



# NATIONAL MEDICAL STUDENT COMMITTEE

..... 2023-2024 .....

## Executive Committee



**Charlotte Smith**  
Chair



**Gopika SenthilKumar**  
Vice Chair



**Paulina Gutkin**  
Chief of Chapter Development

## Committee Members



**Kayla Prezelski**  
Research Coordinator



**Jillian Schneidman**  
Associate Research  
Coordinator



**Jennifer Kunes**  
Resource Development  
Co-Coordinator



**Tami Vasanthakumaran**  
Resource Development  
Co-Coordinator



**Taylor Sawchuk**  
Mentorship Coordinator



**Klea Agollari**  
Mentorship Associate  
Coordinator



**Katerina Jou**  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Coordinator



**Maria Fonseca Bauza**  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Associate Coordinator



**Denise Nemeth**  
Marketing & Social Media  
Coordinator



**Cheryl K. Zogg**  
Liaison to AWS Resident  
& Fellows Committee



# NATIONAL MEDICAL STUDENT COMMITTEE

----- 2023-2024 -----

## Regional Representatives



**Margaret Botros**

Chapter Consultant



**Amy Lu**

Mid-Atlantic  
Regional Representative



**Mackenzie Donoho**

Midwest Great Lakes  
Regional Representative



**Laura Kasper**

Midwest Great Plains  
Regional Representative



**Ariana Ginsberg**

New England  
Regional Representative



**Ryann Maciejewski**

South  
Regional Representative



**Katherine Drew  
Marapese**

Southeast  
Regional Representative



**Nazanin Kermanshahi**

Southwest  
Regional Representative



**Heather Martin**

West  
Regional Representative



**Taraf Jaro**

Africa/Middle East  
Regional Representative



**Preetha Dhanalakshmi  
Saravanan**

Asia/Australia  
Regional Representative



**Rebecca  
Lozano-Franco**

Canada  
Regional Representative



**Aava Param**

Europe  
Regional Representative



**Beatriz Laus**

Latin America  
Regional Representative

## 2023-24 Roster Bios/Photos:

### Executive Members

#### **CHAIR**

**Charlotte Smith**

**Hometown: Barbizon, France**

**Undergraduate: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill '19**

**Medical School: UNC School of Medicine '24**

**Twitter: @cblythesmith**



Charlotte Smith is a fourth-year medical student at UNC School of Medicine, interested in Trauma and Critical Care Surgery. She grew up in France before attending UNC-Chapel Hill for her undergraduate studies. While completing her dual degree in Chemistry and English Literature, she was also a member of the UNC D1 Fencing Team. After graduating, Charlotte received the 2019 Ross Summer Research Fellowship at Atrium Health and was a research technician at the UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy. She is a member of UNC SOM's Medical Education Scholarly Concentration, through which she is pursuing her interests in teaching and mentorship. Her current research focuses on surgical medical education, gender equity, and critical care.

Within AWS, she has served as Co-President for the UNC Chapter, Southeast Regional Representative on the 2021-2022 national committee, and Research Coordinator for the 2022-2023 committee. She is most proud of her effort coordinating the Starr Research Forum for the 2022 AWS Annual Meeting. Outside work, Charlotte enjoys medical illustrations, watching Formula 1, and cheering on the UNC Tar Heels!

## VICE CHAIR

**Gopika SenthilKumar, she/her/hers**

**Hometown:** Hosur, India; Brookfield, Wisconsin

**Undergraduate:** B.S. Biomedical Engineering, University of Wisconsin, Madison '19

**Medical School:** Medical Scientist Training Program, Medical College of Wisconsin '26

**Twitter/ Instagram:** @gogo\_gopss



Gopika SenthilKumar is a G3 (5th year) in the MD-PhD program at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee. She is a Pre-Doctoral Fellow of the American Heart Association, and her research focuses on ways to treat and prevent human microvascular disease. Her long-term goal is to become an independent surgeon-scientist with research centered around strategies that decrease disease morbidity. Outside of research, she is passionate about mentoring and encouraging the next generation of physician scientists; as such, she volunteers with numerous local pipeline programs, mentors students one-on-one, served as the past Co-Executive Director of F1Doctors (mentorship platform for international students), and served as the Mentorship Coordinator on this committee for the past two years (2021-2023). In her free time, Gopika enjoys trying local restaurants, painting, and working out with friends!

