities and our needed financial assistance, to study medicine at some of the world’s most reputable and best known institutions. By maintaining the excellence in quality education, the Hope Medical Institute assists everyone in making world-class physicians, TODAY FOR TOMORROW’S WORLD.

The Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland is located in the southern part of Poland. The city and region are very rich in culture and arts consisting of many well-known theatres and museums. Katowice itself has an airport, which is about 30-40 minutes from the school which links itself to the outside cities such as the capital, Warsaw, and various other countries as well. The city of Katowice offers a variety of facilities for eating and activities of entertainment. There are various American fast food restaurants, various ethnic cuisines such as Indian, Greek, Mexican, Italian, etc. The famous Indian restaurant “Bombay Tandoor” one of the all time favorites of the students here in Katowice is located right here in the center of town. Delivery of food to the dorms from the various restaurants are available throughout the day so that students don’t have to waste so much time in going out to eat, time that is precious to everyone for their studies.

The Medical University of Silesia itself was started back in the mid 1900's. The university is known to be the largest medical university in all of Poland, providing various opportunities in medical education for students in the fields of Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Pharmacology, and Biomedical Sciences. The university is also well known in Europe and many other parts of the world for its work and research in many distinguished fields of medicine. There are many teaching hospitals affiliated with The Medical University of Silesia throughout the world, especially in the United States, offering a unique opportunity for excellent training in almost any field of medicine. A large percentage of the department heads and senior members of the faculty have more than one graduate degree in the fields of medicine and science. Many professors have both their M.D. and Ph.D. degrees. Some of these professors and other members of the faculty have extensive experience in teaching at various American and European Universities.

Before I come to an end, let me just say a few words about our coed dorms. 99% of the students that attend The Medical University of Silesia live at the school's coed dorm located right on campus. The dorms are quite adequate and somewhat similar to those of American college dorms. There are 14 rooms on each floor of which the average room comes with its own kitchen and bathroom. There is no sharing between these facilities; they are completely private. The rooms come with your basic furniture and also basic kitchen & bathroom utensils.

In conclusion, I hope my expressions towards my second family, The Hope Medical Institute and The Medical University of Silesia, has now helped you somewhat in making that decision as to where you want to be in the future. My experiences in Poland will never be forgotten. It has given me a new thought of life helping me fulfill the dream that I've always thronged for---becoming a doctor. Let the Hope Medical Institute lead us to our destiny, "By Making World Class Physicians, Today For Tomorrows World."

Mr. Joel Jacob

2nd year of the 6-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

HMI's guiding philosophy is that no citizen of the world should be confined to his or her own community or country to access a quality Medical Education. To this end, HMI partners with organizations around the world that have demonstrated a long-term commitment to provide an excellence in international medical education. All of which reflect the unique needs of the individual student. Straight out of high school or with your bachelors, HMI has a program to suit your situation. If one's quest is for a high-quality medical education and a life-long experience to carry it along...your search ends **HERE**.

This is a dream come true so far. My name is Joel Jacob and I'm in my 2nd year of the 6-year program at The Medical University of Silesia – Katowice, Poland. Dreams are meant to happen for those who seek it with the right guidance. HMI has given me the tools for a medical profession much needed for me to be where I am today. With an incredible time frame lay out, this was only too good to be true; but it is.

Outstanding facilities, food of your choice (Indian, Chinese or American), a very well accredited university with an excellent teaching staff here in Katowice, Poland. These are essential prospects I searched for in a medical university and found through HMI. Whether it be McDonald's, Pizza Hut, KFC or Office Max, anything and almost everything is within minutes reach. It is a very well equipped campus within a 150-meter radius of our dorms. Our comparatively large dorm rooms are well furnished and include our own full-bathroom. A perfect atmosphere here in the heart of Europe where adapting isn't a problem adding time and concentration to our schoolwork. Small class sizes are probably one of the biggest assets I enjoy here, giving the professors ample opportunity to meet the needs of the individual student.

Our inherent purpose: to live in a nurtured community of the best people committed to leadership and learning about alleviating human suffering caused by disease. Our community here in Poland as well as the students in clinical-rotations (in the United States) are nurtured through the cooperation and collaboration that HMI has provided. HMI helps the students carry their dream of a medical profession onto the global stage, creating partnerships with institutions that share the students concerns and goals. In this time of uncertainty and anxiety about our place in the international arena, I applaud the dedicated staff of HMI, The Medical University of Silesia, and their partner institutions in the United States who are working together, pooling their expertise and their influence for optimal impact, to attack disease, to improve medical education, and to make dreams come true for students like me from around the world.

Miss Bindi Modi

4th year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Worldwide Dreams

Operating on a five year old in critical condition, designing more effective cancer treatments by linking the new discoveries of gene therapy with immunotherapy, creating fully functional artificial eyes, amending the public health policies of today and performing a quadruple heart bypass . . . hope, hope for the survivors of accidents, hope for those with cancer, hope for the blind, hope for those not getting the best care because of HMO's and insurance problems, hope for suffering cardiac patients. My dream and desire to make a difference fit under a small subsection on the endless exhausting list of the diverse duties of a doctor and the potential difference he or she can make in the lives of so many other people.

