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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear AMS Community and Friends,

Welcome to the Medical Student Senate's inaugural issue of Systole: A Force for Progress at the Heart of AMS! The Systole newsletter series will go out bi-monthly; its sister publication (let's see if you can figure out the name) will be published once a semester as a way to reflect on the completion of major projects and initiatives, as well as a way to evaluate where we plan to go from there.

The Medical Student Senate represents the student body (YOU) before the University and AMS administration and committees. In 2019-2020, we will foster an environment of collaboration, communication, and transparency in all of the Senate's work, with particular emphasis on projects regarding diversity, academics and mentorship, and student wellness.

In this issue of Systole, we highlight the major initiatives that are already underway. Briefly, I want to highlight two of those initiatives here:

- **LCME Independent Student Analysis (ISA) Report**: The ISA team consists of students across the 4 years. We have collected the survey data (thank you all for your raw and honest responses), done a preliminary analysis, and are now in the process of drafting the report for the purposes of AMS's re-accreditation.

- **Feedback on InCUS Recommendations**: We recently submitted a public comment on the USMLE score reporting preliminary recommendations from InCUS. The feedback, which you can find here, was informed both by anonymous comments collected from students and discussions with Senators at general Senate meetings.

We also have some NEW and exciting developments that I’ve been eager to share with you all:

- **New website and social media**: Erica Veazey, Chair of Communications, tells us more about our new website and Instagram profile on page 5.

- **New Senate Mission Statement**: A task force of students developed an official mission statement for Senate. It embodies the core values of our medical student body and will serve as a fundamental guide for the work that the Senate carries out. I would like to say thank you to the team of students that worked with me to develop this new vision: Joey DiZoglio (MD '20), Devin Morris (MD-ScM '21), David Lee (MD '21), Sophie Demuynck (MD-ScM '21), and our Vice President, Rob Williams (MD '23). You can find the full mission statement on page 3.

As you can see, we cannot do this without you! So, this is your “call to action.” We want to hear from you! Please use this newsletter to catch up on the highlights from this summer, attend the next Senate meeting on August 22nd @ 6pm in room 270, and reach out to members of YOUR Senate in person or via email at ams-senate@brown.edu. Thank you for allowing me to serve you, and I am excited for what 2019-2020 has in store for us!

With gratitude,

Eloho E. Akpovi, M.S.
MD-ScM ’21
President
AMS STUDENT SENATE

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alpert Medical School Student Senate democratically organizes and represents the interests of our diverse student body. We facilitate improvements to school policy and operations as well as exercise our voice in the larger healthcare system to better prepare excellent and conscientious medical professionals.

CORE VALUES

Our work will be guided and informed by our commitment to fostering a culture of advocacy, equity, diversity, communication, and accountability.

1. Advocacy: Advocate both for a medical school that nurtures socially and critically conscious health professionals through its curriculum, operations, and community engagements, while providing access to resources that support students' academic success and mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well being.

2. Equity & Diversity: Promote historically conscious and culturally equitable practices within the framework of medical education, including the recruitment and retention of a diverse staff, faculty, and student body; the advancement of a structurally humble medical curriculum where the rights, dignity, and responsibility of the patient are emphasized; and the development of a culturally inclusive learning environment.

3. Communication & Accountability: Uphold open-channel communication between medical students and other components of the medical school and University, ensure that we operate within the interests and wishes of the student body, and acquaint both students and the administration with novel concerns and projects in order to foster a more concordant and united school community.
One such project is this very newsletter series, Systole & Diastole, which will be overseen hereafter by the Communications Committee. Another project, in collaboration with the Student Wellness Board, is the start of new group gym courses available to all medical students at the Nelson Fitness Center. Many other smaller projects are in the works, and between all of us on the committee, we are constantly working to improve upon what we already have at AMS to make something new.

