



**Marshall B.
KETCHUM UNIVERSITY**

Meet Your Peer Advisors

Peer advising provides non-academic advice and personal student perspectives about life and learning at MBKU in an informal way to all students in the first academic year. Peer advising is the student complement to academic advising provided by faculty advisors and University Student Affairs. New students will gain informed student perspective that is based on their Peer Advisor's personal experience within their program, along with formal training.

Peer Advisors are students in the second academic year who are committed to academic excellence and student leadership. They show strong commitment to helping new students make the transition from undergraduates to informed, successful professional students who will be responsible for their academic goals and professional growth.



Taylor Austin

College of Pharmacy

Congratulations and welcome Class of 2023! My name is Taylor Austin and I am part of the Pharmacy Class of 2022. I grew up in Chino Hills, CA up until I

moved to New Mexico to complete my undergraduate studies. I came back to California to be closer to my family and to pursue my pharmacy endeavors. In my free time, I am almost always doing something pharmacy related. I may be working, volunteering, or participating in a pharmacy organization. When I want to have fun I love going to new places and trying new things. My advice to you is to find a good balance between school and fun. Because you can be academically successful and still have fun! As a MBKU student, there are endless opportunities for you to grow as both a student and as a leader. This may be your final years as a student, so I encourage you to make the most of it! I can't wait to meet all of you! Congratulations and welcome to MBKU!

to succeed but there are an endless amount of resources on campus and your fellow classmates to help you on your optometric journey. My advice would be to definitely take advantage of all your resources, get involved in organizations that spark interest and passion, work hard, and truly find your own personal study groove and lifestyle balance. Really get to know your classmates because they're amazing people, find your favorite study spots to make studying less stressful and more fun, and also continue to do things that make you happy. Congratulations and I look forward to seeing you around campus!!



Carmian Buiquy

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello all! Congratulations on this amazing new chapter in your life! My name is Carmian Buiquy, but, everybody calls me Lanie (long story). Before coming to SCCO, I lived in Seattle all my life and attended the University of Washington, majoring in Biology. If I'm not at the library, I'm probably at Disneyland riding Incredicoaster for the millionth time. What better place to relieve stress than, at Disneyland?! Aside, from being a huge Disney fan, I'm also a proud Slytherin and dessert enthusiast. Whether you're coming from out-of-state like I did, or you've been lucky to call California your home, everybody has a bit of nervousness coming into their first year. What worked for me, was doing my best, to introduce myself to everybody in the first couple of weeks. Of course, with a class size of 100+, it can feel a bit daunting, but it's good to keep in mind that these are faces you will see for the next four years. Although you may want to jump right into studying your first week of school, the school does a good job of easing you in your first quarter, so take advantage of that. Finding a good group of people to keep you sane, throughout the hard work of optometry school is essential. This is an amazing community at MBKU, that you are joining, so don't be afraid to form those connections early on. Everybody here, from your fellow classmates, upperclassmen, and faculty, are so giving with their time and resources, and they all truly want you to succeed. We can't wait to meet you all in the fall!!



Ronalie Baldovino

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello! My name is Ronalie Baldovino and I am a part of the OD Class of 2022. I am from Norwalk, California and graduated from UC Irvine with a major

in Pharmaceutical Sciences and a minor in Public Health. I love sports, the Lakers, Grey's Anatomy, trying new food spots, going on adventures, and traveling. During my gap year, I spent almost four months traveling in Spain and Asia. Although times have changed, my time at MBKU has been an amazing experience and I am excited for you to embark on your own journey this year! My favorite part of MBKU is its overall sense of community and welcoming supportive environment. Not only does the faculty want you

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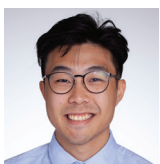


Rachel Chang

College of Pharmacy

Aloha MBKU family! My name is Rachel Chang and I am part of the COP Class of 2022. I was born and raised in Honolulu, Hawaii and moved to Fullerton to attend pharmacy school. I graduated from Chaminade University of Honolulu with a degree in Biology. Some of my hobbies include working out, traveling, baking and wood crafting. I enjoy spending time with family, going to the movies and anything sports!

My advice for the incoming class is make new friends, try new things and keep a positive attitude. Everyone at MBKU is always more than willing to help, so don't hesitate to reach out if you need any help or advice. Time management is a vital component for success and it's important to build a strong support system around you. I look forward to meeting you all and congratulations on your acceptance into MBKU!