What defines success? "To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded." Here at Hope Medical Institute, distinctly named to define the success it shall accomplish, students are given the opportunity to absorb the facts and details of medicine needed to build the foundation of their future success. The need to build upon my Bachelors degree in biochemistry at Rutgers University and the lack of adventure in my hometown of Livingston, New Jersey served as magnets attracting me toward Silesian Medical University at Poland.

Unique in his or her own way, although similarly all good hearted and good natured my new friends and professors or rather I shall refer to them as family due to the close knit structure of the dorm and university, are definitely a positive reason for attending Silesian Medical Academy. Small classes, close personal attention from professors, witnessing surgeries and autopsies are added benefits. As for adventure, I've traveled to seven new countries and am constantly finding new ways to satisfy my quench to travel to territories which are uncharted in my personal European map.

Lastly, upon hearing the two syllables pronounced as "Poland," many conjure up a dark desolate barren picture lacking civilization. After living in Katowice, I have no problem slaughtering the falsely conjured images. From the casino to ice skating rinks, Katowice has many pieces of civilization to keep all occupied.

Thus with the help of Hope Medical Institute, the pathway of making personal and worldwide dreams come true is a pleasant one.

Miss Melodie Mope

1st year of the 6-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Dzien dobry. My name is Ms. Melodie Mope and I am in the six-year program in Poland. At the end of six-years, my name will be Doctor Melodie Mope. That is hard for me to believe, but it is true if I just follow the program set up for me.

I was very lucky to find out about the program established by Hope Medical Institute. We were unaware of it until a friend of the family told me about it. I am glad she did, or I would still be in college in Florida not sure if I would ever get into Medical School. My friend completed the educational part of the program and is now completing her clinicals in New York.

This is my first year here and I can honestly say that this is the best experience for me and is a life-changing experience. Going to medical school has always been my dream and Hope Medical Institute has helped me make a dream come true. Being able to attend medical school in Europe is a great experience. You are able to get more hands on experience and also learn a new culture. The people of Europe and especially Poland are some of the finest I have ever met. Not many people are able to say that they have had an experience like this.

I would recommend this program to everybody. If you want to be a doctor then you should definitely come here. The professors that we have here are excellent. They are willing to take the time out and help if you need it. The classes are also small which means more one on one interaction. The class size is about twenty people. Also, your classmates are always willing to help out. You end up working together instead of against each other. In the States, class sizes are so huge you would be lucky if the professor even knows your name. I have nothing but positive things to say about this program. I feel honored to be able to be here. Hope Medical has been a blessing to me and I thank them for all they do for us. They have everything so organized for us. After my four years here, I will be taking the USMLE and doing clinicals in the states. Everything is pretty much set up for you. All you have to do is take the first step and apply. Dreams do come true.

Miss Sabrina Panesar

3rd year of the 6-year program

The Medical University of Silesia

Katowice, POLAND

The power of healing is one of God's greatest gifts to man. It is with this knowledge that one is able to survive, to help others in surviving. This is what a doctor is, helping others to live day by day. Doctors since the medieval ages up through present day are considered the healers of the human body. The study and practice of medicine is what enables an individual to use this knowledge and help others.

For as long as I can remember, I have always wanted to become a doctor. The thought of knowing that I can help save someone's life, or cure a person has always fascinated me. As a medical student, I am hoping to achieve this goal of becoming a doctor. I am currently studying abroad at The Medical University of Silesia, Katowice, Poland. I am striving to earn my medical degree and hope to become a doctor in the future. The decision to study abroad in Poland was a difficult decision as there are many factors involved such as, being away from home, parents, friends, and of course the United States! However, in spite of all these factors, I still decided to continue my education in Europe. Entering a highly competitive program straight from high school, I was a little overwhelmed at first, and even a bit scared. The program curriculum is as follows: four years of study in Poland, and two years of rotational studies in the United States. After completion of my first year though, I have realized that this was the best decision for myself. A program such as this requires dedication and a will to succeed. You must work hard, and have a desire to achieve your goals.

At first, it is hard to understand why to even study in Poland. But, the education and experiences from my studying here are far more beneficial than anywhere else. By studying in Poland, you as a student will see and learn things that you may not be able to see anywhere else because of the simple fact that Poland has so many different diseases than other areas of the world. There are many obstacles that you must take on just by living in Poland such as the language barrier and such, but these obstacles prepare you later on in life for being able to deal with any type of situation that may come your way.

I am now a student in my second year of medicine. The classes have become more rigorous and more demanding, but the teachers want you to learn, and want you to understand and it makes learning much easier. I am in my spring semester and will enter my

third year in the fall, and I know that the knowledge I have attained in my previous years will help me in tackling the next years to come.

My own personal goal is becoming an ophthalmologist. I know that this will mean countless hours of studying and discipline, but I am willing to face the challenge in order to achieve my goals in life. Becoming a doctor is a goal I have dreamed of my whole life, and I am now reaching my goal, and I won't lose this opportunity to reach my goal.

Studying in Poland takes a lot of dedication and strength. You must want to become a doctor, and this desire of attaining your goal must come from within. I have a very strong desire of becoming a doctor, and I know that nothing will stop me from finishing this goal. As said earlier, the greatest power in life is the power to heal.

