

Interview with Professor Sir Anton Muscatelli FRSE AcSS

Sir Anton has been Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glasgow since 2009. An economist, his research interests are monetary economics, central bank independence, fiscal policy, international finance and macroeconomics.

Sir Anton is regularly called upon to lead or provide policy advice to many august organisations. These include Chairing the First Minister's Standing Council on Europe (2016-21), membership of the Scottish Government's Council of Economic Advisers (2015-21) and Chairing the Russell Group of UK research-intensive universities (2017-20). Sir Anton has advised the House of Commons Treasury Select Committee on fiscal and monetary policy, the European Commission and the World Bank.

After 16 years at the helm, Sir Anton announced he is retiring in 2025.

Sir Anton, thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to speak to us. Our readership is mainly medical students from Glasgow. However, now that we are online, potentially anyone in the world with internet access can find us! Firstly, huge congratulations on being awarded the Loving Cup by Glasgow's Lord Provost and elected the 48th President of The Royal Society of Edinburgh! This recognition of the distinction and honour you have brought to Glasgow and your career-long leadership excellence is so richly deserved! Bravo! Do you mind sharing what you remember of your University student days? What were the highlights, challenges and best memory? Were you a straight A's student who studied all the time? Were you involved in nonacademic activities back then?

I was initially enrolled in Imperial
University and realised soon after that
Physics was not for me. When University of
Glasgow accepted me (to study Economics)
- I felt very lucky and grateful. So yes, I was
studious and did well at exams.

However, I didn't just study! I had wide interests while at University and found a good balance between study and activities such as sports (representing the University in volleyball) and student societies (Italian and Economics).

A highlight was definitely matriculation and starting in Glasgow. The course itself was challenging. Back then everything hinged on how well you performed in the Finals. I remember being very calm in the 2 weeks leading up to the exams because I knew I had worked hard and was well-prepared. My best memories are therefore the start and end of my undergraduate degree and underlines my firm believe that there is no wrong path in life.





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It has been a spectacular journey: from studying economics to being Principal of one of the top Universities in the world (Russell Group). Was a life in Academia / Academic Administration always been your dream?

No - not at all. I was one of just 20 Honours students in my year. The job market in 1984 was tough. After sending out hundreds of job applications, I landed a graduate training job in a bank. One day, quite out of the blue, the phone rang. It was the Department of Economics! Seems they were impressed with my exam performance and wondered if I might be interested in taking on a 1-year teaching assistantship. My father's unstinting support and encouragement gave me the courage to swap the security of banking for this unexpected opportunity to explore a career in academia. One year became two; I started publishing; which led to the PhD. Being in the right place at the right time / serendipity helped - I was promoted to Professor aged 30; Acting, then Head of Department aged 36, Dean at 40 and Vice Chancellor aged 44.

[Reader, please note that Sir Anton is being extremely humble here. Undoubtedly a lot of hard work was involved at each stage. It was Thomas Jefferson who said "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it."]

Many students enter medicine to help people. The course is gruelling, leaving little time for other interests. Politics is an alien topic - rarely mentioned in the curriculum or even casual conversations today. Yet, Professors Rona Mackie (first woman professor, UoG) and Frank Sullivan have both told Surgo they were politically active during their time in UoG. Should medical students be politically aware / politically active? Or should they just "stay in their lane" - focus on passing exams and being kind doctors?

I was not politically active during my studies, although I was politically aware. My contribution to politics is through advising Governments across the political divide to help Ministers develop and improve their policies. It's a personal choice, I believe, and many will come to an interest in politics and policy after their student days.





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Health is a Human Right. 2020 demonstrated the impact of health on the global economy. The world is off track in achieving UN's Global Universal Health Care by 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals target 3.8). The UK and Scottish Governments have increased medical student places in response to the health and social care needs. Downstream job security for these new graduates – potentially the fate of the National Health Service – seems less certain. How can our graduates future proof themselves?

Work force planning is key and past trends may not continue into the future. Maybe it's the pandemic or seeing the National Health Service under strain, young people might think "this is not for me". Undoubtedly, greater resilience and resource will be required if we want to protect the NHS as it stands. Governments and Universities need to work together to increase flexibility and porosity of workforce pathways. Glasgow is one of the first to offer Practicebased learning, where medical students are exposed to patients and clinical environments from Day 1 of their course. I know our graduates will capitalise on and leverage this exceptional opportunity by embedding themselves in hospitals and clinics to build their knowledge base, patient understanding, empathy and embody the Glasgow ethos of Health Professionals: caring and following a real vocation. I'd also say read widely. This ultimately is what will stand them in good stead as doctors in the future - employable anywhere in the world.