## **CHIEF OF CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT**

Paulina Gutkin, she/her/hers

**Hometown:** Tappan, New York

**Undergraduate:** Bucknell University '18

**Medical School:** Medical College of Wisconsin '24



Paulina Gutkin is a fourth-year medical student at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Raised in New York, she obtained her Bachelor of Science in Biology at Bucknell University, where she was also a Division I softball scholarship athlete. Prior to medical school, she conducted clinical research in radiation oncology at Stanford University where she developed enduring connections with women doctors and researchers. Published in the field of oncology, Paulina is passionate about investigating ways to improve cancer care and treatment outcomes. She aspires to a career in academic surgery with goals to enhance patient care, advance research, and develop strong mentor/mentee relationships. Paulina served as the Midwest Great Plains Regional Representative on the 2022-2023 National Medical Student Committee. She is honored to return this year as Chief of Chapter Development and looks forward to working with our 13 Regional Representatives to strengthen and expand AWS chapters around the world. In her free time, she loves to hike, travel, and spoil her cat. She makes the best of the frigid Wisconsin winters by snowboarding and crocheting blankets for friends and family.

## Committee Members

### **RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

**Kayla Prezelski**

**Hometown: Pottsville, Pennsylvania**

**Undergrad: University of Pennsylvania '19**

**Graduate: University of Pennsylvania '20**

**Medical School: Saint Louis University School of Medicine '25**



Kayla Prezelski is a medical student at Saint Louis University School of Medicine. Her goal is to pursue a career as an academic plastic surgeon, and this year, she will be working at UT Southwestern as a Plastic Surgery Research Fellow. She grew up in Pottsville, Pennsylvania and attended the University of Pennsylvania where she majored in bioengineering. Her research interests range from biomedical devices and machine learning applications to medical student education in trauma informed care. Kayla loves research as it allows her to develop project ideas that turn questions into answers that influence the way she will care for her future patients, and she is looking forward to working with the AWS Board as the Research Coordinator this year. In her free time, Kayla can be found at the pottery studio, lifting in the gym, or searching for the best happy hour deals with her friends.

## **ASSOCIATE RESEARCH COORDINATOR**

**Jillian Schneidman (she/her)**

**Hometown: Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

**Undergraduate: McGill University '19**

**Graduate: University of Oxford, '23**

**Medical School: McGill University, '25**

**Social Media Handles:**

**Twitter: @jillschneid**



Jillian Schneidman (she/her) is a third-year medical student at McGill University. She recently took a pause from her studies to complete a master's degree in medical anthropology at the University of Oxford. Her master's thesis explored how gender was embedded in everyday surgical life, looking at the subtle forms of gender exclusions that were present for women surgeons within the medical institution. Jillian has also been a part of numerous other research projects during her studies which have largely focused on improving health care for queer patients. This includes her current research role within Clinic Mauve, the first-ever health and social service clinic in Quebec designed specifically for LGBTQI+ migrants. Additionally, Jillian is very involved in advocacy work in medicine. Two years ago, she founded an award winning Canadian non-profit organization Sex[M]ed ([www.thesexmed.com](http://www.thesexmed.com)), which provides comprehensive sexual health education to healthcare practitioners and students to fill the gaps in the current curriculum. Jillian also sits on the National Advisory Board for CanMEDS 2025, providing strategic direction and overall recommendations for the updated physician competency framework for Canadian medical practice.

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CO-COORDINATOR

Jennifer (Jennie) Kunes, she/her/hers

Hometown: Winchester, Massachusetts

Undergraduate: Harvard University '19

Medical School: Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons '24



Jennifer Kunes is a rising fourth year MD candidate at Columbia Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. She grew up just outside of Boston and attended Harvard University for her undergraduate education, studying Biomedical Engineering with a minor in English literature. She held wide-ranging roles as an adviser, teaching fellow, and coxswain on the Men's Heavyweight Rowing team. She then spent a research year at Brigham and Women's Hospital, studying focused ultrasound neuromodulation and three-dimensional bioprinting. At Columbia, Jennie has served as a Health Education Co-Chair for the school's largest student run clinic, co-chair of the Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group and the Whipple Surgical Society, class Wellness Representative, and co-chair and founder of Columbia Medical Center's student liaison group for Sexual Violence Response. With AWS, she has focused on trauma-informed care, specialty resource guides, and a new podcast helping students succeed in their surgery rotations. In her free time, Jennie is teaching herself leatherworking and shoemaking through YouTube videos and enjoys spoiling her cats, Moose and Fox.

## RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT CO-COORDINATOR

**Name (and pronouns):** Tamilarasy (Tami) Vasanthakumaran, she/her/hers

**Hometown:** Chicago, Illinois - Montreal, Canada - Toronto, Canada

**Medical School:** SRM Medical College, Hospital & Research Center (Chennai, India)

**Twitter:** @ItsTamilarasy

**Instagram:** @tamivasa



Tami is among the youngest to graduate with commendation from the Global Clinical Scholars Research Training program at Harvard Medical School. Born and raised in North America to Sri Lankan immigrant parents, her decision to step out of her comfort zone and study medicine in India was influenced by a childhood trip to distribute funds she raised for victims of the 2004 Tsunami. This journey taught her the importance of being a global citizen who promotes compassion, intersectionality & inclusivity. Tami is a member of the Global Surgery Lab (University of British Columbia, Canada) and is a research leader of multiple global projects at the Online Research Club (Nagasaki University, Japan). She is a youth ambassador and facilitator at Plan International Canada and has been selected for the Youth Delegate Program by UNITE 2030. She is excited to work with the committee and play her part in advocating ways to transcend disparities in surgery. Tami speaks 4 languages and enjoys spending time with loved ones, writing, creating digital art, trying new food, and going on big and small adventures!

## MENTORSHIP COORDINATOR

**Taylor Sawchuk**

**Hometown:** Red Deer, Alberta, Canada

**Undergraduate:** University of Alberta '19

**Medical School: University of Alberta '24**  
**Instagram: @taylorsawchuk**



Taylor is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Alberta, interested in pursuing a career in General Surgery. Prior to medical school, she earned her Bachelor of Science in Psychology and Sociology from the University of Alberta. She then went on to work as a National Recruiter for the U of A, where she traveled across Canada to meet with prospective students. Taylor is a strong advocate for mentorship in medicine, and has been involved in mentorship at multiple levels during medical school. She served as a Co-Lead for MD AIDE, a program at her school that works to address inequity in the medical school admissions process, and provides free MCAT and interview prep, and mentorship to students facing financial barriers and from backgrounds underrepresented in medicine. She also served as co-lead for the Surgical Interest Group, and currently serves on the WCHRI Trainee Advisory Committee, and leads research initiatives with the Women's Health Coalition of Canada. In her free time she enjoys exploring the Rocky Mountains through trail running, rock and ice climbing, mountaineering, and backpacking!

## MENTORSHIP ASSOCIATE COORDINATOR

Klea Agollari, she/her/hers

Hometown: Tirana, Albania; Naples, Florida

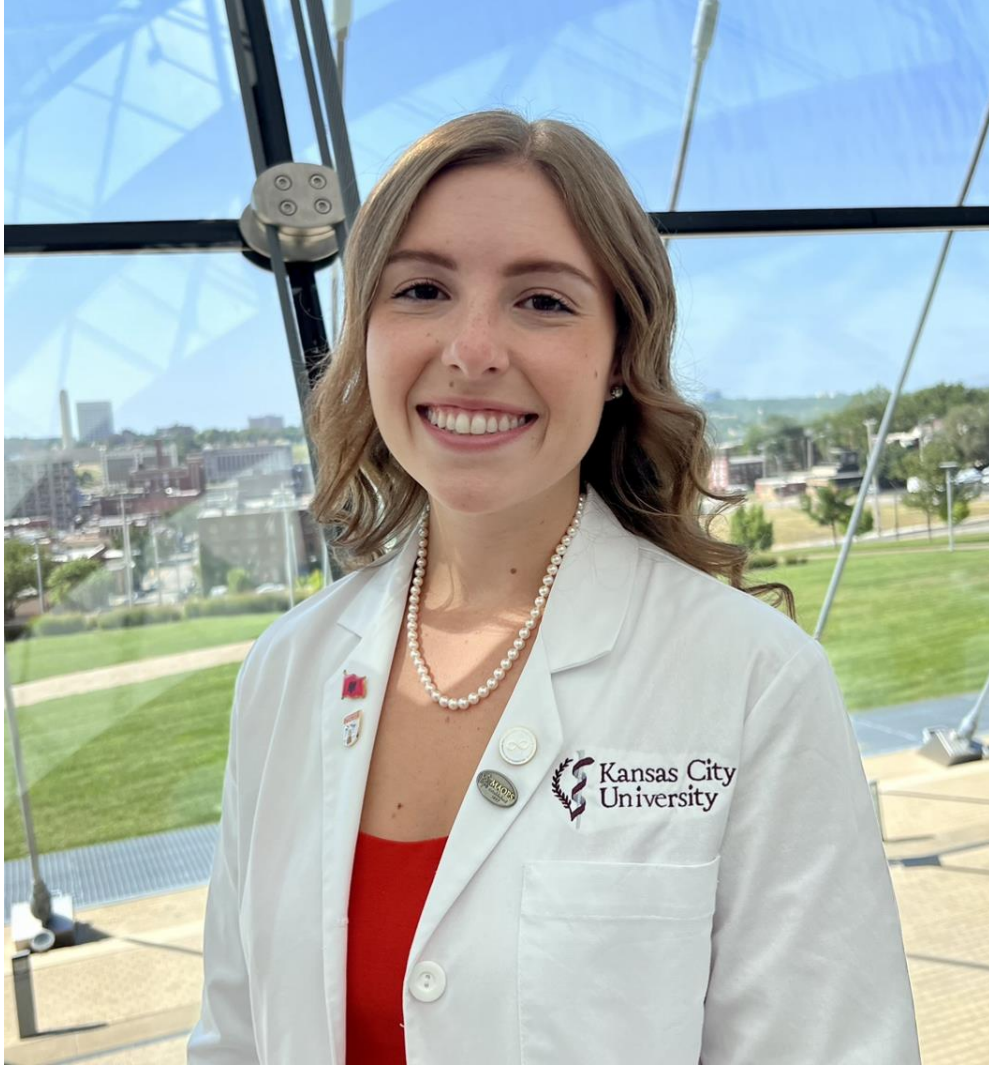
Undergraduate: University of Florida '19

