From a student who finds involvement in medical school invaluable to the experience:

You know those people who say medical school is all work and no play? That medical students spend all their time with their noses in the books, or wasting away in a boring library? That they have absolutely no time to do anything but study? DON’T LISTEN TO THOSE PEOPLE.

If I’ve learned anything in my two years here at UASOM, it’s that while I study more than I ever have before, I also have had the chance to be involved in some of the most rewarding experiences and meet some of the greatest people I have ever had the pleasure of getting to know. I honestly believe that medical school can be four of the best years of any you experience. I know you’re probably thinking that I’m delusional, but medical school truly is what you make it. If you want to study all the time, well then go for it. But it is 100% possible to make it through school without giving up your other passions, or your social life. And while I’m in no way claim to have the fool proof recipe for success in med school, I do think the following advice will get the majority of you through the next four years without hating your lives:

1. Spend your first few weeks getting to know your classmates. Use Orientation to your advantage and meet new people. Your friends in medical school will become some of your closest. (How many other people will you spend time in an anatomy lab with?)

2. Get to know upperclassmen. I would have been completely lost my first couple weeks if it weren’t for the MS2s. Upperclassmen are all more than happy to impart the “wisdom” we’ve acquired (this letter is Exhibit A).

3. Get involved on campus. Attend lunch meetings. Go to workshops. You could spend 24 hours a day, 7 days a week studying and still not get through everything on your list. So find something to be a part of that you enjoy. Find something that reminds you why you came to medical school in the first place. It wasn’t to make straight A’s or be the smartest student in your class. It was to learn how to take care of others. Studying may teach you the facts, but no amount of studying will replace the hands on experiences available to you.

4. Time management is key. It will be your lifesaver. If you know how to manage your time, I guarantee you will be a much happier and well-rested individual no matter how busy your schedule is.

5. It’s quality over quantity. Most of us are used to being involved in pretty much everything. We came into medical school armed with a list of extracurricular and leadership roles that we were certain would get us into med school (and sure enough…here we are). Now the slate is essentially wiped clean. There’s no need to make up for it and join every organization known to UASOM students. Take some time to explore different ways to get involved and then pick a few organizations that you can really have an impact through.

Okay, enough from me. You’ll all figure it out soon enough. Until then, remember to study hard, make friends, get involved, and have fun! And most of all…GOOD LUCK!