

VUSM
Social Mission Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



VANDERBILT
School of Medicine

STUDENT COMMITTEES

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OUR MISSION

Vanderbilt University School of Medicine empowers students, faculty, and staff to actively partner with individuals and communities to achieve health equity.

Our philosophy is to educate diverse, socially and culturally accountable future physician leaders who understand systems of care and social determinants of health.

By advocating to meet the needs of all persons within the context of their care and working for larger systemic changes, our physicians will promote equity and justice within their local and global communities.

HISTORY OF THE COMMITTEE

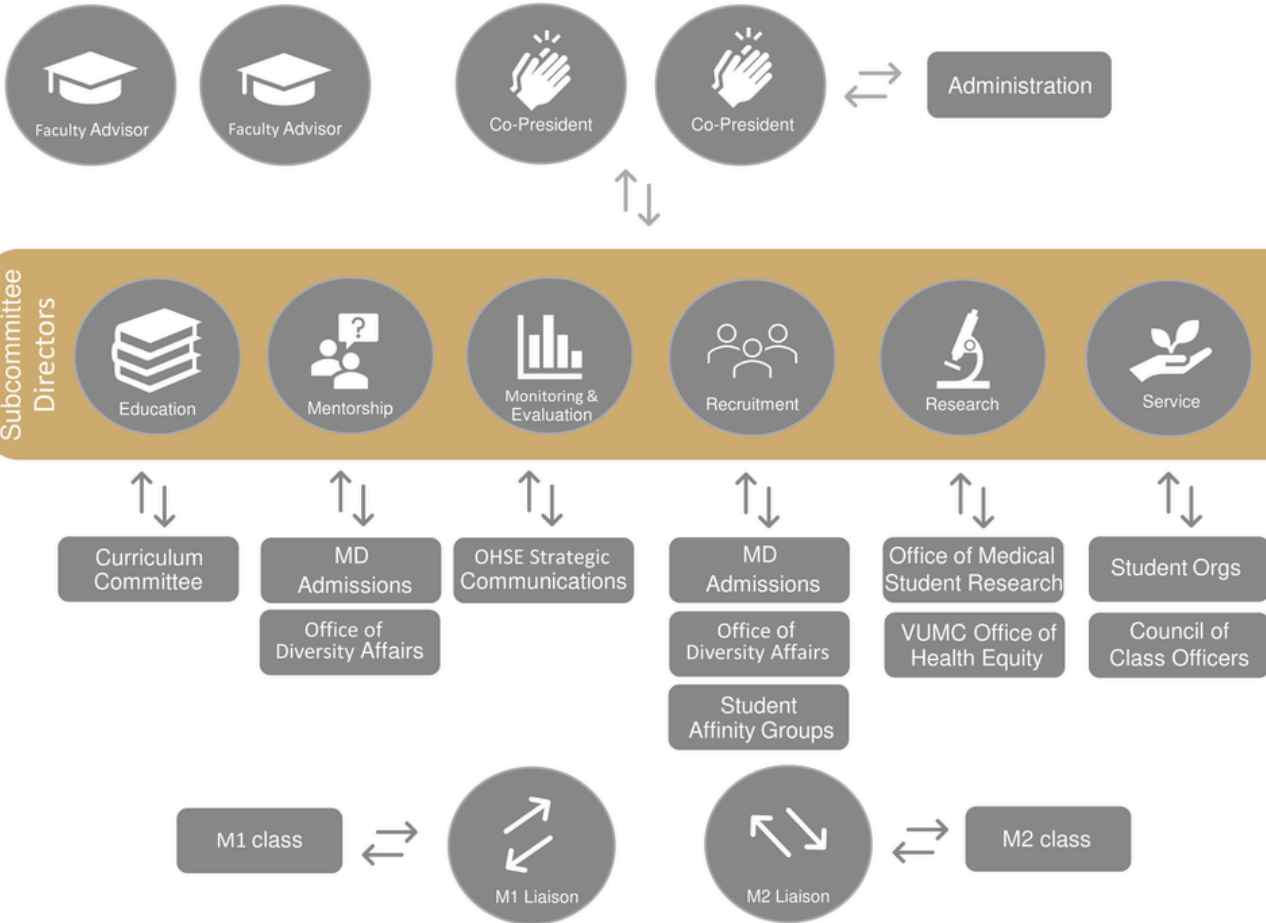
In 2016, inspired by a 2010 article on social mission from the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a trio of second-year medical students organized a discussion group to reflect on the role of medical students in social mission at VUSM. Soon christened the Social Mission Task Force, this group drafted a mission statement focused on recruitment, mentoring, and curriculum. Early accomplishments of this task force included adding social mission-focused learning objects to new and existing courses, establishing the Certificate in Health Equity under the leadership of Consuelo Wilkins, MD, MSCI, and, with the support of VUSM Deans Bonnie Miller, MD, and Amy Fleming, MD, securing the institutional funding and approval to establish the Social Mission Committee as an official student organization in 2019.

Now, Social Mission Committee (SMC) stands alongside Careers in Medicine, the Council of Class Officers, and Wellness as the fourth and newest pillar of Vanderbilt University School of Medicine student life. With institutional support and high activity, SMC is poised to affect change across five focus areas: education, mentoring, recruitment, research, and service. Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic midway through SMC's inaugural year, student leaders persevered through the ebbs and flows of the pandemic to carry out many remarkable projects, including creating the Medical Student Guide to Advocating for Patients, establishing longitudinal service partnerships with multiple organizations in the Nashville community, and curating a list of VUMC faculty interested in mentoring health equity- and social mission-minded medical students.