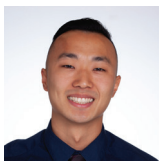


Andrew Chen

Southern California College of Optometry

Welcome, Class of 2023! My name is Andrew Chen and I am a part of the OD Class of 2022. I was born in the suburbs of Chicago but moved to Connecticut when I was 12. I went to the University of Washington where I received a BS in Biochemistry and minored in Comparative History. I'm a huge Seahawks and UW Huskies fan and I hope to some day practice in Seattle. My hobbies include lifting, photography, playing Super Smash Bros, and collecting sneakers. I'm still relatively new to the area, but I love exploring the local food and scenery around town.

My advice for the incoming class is: don't try to tackle it all by yourself. Especially with studying, I find it very helpful to study in a group. There's a lot of times where I think I'm prepared for an exam, but then I go to my study group and I find there are some small details/topics that I either completely missed, or forgot to study for. There are no more curves and we all have a common goal now that we're in the same program. This isn't undergrad where everyone is competing against each other. The atmosphere is a lot more friendly now and you will definitely experience this. I can't wait to meet everyone!



David Cho

Southern California College of Optometry

What's up everyone! My name is David Cho and I am proud to be a part of the OD class of 2022. I'm from Hacienda Heights, did my undergraduate at UC Irvine for Public Health Sciences and am currently living in Irvine with my girlfriend and French bulldog, Oliver. I am a commuter so if you ever have any questions about what it's like to commute, feel free to hit me up. When I am not focused on my studies, I enjoy working out, finding/playing new music, and snowboarding (obviously when the season comes).

You have all made the amazing choice of coming to one of the best optometry programs in the States and we are stoked that you're a part of our family. While at this school, I highly recommend stepping out of your comfort zone and get to know all of your classmates because these will be your ride-or-die buddies for at least the next four years. Help each other with studying, practicing new techniques, and just being there for each other. Also, don't forget that optometry school is a marathon, not a sprint,

so schedule time for yourself to keep your mental and social wellness in check. I am excited to meet all of you and remember, YOOSO, "You Only Opt School Once", so make the most of it!



Elsa Du

College of Pharmacy

Hello Class of 2023, welcome to MBKU College of Pharmacy. I am looking forward to meeting everyone this upcoming Fall quarter. My name is Elsa Du and I am part of the COP class of 2022. I graduated in 2017 across the street at California State University of Fullerton with a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Science. During my free time, I enjoy walking and biking at the beach, hiking, cooking, and drinking at different boba shops. I like to eat different kind of food, enjoy cooking and experimenting with food. I made the right decision to attend MBKU because I enjoy the small class size and the professors/ faculties here on campus. Everyone is very friendly and helpful here, and I enjoy the open-door policy for all professors. The professors here are very caring, fun and want all their students to be successful. Not only that, but the upperclassmen are always here and ready to answer questions, give advice on how to destress and get through every week. With that being said, I want to congratulate each one of you for your hard work and dedications on making it to graduate school. It was a tough journey to get here, and the next 4 years will also be a roller coaster. However, do not be terrified, you have the peer advisors here to help answer questions and share our experiences with you. Congratulations and welcome to MBKU family.



Marielle "MJ" Francia

College of Pharmacy

Hello Pharmacy Class of 2023 and welcome to the MBKU family! My name is Marielle Francia, but most of my class refer to me as MJ. I grew up in a small town in Riverside County (Menifee) and graduated from UC San Diego with a degree in Biochemistry (Go Tritons!). I like to describe myself as the extroverted introvert – basically, I prefer staying in, but I'm not a wallflower when I do go out. When I'm not in the library studying and watching Netflix, I'm probably at home sleeping or going on foodie trips and boba runs with my friends. The biggest piece of advice I could give is to get to know your classmates past the typical officemate culture. Why go through the struggles and hardships of graduate school alone when you can "suffer" together with people who are experiencing the same thing? The next advice is to save time and space for yourself. Now that you're in graduate school, some of you might go for extra-curriculars and that's great. But if you spread yourself too thinly, you'll wear yourself out early and easily. Find spaces in-between classes to unwind and relax (unapologetic plug to the Student Union) or go to the gym and work out the stress. Orange County is full of things to do that can help you destress. Lastly, have fun! You've all worked so hard to get here and yes, it won't be easy to get through this program, but MBKU is your last step before working the typical healthcare provider shift for the rest of your life. Make the most of your time here. And a big congratulations to each and every one of you! Welcome again and I can't wait to work with y'all!



