

# COSGP NEWSLETTER



## COSGP WINTER BUSINESS MEETING UPDATES FOR COM STUDENTS:

COSGP Held its Winter Quarterly Business Meeting virtually January 11-12. Each COM had two representatives in attendance where they discussed key topics in Leadership, Student Finance, Global Health topics and opportunities for students, Wellness Resources, Board Study Tips, and collaborated with other COM leaders to find creative solutions to issues affecting each COM's unique student bodies. **Below you will find highlights and resources for students** discussed at the Business Meeting as well as COSGP Committee Updates and Board Relevant Topic Reviews. For full meeting minutes and topics discussed please reach out to your COM's COSGP Representatives.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

### DO Day on Capitol Hill 2026

- Virtual: March 21-22, 2026
- In Person: March 25-26, 2026 in D.C.

### National DO Day of Service (NDODs):

- April 25, 2026

Presidential Town Hall with Dr. Bob of the AOA

- Feb. 25, 2026
- Students: 6:30-7:30 p.m. CT



## Past Initiatives Links:

Wellness Toolbox

OMELA

Research Resources

Sample CV



# Let's Budget: The Med Student Guide

## Do You Need to Budget?

- Medical students face:
- Limited income
- High debt following the conclusion of our education
- Delayed earning potential

## Where to Start:

- Identify your Financial Goals
- Identify what you want your life to look like 5 years from now
- Write down the goals in present tense, be specific
- Each goal has a price tag, that you will need to budget for

## Key Financial Steps:

- With your goals in mind, organize your current income and expenses
- Find a budget template online.
- For most, Income = Student loans, scholarships, and side hustles
- Expenses can be
  - Fixed (rent, car payments, insurance)
  - Variable (food, gas, entertainment)
  - Financial Goals

## Hidden Costs of 4<sup>th</sup> Year

- Students on avg spend \$8,000
- Expenses Include:
  - Visiting rotation fees - \$100s-1000s, program specific
  - Sub-I travel and living expenses - \$1500-3000, depending on location
  - Application fees - \$2000-5000, depending on the number of programs
  - Interview travel expenses - \$0-1000s, many programs still offer virtual interviews
- Costs can be reduced with careful planning in the first 3 yrs of Med School

## Common Pitfalls

- Setting Unrealistic expectations
- Forgetting irregular or unexpected expenses
- No buffers for high spending periods
- Giving up after “one bad month”

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## Links to COSGP Finance Lecture Series Recordings:

➤ [Student Loan Discussion with The White Coat Investor](#)

➤ [Financial Advising Discussion with Endeavors Advising](#)



## ATHEROSCLEROSIS

Common form of arteriosclerosis  
(hardening of arteries)

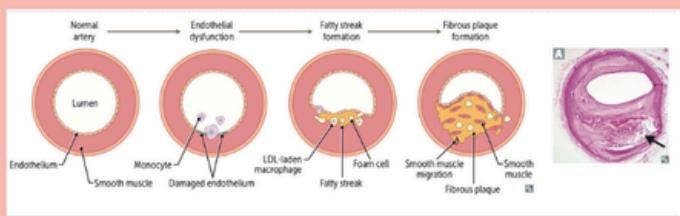
**Risk factors:** HTN, smoking, dyslipidemia, DM, family history, age, male sex, and postmenopausal.

**Symptoms:** Angina, claudication, can also be asymptomatic.

**Complications:** Ischemia, infarction, aneurysm formation, peripheral vascular disease, thrombosis, and embolism

### Pathophysiology:

Endothelial cell dysfunction → macrophage and LDL accumulation → foam cell formation → fatty streaks → smooth muscle cell migration, extracellular matrix deposition → fibrous plaque → complex atheromas



## IN THIS ISSUE:



Atherosclerosis



Marfan Syndrome



Congestive  
Heart Failure

## MARFAN SYNDROME

FBNI MUTATION ON CHROMOSOME 15

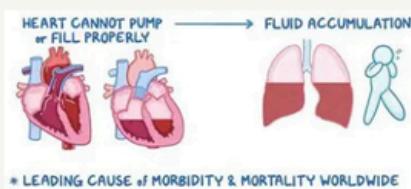


DEFECTIVE FIBRILLIN-1

### Symptoms:

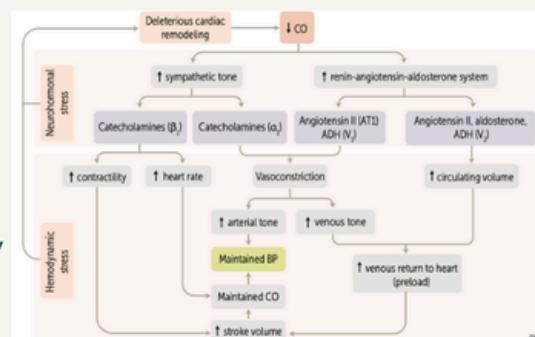
Arachnodactyly, lens dislocation (upward and temporal), aortic dissection, hyperflexible joints

## CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE

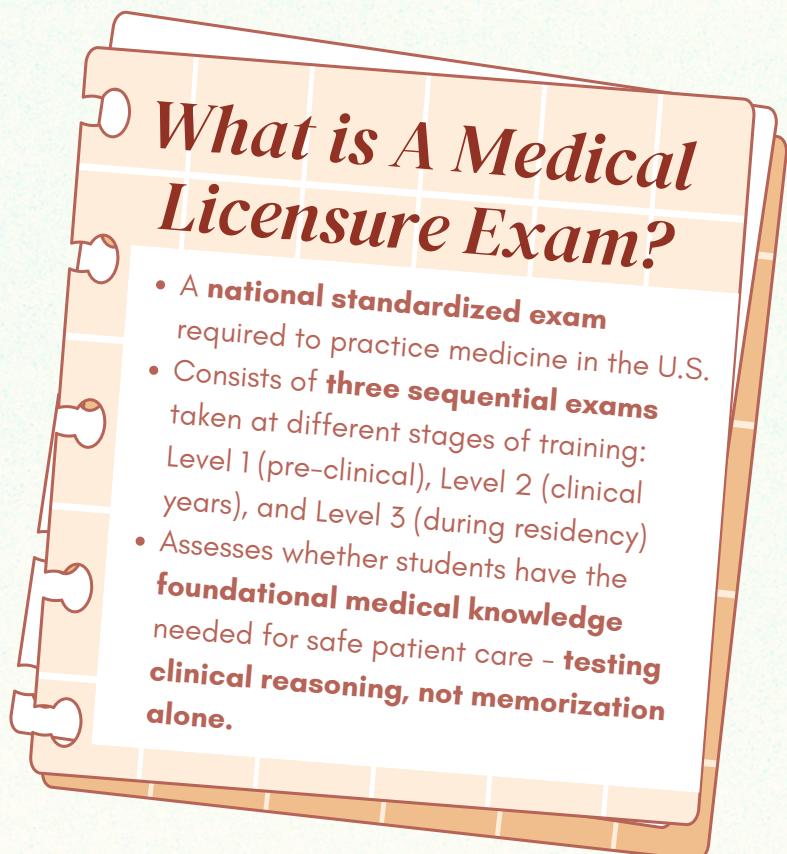


Cardiac pump dysfunction

**Signs & symptoms:** dyspnea, orthopnea, fatigue, S3 heart sound, rales, jugular venous distention, and pitting edema.



# Level Up Your Board Prep



## *Level 1 & Step 1: Side-by-side Comparison*

### Level 1

- A part of the COMLEX licensure
- Required for all DO candidates to take
- Computer based exam
- **320 questions = 8 blocks of 40 qs\***
- **Pass/Fail** but need 400 to pass\*\*
- Scores released after ~4-6 weeks

### Step 1

- A part of the USMLE licensure
- Not Required for DOs (optional)
- Computer based exam
- **280 questions = 7 blocks of 40 qs**
- **Pass/Fail** but need 196 to pass\*\*
- Scores released after ~2 weeks

## *Level 2CE & Step 2CK: Side-by-side Comparison*

### Level 2

- A part of the COMLEX licensure
- Required for all DO candidates to take
- Computer based exam
- **320 questions = 8 blocks of 40 qs\***
- Score of **400 to pass**
- Scores released after ~4 -6 weeks

### Step 2

- A part of the USMLE licensure
- Not Required for DOs (optional)
- Computer based exam
- **318 questions = 8 blocks of 40 qs**
- Score of **218 to pass**
- Scores released after ~2 weeks