An inspiration for students since SMC's inception, Bonnie Miller, MD, stepped down from her advisory role in 2021, and SMC welcomed Gilbert Gonzales, PhD, to join Dean Kimberly Vinson, MD, on the SMC faculty advisor team. During the 2021-2022 academic year, SMC participated in the broader effort of the Racial Equity Task Force to develop a Race in Medicine curriculum that explores structural racism and its intersection with medicine, in addition to internally-driven projects like creating affinity guides for VUSM students and implementing 615-Premed, a robust program of mentorship for underrepresented pre-medical students. During 2022-2023, the continuation of initiatives started in the previous year, including the Planetary Health Report Card, Nashville Neighbors, and 615-Premed, demonstrated the sustained commitment to the social mission of medicine demonstrated by Vanderbilt students. In 2023-2024, passionate students have brought about new initiatives that now coexist alongside historical ones, including the Asylum Clinic, medical Spanish guides, collaboration with the American Heart Association, and a longitudinal partnership with the HERO program to pack school lunches. From the co-presidents to subcommittee directors to medical student volunteers, all members of SMC continue to translate VUSM's social mission statement into actions that move us closer to achieving health equity.

OUR ORGANIZATION

Social Mission Committee



- Provide strategic guidance & broader context for SMC work; facilitate connections with faculty & staff
- Set priorities & oversee all SMC activities; support & encourage subcommittee directors; serve as a contact for questions about SMC
- Liaison between SMC presidents, MSA, & SMC subcommittees; lead for SMC budget & finance
- Set priorities & oversee subcommittee activities; lead communication with relevant bodies outside of SMC
- Liaison between classmates and the SMC board; keep students informed about SMC projects and encourage participation

FROM THE ADVISOR



“SMC works tirelessly to improve health for all patients through their work and programming. I continue to be amazed at how this group impacts meaningful change in realms of education, service, and outreach.”

- Kimberly N. Vinson, MD

Associate Dean for Diversity Affairs in the Office for Diversity Affairs; Associate Professor of Otolaryngology in the Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery at Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Dean Vinson focuses on improving diversity and inclusion within the medical school and clinical learning environments. She is also the Program Director of the Undergraduate Clinical Research Internship Program (UCRIP) for exceptional undergraduate students interested in pursuing a career in medicine and the director for the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine pipeline programs with regional colleges and universities.

MEET THE TEAM



LENA KHANOLKAR
CO-PRESIDENT

Specialty of Interest: Radiology



MAE WIMBISCUS
CO-PRESIDENT

Specialty of Interest: Anesthesia

What have you learned throughout your time leading change as SMC Co-Presidents?

Creating institutional change requires persistence as it takes time to gain buy-in from all those that are involved. While this can be frustrating at times, remaining steadfast in your passions for expanding health equity and generating both short-term and long-term goals can be effective. Over time, your efforts will come to fruition. We as medical students often forget that our voices are powerful, but as future physician leaders, we have the ability to encourage change, both within the academic setting and greater Nashville community.



DHWEEJA DASARATHY
RESEARCH

Specialty of interest: Internal Medicine

What influenced you to promote the involvement of VUSM students in health equity research?

Throughout college, I took a number of sociology classes that highlighted the significant disparities in the healthcare system that contribute to vast differences in healthcare outcomes. I also had the opportunity to work in a number of international and local settings where I witnessed these disparities firsthand. Research often serves as an instigator of change, and frequently students are not exposed to health equity research opportunities, which I noticed as an early medical student. In this role, I hoped to further improve exposure to health equity research and subsequently inspire translation of that research into meaningful change



YANELIS DIAZ
RECRUITMENT

Specialty of Interest: Psychiatry

What motivates you to change the future of medical school recruitment?

It's my firm belief that all aspiring physicians should enjoy equal access and opportunities when it comes to applying to medical school. The process of application can be a daunting task without proper guidance; I enjoy speaking with aspiring physicians, understanding their motivations, and providing that guidance. Further, we know diverse life experiences and backgrounds leads to improved patient outcomes. In order to promote a more inclusive and effective healthcare system, it is absolutely essential to recruit a diverse group of students into medical schools.

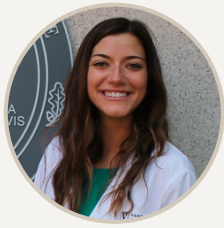


SOPHIE SCHELLHAMMER
MONITORING & EVALUATION

Specialty of Interest: Internal Medicine

What have you found most encouraging about SMC's growth this year?

Throughout the 2023-2024 academic year, SMC has been successful in not only continuing successful initiatives from prior years but also identifying current needs via the student body and community at large. To address these gaps, students from across the medical school, within the SMC executive board, full committee, and larger student body, have collaborated to introduce multiple new projects. Many of these projects involve collaboration with other student groups, faculty members, and administration, allowing SMC be an integral part of the VUSM community.



**OLIVIA PROSAK
SERVICE**

Specialty of Interest: ENT

What does meaningful community engagement and service mean to you and how have you seen SMC's initiatives fulfill this?

Meaningful service includes working directly with community partners to assess their needs and engage with them in a way that centers their mission and goals for flourishing. Externally defined goals for an organization are often ill-informed and may be biased without consideration of what the population truly needs. SMC's work with the Boys and Girls Club has primarily focused on community needs assessments through surveying club members, parents, and staff regarding gaps in mental health education and resources. This has promoted changes including trauma-focused training with staff and the development of an online mental health resource guide available to all members on their organization's website. Our work with Dismas house has also been fueled by assessing needs; leaders of the organization polled residents regarding topics most useful to them following their incarceration experiences to ensure our medical student-led health lectures focus on useful health information to them. Lastly, our participation with the VCH Food Resource Navigation Center, which will have its initial pilot in July 2024, has shown that innovative thinking has the potential to overcome boundaries to resources that propagate health inequity.



