

LEARNING TO TEACH, TEACHING TO LEARN.

My First Year at the WCOM

Michelle Solik, MD, MS, FACP



Dr. Michelle Solik is an Assistant Professor of Internal Medicine at Marian University WCOM.

What inspired you to join the medical school faculty at this point in your career?

I have been incredibly fortunate in that there has always been an educational slant to my professional career. First, it was as a resident representative for my internal medicine residency program's Program Evaluation Committee. Then, as a chief resident, I advocated for our program and residents' educational needs at the institutional level. My first job as an attending physician was one where I had the opportunity to consistently serve on a team made up of learners, all of whom taught me so much about how to be a good teacher, a good role model, and a good coach. Finally, as a program director for residency trainees, I tried to ensure they had

the tools and opportunities to become successful in their future careers. Through every step, I realized how lucky I was to have had great mentors who intentionally invested in my overall growth and development—not just in my knowledge and skills in the practice and teaching of medicine, but also in my evolving identity as a mother, a spouse, a friend, and a mentor. The opportunity to transition into a space that was focused on teaching, mentorship, and professional growth was an “aha” moment and what has ultimately felt like a natural progression for my career. I am grateful for the opportunity to help give back in the same way that others did for me—to spend time learning with and from our students, to support but also challenge them—all to help our students along this path toward becoming great physicians and humans.

What highlights would you like to share about your teaching background?

As part of a residency program leadership team, I had the privilege of working alongside students at all levels, whether in the hospital or in the clinic. During rounds, staffing new patients or stabilizing critically ill patients, there was always a shared sense of curiosity and

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drive to master knowledge, as well as a deep desire to do our best work for our patients. I learned so much from each of my team members, and they taught me more than they probably realized about how to be a good advisor as well as a good listener. These clinical experiences, coupled with my experiences as an educational advocate and leader, helped to reinforce my commitment to learner-centered education and helped me to recognize the role I wanted to play in our students’ development into not only good physicians but *great* physicians.

What unique features of teaching undergraduate medical education do you enjoy?

The part that I’ve enjoyed the most so far in this new role has been the opportunity to lean into my identity as a mentor and build relationships with our students. I love being able to visit with our students while they’re lined up outside the simulation center or spending

time in the atrium after lecture. I feel incredibly happy being able to meet with our students one-on-one—talking about their hometowns, how they got into medicine, their hopes for the future, and strategizing about how we can help them achieve their goals. I am so excited when I hear that they were able to have a great shadowing experience or recognize that they want to commit their life to a particular field and get excited sharing their “why.” And as a mentor, I get to listen, encourage, and offer perspective and support. What a privilege!

Was there a key experience so far this academic year that made a lasting impression on you?

Teaching in the lecture hall has been a humbling experience. I am constantly learning how to “teach the material” more effectively for future learners, and I am in awe of the critical thinking that is being demonstrated by the students when they email me with questions or stop by my office. The space that I’ve enjoyed the most so far in my time here at the COM has been the hands-on lab time I’ve shared with our students during the Introduction to Clinical Medicine (ICM) course. The thing that truly puts a smile on my face is when a student commits to a care plan or shares their thoughts openly with their peers. There is vulnerability and bravery in doing so. However, when they do, we learn something together, and witnessing their “lightbulb moment” is one of the most rewarding experiences as an educator. It’s in those

FUN FACTS *about Dr. Solik*



HOMETOWN:
Springfield, OH



UNDERGRADUATE:
Xavier University
in Cincinnati, OH



MAJOR:
Biology



WHY MEDICINE?
Service, leadership
and science — what
more could you ask for!



FUTURE PLANS:
Pretty simple: do things that
fill my cup, give me joy, and
allow me to be a good spouse,
a good mom, a good doctor,
a good teacher/mentor,
and a good friend.