# Level Up Your Board Prep

## Step & Level: Scheduling

### Level

- Set up an online account, register, schedule, or cancel a COMLEX-USA examination through your portal
  - [www.nbome.org](https://www.nbome.org)
- Because dates and seats are limited, candidates are advised to attempt to schedule an examination at least 120 days in advance of the desired test date(s).
- Make payment
- Be made **eligible by their COM** to take each COMLEX-USA examination (if level 2, you should already pre-approved)
- Testing dates available for scheduling up to six months in advance. **The examination test dates** can be found on the NBOME website.
- **Registration Fee: \$745**
- **Accomodations: <https://www.nbome.org/assessments/test-accommodations/>**

### Rescheduling

- Reschedule or Cancellation Fee
  - More than 30 days before the scheduled date: \$0
  - 6 to 30 days before the scheduled date: \$85
  - 1 to 5 days before the scheduled date: \$250
  - No Show Fee: Within 24 hours of the scheduled date: \$400

PRrep

### Step

- To apply for USMLE examinations, you must submit an application through the appropriate registration entity on website:
  - <https://www.usmle.org/apply-exams>
- Make payment (nonrefundable and nontransferable)
- Medical school verifies your enrollment status
- Schedule exam day/time with Prometric
- Confirm your appointment one (1) week in advance
- On exam day: Present scheduling permit and valid ID
  - [USMLE Checklist](#)
- **Registration Fee: \$695**
- **Accomodations: <https://www.usmle.org/what-to-know/test-accommodations/>**

Link to Info For Rescheduling: <https://www.usmle.org/reschedule-exam>

January 1, 2026	Prometric Testing Region	Step 1	Step 2 CK	Step 3
46 or more days before (but not including) the first day of the scheduled test date	All testing regions	No Fee	No Fee	No Fee
31-45 days and before (but not including) the first day of the scheduled test date	All testing regions	\$35	\$35	\$35
6-30 days before (but not including) the first day of the scheduled test date	All testing regions	\$100	\$100	\$100
5 or fewer days before (but not including) the first day of the scheduled test date	US and Canada	\$142	\$160	\$285*
5 or fewer days before (but not including) the first day of the scheduled test date	Outside the US and Canada	\$365	\$410	N/A

## Tips for Studying



Important things to remember...

You don't know until you try

2) YOU need to invest in YOUR plan

3) Quantity does NOT mean quality



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## What's Step got to do with it?

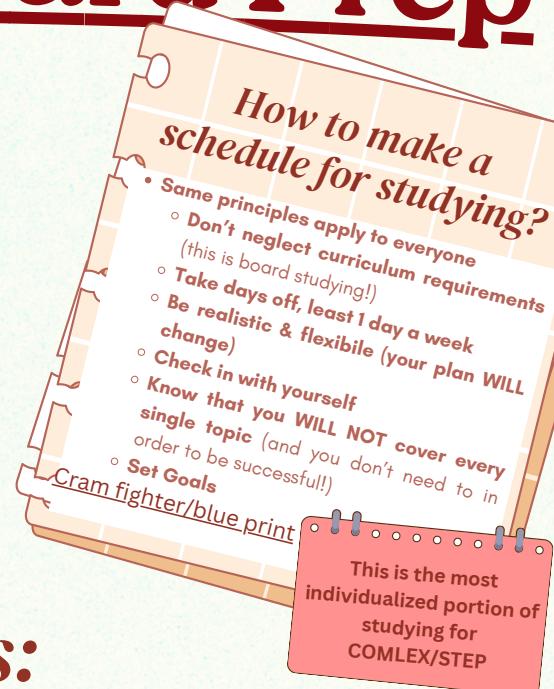
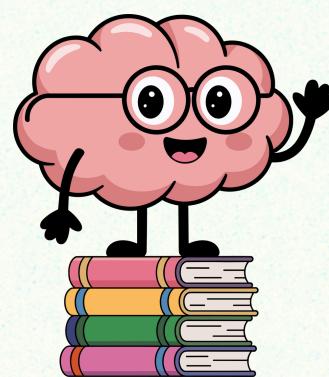
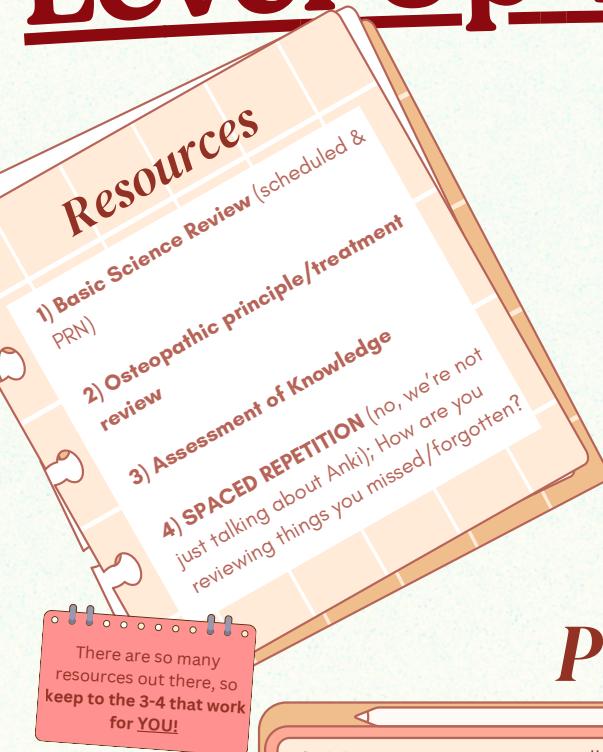
While Step is not required to become fully licensed, it is understandable that some may decide to take it for a variety of reasons.....