**SHIMRAN KUMAR
SERVICE**

Specialty of Interest: Emergency Medicine

What does meaningful community engagement and service mean to you and how have you seen SMC's initiatives fulfill this?

There is a quote that often rings in my mind when I consider service. Lila Watson, an Aboriginal activist, says, "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together." Meaningful community engagement means delving into another's chaos, allowing yourself the humility to learn from them, and to work side-by-side to bring healing. This year, SMC has worked intentionally to foster sustainable relationships with local organizations, and transitioned our school-wide MLK Day of Service from a one-off event, to a recurring monthly project with H.E.R.O. Program of Nashville.



**SUNAYA KRISHNAPURA
EDUCATION**

Specialty of Interest: Pediatrics

Why do you think it is important for social mission to be integrated into medical education?

In order to become well-rounded physicians that utilize a holistic approach towards patient care, it is crucial that students receive education in not only anatomy/physiology but also social determinants of health. Social medicine represents the practice of delivering equitable care to all patients by considering the unique combination of social determinants of health that impact an individual and consequently their health. As future physicians it is our responsibility to consider how the totality of an individual's environment and lived experiences has and will continue to impact their health long-term. This may range from thinking about the lasting effects of childhood ACEs on a patient's mental health to evaluating how housing and financial insecurity serve as barriers to care. I believe that the integration of social mission into medical education is paramount as it allows for us to not only treat a disease process but also understand a patient's illness experience.



AMAD AMEDY
MENTORSHIP

Specialty of Interest: Emergency Medicine

Why are you passionate about mentorship in the context of social mission and health equity?

Growing up, I don't think I knew what mentorship quite looked like. I went to a Metro Nashville Public School, where over 70% of students didn't go to college, and I honestly thought I would be in that same boat. I was lucky at every stage to have people who supported me, even when I didn't know I needed it. I had coaches who would make sure I could afford to play in sports leagues, teachers who volunteered their time to after-school tutoring, and guidance counselors who helped me apply to and afford college. The same was true at my liberal arts college, where I struggled immensely to make that leap. I wouldn't have gone to college or med school without the support of others, and so I wanted to make sure I was able to facilitate the same for other students coming through the ranks, whether at the high school or college level. There's a lot of hardworking people out there who can achieve so much with the right advice and support. This position is rewarding because it gives you the opportunity to do so.



ALVINA LIANG
M2 LIAISON

Specialty of interest: Ophthalmology

How has your involvement in SMC so far influenced your training as a future physician, and what advice do you have for students hoping to get involved in SMC?

The Social Mission Committee stands out as one of Vanderbilt Medicine's most distinctive student organizations. It offers abundant opportunities and unwavering support for students keen on initiating endeavors that advance the social mission at VUSM and VUMC. During my last two years at Vandy, I co-founded the Asylum Collaborative. This initiative provides pro-bono psychiatric forensic evaluations for asylum seekers, bolstering their applications for legal status in court. Working alongside fellow medical students who share my dedication, we've made significant strides through the Social Mission Committee. For aspiring medical students eager to engage in health equity projects, I offer this advice: be ambitious in your vision and assertive in your actions, but also cultivate patience with the outcomes. Change takes time, but steadfast dedication can yield profound results.



PEGGY RANDON

M1 LIAISON

Specialty of Interest:

What inspired you to join SMC, and what have your experiences in SMC taught you about VUSM so far?

During my undergraduate years, I participated in various social justice initiatives that profoundly influenced my dedication to service. I joined SMC because I was eager to continue contributing to health and social equity, enhancing scientific communication within the Nashville community and nurturing cultural humility within VUSM.

In the realm of scientific communication, my experiences in SMC have taught me the value of transforming research findings generated by our students and faculty into accessible and comprehensible knowledge for the public. This involves going beyond academic journals and embracing diverse modes of communication and community engagement. It means making sure that the cutting-edge discoveries made in our institutions can be easily understood and utilized by everyone, bridging the gap between academia and the everyday lives of our community members.

Cultural humility is another crucial pillar of health equity that has taken new meaning through my participation with SMC. It involves taking the time to ask patients and community members about their alternative medicines, health practices at home, holistic remedies, and traditional healing approaches. It means validating these practices and understanding their potential interactions or contraindications with conventional treatments. Finally, it means systematically communicating information to the public about healthy practices and lifestyles that can prevent health disparities before they even arise. By respecting and integrating diverse health perspectives, we not only empower patients to make informed choices but also create an environment where cultural diversity is celebrated.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Dear VUSM Students, Staff, and Faculty,

As our time as co-presidents of the Social Mission Committee comes to an end, we wanted to reflect on our time serving in this role and the honor we had to help promote equity within our community. At a time when it feels that diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives are being rolled back or attacked across the nation, it was inspiring to see our medical school community come together and reaffirm our school and our profession's commitment to upholding the principles of medicine's social mission for our patients. This past year SMC was able to continue to strengthen our community partnerships and foster new ones. None of the work that SMC did would have been possible without our executive board tirelessly working to develop new ways VUSM students interact with the Nashville community and the work of the incredible volunteers who helped our board implement these ideas. We can confidently say expanding health equity is not only an integral part of the VUSM experience, but most students actively seek it out. We thank the administration, faculty, staff who helped our ideas come to fruition; without you, our mission to improve the health of marginalized and minoritized members of our community would never have been possible.