Graduate: University of South Florida '20

Medical School: Kansas City University College of Osteopathic Medicine '25

Twitter: @KleaAgollari

Instagram: @klea



Klea is a second-year medical student at Kansas City University. She was born in Albania and moved to Florida when she was one year old. She is proud to be a first-generation student and the first in her family to become a physician. Klea completed her undergraduate studies at UF earning her Bachelor of Health Sciences and then her Master of Medical Sciences at USF. Her interest in surgery started in college when she discovered a fibroadenoma in her breast and had to undergo a lumpectomy. This experience introduced her to a new passion, and she is interested in pursuing a career in breast surgical oncology. Klea is also very passionate about fostering relationships and has led one of the most successful mentorship programs (JUMP-Start) at KCU for underrepresented students in medicine. She is very excited to connect with everyone at AWS and continuing empowering women through mentorship and unwavering support. In her spare time, Klea enjoys Orange Theory, road trips with her family, matcha lattes with her friends, and exploring all the best food places wherever she goes!

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION COORDINATOR**

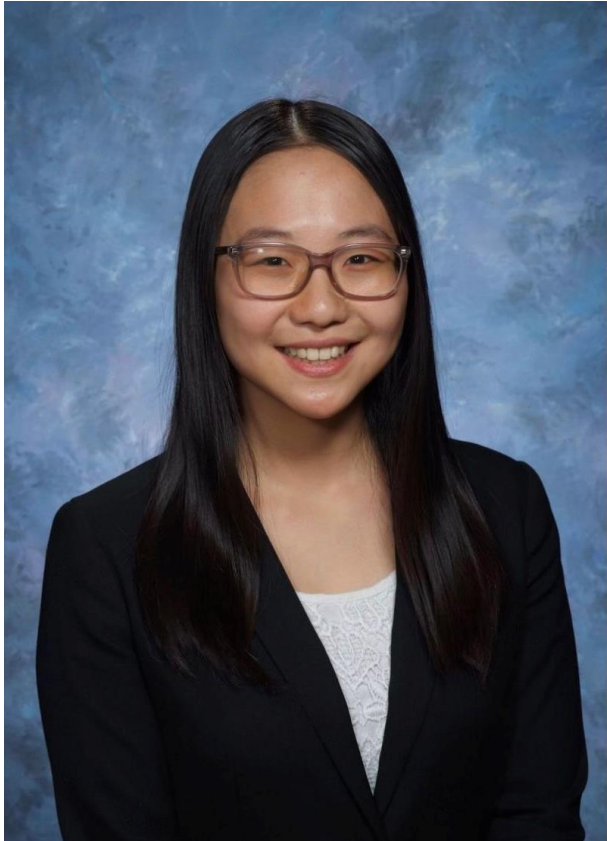
**Katerina Jou, she/her/hers**

**Hometown: Queens, NY**

**Undergraduate: Sophie Davis Biomedical Education Program at City University of New York (CUNY) City College '20**

**Medical School: City University of New York (CUNY) School of Medicine '24**

**Instagram: @katj03**



Katerina Jou is a rising fourth year medical student at the City University of New York (CUNY) School of Medicine. Throughout her career, she has grown passionate about how the political landscape influences both physician and patient welfare, which has motivated her to explore opportunities in medical and healthcare policy. Her work currently focuses on the impact of value-based practices, novel laboratory tests, and artificial intelligence on improving surgical outcomes. At her school, she has been heavily involved with the student research advisory board, American Medical Student Association, and both orthopedic surgery and general surgery specialty interest groups, for which she spearheaded events concerning patient advocacy and female representation in orthopedics. As the diversity and inclusion co-coordinator, she's eager to continue AWS's efforts in promoting exposure and experience among budding surgeons and learning about this international community of inspiring individuals. She aspires to collaborate and create innovative solutions that rectify healthcare disparities, especially in surgical subspecialties, and improve the continuum of care for all patients. In her spare time, she can be found either singing, ice-skating, embroidering, playing violin, cooking, or watching her favorite sport, *Jeopardy!*.

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION ASSOCIATE COORDINATOR**

**Maria Fonseca Bauza**

**Hometown: Miami, FL**

**Undergraduate: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill '20**

**Medical School: UNC School of Medicine '25**

**Twitter: @fonsecabauza**



Maria Fonseca Bauza was born in Montevideo, Uruguay. She earned an Associate of Arts degree from Miami Dade Honors College, through the financial assistance of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy. Maria then transferred to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in 2020. Maria is now a third-year medical student at UNC School of Medicine. She is enrolled in the Comprehensive Advanced Medical Program of Spanish, which will allow her to graduate