Life as Principal and Vice-Chancellor must be really full-on. How do you keep yourself balanced? I see lots of delicious home cooked food on your social media feeds – what else brings you joy and perspective in life?

I enjoy music and caught a jazz performance as part of the Celtic Connections festival. I enjoy reading – both fiction and non-fiction. I am enjoying To the Dogs (Louise Welsh) very much at the moment – and it is not based on Glasgow! I follow football of course – geography means I can't support my team in person as often as I would like! I am hoping to do some travelling for pleasure post retirement too.

Let's fast forward to late 2025. It's your first official day of retirement. What will that day look like?

I will not be in Glasgow. I am looking forward to a period to take stock, adjusting to a new normal - away from something that has been my life for 24 years. It will be a day of mixed emotions. A wrench - inevitably. Pride in my work. Possibly a little relief... I won't need to look at emails and the phone won't ring with issues to handle that day!

Thank you Sir Anton! We wish you a happy retirement when it comes and all the best for the next exciting chapter of your life!



January 25' insta @surgo_uofg Est. 1935

DAANYAAL ASHRAF

A New Year of Surgo

As we enter a new semester of university, this edition of Surgo is focussing on something a bit lighter. With a new year beginning and new stresses going around its important to take time for yourself to avoid burnout. That is why we wanted to focus on worklife balance

As a medical student, with the pressures and expectations we feel, it is even more important to take time for ourselves in between those intense study periods, whether it is reading a book, or going for a walk, or playing your favourite sport it is essential to find time in your busy day to take your mind off university stresses and focus elsewhere in order to maximise your mental health.





JANUARY 2025

Your production team



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We Need You

We want to feature \mathbf{YOUR} work in the next issue of Surgo.

Our magazine is now accessible through an online publication platform meaning that all contributions are citable (and give a big CV boost!).

Email your articles to surgo_uofg@yahoo.com



A CONVERSATION WITH DR SHARON SNEDDON

Work-Life Balance

What was your university experience like?

I did my undergraduate degree here in Glasgow and it took me a while to settle in, I was the first person in my family to go to University, and I had no reference to what it should be like. I really started enjoying University from third year onwards, as by then I had a well-established friendship group and had finally worked out how to study, and just how much effort I had to put in to pass my exams. Study didn't come naturally to me and it did take me a while to get the hang of things. My favourite part about the course was being in the Anatomy department every Friday afternoon, we'd either have histology or dissection, and we were taught by some amazing teachers who were real characters and really passionate about the subject. It was in these classes that I developed my love for embryology, looking at serially sectioned embryos.

Were you involved in any extracurriculars during your university experience?

I was heavily involved in dance and musical theatre as an undergraduate, but not through the university, I would rehearse 3-4 nights a week. It was something that I was passionate about, but it meant that I didn't have much time for other things. I was part of a netball team in my final year, but that was only because they were short of a player. I was completely hopeless, and still have flashbacks from when I'd try to pass the ball, and inevitably pass to the opposition.

How did you balance university with other commitments?

I don't think I really considered it at the time, I had what I had to do each day, and I was pretty good at making sure it all got done. I think it was slightly easier for us as we had a very regular timetable which was the same the whole year, so that meant I knew exactly what time I had available for all my commitments outside of study.

How did you prioritise/organise your separate commitments and university work?

I tried to prioritise my university work, so I would go straight to the library after lectures to write up my notes and do my research for tutorials. We had labs each week that had pre-lab work to be completed, so I always made sure these were done well in advance. My next priority would be work, as I needed the money to pay for travel to uni. I had a routine, and that made it easy for me to stick to.

I wrote everything down in my Union diary (I still have mine!) and carried this with me everywhere as there was no moodle or online timetables in my day!



A CONVERSATION WITH DR SHARON SNEDDON

Work-Life Balance

Did you manage to make time for social commitments, if so how did you manage this along with all your other commitments?

I lived at home and I had two part-time jobs, so I was always busy. I sometimes felt like I missed out on social events, especially spontaneous things, as I always either had to be going to work, rehearsals, or constrained by public transport times! I had to be very organised, I still had time for friends and family, but other activities like reading for pleasure or watching TV didn't happen! Going out-wise, whereas other students would be in Hive every Thursday and Cheesy Pop every Friday (is that still a thing in the QM?), I'd probably do those once a month / six weeks.