We would like to highlight some of the successes of the Social Mission Committee from this past year. As always, each of our subcommittees (education, service, research/advocacy, mentorship, and recruitment) worked to add new projects over the year. These include starting a menstrual equity focused group, expanding mentorship efforts for high school and undergraduate students, and developing a database of health-equity researchers. We continued to work on incorporating climate health content into the medical curriculum, an effort that was started many years prior but continues to grow every year. The asylum clinic, founded last year, saw its first set of patients this year and had its regular volunteers growing in number. All of these efforts were through collaboration with many organizations on campus, for which we are equally grateful for the opportunity to collaborate. It has been a pleasure seeing these efforts grow over time and their meaningful impact on our Vanderbilt and Nashville communities. As we watch each new class join VUSM, we are excited to see the future direction of health equity initiatives, social medicine, and SMC.

We feel incredibly fortunate to have been in this position over the last year. VUSM's passion and energy for health equity is what drives our organization to continue to advocate for institutional change. Working alongside all of you to serve as fierce proponents for our patients inspires us to continue in this work, even when challenges arise. We know that advocacy work can be slow and frustrating at times, but we have the utmost confidence everyone within VUSM will continue to do incredible work for our community. We cannot wait to see all that is accomplished in the coming new academic year!

Best,

Lena Khanolkar and Mae Wimbiscus
SMC Co-Presidents, 2023-2024

EDUCATION

The SMC Education Subcommittee exists to identify opportunities for greater development of structural and cultural competency in our curriculum, expand opportunities for meaningful clinical engagement with underserved populations, and create opportunities for students to gain the skills needed to lead a career in social medicine.



PLANETARY HEALTH REPORT CARD

For the third year, VUSM again participated in the annual Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC), a global initiative assessing institutions' sustainability efforts and response to the climate crisis. This year, 151 health professional schools across 18 countries and 7 healthcare disciplines took part. The PHRC evaluates areas like Curriculum, Research, Outreach, Student Initiatives, and Campus Sustainability. Students completed the metric-based tool for evaluation planetary health content in our MD curriculum. SMC involvement in the PHRC has facilitated advocacy for climate health integration into our curriculum and promoted sustainable practices. We thank the deans, faculty, and students for their contributions to this endeavor, reflecting our ongoing commitment to sustainability.

MEDICAL STUDENT ADVOCACY GUIDE

This guide, written during the 2019-2020 school year, serves as a reference resource for students during clinical experiences so that they will be better prepared to serve as a patient advocate. While initially designed for second-year medical students, different versions of the guide have been created for the internal medicine and pediatrics housestaff. SMC continues to provide "badge buddies," which link to the guide, for medical students starting their clinical rotations and is responsible for updates to the guide. Recent additions include reproductive health resources, mental health resources, and COVID-19 specific information.



MEDICAL SPANISH GUIDES

Vanderbilt University joined forces with the Latino Medical Student Association to develop Medical Spanish guides tailored for each clerkship. These guides offer specialized terminology and phrases relevant to specific areas of medicine, enhancing communication between healthcare providers and Spanish-speaking patients.

MENSTRUAL EQUITY JOURNAL CLUB

SMC, in partnership with Medical Students for Choice, hosted a journal club on menstrual equity together with Dr. Mack Goldberg. The event centered around three articles, covering topics such as period poverty, stigma, menstrual education, current legislation, and opportunities for advocacy. It was a fruitful discussion that provided valuable insights into this crucial issue.

CHANGING OUR CLIMATE, ONE STEP AT A TIME



SUNAYA KRISHNAPURA

This year the education subcommittee made great strides within the areas of climate health education and healthcare sustainability. In 2022 we participated for the first time in the Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC) initiative. The Planetary Health Report Card (PHRC) is a metric-based tool that was developed by medical students at the University of California, San Francisco, in 2019 with the goal of serving as a needs-assessment and to increase planetary health accountability and awareness among health professional schools. The PHRC evaluates schools on five broad categories: curriculum, interdisciplinary research on health and environment, community outreach and advocacy, support for student-led initiatives, and campus sustainability. The SMC Education Committee completed our third annual PHRC this year. The report card has served as a critical tool that allowed for the committee to design a longitudinal climate health curriculum proposal and advocate for its integration. This year we were able to integrate most aspects of the proposal into lectures and CBL cases in the Foundations of Medical Knowledge phase, covering topics ranging from the impact of climate change on vector-borne diseases to the subject of green endoscopy. Additionally, this year a group of students also designed and delivered a presentation to the M2 class through the Foundations of Healthcare Delivery course to discuss the implications of climate change on health as well as provide education on how to take a climate-conscious social history. We have also initiated conversations regarding integration of this content into different rotations in the clerkship phase. We look forward to the upcoming year, where rising M2s will be able to hone their skills with taking a climate-conscious social history and practice educating patients on the effects of climate change on health outcomes through case-based scenarios. Thanks to the joint efforts of students and faculty in implementing these key curricular changes, we were thrilled with the publication of the PHRC to see an entire letter grade increase this year from a C- (2022) to a B- (2024).

IMPACT

CHANGING OUR CLIMATE, ONE STEP AT A TIME



SUNAYA KRISHNAPURA

In addition to the climate health education work, this year the committee has also continued its ongoing work addressing the intersection of race and medicine. In 2021 a group of students through SMC drafted a Race in Medicine curriculum proposal that proposed longitudinal changes to the medical school curriculum to incorporate education on structural racism and its intersection with medicine. Today elements of the Race in Medicine curriculum have been successfully infused throughout the FMK, clerkship, and Immersion phases. Building upon this foundational work, this year a group of students created a Skins of Color clerkship resource to supplement the Dermatology lecture in the IM clerkship. With this new initiative we hope to provide students with a more robust education regarding the diversity of skin pathology presentations among patients of different racial and ethnic backgrounds.