Miss Anupa Patel

2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

After completing my undergraduate degree in Biochemistry, I thought myself competent enough to be accepted by US medical schools, but I was sorely disappointed. Reduction in class sizes and increase in requirements make it harder for the best students to be accepted. HMI allowed me a chance to prove myself worthy of being among the ranks of practicing US physicians in the future by studying in an excellent institution in Europe, which is recognized by the US Department of Education as an esteemed school of medicine.

I am now done with the second year of the 4-year medical program, and it has been the best experience I have had. Not only was there an excellent forum on learning the information through books, but also wonderful opportunities to shape my interactions and sharpen my reasoning abilities by seeing actual patients at the hospital wards. I think in all, joining HMI has been the best thing that happened in my life. It allowed me to explore an opportunity that I would not have otherwise been granted in this very competitive world.

Miss Dipti U. Patel

2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Dzien Dobry From Katowice, Poland, (Pronounced Gin Dobray which means “Good Day” in Polish)

My name is Dipti Patel. I graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with a BS in Biology and minor in Chemistry. After graduation, I worked in Orthopedic Surgery as a Research Coordinator. I came to Poland in September 2000 and have almost completed my second year. Like most other students here, I am glad that Hope Medical Institute has this program, which has given me an opportunity to study medicine.

Having lived and studied here for almost 2 years, I believe I am in a position to tell other potential students, the strengths and weaknesses of living and studying abroad. I have also got to travel to quite a few places and partake in the rich cultural and historical heritage.

It has barely been over 10 years since Poland crawled out of communism and already the changes are so great that one could mistake this for any other modern western European country.

Living in Poland from a student’s standpoint can be described succinctly in one word: inexpensive! Specifically, the word cheap was not used because the quality of goods and services are comparable to any modern country. Almost everything one may need to live and study while here, is available. Walmart type stores have popped up all over Katowice, as have fast food restaurants like McDonalds, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, etc.

Transportation in and around Poland can be considered bargains. With a student ID, most tickets are about half the normal price. One can find roundtrip fares to almost any European destination for as little as \$210. Advance reservations at youth hostels, ensures lodging at about \$10 per night with a student ID.

As for school, The Medical University of Silesia is among the oldest and top rated medical schools in Poland. Like any other professional school, you study and work on your own with guidance from the teachers. The professors have quite an easygoing style and are quick to oblige us in many aspects of our day-to-day classes and exams. Exams can be both hard and easy depending on the professor and the level of nit picking in which they may want to indulge. The schedule is as rough as any other medical school in the US, however we do have the small luxury of being able to reschedule exams according to our conveniences.

The dormitory facilities are relatively luxurious with private rooms, private baths, and new fittings. We even have high-speed Internet connection to individual rooms arranged by the students themselves. The school is barely three minutes from the dormitory, which is very convenient especially between classes. Most shopping is within fifteen minutes (20 zł; \$5 by taxi) from the dormitory while entertainment such as theaters and nightclubs are just a little further away.

Language is a barrier even though it need not be one. We are taught Polish as part of the curriculum, and interacting with the Polish students helps ease this barrier especially because they speak English quite well. Also, our very polite Polish counterparts are more than happy to make friends with us.

All said and done, for all the experiences and encounters, there are many more positives than negatives. The medical education is attainable even with the many pleasant distractions that exist here, as long as one does not lose sight of his goal.

Do Widzenia (“Good bye” in Polish)

Mr. Roshan J. Rajasekharan
4th year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Pozdrowienia! Greetings from Katowice, Poland. My name is Roshan and I am from Winnipeg, Manitoba. I graduated in 1996 from the University of Manitoba with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry and in Zoology. Although attaining a B.Sc. is in itself considered to be a great accomplishment, I left the university feeling unfulfilled. I knew I had the desire and potential to achieve more in life, but at that time could not decide amongst doing a Masters in Chemistry, applying for dentistry or pursuing a future in medicine. I chose instead to take a year off from the academic life to do some serious soul searching. By the end of that year, not only did I realize that medicine was my calling, but that studying abroad was an option that could add immeasurably to my personal growth. The vehicle through which I have come to fulfill my aspirations is Hope Medical Institute and their caring staff.

HMI is an organization that strives to make the hopes and dreams of medical school candidates a reality. They helped me get a position in a reputable medical school in Katowice, Poland. Now many of you may ask, "Why Poland?" Personally speaking, I made the decision to attend the Silesian University based on its merits and because it represented an opportunity for me to further my education in the midst of an interesting, foreign culture. The medical academy is the largest in the entire country. In the last half of this century, the school has produced well over 16,000 doctors. Many of these doctors are now practicing medicine in North America. Having had this background information about the university as well as the support and encouragement of HMI, I found the transition into medical school to be smooth and easy.

The city of Katowice in which the Silesian Medical Academy is located is one of the largest industrial cities in Poland. It has many of the amenities quite often found in western societies. Fast food restaurants such as Burger King, McDonald's and Pizza Hut are situated in the heart of downtown. In addition to this, shopping and traveling in and around Katowice is made simple with the easy access to public transportation. Having all of this at my disposal, I found the shift from North American life to European life to be fairly simple.

The Silesian University School of Medicine as I have mentioned before, is the biggest medical school in Poland. The teaching hospital uses some of the newest, state of the art equipment for both research and diagnostic purposes. The school's facility consists of some of

the brightest and most talented doctors and professors in the nation. They are all highly knowledgeable within their specialized fields and they teach us according to North American medical school guidelines. The professors are tremendously supportive and very approachable. If you have any difficulties or if you just want to discuss a particular topic, they are more than willing to set some time aside to help you with whatever problem needs to be solved. With this personal attention I feel that one can learn more and have greater appreciation for the knowledge attained.