Justin Ogoy

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello, and welcome to MBKU! My name is Justin, and I'm an Eyevenger (OD Class of 2022). I'm from Hemet, CA and I graduated from UCLA in 2015 with a degree in Psychobiology.

Meet Your Peer Advisors

Prior to optometry school, I was an EMT-turned-ophthalmic technician, so if you have any concerns about transitioning from the work force back to student life, feel free to reach out. In my free time, I love traveling, hiking, playing tennis with classmates, karaokeing, eating KBBQ, and napping in the library. My advice to you is to get out of your comfort zone and try new things. For most of you, these will be the last few years of your academic career. So use them to intentionally stretch yourself and grow in ways that your future patients will be thankful for. For instance, talking to lawmakers in Sacramento about optometry was out of my comfort zone. But doing so grew my interest in advocating for the profession and for the needs of my future patients. Equally important is to not be ashamed to ask for help, and to ask early! You're not just joining a program but a family and everyone here sincerely wants you to succeed. With that said, congratulations on making it to MBKU and see you all in the fall!



Aaron Hunro

School of Physician Assistant Studies

Hey MBKU Fam! Welcome! My name is Aaron Hunro, PA-S and I am part of the Class of 2020 School of PA Studies. I am our class CAPA Student Representative and the MBKU Pre-PA Mentorship Club Co-President. I am passionate about mentoring aspiring PA students and utilize my platform and resources to inspire others. I'm from Long Beach, CA and am actually commuting every day. It's intense but manageable. So commuters, don't worry! I love giving back to my community through various projects and volunteer services including my "Project Thank You, America!". I'm thankful to have earned the PA Community Service Award and CAPA Ruth Webb Minority Scholarship this school year. Aside from community work, I enjoy making music, playing sports (I play in a co-ed beach flag football league with a couple of classmates) and doing photography! I'm excited to help you throughout your journey and beyond. Best of luck and feel free to reach out to me if necessary!



Nathalie Le

Southern California College of Optometry

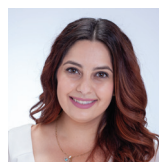
Welcome 1st years! My name is Nathalie Le and I am part of the OD class of 2022. I grew up in Lake Forest, California and graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo in 2015 with a degree in Biological Sciences. My hobbies include binge watching tv shows, searching for good places to eat, and taking long naps when time permits. One of my favorite things about MBKU is that there isn't a single person on campus that wants to see you fail; everyone from staff and faculty to fellow students and peers genuinely hopes for your success in professional school. Don't ever hesitate to reach out for help because there's definitely a resource on campus for you to contact. My advice to you all is to break out of your comfort zones and try things you've never tried before. Your first year is a great time to explore so don't let your school life take over your social life. Join any of the many clubs on campus, meet more of your fellow students, get involved! Congratulations on your acceptance and welcome to the MBKU family! Looking forward to meeting you soon!



Diana Lujan

College of Pharmacy

Hello and welcome incoming class of 2023! I'm so excited for you to start this new journey with MBKU! My name is Diana Lujan, and I'm a part of the class of 2022. I was born in La Mirada, California and grew up in Norwalk, California. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science from CSULB in 2011. As you can see, I'm definitely a So. Cal girl, so it only made sense for me to stay in California for pharmacy school! Some of my hobbies include biking at the beach, paddle boarding, and working out. I love Italian food, Mexican food, Sushi and have the biggest sweet tooth! I'm so proud to be a student here at MBKU for so many reasons. The faculty is so welcoming and always eager to help you succeed. Always know that we are all here to assist you in this new chapter of your life and make the transition as smooth as possible. I'm looking forward to meeting you all, but in the meantime enjoy your summer because P1 year comes in full force.



Aida Mahfood

School of Physician Assistant Studies

Hi, welcome to the MBKU family! My name is Aida Mahfood and I am a part of the PA class of 2020. I grew up in Burbank, California and graduated from California Lutheran University in 2016 with a degree in Biology. Prior to PA school I worked as an ER technician in Santa Clarita. My favorite hobby is golfing. I also enjoy country music, going to the beach, and sporting events. I am a huge Los Angeles Lakers and Dallas Cowboy fan! I love the close-knit community that MBKU has to offer. Everyone is constantly trying to help each other to do their best. I encourage you all to get to know your classmates and explore the beauty of Orange County together. Try to learn the most you can from your classmates and professors to be the best version of yourself and a great provider! My advice is to find the best ways to manage your stress, continue to do the things you love while in PA school, and have fun in your free time. I hope you enjoy your first year at MBKU! Congratulations on this amazing accomplishment!