The education subcommittee is committed towards continuing to support medical student education on various health equity topics. With this in mind the subcommittee launched two new projects this year. Language/literacy is a key social determinant of health, and throughout their training students will have the privilege of caring for patients from diverse backgrounds and who speak different languages. Through the subcommittee students in partnership with the Latino Medical Student Association and Interpreter Services created clerkship-specific medical spanish guides. We hope that these guides will serve as a valuable supplementary resource for those interested in learning medical spanish. Lastly, in partnership with Medical Students for Choice, we held our first menstrual equity journal club to discuss the topic of period poverty and brainstorm ways to address the issue from a healthcare standpoint. According to The Alliance for Period Supplies, “in the United States 2 in 5 menstruators struggle to purchase period products.” Lack of access to menstrual products is correlated not only with severe long-term health consequences, but also disparities in education and career prospects. Through our journal club we discussed the implications of this global public health issue as well as potential education and advocacy efforts to promote menstrual equity within our local communities. We are very excited to begin implementing these initiatives in the new year to improve screening practices for period poverty.

Sunaya Krishnapura, M3, Director of Education

IMPACT

SERVICE

The goal of the Service Subcommittee is to increase medical student presence in the community through longitudinal relationships with Nashville organizations.

SERVICE DATABASE FOR STUDENTS

To enable ease of access to service opportunities, both within the SMC body and the student population at large, the service subcommittee introduced a new centralized spreadsheet for service opportunities available to VUSM students. This has encouraged participation across class years.



MLK DAY OF SERVICE

Despite a setback from the January winter storm, medical student volunteers showed up with enthusiasm for the rescheduled MLK Day activities. Through the H.E.R.O. Program, in collaboration with Metro Nashville Public School's Homeless Education Resource Office (HERO), volunteers packaged essential supplies for homeless children, including clothes, hygiene products, school supplies, and food.

Similarly, the Safe Haven Family Shelter event was successfully rescheduled. Volunteers joined 1-hour shifts to create a mural/canvas with shelter families, promoting the theme of 'Creating Peace.' Despite the challenges, these dedicated volunteers demonstrated their commitment to service and community engagement.



SERVICE

HERO PROGRAM

Since the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, medical students have been actively involved in the HERO Program's efforts to assist unhoused children in Metro Nashville Public Schools. On the first Sunday of each month from 10am to 12pm, they've unloaded and packaged essential supplies like food, clothing, books, and school materials. Their participation has provided tangible support to children in need within the community.

DISMAS HOUSE

Medical students from VUSM are delivering concise, informative lectures on various health subjects to residents of Dismas House, a home for formerly incarcerated individuals. Topics have included diet and nutrition, sleep hygiene, mental health, smoking cessation, and STI prevention and contraception. These 30-minute sessions equip residents with valuable health knowledge, promoting wellness and informed choices.



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB - MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS

Through this initiative, volunteers are creating a practical resource guide on mental health apps and exploring how technology intersects with mental well-being. Teaming up with the Digital Club at the Boys and Girls Club, they have also planned informative Q&A sessions, both online and in-person, to discuss mental health topics within the community. These efforts aim to provide accessible information and facilitate meaningful conversations about mental wellness.

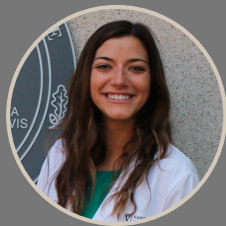
TRANSFORMING SERVICE: VUSM'S MLK DAY BECOMES A YEAR-ROUND COMMITMENT

This year, one of our goals as co-directors was to promote projects that were longitudinal in nature. VUSM's MLK Day of Service is a large annual event that brings students together for a day of community engagement. Though this has always been helpful, it has not always been sustainable event, and we sought out to change that this year.

We partnered with Safe Haven Family Shelter, a local group providing shelter and wrap-around support services for unhoused and uprooted families. We had the lovely opportunity to spend the weeks leading up to MLK Day doing art with the moms and kids at the shelter, getting to know one another. On MLK Day, we came together to put together a large collage on canvas of all our artworks from the previous weeks. The theme of each art piece was "what brings you peace," and it was beautiful to see the pride and joy in all the families' eyes when they saw their collage go up to decorate their halls.



SHIMRAN KUMAR



OLIVIA PROSAK



We additionally did a project with the H.E.R.O. Program, which works to provide supplies to unhoused children in Metro Nashville Public Schools. We had worked with them last year and wanted to continue this relationship. After a great day packing books and lunch items for children, we collaborated with the H.E.R.O. team to make the packaging days a monthly event.

As Director of SMC Service, it has been beautiful to see VUSM's MLK Day transition from a one-day event to something that lasted the weeks preceding and the months after, still to today.

Shimran Kumar, M3, and Olivia Prosak, M3, Directors of Service Subcommittee

IMPACT

RECRUITMENT

The goal of the Recruitment Subcommittee is to collaborate with the Office of Admissions, Office of Diversity Affairs, and other student organizations to increase representation and support of underrepresented students within the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine.