Much of this work has come out of a collective dedication between students and the administration to improve upon how we communicate, particularly with regards to the culturally inflammatory incidents of last year. We cannot change those events or their respective consequences. However, many people inside and outside of the Senate are working to build a future for the school where we acknowledge and learn from the regrettable past. Many hard- fought victories came of the incidents of last year, most notably including the addition of "commitment to anti-racism" to the school's mission statement. This work from students led to the formation of a Working Group comprised of students and faculty which convenes monthly, dedicated to address the tension within the school community. Many of these issues will take more foundational changes to tackle, and through large- scale initiatives that we are putting together, we can take the school community in a more inclusive and welcoming direction for its URM members.

Creating open roads for communication between students and administration is a major goal for the Progress Committee, and so we all urge you to come forward with ideas for bills that we or other appropriate committees would be happy to assist you in drafting. We may have our own ideas, but it is through the insight of the students that the Senate has the power to create change at the school.

Check out the "Senate Updates: Q & A" for more!
MEET THE SENATE E-BOARD
COMMUNICATIONS

ERICA VEAZEY, MD ’21

The Communications Committee is dedicated to improving dialogue at AMS. Whether we're broadcasting student voices to the administration or breaking down barriers between class years, we want to connect our community. Our goals for this year include increasing the transparency and awareness of the amazing things that are happening in our community. We want to do this by revamping our website and developing an Instagram account with updates from each Senate meeting. We look forward to hearing from and talking with all of you this year!

Stay in touch with us!

- Follow us on Instagram: @amssenate
- Check out the NEW Senate website (brown.edu/go/medsenate)! You can find useful resources as well as information on how to interact with Senate, propose new bills, or get involved.
The Academics & Mentorship Committee coordinates several initiatives to improve the various resources available to students at AMS:

- **AMS Research Collective:** We have been gathering research experiences from AMS students over the past several months with the hope of connecting underclassmen and with excellent mentors and projects.

- **Senate Mentorship Initiative:** We are rolling out a new program this year to foster mentorship between 3rd and 4th year students. Individual mentors for clerkships as well as specialty specific advising will be available.

- **Study Resources:** Many of you have filled out our recent survey on the resources you used to study for pre-clinical years, wards, and shelf exams. We hope to use this data to work with OME on hopefully subsidizing the most high yield study tools. Stay tuned.

Check out the "Senate Updates: Academics & Wellness" for more!
The Finance & Membership Committee has a continued focus on transparency for pre-clerkship electives and student interest group leaders. It is our desire to make funding a fluid process while maintaining open lines of communication. Our vision of increasing student interconnectedness between the Jewelry District and College Hill will continue in the months and years to come. It is also our hope to have a reserve of funds to promote milestone celebrations for the classes of MD ‘20, MD ‘21, MD ‘22, and the incoming MD ‘23. The end of the 2018-2019 year culminated with the “Bill to Amend the Senate Finance Committee Guidelines to Commit to Action on Climate Change.” A sustainability focus has been developed and will be implemented in the Fall of 2019 with a focus on healthy food options, wasteless spending requests, and more targeted funding allocations.

We are working to produce a polished final product that will allow for seamless transition between incoming senators moving into co-chair positions. It would also be in our mutualistic benefit for both the senate and student body to have a more fluid and clear funding cycle. Our current standard of using Google Forms leaves room for improvement and does not create the proper metrics to ensure future Finance committee members have adequate data backing their decisions and to refer back upon when questions arise. With better resourcing of available programs and spreadsheets, the Finance committee hopes to make a current rolling budget available for the treasurers and leaders of elective and interest groups.

You can reach the Chairs of Finance and Membership at brownmedfinances@gmail.com.
MEET THE SENATE E-BOARD

ACTIVITIES

The Institutional Affairs section of the Activities Committee coordinates student-wide social engagement including:

- Annual AMS Gala,
- Class celebrations to mark those very important checkpoints...
- "Lunch with the Deans" (Deans Elias, Tunkel, and Cyr) series,
- Incorporate wellness and healthy living into life at 222 Richmond Street, and
- Most importantly, serve as a voice on Senate to make your suggestions/plans for AMS a possibility.

I took on this position with the goal of helping AMS students feel celebrated and at home in our community and I look forward to helping make that a reality this year!