- Specialty Competitiveness
- Desired Residency Region
- Potential Fellowship Opportunities

If you are considering/unsure if taking Step is the right decision for you, please speak to your Academic Affairs and get a better picture of your situation!

NRMP Charting Outcomes for U.S. DOs

# Level Up Your Board Prep



## Practice Tests:

**3-4 Practice tests** is generally recommended. Stamina is important!

**Many of your schools provide 1/2 COMSAEs; usually don't come with answer keys**

**Avoid overanalyzing** Q-bank score/practice test performance on Reddit

**Student COMSAEs with answer keys** available for \$60, different from COM forms

**NBME practice exams**, although geared for STEP, do offer probability of passing (plus a lot of metrics)

**Free 120: NBME product** that is 120 questions and free; usually taken 3-4 days before either exam



## Wellness During Studying

### Consistency is KEY:

- Stick to your schedule
- It's more important than completion

### Allow for flexibility while keeping yourself accountable:

- Being flexible reduces anxiety and ensures you are able to still complete tasks with the least amount of anxiety if your schedule needs to change

### Self Care is NOT optional:

- Take adequate breaks, rest, sleep
- Talk to a friend
- Study with a group in quiet
- Change up study spots
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Treat yourself to your favorite coffee, snack, lunch, etc to reward yourself along the way!

# WELLNESS TOOLKIT

## LINK TO WELLNESS TOOLKIT



### 9 Dimensions of Wellness:

1. Physical Wellness
2. Emotional Wellness
3. Intellectual Wellness
4. Social Wellness
5. Spiritual Wellness
6. Occupational Wellness
7. Environmental Wellness
8. Financial Wellness
9. Creative Wellness

### WHAT IS THE WELLNESS TOOLKIT?

- This is a resource that helps highlight all 9 dimensions of wellness that we and fellow medical students should be educated on and encouraged to connect with.
- This website contains **definitions, facts, extra resources, and wellness events ideas** that fall under each dimension so that you can more easily bring well-rounded wellness supports to your own college of osteopathic medicine and maybe beyond into your future practice as an Osteopathic physician!



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### FEEDBACK?

COSGPVC2@AACOM.ORG  
WELLNESS TOOLKIT WEBSITE

TELL US YOUR THOUGHTS





## Lung Disease

### Restrictive

#### Pathology

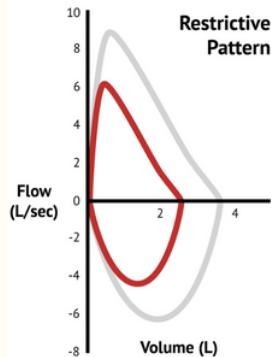
Lung volume is reduced due to process impairing inspiration. These diseases are characterized by lung VOLUME problems.

#### Differential

- Pleural Effusion
- Sarcoidosis
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Neuromuscular disorder
- Pneumonia
- Asbestosis/Silicosis
- Trapped Lung
- Kyphoscoliosis

#### Clinical Findings

- Dyspnea, chronic cough (typically dry)
- Inflammatory changes on chest imaging, including fibrosis
- Total Lung Capacity < 80% of expected
- FEV1/FVC < 0.8 where both FEV1 and FVC are low



#### Pathology

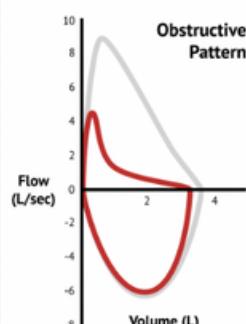
Diffuse airway disease that can limit airflow in or out of the lungs. These diseases are characterized by increased resistance to airflow due to diffuse airway disease.