Has this balance changed/become harder to manage since you've left university and become a staff member?

It's different as I have more responsibilities now. I miss the carefree days of not really worrying about mortgages and pensions and insurance, and my job is really busy and has become busier as more students join the course. I think as I've become older, I am much less organised than I used to be, but I think that is because I have more to manage.

How did you manage your mental health during university/ has this become harder nowadays?

I was very lucky to not have any particular tough periods at University, but since leaving, I have gone through periods where I have struggled, things like grief, loss, stress unfortunately affect us all, and dealing with these on top of study and work can be a real challenge. I am very lucky to have a great support network of family, friends, and terrific colleagues in the medical school who I can go to when things get hard.

Are there any resources you would recommend from the uni/elsewhere to help students balance all of their responsibilities?

A diary! I no longer use a paper one, but I use Notion to organise myself. I integrate my home calendar and my work calendar so I always know what I am doing. There are lots of great organisation apps. Notion takes some work to set up, but it's worth the effort, I plan meals, activities, work meetings, lectures, the lot! I'm also very keen on the idea of habit stacking – and there are lots of apps for this, but I don't use one, I just pick one thing I'd like to start doing, then stack that onto something I already do, then it increases the chance I'll stick to it! Google the 21 90 habit rule!



DAANYAAL ASHRAF

Finding a balance as a medical student

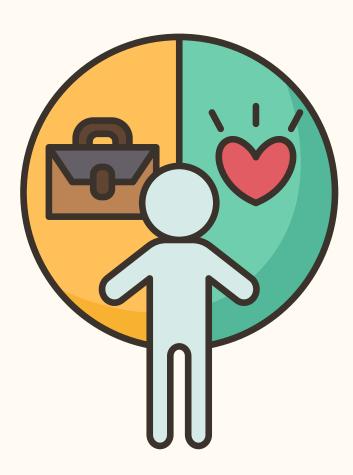
As students, one key area that all of us struggle with is finding balance between studying and other activities. With the constant stresses of exams and coursework looming over us, it can feel challenging to try and reach a healthy medium. This can be extremely beneficial to achieve as it helps aid our mental health and combat burnout, something we are all familiar with.

Some key activities/responsibilities that can provide a break from intense study sessions can be:

- Sports
- · Socialising with friends
- Reading
- Exercise
- Work
- Volunteering

It is vital to schedule in these times between for various activities so that we protect our mental health(and overall sanity) and also improve our efficiency of studying.





Nowadays, mental health issues are more publicised, so it is very important to check in with yourself as well as your friends to make sure they are ok. If you are ever feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope there are various resources available and staff members/friends who are willing to listen and aid you in finding balance in your university life.



HEATHER PINDER

Elective Stories

For my senior elective, I wanted to go abroad and experience medicine in a completely different setting than the UK. As I am interested in orthopaedics, this led to me applying for an elective at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. I had heard wonderful things from previous SSC and Elective supervisors about the fantastic experience in South Africa, after a bit of research I decided that Tygerberg Hospital in Cape Town seemed like the ideal destination.

I also had other more personal motivations for pursuing an elective in South Africa, as Cape Town holds a very special place in my own family history. During the Second World War, my Great-Grandfather was posted to Cape Town with the Fleet Air Arm as an aircraft engineer. Here, he met and married my Great-Grandmother, originally from Muizenberg (A beachside town to the south of Cape Town). Before my trip I was able to do extensive ancestral research and was able to visit some of the areas where she grew up and lived, allowing me to experience the culture she left behind in 1944.

Entering Tygerberg Hospital for the first time was very daunting. The hospital campus is the size of a small village and is the second largest hospital in South Africa - with 1899 beds. I was welcomed to the department with the 7:30 trauma meeting, where all the orthopaedic trauma patients admitted in the last day were discussed, and a surgical plan was formed for each.

The 24hr emergency theatre list from the day and night before was also discussed, with the registrars presenting each case to the team of consultants. After this I would head to theatres, finding a different list to scrub in with every day.