The field of medicine requires the dedication of a lifetime. Getting into medical school and completing the training will not be an easy task. It will be a challenge that will require a great deal of commitment. All in all, successful candidates will find studying in Poland to be a great choice and an excellent opportunity to become a well-trained physician. My best wishes to all the applicants and I hope to see many of you in Katowice next year!

Mr. Suresh Jacob Rodil

1st year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Greetings, prospective students and parents. My name is Suresh, and I would like to share with you some of my experiences and thoughts on attending one of Hope Medical Institute's English language programs in Poland. I am currently in the second semester of my first year here in Katowice, and, looking back, time has certainly flown by. Just a few months ago, I was packing my suitcases and preparing to move to a foreign country, uncertain of what awaited me here in Poland. I was very nervous, because, at the time, I had no idea what life in Poland would be like. A million thoughts were running through my head. What should I bring? What am I getting myself into? How am I going to survive without my mom's cooking?!?! Now that I have completed my first semester here, and I'm still alive, let me tell you that I am so glad that I didn't let my fears and anxiety get the best of me.

When I first arrived here in Poland, members of the HMI staff were at the airport to welcome me. I made quite a few friends in just the first few nights of living in the dormitories, where I live on a floor that is occupied fully by other students in my class. We all bonded right away because we were all in the same boat, and this was very comforting. During the first week, HMI arranged for all of us new students to go on excursions together to Krakow and to the local supermarkets and downtown area to help us get oriented and get set up in our rooms. Our rooms here are very homely, by the way, and there is an IKEA store nearby, for those who really want to make their rooms extra-comfortable. The cost of living is much cheaper here in Poland, so with \$40, you can buy groceries to last for two weeks. Most of us have televisions with satellite dishes in our dorm rooms. Also, just this year, we were able to get Ethernet connections in our dorm rooms. Now, friends and family back home are just a mouse click away! Two doctors on the HMI staff also live in the dorm buildings with us students. If any of us ever have any health problems, all we have to do is go downstairs and see Dr. Omar or Dr. Sham.

When we started classes, I was impressed by the high caliber of both the professors and the other students here. Having graduated with a degree in biology and having taken some of the classes before, I kind of expected that I would have a much easier time compared to other students. I'll be the first to admit to you that this was not the case. This is a serious medical school, and just because it is in a foreign country does not mean that it is any easier than any other medical school in the United States. The professors here are experts in their fields, many of them having both an M.D.

degree and a Ph.D. They all know what material is tested on the USMLE, and they teach us this material very thoroughly. All of my fellow students are very intelligent people also, so as a whole, the classroom environment here is very challenging and conducive to solid learning of the material. The students from the year ahead of me have also been very helpful as far as telling us what books to study from and helping us prepare for exams. Since all of the students from the English language program live in the same dorm buildings, we all interact with each other constantly on both a scholastic level and a social level. Everyone helps each other out.

Outside of school and studying, there are many things to do here. There is a gym nearby that many of us go to. There are nightclubs and coffee shops and restaurants nearby, as well. And, the best part about living in Poland is that there are so many other countries that are just a train ride away. Since I have been here, I've discovered the joy of traveling to Hungary, Austria and Czech Republic which are all very nearby. At the end of February, we had a 2-week break in between semesters, and I went to Egypt with my neighbor in the dorms. We got a great deal from a travel agency here in Poland. We paid \$400 for a package that included roundtrip airfare, hotel accommodations for 14 days, and breakfast and dinner every day in the hotel. If you can find another country where you can a deal as great as that, I recommend that you go to medical school in that country. Of course, I'm joking...but I highly doubt that you would be able to find deals like ours' anywhere else.

When I first arrived in Poland, I spent a lot of time trying to convince myself that coming here was a good decision on my part- that being far away from my family and friends would be good because there would be fewer distractions from studying: that two years here was not going to be a long time, and that the time would go by fast and I would be back in the US in no time; that I would be getting an education of a quality equal to one I could get in a US medical school for only the fraction of the price. Having been here for a semester and a half now, I can truly say that I no longer need to convince myself of any of these things. I am thoroughly convinced! I am very convinced that the education I am getting here will prepare me to pass the USMLE Step I exam with flying colors and secure a good position for clinical rotations in the US. I have made friends here that I know I will have for life, and we have shared many memorable experiences together. Living far away from home has made me better equipped to handle real life and to take care of myself.

Miss Meera Sehgal

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

When I first heard about the program offered by Hope Medical Institute, it came at a time when I was considering my career options. The program seemed almost too good to be true. I knew I wanted to practice medicine, but did I want to go all the way to a country that I knew nothing about? The desire to become a physician was very strong and I knew that this was the answer. I called the HMI office and they sent me brochures and an application. I also had a chance to talk with a doctor who had graduated from one of the HMI affiliated medical schools. He made me feel like this was a program I wanted to get involved with.