#### Differential

- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
  - Emphysema
  - Chronic Bronchitis
- Asthma
- Bronchiectasis
- Bronchiolitis
- Cystic Fibrosis

#### Clinical Findings

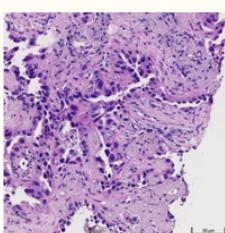
- Dyspnea, wheezing, chronic cough with sputum production
- Blue Bloaters/ Pink Puffers
- FEV1/ FVC < 0.7
- Typically, an older smoker with sedentary lifestyle



## Lung Carcinomas

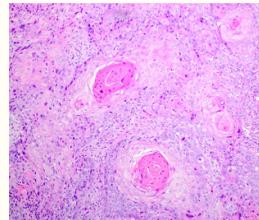
### Adenocarcinoma

- Most common type in nonsmokers
- Tend to be in periphery of lung
- Gain-of-function mutations (EGFR, KRAS, ALK)
- Histology shows glandular formation and mucin production



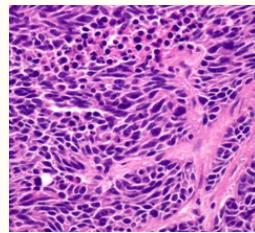
### Squamous Cell Carcinoma

- Central tumor arising from metaplastic squamous epithelial cells
- Major risk factor is smoking
- More common in men
- Histology shows intercellular bridges and keratin pearls



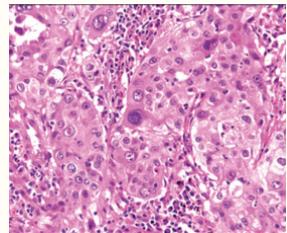
### Small Cell Carcinoma

- Centrally located tumor of neuroendocrine cells
- Major risk factor is smoking
- Poor prognosis
- Histology shows small cells with scant cytoplasm, fine "salt and pepper" chromatin, numerous mitoses, and areas of necrosis



### Large Cell Carcinoma

- Non-small cell carcinoma without definitive squamous or glandular differentiation
- Diagnosis of exclusion
- Histology shows large nuclei, prominent nucleoli, anaplastic features, and moderate cytoplasm