COLLABORATION WITH THE OFFICE OF ADMISSION

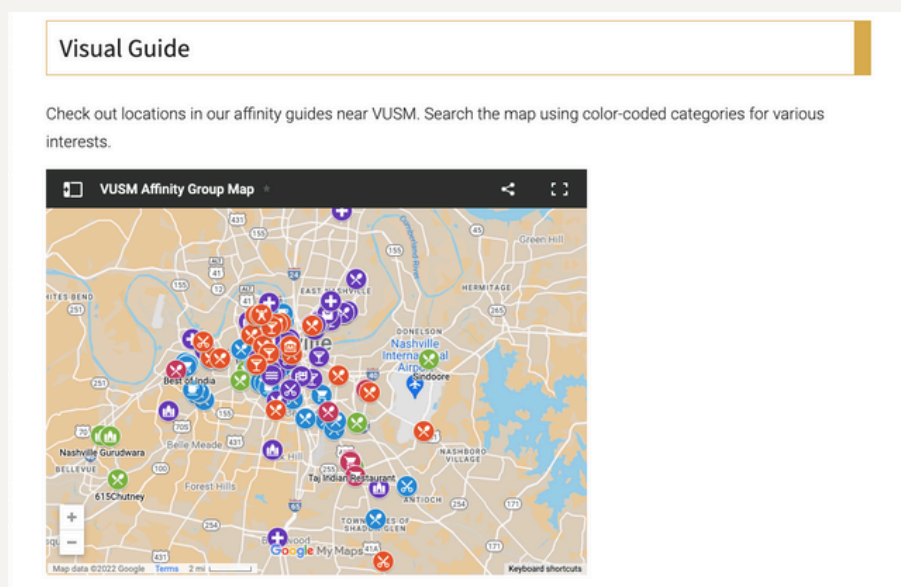
SMC's recruitment subcommittee works in tandem with the Office of Admission and other relevant bodies to reach students from all backgrounds and introduce them to what Vanderbilt has to offer. Participating in Affinity Night allowed the recruitment team to share insightful information with accepted students about life in Nashville.

REACHING OUT TO NEARBY INSTITUTIONS

We worked with Belmont University to enrich the recruitment experience for prospective students. Through this collaboration, we leveraged the strengths of both institutions to provide valuable insights and resources to aspiring medical professionals.

UPDATED AFFINITY GUIDES

SMC partnered with the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO), Asian Pacific American Medical Association (APAMSA), Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA), LGBT MD, Student National Medical Association (SNMA), and OHSE/VUSM Strategic Communications to update affinity guides for admitted and current students, directing them to potential places where they could find community or cultural resources.



INNOVATING RECRUITMENT: BUILDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

The Recruitment Subcommittee experienced a year of adaptations, adjusting to new federal policies on admissions. We learned valuable lessons about maintaining communication with all stakeholders during periods of change.



YANELIS DIAZ

We had the opportunity to propose changes to the Office of Admissions, which we believed would enhance the recruitment of students who embody SMC's core mission. I also participated in an admissions workshop, where we brainstormed potential improvements to the current admissions process with student leaders, faculty, and deans. This exercise proved enlightening, demonstrating the complexity of system-level changes and VUSM's commitment to a fair admissions process.

Throughout the year, the SMC Recruitment team continued to engage with prospective students, aiming to attract individuals with diverse life experiences. This included collaborations with Belmont University and participation in Affinity Night for accepted students. These efforts underscored the challenges of increasing event attendance, particularly with a shift towards online rather than in-person events. We also collaborated with student leaders from various organizations to update all affinity guides and create new ones. This allowed us to showcase Nashville's unique community and its enriching experiences to prospective students.

I am honored to have served in this role, working alongside individuals committed to making medical school recruitment more equitable and welcoming for all backgrounds. Increasing diversity enhances patient health outcomes. We must continue to find creative solutions to further this goal.

Yanelis Diaz, M3, Director of Recruitment Subcommittee

IMPACT

RESEARCH

The SMC Research Subcommittee exists to broaden, support, and facilitate opportunities for medical students to identify and address social determinants of health through formal research avenues.



RESEARCH MENTOR DATABASE

This database compiles the contact information of mentors involved in health equity research as well as information on ongoing research projects in the field. Together with Dean Estrada, a single, streamlined database will be created and help to facilitate medical students' involvement in projects related to health equity. Research mentors will be recruited both from medical student suggestions and recruitment surveys.

HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH PANEL

SMC organized a panel of research mentors engaged in health equity research. They shared their experiences with medical students from all years and provided insights about finding a research mentor, developing a research project, and a variety of other research-related questions.

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH INTO THE CASE CURRICULUM

This project aimed to bring topics related to health equity research to the M1 research course, called CASE. By introducing health equity-related research as early as M1 year, SMC aims to foster longitudinal and meaningful health equity research within the student body.

HEALTH EQUITY FUNDING



The Office of Health Equity provides grants for students with innovative ideas to promote health equity at Vanderbilt. A recent project funded by this grant is the Asylum Clinic, which provides psychiatric screenings to refugees, led by SMC co-president Mae Wimbiscus, M2 rep Alvina Liang, and M2 Elizabeth Sun.

BRIDGING GAPS: NEW DATABASE SHOWCASES HEALTH EQUITY RESEARCH

Vanderbilt students excel at research and frequently travel to present at conferences all over the country. However, between flights, lodging, conference registration, and poster printing, presenting at conferences is a significant barrier. Vanderbilt students excel at research, but frequently do not have exposure to health equity research opportunities. Several students throughout the years have expressed interest in pursuing health equity projects, but are unsure of avenues to get involved.



DHWEEJA DASARATHY

In order to streamline research opportunities for students, the Office of Health Equity and the Research and Advocacy subcommittee collaborated to create a database of existing projects, mentors, and prior projects that students have worked on. With the assistance of Dean Estrada, we were able to (and are in the process of) create a database with over 70 (and growing!) projects and mentors that will be available to students starting in the upcoming academic year.

