

dear residents

Do Not Let Your Spirit Wane

April 13, 2025

Dear Residents,

As the academic year draws to a close, it's common to set our sights on the upcoming academic year or graduation as the case may be. This final quarter is when academic resolutions are made. Program leadership convenes to reflect on the past year and set goals for the coming one. Fellowship planning commences, and preparations are made for the graduation of departing residents and the onboarding of incoming ones. Naturally, interest in didactic activities tends to decline during this period. Morning report and noon conference participation dwindle, and "lunch and learn" sessions become "lunch and leave" affairs.

Many residency programs will make participation in these didactic sessions more than just expected; they will make it mandatory. In this program, I have relied on your intrinsic motivation to learn and have anticipated that while participation will fluctuate, I have assumed that limiting team census, consult volume, and clinic panels will provide you with the time and space to invest in your own education. Lately, participation has dwindled to the point where faculty members who are eager to assist you in learning have begun to wonder if the cause is being lost.

Intrinsic motivation generally outperforms extrinsic forces, especially when the task ahead of you requires creativity, critical thinking and complex problem solving. In his book ***Drive: The Surprising Truth of What Motivates Us***, [Daniel Pink](#) explains that intrinsic motivation has three important drivers:

- **Autonomy** – the desire to direct our own lives.
- **Mastery** – the urge to get better at something that matters.
- **Purpose** – the yearning to do what we do in service of something larger than ourselves.

Autonomy leads to agency. They are interrelated but slightly different concepts. While autonomy is the freedom from external control, agency is the capacity to make choices with intention and influence outcomes for yourself and others.

Accordingly, self-directed learning emerges as a path forward. Given the many avenues for learning – self-directed, experiential, and serendipitous, along with the proliferation of web-based information, apps, and podcasts, you may assume that morning report and noon conference are superfluous. They are not.

There is a downside to self-directed learning – it's based on a [Dunning-Kruger](#) principle, that we don't know what we don't know. A structured curriculum then becomes necessary to ensure that you learn the full depth and breadth of internal medicine.

Our team is fully revamping the noon conference curriculum, aligning in with the [American Board of Internal Medicine Blueprint](#) to ensure that you are broadly competent and confident at the end of your training here. I want to emphasize that we invest significant resources to develop and deliver a thoughtful curriculum and that your participation is the engine that motivates us to remain enthusiastic and engaged in your education.

As we wrap up the year and look ahead, I hope you'll take a moment to remember why you chose this path in the first place. We're here to support your learning, your growth, and your goals—but it only works if you show up. Not because you have to, but because you care. These sessions aren't just boxes to check—they're opportunities to sharpen your skills, challenge your thinking, and connect with people who are invested in helping you succeed. So, let's make the most of what's left this year, together.

Thank you for your support and Passover greetings to all who celebrate.

Dino Kazi