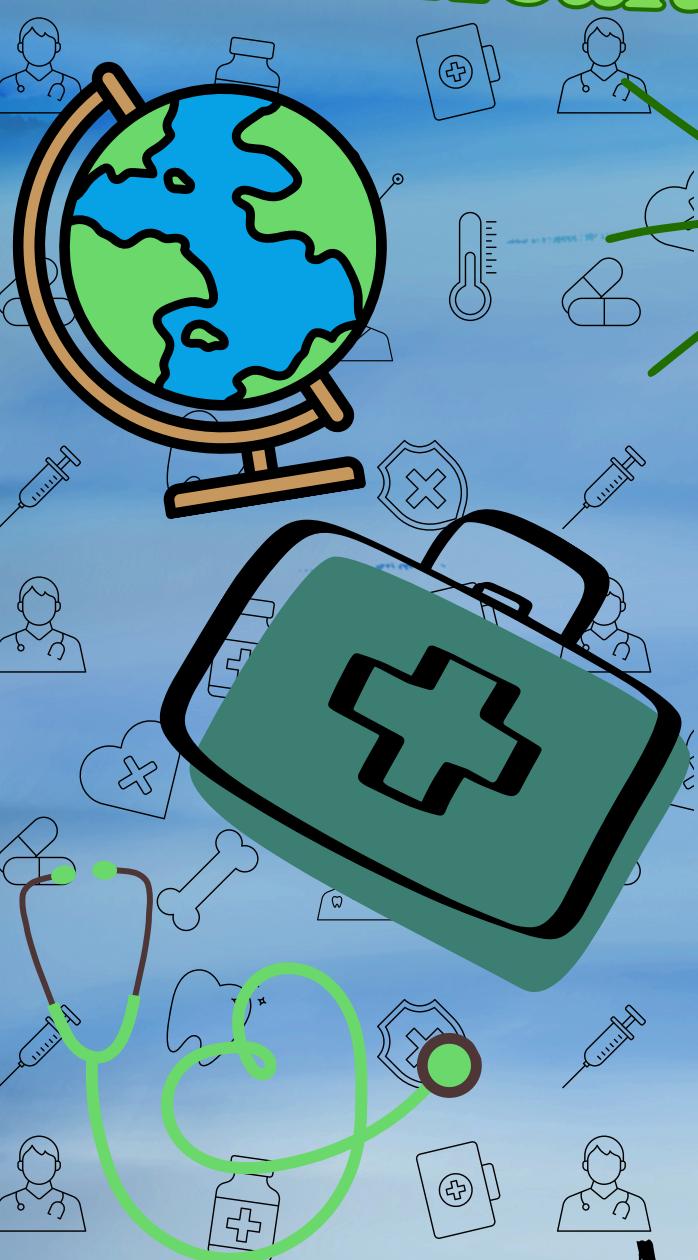


# Global Health Org Spotlight



Founded in 1961 DOCARE International is a medical outreach organization dedicated to providing healthcare to under-served communities around the world. DOCARE provides care via two approaches: short-term global health outreach trips and permanent continuity of care clinics.

Short-term outreach trips are generally one to two weeks in length and provide opportunities for medical students and professionals to volunteer their healthcare services to a community. Permanent clinics provide continuity of care in selected areas and permit medical students and residents to complete one-month rotations. In all cases, DOCARE works with local physicians and nonprofit organizations to sustain assistance, provide appropriate medical supplies, and ensure a positive impact.



# COM Student Activity Spotlight

## Mr. VCOM Pageant

The VCOM-Carolinas Student Government Association has proudly partnered with our SOMA chapter to support the planning of their annual Mr. VCOM Male Pageant, a campus tradition that celebrates leadership, creativity, and service. With the support of SGA, student organizations came together to nominate contestants who will showcase their talent, professionalism, and dedication to VCOM during the competition.

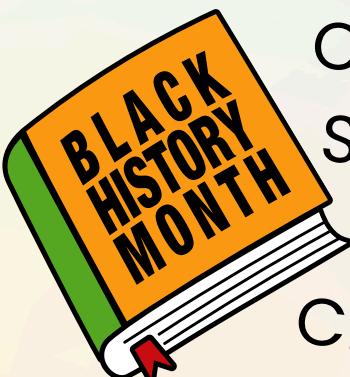
This exciting event will feature multiple rounds and a Spirit Week leading up to the main pageant, giving students the opportunity to show their school pride through themed days while also giving back through a campus-wide canned food drive benefiting local food shelters.

Mr. VCOM is not only a fun and memorable social event, but also a powerful example of collaboration among student organizations and a meaningful platform for philanthropy and community service. The success of this event truly highlights the strength of student leadership and collaboration at VCOM-Carolinas.



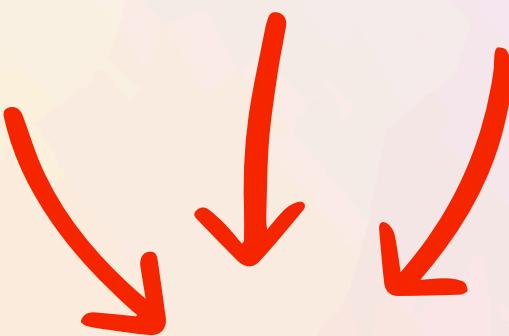
# Stay Up to Date With COSGP

Congrats to all our COM  
SDOY, GSOY, & SROY Winners!!!

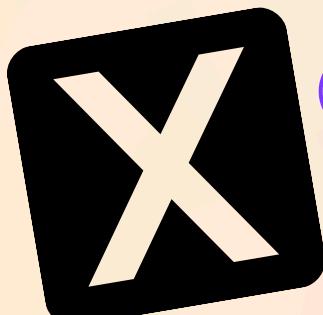
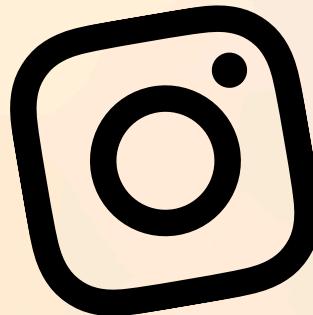


!!! **COMING SOON** !!!

COSGP X SOMA Black History Month  
Student Spotlights and an Exciting  
Guest Speaker  
Check out our Socials for Updates



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