
California Student Symposium for Emergency Medicine

Tatiana Ramage, MSIII
Emerson Posadas, MSIV

VP Symposium 2014-2015,
UC Irvine Health School of Medicine



Nearly 150 attendees at the Western Regional Emergency Medicine Student Symposium (WREMS) this year explored emergency medicine (EM) topics such as FAST scans and acute asthma exacerbation, participated in mock interviews with California residency program directors, and learned “from the horse’s mouth,” so to speak, what qualities it takes to succeed in EM.

Beginning in 2006, this annual student symposium has been co-hosted by UC Irvine and University of Southern California. This year UC Irvine returned to organizing and hosting the event. One of the original cofounders of the symposium was in attendance, Dr. Warren Wiechmann, currently Assistant Clinical Professor of EM at UC Irvine and the Associate Dean of Instruction Technologies. It was no surprise that the day was bursting with technology. Paper programs were replaced by a smartphone app, in addition to iPad interview booths and “Selfie” stations that dotted the outdoor patio. Google Glass was raffled off to three lucky attendees for the day, and the program panel incorporated a live Twitter feed for real-time questions and comments.

The morning commenced with an exceptional group of speakers that included Dr. Chakravarthy, UC Irvine Residency Program Director, who gave the crowd-pleasing talk titled “A day in the life of an EM doctor: What Medical Schools don’t tell you!” Each speaker provided their own perspective on the good, the bad, and the ugly of EM and spotlighted what traits are crucial for success in the field.

Other highlights of this year’s symposium include the utilization of UC Irvine’s state-of-the-art simulation center to run two EM simulations, coordinated by UC Irvine Simulation Fellow Dr. Julie Sayegh. Another new feature this year was a mock interview and speed-mentoring workshop which proved to be a favorite amongst third and fourth year medical students. Students were able to have two hours of face-time with program directors for practice questions and feedback in an informal and relaxed setting.

This conference is designed for everyone, from undecided first year medical students to fourth year

medical students preparing for their EM interviews. By providing two tracks, one for the pre-clinical students and one for the clinical students, we were able to tailor educational workshops toward what was most relevant to their particular interests. In addition to the educational workshops, the symposium was a great social event for networking with EM physicians and medical students. This year there were twelve residency programs that sent representatives for the residency fair and students traveled from eleven different medical schools to be there.

Responses to the post-event survey indicated that the majority of attendees rated the symposium 5 out of 5 and 100% of the attendees rated the symposium at least 4 out of 5 (with 1 being poor, 3 being good, and 5 being excellent). One attendee commented, “wonderful speakers and residents who were willing to help out students” which highlights the real strength of the conference. The strength of the WREMS is that it brings together a large number of EM physicians (at this event there were over 30) who travel to talk to medical students, teach, answer questions, and provide resources to help these EM-interested students with their budding careers.



Figure 1. Dr. Erik Barton, Department Chair of Emergency Medicine at UC Irvine, at the iPad interview station.