My next step was to go to the convention. If I had any doubts, they were greatly diminished during my first night there. I made many new acquaintances, and even had a chance to speak with my future suite-mate. The HMI staff was very reassuring, but what I remember most was the Deans from the school I was going to go to and the student who had come to speak with us. I felt like he was constantly barraged by a thousand of the same questions...what was life like there...was it expensive...what was the food like...did you have to speak Polish...and so on. What impressed me the most was how patiently and with what enthusiasm he spoke with us. I was now on my way to Lublin, Poland.

Arriving was scary, in a strange airport in a foreign country. But I had about twenty other equally confused classmates with me. Looking back on that day, my classmates and I have laughed at our first impressions of Poland and each other. What I found in Poland was a great group of friends, caring staff, and some of the people I respect most. I was often in awe of my professors, and felt like they really cared as to what kind of physician I became. I often felt like a sponge, absorbing information constantly. Besides the education, I also had time to relax and to get to know the country I was living in.

The years I spent in Poland have given me some of my most wonderful memories and a feeling that I am ready to enter the medical field in America. The Medical University of Lublin has provided me with a solid education and with the confidence that I can take with me into my future career. H.M.I. has helped make my dream of becoming a physician possible.

Mr. Ashish Shah

4th year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

My name is Ashish Ajay Shah. I live in Reading, Pennsylvania. I attended Pennsylvania State University and I received a Bachelor's of Science.

The reason I called HMI was obviously to attend medical school. The idea of getting a medical education in Europe sounded like a great opportunity to not only receive a medical degree, but also to learn a great deal about a different culture.

I had no idea what living in Poland was going to be like, but knowing I wasn't going to be alone was a comfort. There were other students coming from different countries that were there to attend medical school as well. It took me no time at all to adjust to my new surroundings, especially since we were a group all in the same boat. All the same fast food places that I'm familiar with in the US are also here. I loved KFC! That place was like my own personal kitchen. Also, everything that I needed was provided for in the dorms. This made everyday living much easier.

Poland has a great deal of history that just isn't present in a young country such as the US. The first semester class load was light compared to the rest to give us all some time to adjust. This provided all the students a good amount of time to explore the city and to find out what Lublin had in store for me. I admit, getting used to the language is quite difficult, but even that eventually would come with time maybe not in 4 years, but eventually nonetheless.

Life here is very different, however, a good education is the only reason that I intended on being here for, and little did I know that I would come back with so much more than that. The medical school is basically just like any other school you could go to. I believe that education is universal throughout the world; it doesn't matter where you are. As long as you put the time in that's necessary, you'll come out with the skills needed to reach your goals. All the classes were small in size and that is a great environment to learn in. The professors were all highly learned in the subjects that they taught.

The Hope Medical Institute staff was a great help in solving problems and answering questions that pertained to seemingly trivial things. However, to me that resource was indispensable. In fact, we had one of them living on our hallway in our dorms. They have helped us get our visas, schedule classes and even encouraged us to have social lives outside of the dorm life. I definitely took advantage of that. During my time in Poland, I've met numerous people and made many really good friends with whom I continually keep in touch with.

My visit to Poland for the purpose of going to medical school was superb. I fully intend to come back again sometime, assuming I can get time off from my busy residency schedule that is. Thanks HMI!

Mr. Gurmail Singh

1st year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

My name is Gurmail Singh. I'm a first year medical student at The Medical University of Lublin. I just want to tell you about my experiences not just in Poland but also with Hope Medical Institute. When I first arrived to Poland I was worried about how will I get to the university since I didn't know the language? But I didn't have to worry for too long. When I got off the airplane Hope Medical Institute office personal was there to meet at the airport. I also realized that I didn't have to know Polish language to get through college because everything is taught in English. But they also have one Polish class to teach you about the basics. I really like Poland. I attended their program about 3 years ago but I missed my family so I quit after my first semester there. But since then, I visited Poland twice after I quit the program initially. I'm an Electric Engineer and I was working for GM as designer and contactor. But I thought maybe I made a mistake when I dropped out three years ago. I realized I really wanted to be a doctor so I joined their 2001 class again. I like attending the Medical University of Lublin because all the professors are very helpful. If anybody in our class needed extra help with understanding the material the professor taught in classes or in lab, all they have to do is ask the professor to spend extra time with them and they always do. The professors have stayed after class and came in early to spend extra time with even one student. They have always been there to help me. They let you take the bones, microscope or slides home and study with a friend if you want. Poland's weather is like USA. I have noticed that you can buy anything and everything that you can buy in the USA except it is much cheaper. You can live in an apartment or in a dorm. I live in a dorm because all of the classes are nearby so I can either walk to them if I want or I can take a taxi. The best thing I like about living in the dorm is now computers and the Internet are available at the dorm. I don't have to go anywhere if I want to send an e-mail to my friends or family or check anything else I want. I can keep in touch with my family and friend via E-mail at anytime I like the fact that the cellular phones are also available here and are very cheap. I have noticed people are very nice. There is no crime here either. The stores are near by my dorm. You can either cook for yourself if you like or you can take turns and cook two to four people. When you have a week or so off you can either go back to USA or visit Europe via train. You can enjoy collage in Poland as much as in USA because of the location of The Medical University of Lublin to the near by town. If my wife had any questions or concerns about the program, she usually calls Hope Medical Institute and Mr. Patel has always helped her. She always says he always gets back to her within a timely manner

Miss Sunita Singh

4th year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

Being accepted into the four-year medical program with Hope Medical Institute at The Medical University of Lublin, I felt so excited and fortunate to have the opportunity to pursue my career as a physician. As with any new changes in life, I was both excited and scared. I looked forward to the venture I would soon be approaching—exploring a new area of the world with their unique customs and lifestyle as well as being able to learn and study medicine. At the same time however, I was a bit nervous about studying abroad for at least 2 years away from my family and friends. Although I felt I would be able to adapt to my new surroundings, I did have some concerns. Would I be able to easily maintain my vegetarian diet? Would I find my niche amongst colleagues? Were the faculties' teachings appropriate and in sync with the standards of American medical schools?