The goal of the External Affairs section of the Activities Committee is to enhance our community with other graduate and health professional students. We plan to do this through several avenues:

- Partner with nursing students to do fundraising walks together. Last year we participated in the National Alliance on Mental Illness Walk and the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk in October.
- Partner with masters and PhD students to have them give short talks on their fields of study following lectures in the first two years of medical school.
- Start a new initiative to learn more about our peers in other healthcare fields and what they do on a daily basis through a “bring your healthcare peer to work day.” We hope this would lead to better communication and collaboration as we learn more about each other and how our daily tasks overlap as well as differ.

We are very excited about the goals for the year and always open to new suggestions or interest in making these goals a reality!

Check out the "Senate Updates: Academics & Wellness" for more!
Many projects have taken shape over the summer, with the intent to improve quality of life and the academic experience for students. That being said, there are also many resources already in place at AMS that not many students know about, and we’d like to highlight those as well in this section. To find out more about the resources available to students at AMS, check out the “Resources” page of the NEW Senate website.

- Starting this year, students will be able to access the various gym classes at the Nelson Fitness Center for FREE, with no attendance limit. More information on the individual classes and their schedules are available on the Nelson’s website, and all you need to do is show your ID and let them know that you’re a medical student. It’s that easy! Thank you to Parker Woolley and Shital Shah for helping make this happen.

- Peapod, the home grocery delivery for Stop and Shop, has a home delivery program for students and staff at the medical school. With a minimum order amount of $60, you can use code “AMSBROWN” during checkout if you’re a new customer to Peapod to take advantage of:
  - Free delivery for three months (from your first order)
  - $5 of each order for one year (from your first order)

- Work is underway to integrate cultural competencies and social awareness further into our medical education. Through a collaboration with the Senate, OSA, and ODMA, this curriculum will be designed to train medical students in understanding various interpersonal dynamics they will encounter and their nuances. Some elements include respect, safety, inclusion, bystander activism, and recognition of privilege with regards to race, class, sex, and gender. While this process will take time, we are committed to developing a program that will be comprehensive, engaging, informative, and subject to growth.

- Plans to improve our experience at the school itself are in the works! Have you enjoyed the standing desks in the academies? Some might end up being placed in the library as well! Annoyed by the Red Academy side door not opening on both sides? The work order has been placed. Sick of someone’s crumbs in the seminar rooms while you’re studying? Who knows, there might be wipes available soon in each room so that you can clear the out before you start your cram session.
Questions always linger in the minds of students at AMS, and there honestly isn't enough space or time to explain ALL of the details. In order to address the most high-impact changes at the school, only a few things will be highlighted in Systole's "Senate Updates" section. Instead, many others will be covered within the note from the office who made the initiative, and many of the more easily answered questions will be posted here in this Q & A. If you'd like any more information regarding something covered in this Q & A, please email ams-senate@brown.edu to reach us. If there's a question you'd like to see featured in the Q & A (and is of the appropriate length to be added here), use this handy form to ask!

What's the difference between this and "Vital Signs"?
Well, aside from our charm, Systole and Diastole are Senate-run newsletters that will provide updates on major/minor projects, with the purpose of keeping students informed of progress and keeping school legislators accountable (so things don't fall through the cracks). Vital Signs will be coming directly from the school administration, and will reflect more global changes to the school. Through "Vital Signs", new AMS/Biomed initiatives are made known more easily, and students can have a clearer idea of the focuses of the administration.

Does the admin know that parking / shuttle use is a problem at RIH / WH?
Absolutely. Unfortunately, that requires further conversations with Lifespan to negotiate a better plan for students on rotations, so while talks have begun in the medical school on how to tackle this problem, it will take Lifespan's approval to get a plan in place. (Expect this to come up again...we sure do!)

Can we have a financial consultant available to students that is qualified to help us navigate our longer- term finances within and beyond our time at AMS?
We have spoken to administration to begin this process to establish some form of consultation for students, given that the current structure of the Financial Aid office isn't equipped to discuss strategic financial decisions for students. The drafted bill will highlight student needs, from preparation to pay back exorbitant student loans and consolidations, to spending strategies and efficient use of savings while tackling the cost of medical education. Please feel free to reach out to your senators if you wish to provide your input and perspectives in the design of this bill.