Karen Mai

College of Pharmacy

Hello Class of 2023. Congrats to you all and welcome to MBKU "Pharmily". My name is Karen Mai and I am a part of the College of Pharmacy, Class of 2022. I was born in Vietnam and I currently live in Garden Grove, California. I graduated from Orange Coast College. I enjoy hiking and camping when I have free time. I have been to Angle Landing, Subway, The Wave, Antelope Canyon, and Bryce Canyon. Since MBKU offered a small class size and open-door-policy, I was able to know my classmates and faculty and staff quickly. Likewise, the staff and faculty know their students. Furthermore, the upper classmen are very supportive and willing to offer advice if needed. For all these reasons, I truly feel welcomed at MBKU. I am confident you will too when you start your pharmacy education at MBKU in August 2019. The current students, faculty, and staff are here to help you succeed in pharmacy school. Congratulations again on your acceptance to the COP 2023. Hope you enjoy your time at MBKU.

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Andrew McCan

Southern California College of Optometry

My name is Andrew McCan and I am in the OD Class of 2022. I grew up in Bakersfield, California and graduated from the University of California, Irvine in 2017 with my Bachelor's in Biological Sciences. My hobbies include watching Netflix, hanging out with friends and family, and taking long road trips. I love the O.C. and I am so excited to share this little slice of heaven with you! MBKU is great and I love the welcoming faces that are always on campus! I love that there are so many opportunities to meet people and become involved on campus. This past year I was lucky enough to be involved with the Class Board and help plan many exciting events, including a Yacht Party for my entire class! My piece of advice for anyone coming to MBKU is to be yourself and enjoy your time here. My hope for every incoming first year is to meet awesome friends, join amazing clubs and continue to find your passion for the eyes! Congratulations on becoming part of the MBKU Family! I cannot wait to meet you all!



David McWhorter

School of Physician Assistant Studies

Congratulations and welcome to the MBKU family! My name is David McWhorter, and I am a student in the School of Physician Assistant Studies class of 2020. Originally from central Illinois, a change in scenery, and of course weather, inspired a move to California in 2012. I am a U. S. Navy veteran and 2016 graduate of California State University- Fullerton with a degree in Kinesiology and a minor in Chemistry. My hobbies include traveling and spending time with my wife, Karla and English bulldog, Beefcake. I love the family atmosphere that is present throughout the entire MBKU campus. The numerous clubs and events promote a cohesiveness between faculty and students. I would encourage everyone to become involved in the many campus activities MBKU provides. It not only enriches your MBKU experience, but it allows you to connect with students and faculty from the other programs. Additionally, my advice to all incoming students is to encourage you to communicate with your peer advisor when you need any advice, or have any questions or concerns. Of course, school can be challenging, and no one knows this better than the students that have just gone through it. We are more than happy to help, as we were in your shoes just a year ago. Lastly, take care of yourself. Make sure to take breaks from studying by doing activities you enjoy such as exercise, Netflix, or hanging out with friends. Most importantly, form connections with your classmates and enjoy the first year of your graduate school experience! I look forward to meeting you in the fall.



Chris Obi

Southern California College of Optometry

My name is Chris Obi. I am member of the OD class of 2022. I completed my undergraduate degree at USC in Political Science and Biological Sciences. I worked in both, private practice and retail optical for a few years between USC and optometry school. I am an LA native and love to eat, so feel free to reach out for recommendations. I'm a big wine (and spirits) guy, an introductory sommelier, and this summer will be attempting my "Certified Specialist of Wine".

My pieces of advice are: take advantage of all the free food and raffle contests; take the opportunity to try new things and make friends with your classmates - they will be with you for the next 4 years and are in the same boat as you - leverage them! One important thing I have learned is to not

procrastinate and stay on top of everything. You don't have to spend all your time studying and reading ahead, but do not fall too far behind. Most importantly, have fun, enjoy yourself, and be sure to schedule "me" time.