Living in Poland, I found that much of my concerns were laid to rest. As far as food was concerned, I felt basically at home. There are several franchised restaurants such as McDonald's, KFC, and Pizza Hut as well as wonderful privately owned restaurants where many of the students eat. There are also of course grocery/department stores such as Real which contain all the grocery, house, and school supplies one would need. In addition to eating out, there is a wide range of recreational activities that are available to students. There are facilities where students can play basketball, tennis, and aerobics. There are also a number of fitness centers. Going to the movies were always a favorite, and traveling to other parts of the country as well as the other parts of Europe were also an exceptional part of studying abroad. There are many aspects that play a crucial role in the academic life in Lublin. The campus setup itself I felt was a safe, quiet, and appropriate environment for studying. In addition, establishing friendships amongst the students of all different years provide a good network of support, encouragement, and guidance. I also saw that there is a collaborative effort between the students and professors. Many professors genuinely care about the concerns of students both in their academic and personal lives. Being a graduate of an American university where I sometimes felt lost in a crowd, I was surprised to see that the faculty and staff at the university and Hope Medical Institute were more interactive, encouraging, and interested when students shared and worked with them. It was comforting to have this network of support and cooperativeness.

My experience studying medicine in Poland I feel was a valuable one. It gave me an opportunity to grow academically and taught me a lot about myself. It made me more independent and opened my eyes to the beauty of other cultures and people.

Miss Dominika Szwedo

1st year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

Pursuit. As a first year of the four-year program, pursuit is the primary reason why I am here -to obtain my degree as a medical doctor. However, this program is somewhat different from all of the others that I have considered. Its location is Poland instead of the United States. Even as American of Polish descent, I had my reservations prior to arriving here because of language, social, and cultural barriers on top of the ordinary hardships of medical school. How will I adjust? Such anxieties were further magnified by the thought of the distance between Poland and United States, where my family and friends are.

Upon arrival, I realized that most of my worries were the ordinary anxieties everyone feels before adjusting in a new location. I recognized that I suffered from the same manifestations before starting high school, college, and all my new jobs. I realized that my adjustment depended on my mentality, how I approach the situation.

The first year of *any* new school is a learning experience, not only with respect to academics. It is the time to make new friends, mature, and learn. I feel that being in a foreign country magnifies this experience. We are engulfed in a foreign culture, living it, but then we realize that this culture, aside its peculiar customs and language, is much like our own. I feel like The Medical University of Lublin has made us feel at home. Hope staff as well as some of the professors helped us get oriented with the city and culture, helped us in tasks such as obtaining apartments, transportation, etc. It is also nice to see familiar places such as McDonald's and Pizza Hut. Further, many of the residents of Lublin are English-speaking. This makes our experience on the streets and restaurants more enjoyable. I could continue with the list. However, that would make my essay way too long and boring. Therefore, I recommend that you prepare yourself with the right mentality and experience this medical school *yourself*.

Miss Payal Trivedi

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

Truthfully, I never thought that I would be writing about my experiences in medical school let alone any experience in Poland. But, I find myself sharing two years worth of just that. I got the opportunity to enter this program just as I was thinking about entering medical school back home. I filled out the application to HMI and the next thing I knew, everything was snowballing heading straight for Poland. Mind you, I was a bit older than the average medical school student, so I had my reservations.....I am sure we all do. But once I arrived, I discovered that we were all in the same boat. My class was made up of ten students, and it was much like starting school all over again. Meeting new friends, taking new classes, (to the prospective student...Polish will be a part of the curriculum...Tak!) and meeting new professors. And by the end of the first year, after Biochemistry, Anatomy, and the other first year hurdles...I could honestly say, I had made it through and was all set to begin second year. This was the year we got to finish what we began first year and put our Polish into practice!! We were actually seeing patients in the hospitals and beginning to get a glimpse of what clinical medicine was all about. All the text that we had read, all the notes we took in lecture, came to life as we learned to make a diagnosis on a real patient. It was quite a job communicating in Polish, but patients are just as helpful as the professors in trying to make you understand. The side of medicine no book or journal could ever prepare you for is how to treat your patient. So with Pathology, Pharmacology, clinical hours and the other second year classes survived, my two years in Poland were completed. But it wasn't just classes that I had achieved.... I can tell you that I met some of my closet friends there. Being away from home I had the chance to experience life on my own in a different culture and environment. I got to travel and see some of the most beautiful places. I know I would never have been able to visit these had I been back home in the States. The friendships and bonds that I have made, the lessons that I have learned, these past two years have made my life so much richer and memorable. This was a very unique opportunity that I grabbed, definitely a decision I always have to wonder about and try to explain years on down the road, but not one that I will ever regret.....