I was also able to shadow one of the registrars during their 24hr call shifts. Due to the high volume of trauma presenting to the hospital, there is an emergency orthopaedic theatre that runs 24/7, where surgeons can work through the backlog of trauma built up from the previous day. Outwith the hospital I had time to explore Cape Town as a city. Cape Town is a beautiful city with a vibrant cultural scene. There are regular tours to Robbin Island, a poignant activity that I feel is crucial in understanding the Apartheid era and inequality faced by so many South African Citizens. I would also thoroughly recommend a walk down Kloof Street, and a venture on the Table Mountain Cable Car. as well as surfing on Muizenberg Beach. Also, a trip to Cape Town is not complete without visiting the African penguin colony on Boulders Beach! The Western Cape is famous for its winemaking, and there were plenty of opportunities to explore the beautiful vineyards on the Franschhoek Wine Tram.



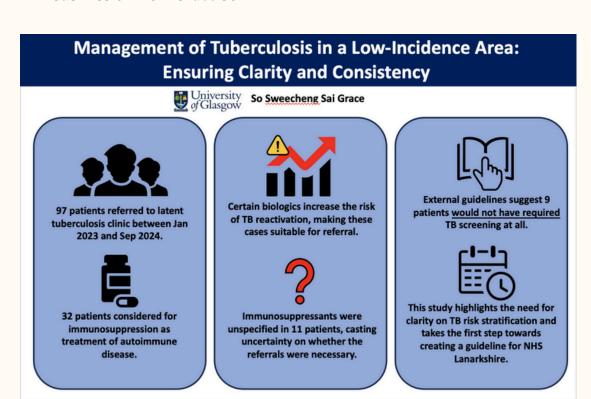


COMPETITION TIME

Visual Abstracts

What is a visual abstract?

A visual abstract is a novel way of presenting research. It is a small graphic that gives a brief overview of the research question, methods, and conclusions of the project. In essence, it is an eye-catching summary of the research you have carried out. Below is a submission from Grace So:



The Top 5 submissions will win a £20 cash prize, with the winner receiving an even bigger reward!!

What do I need to submit?

- Your written abstract (introduction, methods, results, conclusion (250 words))
- Your visual abstract

Acknowledgements: Angela Shaw, Jill Bell, Dr Ann Noble

- The name of one project supervisor
- The date of submission to the competition

Good luck!



CELESTE HERNON, CAITLIN MCEVOY Elective Stories

Mental health issues are not always evident from physical appearance or speech which highlights the need for a comprehensive psychiatric history. This became particularly clear to me during one of my early experiences in old-age psychiatry; an elderly woman who lacked insight into her dementia diagnosis. Although she appeared neat, organised in her speech, and showed no obvious neurological symptoms, she frequently experienced delusions of individuals breaking into her house—issues that only came to light when directly inquired about. Her confusion regarding everyday matters, such as visits from friends or upcoming appointments, revealed subtle cognitive impairments that were not apparent on the surface. This emphasised the importance of using specific diagnostic criteria and cognitive assessments to provide objective measures to accurately identify mental health conditions that may otherwise be overlooked. - Celeste Hernon



For my junior elective, I did a placement in the cleft department here in Glasgow. As the cleft centre for Scotland, I got to see the breadth of cleft care. I was welcomed as part of the team and encouraged to get involved from the very start. From the very important task of holding and entertaining the newborn baby whilst the consultant talked to the parents, to harvesting bone from a child's iliac crest and observing a speech and language therapist running a video fluoroscopy clinic there was always something to be a part of. My timetable was flexible and allowed me to meet and work with many members of the cleft team. By seeing new patient consultations, cases in theatre, post-op ward rounds, and follow-ups I was able to explore a cleft patient's journey. Scrubbing in theatre every week was encouraged and reaffirmed by the aspiration to do surgery. It was so interesting to see operations that only happen here within Scotland, with the youngest patient I saw being only 18 weeks old and the oldest at 59 years. As I was assisting I got to look through the microscope for a cleft palate repair which meant I had one of the best viewpoints in the room. As a patient's journey will span many years of their life, holistic care and support is so important, from a midwifes support when a cleft lip is diagnosed via ultrasound, to a clinical psychologist making time to check in on each patient, and to daily visits by the cleft nurses and consultants when in hospital. It was a fantastic experience to learn from and I appreciated how supportive all the team were. - Caitlin McEvoy