Purvi Patel

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello everyone, my name is Purvi Patel and I am in the OD Class of 2022. I am a full-on SoCal girl. I grew up in Torrance and graduated from UCLA with a PsychoBiology degree in 2016. In my spare time, I love hanging out at the beach, reading, and binge-watching shows like there is no tomorrow. Seriously, I am always looking for new shows to watch! I also love to travel and explore new places (my favorite has to be studying abroad in England).

My advice is to make time for things outside of the classroom. This can still be optometry related like going to the different conferences and mission trips or getting involved locally in all the activities and clubs. It is a great way to bond with your peers, re-inspire or motivate you, and get free food and raffles! Also, don't forget to relax and do things you love. It is important to take a break from time to time. Try to nurture your relationships with your family, friend, and peers as they can be a great support system. Congratulations and I am really excited to meet you all!



Caroline Quan

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello! Congratulations and welcome to the MBKU family! My name is Caroline Quan and I am part of the OD class of 2022 (Go Eyevengers!!) I was born and raised in Cerritos, CA and graduated from UC Berkeley with a degree in Chemical Biology. When I'm not testing the limits of how much information I can fit onto a sheet of paper or creating jewelry out of shrink plastic, I also enjoy painting, playing tennis, making time-lapse videos, reading, and belting out Disney songs.

One of the wonderful things about MBKU is that there are so many opportunities to explore your interests both within and outside the field of optometry and even to combine those interests. A few of my friends/ classmates and I formed a band called The Occluders and we had a blast participating in the school talent show alongside our many other talented classmates. My advice is to take advantage of the wealth of resources that our school has to offer. Classes are definitely important but it's also worthwhile to spend some time attending events such as conferences and local optometric society meetings as well as club meetings and class socials, where you can interact with and be inspired by lots of other students, doctors, and leaders within the profession. Be proud of yourself for taking this next step in your journey and make the most of it! We're all here to help you so please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions. I can't wait to meet you all!



Jonah Resnick

Southern California College of Optometry

My name is Jonah Resnick and I am a member of the OD class of 2022. I grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota and graduated from The University of Minnesota in 2018 with a degree in Biology and a minor in Music. My hobbies include playing Frisbee, playing guitar, and bingeing TV shows. I love that MBKU has so many opportunities for students to be exposed to professionals in the area and how friendly the faculty and students are. I recommend utilizing your free time to have fun! Go to the beach, Disneyland, or just hang out with your classmates. School keeps you busy, but make sure to relax once

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in a while. Join the clubs that interest you and get involved, especially since there is free food at the meetings. Make sure to start good study habits early, and do not be afraid to ask for help. Congratulations for making it this far! Enjoy your time here at MBKU, and I cannot wait to see you on campus!

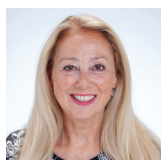


Rachel Rivera

Southern California College of Optometry

Hey there, welcome to MBKU! My name is Rachel Rivera and I am part of the Optometry program class of 2022. I grew up in Yorba Linda (local!) and I graduated with a degree in Microbiology from Cal

Poly in San Luis Obispo in 2018. In my free time I love to play tennis, walk my dogs, do some wood burning art, and check out local breweries and restaurants. There are so many fun things to do in the area - you'll never get bored! My favorite thing so far about MBKU is the amount of activities that are offered year round, such as club events, craft classes, mission trips to different countries with our awesome doctors, and even a day with puppies on campus before finals. My biggest piece of advice is to try to go to as many events as you can early on so you get a chance to meet everyone in your class and experience all this campus has to offer. I find that having a strong support system really helps me everyday. Additionally, don't be afraid to ask for help from faculty or other classmates! I've never met a more welcoming and helpful group of people than those right here on campus. Congratulations again on making it this far, you're going have an amazing experience here!

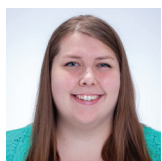


April Shaw

School of Physician Assistant Studies

Welcome to MBKU! My name is April Shaw and I'm a member of the PA Class of 2020. I grew up in Southern CA, attended undergrad at Cal State Long Beach

and served time in the military as a dietitian and then worked in the area of public health- so this is my second career! My passion is working with the underserved, especially children. I love being outdoors, hiking, bicycling, anything active. I also love to travel and have been to most of the countries in Europe. My favorite cities in Europe are Paris, and Budapest. I'm also a big Disney fan, and can't wait to get another Disney passport when I have more free time! I serve as the class secretary for the 2020 Student PA Society meetings and I highly recommend getting involved and serving as a board member. My advice to you as an incoming student is: YOU CAN DO THIS! You have to trust the system. It will seem like you have to find your comfort zone for studying and it may be different than what you've done before. But it's okay! We all go through that. MBKU has a knack for picking great PA students, and you will be great! Believe in yourself and don't be afraid to ask questions! The didactic year will go by so quickly. Try to relax and enjoy any free time you have! Congratulations!