Najlepsze zyczenia...(Best Wishes)

Miss Betsy Varghese

2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

The intricate task of medicine can be made an educational as well as a fun filled experience. I normally wouldn't have thought so but living in Poland for two years has taught me otherwise. In the midst of a unique but interesting culture, we were able to learn the subjects that are critical to our medical career from a school that brought these subjects to life.

The professors at The Medical University of Silesia are kind, highly intelligent and are always willing to accommodate to the needs of the American students. In doing so, the students feel more comfortable and in return have a great deal of respect for them. With their diligent work and their obligations as teachers, they fully prepare us for the greatest exam that sets off our medical career: USMLE Step I.

The greatest advantage of coming to Silesia is being able to finish the 3rd and fourth years, which consists of clinicals, in the US. Having completed the USMLE Step I, we start our clinicals in various well-known hospitals, for example in New York which are affiliated with The Medical University of Silesia through the Hope Medical Institute. The Hope Medical Institute, our family away from home has helped us since day one, encouraging us to do the best we can. Through them and the professors at Silesia, we have more faith in ourselves and are able to come one step closer to our goal in becoming the greatest doctors we've always dreamed to be.

Mr. Sarat Varghese

1st year of the 6-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

I can still remember what it was like for me to decide to come or not to come to Poland for medical school. There were so many things going into making that decision. Whether I would like a school that I had never visited, considering I had never even been to the country, and didn't even know what the language or people would be like. Would I make new friends? Could I cut it as a medical student? These were some of the questions I asked along with many other thoughts that raced through my mind.

I arrived in Poland for the first time, not really knowing what to expect or what not to. I remember coming out of the airport and seeing HMI's representatives waiting for the new incoming students for the 2000-02 school year. My first impressions were much better than what I had expected. I was intending to see, a third world country with broken down buildings and an abundance of pollution. In fact what I did see were faces that were happy as I was to get off their long flights from their homes. And it only took a few minutes for the students to meet each other and friendships to be made. Coming from New York, I was used to the large amounts of people and hoped for an environment similar to my suburban home.

We arrived in Lublin later that afternoon, and for the next incoming week we were taken around the whole city and shown tourist attractions, where our classes would be held, how to utilize the bus systems, take taxis, and even how to order food. Being in a foreign town was awkward but being in a completely different country all together can be difficult as you could imagine. Even though no one spoke the language, the help that HMI provided us allowed us to learn so much within one week. I made new friends and began my four-year adventure in Poland.

Being in Poland can be difficult, but luckily I was able to make good friends and roommates at the beginning of my stay. My friends and I explored the small town of Lublin within the incoming weeks and discovered that the locals were as interested in learning about us as we were about them. By becoming friends with the local Polish citizens, we were able to make full usage of the town, and learn more about the Polish culture and history.

It is not easy going to school in a foreign country and trying to get your MD, but it is possible and it has been done. I was very hesitant to leave my home in New York, and come to Europe. But, I realized I would be the lucky one to come to Europe. I would be able to travel Europe in the four years that I am studying here and see things and experience cultures of all different types of people, something most people would not go through in their lifetimes. But Poland is not perfect, just as any other college in the US would not be perfect. Coming here is an experience that I know I will never forget.

Mr. Vigel Varkey

4th year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

To Whom It May Concern:

Nearing the end of my time spent in medical school, I would like to take a moment to share my experience at the Medical University of Silesia and abroad.

For those of you who are interested in perhaps one day becoming a physician, the Medical University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland offers not only the allure of studying medicine in Europe, but a strong medical foundation to build a career on. This ambition can be best exemplified by the various 3rd and 4th year clerkships opportunities. Whether your interest in pursuing clinical rotations lies in Poland or at various teaching hospitals in the US, the Medical University of Silesia has joined an elite few that offer training sites at various ACGME accredited institutions for the entire duration of the clinical years. Otherwise, the large number of clerkships offered at the university would be more than adequate to help you select a field of interest.

I am currently a fourth year student looking forward to starting my internship at a medicine residency program in N.Y. Regardless of where my plans take me and what lies in yours, I can confidently say that the program at the Medical University of Silesia is definitely worth exploring.

Sincerely,

Vigel M. Varkey

Mr. William R. Walker

1st year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

It has become my personal and self-preserving mission to develop some knowledge and experience in health disparities. My dreams to become a physician have been fueled by what some may consider a driven desire. The Hope Medical Institute has aided me in pursuing that dream. Traveling halfway around the world can be a scary event but if your dreams and desire drive you to become a physician, HMI can provide you with that path to become a physician. Traveling to Europe has also been a dream come true, no other program can provide you with the opportunity to pursue your dreams and see Europe at the same time.

Entering into the HMI program has not been an easy ride but nothing in life worth having is easy. I believe this program is a developing program but a program on the right path. The HMI program has provided me with the means to meet other cultures and new people. This is always a positive event but to experience different cultures first hand is a breath taking experience that should not be overlooked. Poland is a country bordered by other countries such as Germany, Hungary, and so many more. My personal goals speak to health disparities in general, but I do believe that the HMI program can fulfill dreams in going to new places and entering a higher level of life. The Hope Medical Institute is an institute that has the potential to not only develop my interest in medicine, but also equip me for what has become a personal and professional goal.