VENKATA "KANI" MEGHAM

Elective Stories

During my elective at Apollo Hospitals in India, I had a remarkable opportunity to immerse myself in the field of cardiothoracic surgery. Working alongside renowned surgeons, I observed, learned, and assisted in various complex procedures, from aortic dissections to coronary artery bypass grafts. Witnessing the precision, skill, and decisionmaking required in each surgery was humbling and deeply inspiring, reinforcing my passion for this field. An eye-opening experience early on was observing a minimally invasive CABG performed in a robotics suite using the DaVinci system. It felt almost futuristic, as though I was watching a scene from a movie, making me appreciate just how advanced medical technology has become. Over the 4 weeks, I was continuously challenged. I had just one week to familiarize myself with the rhythm of cardiac surgeries before being taught various suturing and knot-tying techniques. By the end of the 3rd week, I was harvesting saphenous veins for CABG procedures, which as a relatively young medical student, felt like the epitome of my career so far and has cemented my life-long passion for this profession.

However, life in a private cardiac surgery institute was not all I expected. My time there also exposed me to the disparities in access to healthcare, especially outside of the NHS.

A particularly shocking moment occurred when a patient's family had to purchase their own supply of AB+ blood for surgery due to the hospital's limited supply. This stark reality heightened my appreciation for the healthcare services provided by the NHS. I think as medical students rotating through various hospitals, we often find ourselves as outsiders integrating into established teams, making it harder for us to learn and fit in. This elective was a beautiful experience due to the warmth and inclusiveness of the team. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to cherish the vibrant culture of India, which made my time there all the more memorable and I hope to rejoin them for my senior elective next year.





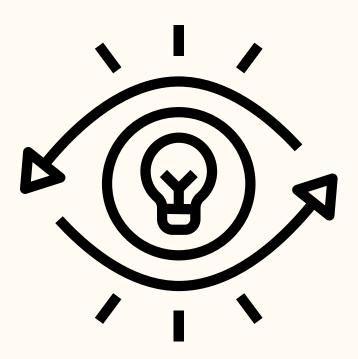
COMPETITION TIME

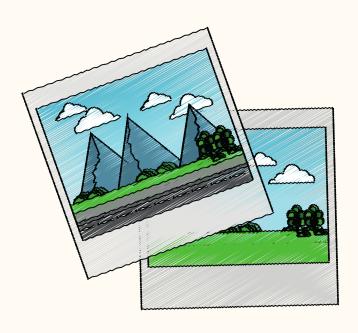
Surgo Vision Competition

"A picture is worth a thousand words" - Confucius

To encourage intellectual curiosity, critical thinking, observational and diagnostic skills, the ability to empathize with patients, and promote a general sense of well-being, Surgo will publish up to 5 images submitted by medical students in each issue.

Images can be in the form of a painting, cartoon, photograph, still life drawing, doodle ... the list is endless - limited only by your imagination.





Selection criteria:

- 1. The image must be an original piece, submitted via email to the Editor in Chief, Surgo (format JPEG or TIFF)
- 2. It should be certified as original and be accompanied by a short description of what it represents/means to you / why it should be published.
- 3. The best 5 will be selected for publication in Surgo by Professor Cindy Chew.
- 4. Each successful submission is awarded £20.
- 5. At the end of the year, all published images are eligible to compete for the Best Medical Vision prize up to £100.



LAURA HEWITT

Surgo Vision Competition

A few years ago, I looked in the mirror and made a declaration: I was going to commit to growing my hair as long as possible. Albeit a fairly small decision in the moment, it grew to become a feature that would softly shape the edges of my cementing teenage identity. I began to be acknowledged as 'the girl with the long hair' in school. In times of selfdoubt, it could become a veil of confidence. On many more joyful occasions, it acted as a fun conversation starter, offering countless little moments of connection.

A couple of years ago, I looked in the mirror and had a realisation: my hair was no longer growing as it used to. As I began to juggle health problems alongside university demands in my second year, getting through exams and coursework grew more challenging. Less time was available to be spent on 'unproductive' hobbies: taking extra time for haircare and carving out quiet moments of creativity was no longer possible. As the ends of my hair began to grow a little more ragged, the fringes of my broader identity began to fray slightly. Last year, I gave myself the space to really see my reflection, and I realised I needed to reconnect with the person I used to see in that mirror. During my intercalation year, I have regularly been making space for health, creativity, and some wonderfully therapeutic unproductiveness. A couple of months ago I observed that my hair was starting to look healthy again.