The main objectives of the research subcommittee are to encourage student involvement in health equity research and highlight successful student research projects. The committee is excited to fulfill these objectives with this new resource for students. We hope this allows for students to further pursue their health equity research interests as well as spark interest in others, with the hope that evidence-based research will translate into reducing many of the existing healthcare disparities.

Dhweeja Dasarathy, M3, Director of Research Subcommittee

IMPACT

MENTORSHIP

The goal of the Mentorship Subcommittee is to promote opportunities for connection between medical students and physician leaders at Vanderbilt who are conducting work that aligns with advancing the social mission.

615 PREMED

Resources and personalized advice are shared via sessions offered to premed students who are underrepresented in medicine (URM) at Nashville and Tennessee universities. Over the course of the year, students have given presentations at local colleges about healthcare-related career paths, hosted zoom webinars discussing application tips, and coordinated one-on-one longitudinal mentorship by pairing medical students with interested pre-med high school and college students.

PRE-MED STUDENT WORKSHOPS

Throughout the year, the mentorship subcommittee has hosted workshops to provide advice and feedback for students preparing to apply to medical school. These sessions have included topics such as brainstorming for personal statement and application editing. Thanks to generous medical student volunteers, all of these sessions have been held in a hands-on, one-on-one format.

NATIONAL DOCTOR'S DAY

Together with 8 student leads, Amad Amedy coordinated groups of students to spend a half-day with 8 local high schools to teach students about the medical profession as a career path, as well as introduction to basic medical topics. A total of 72 VUSM medical students, along with VUMC residents, volunteered their time to teach and reached approximately 200 students.



MENTORSHIP FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

When most medical students and physicians look back on their path to the field, there is almost universally one or more mentorship figures who inspired and guided them along the long path. While some students have access to several potential mentors in their communities, certain students from underserved communities do not. Thus, the role of this subcommittee is to address that social inequity.

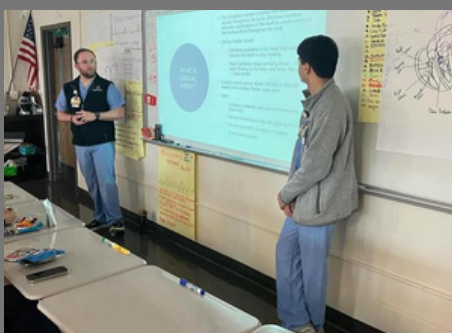


AMAD AMEDY

From hosting one-on-one Zoom webinars to biannual coffee check-ins, there are many opportunities for involvement with pre-medical students. Of the 70+ students we were able to reach, many reported being more confident about going into the application cycle because of the connection they developed with their mentors. A large portion of students came from low-income backgrounds, dealt with language barriers, and reported little knowledge about the med school application process (even as far into their junior or senior years).

At the high school level, it was great to engage students in discussions about common health problems like diabetes and skills sessions such as CPR and stop the bleeding. Many students reached out to me shortly after to tell me how excited they were to pursue a medical career and were already asking about next steps. Regardless of age or level of education, the mentorship subcommittee's efforts allowed students to receive the support they needed at a critical inflection point in their academic and professional careers.

Amad Amedy, M3, Director of Mentorship Subcommittee



IMPACT

MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

The Operations role has now merged with the Monitoring and Evaluation subcommittee director to streamline processes and bridge the many projects, people, and events housed under the SMC umbrella.

REDESIGNING NETWORK FOR SMC COLLABORATION

Under the new leadership of the 2023-24 SMC presidents, SMC transitioned communication to GroupMe for both subcommittees and general SMC announcements. This created centralized avenues to distribute information. Because GroupMe already hosts many other conversations for VMS students, this allowed for a natural integration into the medical student workflow.

INCREASING SMC VISIBILITY VIA NEWSLETTERS

This year, SMC used the SMC Newsletter to keep the VUSM community informed about ongoing projects. Newsletters included updates from SMC subcommittee directors, debriefs of recent SMC events, and ways for students to get involved.

ANNUAL REPORT

In partnership with the OHSE/VUSM Strategic Communications team, M&E outlined a report and gathered contributions from all subcommittees to showcase SMC activities and achievements during the 2023-2024 academic year.



TELLING THE SMC STORY

Starting this year, the Operations role merged with the Monitoring and Evaluation subcommittee director to bridge the many projects, people, and events housed within SMC. With this new role, our mission was to enhance engagement, streamline communication, and foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment within our medical community.



SOPHIE SCHELLHAMMER

We distributed school-wide newsletters to keep the VMS community informed about current SMC happenings and opportunities for involvement. This newsletter served as a vital tool for disseminating information, promoting transparency, and encouraging active participation among students.

To minimize barriers to student involvement, we implemented GroupMe-based avenues of communication and service opportunity spreadsheets to simplify the student recruitment processes. By leveraging these platforms, we were able to enhance efficiency, improve coordination, and facilitate seamless communication among SMC members and prospective students alike.

Recognizing the importance of input from the student body, we created a feedback form to gather suggestions and ideas for improvement from all members of the VMS community, whether they were actively involved in SMC or not. This initiative was designed to ensure that our efforts were aligned with the needs and priorities of our peers.

Finally, we created the SMC Annual Report to showcase the progress and work accomplished by SMC throughout the academic year. This report served as a comprehensive overview of progress, initiatives, and impact, highlighting the commitment of our members to advancing the mission of SMC.

I am grateful for the opportunity to have been on the SMC Executive Board and be a part of the health equity mission at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine. I look forward to the positive change that comes with each subsequent year and to continue to gain inspiration from my peers.