Why do we still use USMLE-Rx and not other, more recognized resources?
Given the ubiquitous use and high cost of more comprehensive and accepted paid services, most notably UWorld, we found it practical to push for the subsidy of different resources for students to prepare for exams they must take across the years of their medical training. Thanks to those who responded to a survey earlier in the summer, we have quantitative and qualitative data to present to the OME, and will be meeting with faculty shortly to discuss alternative study resources for students.
Welcome MD Class of 2023! This is always a wonderful time of the year as we welcome another outstanding medical school class. I would also be remiss if I did not welcome back the MD Class of 2022 (hope you had an enjoyable and productive summer), offer my best to the MD Class of 2021 as they continue their clinical clerkships, and recognize the MD Class of 2020 as they begin the residency application process.

In working with the leaders of the Medical Student Senate, I have been asked to provide a monthly message to highlight important initiatives at the medical school and more globally in medical education. I wanted to take the opportunity to reflect on the USMLE examinations. Many of you are aware that there is a national dialogue around whether the USMLE examinations should be reported Pass/Fail rather than the current 3-digit score. This discussion gained clarity at a meeting of the AMA’s Accelerating Change in Medical Education consortium schools that we hosted at AMS in April 2018.

In follow-up to that meeting, I was invited to participate in the Invitational Conference on USMLE Scoring at a meeting convened at the National Board of Medical Examiners in Philadelphia in March 2019 around this controversial topic. Preliminary recommendations from that meeting were recently disseminated, and the comment period ended on July 26, 2019. Although I understand the controversies, I am in strong favor of this change given the impact that scoring of the USMLE exam has had on the residency application process and student wellness, and the need to address racial/ethnic demographic differences that currently exist in performance on the USMLE examinations as well as potential bias within the exams. I, and others at AMS, added our strong recommendation to disrupt the current system and take the bold first step of instituting a Pass/Fail score reporting for all USMLE examinations, in combination with a definition of “common sense” competencies that residency programs can use to evaluate prospective residency applicants. Without disruption, I don’t believe there will be the impetus for change. We anxiously await the final decision, but I see this as a “game changer” for medical education and one that is long overdue. Stay tuned.

In the coming months:
- Opening of the new building at 225 Dyer Street
- Criteria for selection of AMS medical students into Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society
Curriculum on Opioid Use Disorder

Since 2015, the Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University (AMS) has developed and implemented a longitudinal, integrated curriculum around Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT). This curriculum, which begins in the first year IMS curriculum (within Brain Sciences) and Doctoring and continues into the clerkships, focuses specifically on what OUD is and how to treat it.

All students who graduate from AMS, as a result of this curriculum, can prescribe MAT (Buprenorphine specifically) in Rhode Island once granted a full Rhode Island license. The Office of Medical Education and Continuous Quality Improvement is working nationally to enable students to prescribe MAT upon graduation regardless of practice location (and hope to have this implemented sometime in the fall).

AMS is the first medical school to have its curriculum count for MAT training. For its efforts, AMS was awarded an American Association of Medical Colleges Innovation Award. In addition, faculty from the OME-CQI met with the Freshman Working Group on Addiction in Washington D.C. in June to discuss their work.

LCME Re-Accreditation Updates

- We’ll have an LCME Consultation September 24 & 25, 2019 with Dr. Veronica Catanese, LCME Co-Secretary and Senior Director, Accreditation Services.
- Members of the Steering Committee will be working with the AMS Student Senate to select students to participate in several portions of the site visit.
- The LCME Steering Committee met last month and reviewed the quantitative data from the Independent Student Analysis. Thank you to all of our students for providing us with this valuable information! The Steering Committee also provided feedback on the list of faculty and administration who will meet with LCME site visitors during our site visit: October 4-7, 2020. Please note you will receive an email in the coming weeks with more specific information if you are asked to attend one or more session(s).

For more, check out AMS Vital Signs July 2019 emailed out on July 25, 2019.
Longitudinal Mentorship

The official launch of the Dr. Mary B. Arnold Mentors program occurred in April 2019. These mentors will work with students longitudinally across the four years of medical school. 3rd year students were assigned their mentors in April; 1st and 2nd year students will meet their mentors this month.