Mr. Jaroslaw Wisniewski
2nd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Lublin
Lublin, POLAND

To all future students of Hope Medical Institute,

To those who firmly have taken the decision to start their medical education, to those who are hesitating and to those who just read those lines out of curiosity...If you just received the information package and are reading it now, full of hesitation and doubt, you are like me, almost two years ago...

When I look back now, I remember having been extremely skeptical and very, very cautious about making any fast decisions. After going through the package, I wanted to find out more about the program. After all, you don't get the chance to become a certified physician on a silver platter just every day. I couldn't believe that it could be so simple; I was convinced that there was a catch. However, as the departure date approached, I realized the only catch was that I had to leave my friends and my family behind, and go where I almost didn't know anybody. It was not an easy decision, even for me as a Polish-Canadian, but it all turned out for the best. Even more than that, it helped me. If you are focused on getting a good education, you have to put many of your daily preoccupations aside and that's exactly what studying abroad helps you do.

On the other hand, if you look on the map, you'll realize how small, yet how culturally diversified Europe is. Studying in Poland does not necessarily mean staying in Poland all year long. In fact, most (if not all) HMI students travel at least once during their school year to neighboring countries for fun or out of necessity, to prolong their visa in Poland. Favorite destinations are Prague, Italy, France, Germany, UK or even Mallorca or Gran Canary. Once you are in Europe, everything else is close, and you might be astonished at all the affordable destinations. Moreover, Europe has recently gone through a historical change by adopting a common government and a single currency, the Euro, which makes it safer and easier to travel. In Poland, this change is not yet in place, but negotiations are on the way, and by the time you graduate, your diploma will not only be from Poland, but from the United European Community, which might be a great asset if you ever choose to work in this part of the world.

When I look back now at the years I spent in Lublin, I don't regret anything. I met many interesting people, made some life-long friends and my cultural experience of Poland and Europe has grown along with my medical experience. One more thing, from a practical point of view, you might learn more here than back home. Medical laws are more flexible in Poland than in the US and if you have the right attitude, you might even get the chance to be part of medical interventions such as suturing a patient's skin during first year of study.

I won't lie to you, getting an outstanding medical education is a lot of hard work and will get stressful at certain points, but it is worth all of the effort. You are given all the tools to become a great physician, but what you do with these tools are entirely up to you. The quality of knowledge you carry back home depends entirely on your commitment.

Mr. Scott Woska

3rd year of the 4-year program
The Medical University of Silesia
Katowice, POLAND

To live in Europe and simultaneously obtain a US accredited medical degree that will prepare you for your own American Dream is truly the essence of “Carpe Diem”—living each day to its fullest. Many ambitious students across the world every year begin their journey in pursuit of a medical degree, with unique experiences that will undoubtedly be some of the very best and most rewarding times of their lives. However, after having experienced the traditional academic route of higher education via the likes of the University of California, Los Angeles (U.C.L.A.), where I decisively had the experiences I have attained while living in Poland. My medical education in Poland has tempted my insatiable passion to travel as much as my finances and academic preparations would enable me to do, which has taken me to such extravagant destinations as the Canary Islands, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Belgium, England, France (Paris on New Year’s Eve), Italy, Spain, Egypt (twice!), Israel, Thailand and Singapore, with destinations of the United Arab Emirates, Turkey (Istanbul) and Norway all scheduled this year. Indeed, I have been afforded a remarkable pageantry of experiences and wondrous opportunities to see and meet people from vastly different cultures and customs around the world that I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to do so...at least not until well after my pension had begun. Now that just wouldn’t be the same then would it?

But make no mistake about it; it is the medical education that is of utmost importance. Many of us traveled an array of different paths in finding one another here in Poland, but our goals are essentially all the same: to take advantage of an incredibly unique opportunity to acquire a degree in medicine from an academic academy that is regarded as one of the leaders in all of Eastern Europe. High quality education is informed by high quality research, much of which the faculty has acquired in fellowships in England and the United States. The overall academic infrastructure and extended research opportunities are excellent. There are numerous educational collaborations available, both formal and informal, between departments and local hospitals; hence, providing an exceptional academic platform by which the student can excel in both practical knowledge and clinical experience.

These strengths and activities are reflected by the continued success of the large majority of my fellow colleagues in successfully passing the National Board Examinations (i.e. USMLE) and ultimately securing residency positions across the United States.

My serendipitous discovery of Hope Medical Institute's opportunities in Poland has profoundly enriched my life culturally, socially and professionally. The opportunities here in Poland are immense. Personally, I have been afforded a stupendous opportunity to work intimately with an orthopedic surgeon specializing in sports medicine – a field of medicine I am ardently interested in pursuing. I have subsequently been exposed to a monolith of one-on-one guidance with regard to surgical techniques and the ever-precious clinical experience. Moreover, I have also traveled abroad with the doctor to various Orthopedic Surgery/Sports Medicine conferences, thus providing an unparalleled ancillary medical education. Of course, mingling with many well-connected and highly respected orthopedic surgeons across the country may very well pay dividends when I begin applying for orthopedic residency positions next year.

I full-heartedly believe that the quality of the teaching and potential research opportunities you will experience in Poland will far exceed your expectations. Rest assured, in cooperation with Hope Medical Institute, the medical school's administration department will help ensure that your experiences in Poland are enjoyable, productive and rewarding.