Kristin Slingerland

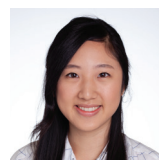
School of Physician Assistant Studies

Congratulations and welcome to the MBKU PA family! My name is Kristin Slingerland and I am in the PA program class of 2020. I grew up in Sacramento,

CA and I graduated from UC Davis with my B.S. in Neurobiology, Physiology and Behavior in June 2015. Prior to attending PA school, I worked as a clinical research coordinator for 5 years and as a medical scribe for 3 years. When I'm not in class, I love to travel, play board games, and go to Disneyland! I am very passionate about community service and serve as the Class of 2020 Health/Community Outreach Chair and MBKU OC Lions Club PA Liaison.

PA school is extremely stressful and time consuming, but it will also be the best time of your life. You will make lifelong friends and memories, and you will be learning how to do something you love. Remember to take a break from studying to sleep, decompress, and have fun. One of the reasons I love MBKU is that the schedule gives you a free weekend after each test. I PROMISE you will have time for yourself even though it may not seem like it at first. Trust me, I got married and bought an annual pass to Disneyland during my first year.

Starting PA school is scary and difficult, but you are on your way to becoming a healthcare professional and all your hard work will be worth it! Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or just need to vent. Good luck!



Prudence Tam

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello! My name is Prudence Tam, and I'm in the SCCO class of 2022. I'm originally from the San Gabriel Valley (626 HOLLAH) and attended UCLA

as a Psychobiology major for my undergraduate studies. It was my time at UCLA that largely cultivated my desire to pursue a career in optometry, so I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to be on this journey towards becoming an OD! When I'm not busy crying over very diligently studying my notes, you can catch me handlettering, baking, and enjoying quality time with loved ones over good food and iced lattes. I love that MBKU fosters an environment of support and encouragement. My peers truly do feel like family, and I am so glad that we have each other to celebrate the triumphs while also enduring the trials of graduate school together. As you embark on your graduate school journey, I encourage you to strive to take care of yourself and make time for the things outside of school that bring you joy! Remember that your academic performance ultimately does not define you nor serve as a measure of your worth. Your MBKU family is always here to help and uplift you, so don't hesitate to reach out to fellow classmates as well as our incredible faculty! I hope your first year of graduate school is full of wonderful new experiences, friendships, and even challenges that will surely be overcome. Congratulations, and welcome to MBKU!



Nina Ton

School of Physician Assistant Studies

Congratulations and welcome to MBKU! My name is Nina Ton, and I am in the PA class of 2020. I grew up in Garden Grove and graduated from California

State University of Fullerton in 2018 with a B.S. in Health Science. My health care experience includes being an emergency department scribe, cardiopulmonary rehab aide, physical therapy/chiro aide, and the lead program coordinator/researcher at the Fibromyalgia and Chronic Pain Center. I enjoy spending my free time drinking excessive amounts of boba, endlessly scrolling through Instagram for memes, and binging Netflix until it asks me if I'm still watching. All jokes aside, PA school is hard, and it might be the hardest thing you've ever done. So, my advice to you is to never give up. There may be moments where you feel like it's impossible to learn all of this information in time and like you don't know anything at all despite studying 24/7 but keep up that momentum and try to focus on learning, rather than just memorizing as much as you can. If you do this, I'm confident you'll be surprised at how much you do know when it's time to take the exam, despite possibly feeling unprepared or like you don't know anything at all. So work hard, and it will pay off. You got this class of 2021!