Sophie Schellhammer, M3, Director of Monitoring, and Evaluation



BEYOND THE CLASSROOM: INTEGRATING NEWFOUND KNOWLEDGE

The start of medical school presents many challenges, the most recognizable of them being maintaining and excelling in academic performance. But what often goes overlooked is the social challenge of medicine - an overlying obligation to leverage this newfound medical knowledge for the health and wellness of at least the most regionally immediate society. For Vanderbilt first-year medical students, one might imagine the cognitive dissonance ensued when all the evidence and explanation used to achieve such a position (our promises within applications, interviews and upon entrance to medical school) had no clear avenue of substantiation while in the program.



PEGGY RANDON

The task of the Social Mission Committee (SMC), particularly the M1 and M2 liaisons, is to facilitate sustainable conversations and contributions to these community-oriented efforts for the newest classes.

It was important for the incoming M1s to approach service, research and student-led education through SMC realistically, as well as with dedication and compassion required to do no harm. Discussions with the class quickly revealed a desire to bridge scientific communication and the cultural interests reflective of the Nashville communities and of our diverse class. Alongside our teaching of western medicine practices, we attempted to understand alternative forms of wellness, be it evidence-based art and creative therapies, or natural products. This took form through the introduction of music therapy on the annual VPIL interdisciplinary professional panel for medical students to ask questions and become acclimated to the resources already available to patients at Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital and Vanderbilt University Hospital. Further, our M1 class identified a pressing need to critically assess the literature on these topics, and our ongoing efforts will be to see this to fruition

IMPACT

To our class: never underestimate the impact of holistic care and concern of a person, which should not be limited to your time in the hospital or clinic. Also remember that information is power- those who have it are at an inherent advantage. A small part of remedying the inaccessibility of medicine can be achieved through delivering preventive strategies and alternative forms of wellness, as well as continuing to place high value on scientific communication. I look forward to passing the valuable lessons learned from serving as the M1 liaison to whoever will be our future M2 liaison and taking on leadership roles beyond SMC. I hope to continue advocating for and implement comprehensive health strategies, and create an environment where student knowledge and community wisdom are equally valued and synergized at VUSM.

Peggy Randon, M1 representative

IMPACT

THE ROBERT F. MILLER AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

This award, established in 2018, is granted to five VUSM students (one from each MD class as well as one graduate, or G Phase, student) who have demonstrated a commitment to serving their community. The selection process involves two phases: a peer- or self-nomination survey and an invited application. Selection is based on service hours, number and depth of service experiences, demonstration of leadership through service, and essay responses covering motivation to serve and a vision for service's role in the applicant's future career.

The award is named for Dr. Robert F. Miller, Professor of Clinical Medicine and Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair in Medicine at Vanderbilt in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Public Health. He is co-founder and current medical director at Shade Tree Clinic, Vanderbilt's student-run free clinic for the underserved populations of Nashville. Dr. Miller acts as a constant role model for VUSM students through his career dedicated to service and community engagement.



Robert F. Miller, MD



Peggy Randon



Elizabeth Sun



Amad Amedy



Kasey Hutcheson



Kaitlin McKernan

THE ROBERT F. MILLER AWARD FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE AND ENGAGEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S RECIPIENTS:

M1: Peggy Randon

“Thank you so much for this service award, which is a testament to our collective efforts. I have a lot to be grateful for, and I am motivated to expand scientific communication and health equity initiatives at VUSM and beyond.”

M2: Elizabeth Sun

“Service is a way for me to take action on my belief that each human has a right to a quality of life that is acceptable as they define it and to address the inequities that are pervasive in our society.”

M3: Amad Amedy

“I was raised by this community, so I'm grateful to have been able to give back by supporting the next generation of diverse physicians who can further help address the health disparities in our communities”

M4: Kasey Hutcheson

G-phase: Kaitlin McKernan

Additional congratulations to our honorable mentions

Landon Clark (M2), Sunaya Krishnapura (M3), Nina Curkovic (M4), Sharon Fernandez (G1)

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As the SMC Executive Board, we would like to extend our warm thanks to the following individuals for their passion and dedication to SMC efforts over the past year. Our work is only possible because of you.

SMC FACULTY ADVISOR

Kimberly N. Vinson, MD
Associate Dean for Diversity Affairs

ALL PARTICIPATING MEDICAL STUDENTS

PAST SMC LEADERSHIP

Social Mission Task Force Leadership

- 2016-2018: Jillian Berkman, Daniel Markwalter, Pierce Trumbo
- 2018-2019: Katy Anthony, Will Furuyama, Kelly Scheuring
SMC Co-Presidents
- 2019-2020: Will Furuyama & Mollie Limb
- 2020-2021: Heidi Carpenter & Somto Ukwuani
- 2021-2022: Helen Gambrah & Eki Olumese
- 2022-2023: Kayla Buttafuoco & Rishub Das

We would like to thank the Dean Fleming, the VUMC Office of Health Equity, and Medical Student Affairs for their guidance and partnership on various SMC initiatives.

We would also like to thank Kyra Letsinger, Associate Content Creator at VUSM, and her predecessor, Lexie Little, for their assistance in creating this annual report.

THANK YOU

STAY CONNECTED

WEB

vanderbi.lt/vandysmc

For MD Students:

<https://medschool.vanderbilt.edu/md-gateway/social-mission-committee/>

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The Social Mission Committee Annual Report is published by Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, OHSE Strategic Communications.

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School of Medicine
Eskind Family Biomedical Library and Learning Center
2209 Garland Avenue
Nashville, TN 37240-0002