NEW Learning and Accessibility Specialist

Introducing Lorrie Gehlbach, PhD! In her new role as Learning and Accessibility Specialist, Dr. Gehlbach will be responsible for the academic accommodations process for medical students, and will provide individual consultations regarding test-taking and study skills for medical, Gateways, and PLME students. Dr. Gehlbach is located in room 266 on the second floor and can be reached at Lorrie_Gehlbach@Brown.edu.

NEW Associate Dean for Student Affairs

Roxanne Vrees ’98 MD’03 RES’07 has been appointed as the new Associate Dean for Student Affairs. As Associate Dean for Student Affairs, Dr. Vrees will oversee the Office of Student Affairs and its mission to support medical students in their development both personally and professionally, and have a major role in student advising, career development, and wellness initiatives. With her dedication to medical education and to the development of our medical students, Dr. Vrees will be an excellent leader for this critical area of the Medical School. Dr. Vrees will begin this new role on September 3, 2019. Check out the next page to read her personal statement!

Please note that Jordan White, MD, MPH will indeed be continuing with the office in a part-time role as Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.
Dear Students,

As you gear up to start this important chapter of your lives, I wanted to extend my heartfelt welcome to you all on behalf of the Office of Student Affairs and also take a moment to share a bit about myself as we begin to get to know each other. I was born and raised in Jamaica, West Indies and as a first generation college student and the only physician in my family, I have a unique appreciation for the true privilege it is to be a physician and patient advocate. I found my way to Brown as a student in the Program in Liberal Medical Education in 1994 and went on to complete both medical school and residency training here. My clinical work as an Academic Specialist in General Obstetrics and Gynecology at Women & Infants Hospital has afforded me the opportunity to work with patients from diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as trainees across several disciplines. My current areas of interest include caring for survivors of sexual assault, trainee remediation, and promotion of diversity, inclusion, and health equity. While I have remained an active member of the Brown Community for the entirety of my professional career, the opportunity to serve as your Associate Dean of Student Affairs is nothing short of a dream for me. My combined fortune and misfortune have brought me to where I am today and I have dedicated my life and career to always paying it forward. I credit my achievements to extraordinary mentors, my career satisfaction to incredible colleagues and friends alongside the wonderful patient population I serve. As for my sanity and insanity, I owe that all to my loving husband and two children, ages 12 and 9. In my country, we often say “there are no problems mon, just situations”. I look forward to navigating all the situations we will face together over the next four years. I am so excited to have come full circle and to be back home at Alpert Medical School where my journey first started 25 years ago!

Sincerely,

Roxanne Vrees, MD
Associate Dean of Student Affairs
On behalf of the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs (ODMA), we would like to welcome the MD Class of 2023 to AMS and welcome all to the 2019-20 academic year. We are looking forward to the new year and to starting our newest initiative, MEDSTEP (Mentoring and Educating Diverse Students and Trainees to Excel as Physicians). MEDSTEP is a mentoring program whose main goal is to create community and structured mentorship within AMS for individuals who self-identify as underrepresented in medicine (UIM). The program uses a group and peer mentorship model that includes students, residents, housestaff, and attendings to build community at AMS and create a safe space for discussion, education and professional growth.

The objectives of MEDSTEP are to:
- Establish a system of mentorship for all medical students and trainees who self-identify as UIM.
- Utilize the group mentorship model and peer mentorship to leverage the resources of the entire AMS UIM community.
- Prepare mentors and mentees to address challenging professional situations.
- Strengthen the sense of community at AMS for UIM faculty, trainees and students.
- Create a safe space for discussion, education and professional growth.

If you have registered for MEDSTEP, stayed tuned for info from the ODMA within the next few weeks.