Meet Your Peer Advisors



John Trinh

College of Pharmacy

Welcome to MBKU! My name is John Trinh and I am part of the College of Pharmacy, Class of 2022. I am born and raised from a small town in Southern California called Oxnard, CA. I graduated from the University of California, Irvine in 2013 (Go Anteaters! Zot Zot!) with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health Sciences. Apart from school, you can find me spending time with my nephews and nieces, whether it's watching their basketball games at tournaments or watching them perform musical plays/dances at their school. I enjoy cooking, watching my favorite TV shows on Netflix/Hulu, spontaneously going on road trips, trying different food cuisines, and staying active by going hiking, lifting weights at the gym and running. I am a sports enthusiast! I love watching and playing basketball (Go Lakers!), football (Go USC!), and baseball (Go Dodgers!).

I am extremely excited for all you to start your professional healthcare career here at MBKU. It can be both exciting and nerve-racking, but I know each one of you can excel academically with the assistance of the supportive faculty and students here. My advice to you all is to manage your time out of class wisely and to stay resilient in your studies. There will be times when you want to give up after performing poorly on an exam or when things become overwhelming but know that everyone here is more than happy to assist with your success. Managing your time in studying and other responsibilities will help you excel. Remember to study hard but enjoy your first year of graduate school because time flies! Again, congratulations and I look forward to meeting you in the Fall!



Maria Tu

College of Pharmacy

Bienvenidos a MBKU! My name is Maria Tu and I am part of the COP class of 2022. I'm native to California but my family is originally from Ecuador. I grew up

in Newport Beach and love the area so much that I never strayed too far from home. I graduated from the University of California, Irvine in 2009 with a degree in chemistry and from Pepperdine in 2013 with a master's in education. My hobbies include cooking, listening to podcasts, and making boba runs with my daughter. I love spending time with my family and looking for new adventures with them. My best advice is to strive to maintain balance in your life while at MBKU. Devote regular time for yourself, those you love, and the activities that keep you sane. I love that MBKU has so many resources for wellness and academic help. It's also a wonderful place to make new friends and meet a diverse group of people. Finally, never feel like you're alone in anything. All of us at MBKU are here to help you reach the success you strive for. Reach out and ask questions! Enjoy this new journey and take advantage of everything that MBKU has to offer!



Nina Van

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello there! My name is Nina Van and I would like to welcome you to MBKU. I am a student of the OD Class of 2022. Born and raised in Long Beach, I went to UC Irvine for undergrad as a Biological Sciences major and am now here in Fullerton. You can tell I'm a SoCal girl! If you don't see me at the campus library, I'm probably eating at the latest Instagrammable spot, grabbing

Sharetea/7 Leaves, watching Netflix, or driving to LA for an adventure. A fun fact about me is that I was a dancer at Disneyland for their Chinese New Year Celebration in Mulan's Procession a few years back. It was the most surreal and exciting experience performing at my second home (I'm a huge Disney geek!).

Through this year, MBKU has become a place I can call home as well. I never expected this school to care about their students so much and the faculty to really want to get to know us. Administrators and professors are very approachable and care about what we have to say. I think that is why our school feels so family-like. My advice is to get to know everyone in your class, the upperclassmen, and the faculty on campus. These people will be your support system for the next 4 years and you will be theirs. Get involved in the clubs you like (and there's always free food at meetings)! First year is a great time to get involved and get to know what the school has to offer. All of these opportunities will come when you begin your journey in August, so get excited! The Peer Advisors will be there to help you transition, so don't ever hesitate to contact us when needed. Congratulations again and see you soon!



Melanie Vela

College of Pharmacy

Welcome to MBKU! My name is Melanie Vela, and I am part of the College of Pharmacy Class of 2022. I was born in Los Angeles, and currently live in Hacienda

Heights. I attended Azusa Pacific University and attained my Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and a minor in Honors Humanities. My hobbies include going on hikes, playing with my dogs, buying new earrings, eating nachos, and drinking a lot of coffee. MBKU is located in a great spot that's surrounded by a variety of coffee shops, which for a coffee lover like myself, gives me a variety of places to sit down and study with a good cup of coffee. One of my favorite things about attending MBKU is that there are many opportunities to get involved. Additionally, all the people, both faculty and students, are extremely nice, motivating, supportive, and genuinely want you to succeed. The first year of grad school goes by quickly, and my advice for you is to really take advantage of all the opportunities that are presented to you. Don't hesitate to get involved and don't hesitate to ask for help when you need it. Lastly, make sure you start off your first year with good study habits and destressing tools. Once you get into those good habits, your experience here at MBKU will be much more rewarding. Congrats on your acceptance to MBKU, and I look forward to meeting you in the fall!