As one of the first drawings I have done since I was around thirteen, this sketch felt like a moment of recoupling parts of my younger identity with the person I want to be now. I feel very fortunate to know that I am on a career pathway which aligns so deeply with my core values - it is truly the greatest privilege to know I will be in a position to help so many people at such vulnerable moments - though I don't doubt there will be many more challenging periods ahead. It has felt significant to see this physical, visible representation of the importance of filling my own cup. My hair isn't as long as this yet, but as I continue to prioritise selfcare, perhaps someday it can be. To me, this image is a reminder that I always have the power to make positive changes: I can relearn to draw at 22; I can be joyously unproductive when I need to be; and, as my hair has taught me, it's always possible to make some positive growth.





It's okay not to be okay

University brings change and challenge which can sometimes be difficult to adapt to. It is perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed at university but, if you're feeling down, or just want someone to talk to it's important to reach out and get help. The University's counseling and psychological services offer a range of self-help resources. More information can be found at:

https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/counse lling/self-help

Recommended apps and websites

Calm: Calm is one of the top-rated apps for sleep and meditation. Getting a good night's sleep helps lower stress and anxiety as well as boosting your mood: https://www.calm.com

Headspace: Meditation is an effective way to improve focus, reduce stress, and increase sleep quality. If you are new to meditation, the Headspace app is a great way to start with numerous different guided mediations taking you step by step through the meditation process: https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app

Living life to the full: Work through free online courses aimed at reducing stress, and improving mood and resilience. Living life to the full is a great resource: https://llttf.com

Useful Numbers

Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87 -

Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am
Friday 6pm-Monday 6am
A free, confidential, phone and web-chat
service for anyone in Scotland over the
age of 16 experiencing low mood,
depression or anxiety

Glasgow Students' Nightline - 0141 334 9516

Monday-Friday 7pm-7am
A confidential telephone, text, and online listening and information service run by trained students for the students of Glasgow University, Glasgow Caledonian University, and Strathclyde University.

Glasgow & Clyde Rape Crisis - 08088 00 00 14

11am-2pm Monday - Friday Provides support for women and girls who have experienced rape, sexual assault or sexual abuse.

Samaritans - 116 123

24hrs

A helpline offering emotional support for anyone feeling down, distressed or struggling to cope



The medical school is happy to meet with anyone who is struggling, just drop them an email at med-sch-welfare@glasgow.ac.uk



PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW Tail Lights



Happy New Year! Hopefully, everyone had a restful festive break and is settling into the rhythm of the Glasgow Medical School routine. With the Academic year in its second term, it has been wonderful to meet you at teaching and in the hospitals.

As you progress through your studies in medical school and life as a doctor – you may occasionally wonder "Is this it?" I grapple with this question regularly. Don't get me wrong – I have wanted to be a doctor for as long as I remember and am so grateful for that opportunity. I possess all the ingredients to ensure happiness – but why can't I shake that feeling of "something's missing".

Seems I am not alone. In his "final prescription for the nation" last week, Dr Vivek Murthy summarises his observations after 2 terms as Surgeon General of America. Seems self-worth and fulfilment needs 3 ingredients: Purpose, Service and Relationship. Remember when we did sports, volunteered in community service before medical school? Turns out all that is actually good for us! (Not just for the CV...). I encourage you to read this short piece – and come back to it often – I promise it will be more than worth your time. QR code below and link here:

https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/my-parting-prescription-for-america.pdf





PROFESSOR CINDY CHEW

Tail Lights

Thank you to everyone who came to visit the "Navigating Uncertainty" exhibition at the Clarice Pears last term. We were blown away by the response, especially the support from Professor Sir Kenneth Calman! If you missed it, the digital art collection can be viewed here: https://medicineandtheartsglasgow.com/ - QR code below.

Big thank you to Julianna Sandoval Alfonso, Charlotte Duffus, Rueben Heaton, Laura Hewitt, Tazra Khan, Gregor McIntosh and Grace So for your help filming the Active Bystander videos – you were all big hits in Liverpool as part of a collaborative project on medical student Active Bystander Training!

We are busy planning new initiatives for you through MedChir and Surgo – so keep an eye out for these over the next few weeks.



Mean time - keep your submissions coming for the Visual Abstract and Surgo Vision competitions Remember: 5 best submissions accepted for publication receive £20 with a chance to win the end of year £100 overall best submission prize - and is legitimate CV fodder! So get your skates on and showcase your work with the world!

Till the next Tail Lights – I wish you much fulfilment! Remember: you are the OG! You have worked hard to get into one of the best medical schools in the world and you are well on your way to becoming doctors. That's purpose and service checked: go work on your relationships.