The ODMA team: (left to right)
- Joseph Diaz, MD, MPH, Associate Dean for Diversity and Multicultural Affairs
- Tracey M. Guthrie, MD, Assistant Dean for Diversity
- Patricia Poitevien, MD, MSc, Assistant Dean for Diversity
- Angela Zhang, MD'21, Diversity Fellow
- Natasha Rosa, BA, Administrative Coordinator

Questions? Send an email to the ODMA at odma@brown.edu.
COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT
ROSEDELMA SERAPHIN
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR ODMA

Rosedelma Seraphin will be joining the Division of Biology and Medicine as Assistant Director of the Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs. Her first day is TODAY!

Rosedelma joins us from Bryant University, where she has been the coordinator of International Student Integration at the PwC Center for Diversity and Inclusion/International Affairs since 2015. In this role, she has developed programs to assist multicultural and international students in meeting academic, personal, and professional goals. She has worked collaboratively with offices and programs across the Bryant campus, and provided training to improve cross-cultural relationships for international students.

Prior to her time at Bryant, she worked as an international program consultant for the Cambridge Institute of International Education, and as a residence director in the Office of Residence at Lesley University, Cambridge, MA. Rosedelma is a graduate of Southern Connecticut State University and earned a master’s degree in intercultural relations at Lesley University.

As assistant director for ODMA, Rosedelma will be responsible for creating, implementing, and managing a wide array of programs aimed to support students, faculty, and trainees within the Warren Alpert Medical School. She will also facilitate partnerships to advance Pathways to Diversity and Inclusion: An Action Plan for Brown University (DIAP) initiatives throughout BioMed and manage the daily operations of ODMA. She will represent the Warren Alpert Medical School at recruitment events, and serve as a key representative of ODMA with its constituent students, faculty, and trainees, as well as internal and external partners.

"I am very excited to work as the Assistant Director of the ODMA at Brown University," Rosedelma says. "I am passionate about the work as it relates to equity, diversity and inclusion, and look forward to expanding in areas of health and wellness. I genuinely look forward to having the opportunity to meet each of you in person, build relationships, and am excited about the projects we will be working on together in the future. Please feel free to stop by my office at any time, if you have any questions, or just want to say hello. If I can be of service at any moment please feel free to contact me."

Please join us in welcoming Rosedelma to ODMA and to AMS!
Dear Class of ‘23,

Welcome to AMS! You are about to begin one of the most exciting and fulfilling times on your life.

222 Richmond Street is energized by your arrival, and we are all eager for the many opportunities the new year will bring. As you familiarize yourself with the AMS “campus,” we hope you will feel the strong sense of community that is at our core. We are not only passionate about medicine, but care deeply about each other.

Your time at AMS will hopefully be one of the most transformative experiences of your lives, and the community at the school plays a large role in that. Your peers will become your closest supports, the faculty will be your mentors and friends, and your late night conversations with staff will keep you sane as you study for your many exams. No one will say that your experience will be without hardship. But your efforts will be greatly rewarded, and the little moments throughout your four years will help define the professional you will become. This is your first step into a career with centuries of tradition, along with endless room for innovation and growth. You are on your way to becoming the leaders which define healthcare and medicine, and we are excited to work alongside you to achieve that goal.

Enjoy the first week of Orientation, and... good luck with the RIPTA.
To submit an event to the calendar, please email ams-senate@brown.edu with the name of the event, start and end time, location, brief description, contact information, and RSVP information, if applicable.

**Student Interest Groups Fair**
3:20PM

Find out about all the Medical Specialty, Student Affinity, and Personal Interest Groups at AMS! Talk with students, sign up, and see the many passions that exist within our community!

**Al's Pals Ice Cream Social!!**
5:00PM

First Years, meet your Second Year Al’s Pals, a student mentor that can be your guide through the ins and outs of AMS!

**ODMA Welcome Brunch**
11:00AM

Please RSVP with the form in the mail sent on 7/19 by 8/15!

**August AMS Senate Meeting**
6:00PM

Please join us for the August 2019 Senate Meeting! If you can’t make the meeting or simply have an idea or concern that you’d like to be discussed by the Senate, please reach out to your Senator or...

**Screening of Documentary**

**Code Blue sponsored by the AMS Lifestyle Medicine Interest Group**
6:00PM

A nice celebration after making it through your first exam of medical school!