Brian Vo

Southern California College of Optometry

My name is Brian Vo and I'm a part of the OD class of 2022. I'm from Dallas, TX and graduated from UT Austin with a BA in Biology (HOOK 'EM!). Disappointingly, I

don't have a cowboy accent, but I do have an unhealthy passion for a good steak and BBQ. I love rock climbing, scuba diving, and stuffing my face with questionable amounts of food. If anyone is looking to try out rock climbing or looking for a spot/belay let me know!

My first piece of advice to you, is to try and fully enjoy your summer and not stress too much about the upcoming quarter. Each and every one of you were hand-picked from hundreds of applicants to be a part of the SCCO and MBKU family, and you all have the capacity within yourselves to succeed in

Meet Your Peer Advisors

this program. However, do try to make time and take care of all aspects of your life. Mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual. Open yourself to your peers, and allow them to open themselves to you.

With this last season of Game of Thrones just ending, I thought this quote could help: "When the snows fall and the white winds blow, the lone wolf dies, but the pack survives." - Eddard Stark.

Maybe focus less on the lone wolf dying part, but there's truth in that as a class, you all will be more successful if you're all unified!



Joanne Vuong

Southern California College of Optometry

Hello, new MBKU family members!! My name is Joanne Vuong and I am in the OD class of 2022. I was born and raised in Southern California in the City of San Gabriel. I spent my undergrad years in hot heat of UC Riverside, majoring in Biology. I have many favorite pastimes, but a few include bingeing TV shows, hiking, snowboarding, finding new foodie spots, and just chilling with my pug, Cheddar. I am so excited for you all to start your new journey of optometry school at SCCO! Life here will be really rewarding – you'll learn from the best faculty, spend time with great classmates, and get to participate in many fun activities. My favorite memories during my first year has to be enjoying the company of my new friends whether that be during school gatherings, weekend conferences, or even stressful cram sessions. Your classmates will be your rock during the next four years so make sure to get out of your comfort zone a little and extend a friendly hello. Optometry school isn't the easiest, but your classmates will be there to both support and struggle bus alongside you. When school gets tough and freedom seems far away, don't forget to take a break, breathe, and just relax. For example, my friends and I like to get together at the end of a stressful midterm block to unwind, cook, and watch a movie. This really helps us celebrate our achievements and prepare for the next set of rough weeks. Take each step at a time and make sure to enjoy every moment because after four years, you're going to be optometrists!! Congratulations again for joining the MBKU family!



Alicia Zhang

Southern California College of Optometry

Welcome to SCCO! My name is Alicia Zhang and I am part of Class of 2022, the Eyevengers! I am from El Monte, CA and I graduated from UCLA in 2017 with a degree in Biology. I love trying new food places so if you're ever in need of any restaurant suggestions around this area, don't hesitate to ask! In my spare time, I like to listen to music and watch Netflix. I am so excited for you all to begin your journey towards being optometrists and I am honored to be part of this experience with you all! My advice for you is to put yourself out there and really take advantage of all the opportunities that come your way. Study hard but don't forget to live a little every now and then! Lean on your classmates and don't be afraid to ask for help. Optometry school might sound intimidating but it's going to be a fun ride so enjoy it! Once again, Congratulations and welcome to the opto-family!



Diana Zhang

College of Pharmacy

Hello everyone!!! Welcome to MBKU and congratulations on opening this very exciting new chapter of your life! My name is Diana and I am part of the COP 2022 class. So a little bit about me... I was born in Utah but grew up in Vancouver, Canada as well as Guangzhou, China. I spent most of my life living in China and I feel so grateful to have been able to experience life in multiple countries and learn about different cultures. I moved back here for college to attend Purdue University in Indiana, and graduated with a bachelor's in pharmaceutical science in May 2018. So as you can see, I'm kind of all over the place, which is why my greatest hobby is travelling – I can never stay in the same place for over 3 months without going to a new city or country! California has always been on my bucket list of places to live in, so I packed my bags and came to MBKU, which is one of the best decisions I've made because I have learned so much at this program in my first year and met such wonderful, kind classmates and faculties. The best advice I can give to all you first year students are to not be afraid to take advantage of any opportunity that comes your way, this could be a job application, a leadership position, or a professional conference where you could meet new people, because these are the experiences that help you grow both professionally and as a person. I can't wait to meet everyone, and once again, congratulations!