as a bilingual physician. Furthermore, as a student-physician at a free monthly cardiology clinic at the Carrboro Community Health Center, Maria has witnessed the immense cardiac health disparities faced by immigrants, which has fueled her commitment to pursuing a career in Adult Cardiac Surgery. Her current research on cardiovascular complications after transplant surgery with the Latino Transplant Clinic reflects her dedication to addressing the medical needs of her community. Maria's passion for improving healthcare accessibility and communication is also evident in her interest in medical illustration. She is keen on using art to overcome language and literacy barriers in healthcare.

## **MARKETING & SOCIAL MEDIA COORDINATOR**

**Denise Nemeth, she/her/hers**

**Hometown: Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico**

**Undergraduate: University of Texas San Antonio '11**

**Medical School: University of the Incarnate Word School of Osteopathic Medicine '25**

**Twitter: @dv\_nemeth**

**IG: @dv\_nemeth**



Denise Nemeth is a medical student at the UIWSOM in San Antonio, TX. She is the outgoing President of her school's chapter of the American College of Osteopathic Surgeons- MSS (ACOS-MSS), and a member of multiple organizations including the Latino Surgical Society (LSS) and Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA). Denise served as AWS IG Subcommittee 2022-23 Co-Chair. She is passionate about providing healthcare to medically underserved and marginalized communities. Her research and subspecialty interests are varied and include minimally invasive surgery, wound healing, and gender equity within surgical specialties. She is an advocate for Latino health and hopes to see increased representation via increased numbers of Latino/Hispanic physicians and surgeons.

In her spare time, she enjoys traveling the world, reading, writing, and spending time with her husband Steve. She enjoys feeding hummingbirds and hopes that her home will be "Hummingbird Grand Central" one day. Denise aspires to become a rural surgeon.

## **MEDICAL STUDENT LIAISON TO THE AWS RESIDENT & FELLOWS COMMITTEE**

Cheryl K. Zogg, PhD, MSPH, MHS

Hometown: Minneapolis, MN

Undergraduate: Macalester College

Graduate School (master's): Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Graduate School (PhD): Yale Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Medical School: Yale School of Medicine

Twitter: @CherylZoggPhD

Instagram: @cherylzogg



Cheryl K. Zogg is a final-year MD-PhD Candidate at Yale School of Medicine. She completed her PhD in Chronic Disease Epidemiology in 2021 based on combined research from Yale School of Medicine, Harvard Medical School, and Oxford University. She is enjoying being back in clinical practice as a fourth-year medical student and looks forward to embarking on a career in academic surgery as an aspiring general surgery resident next year. Funded by an F30 Individual Predoctoral MD/PhD Fellowship from the National Institute on Aging, Cheryl's research centers around striving to understand how the organization of health systems, social determinants of health, and variations in access influence the outcomes and quality of care that surgical patients receive. She has a particular clinical interest in end-of-life outcomes and optimizing quality of care amongst older trauma patients. Cheryl has previously served as the Chair, Research Coordinator, and Resource Development Coordinator of the AWS National Medical Student Committee. She is excited to return this year as the Medical Student Liaison to the AWS Resident & Fellows Committee.

### **Regional Representatives**

## MID-ATLANTIC REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

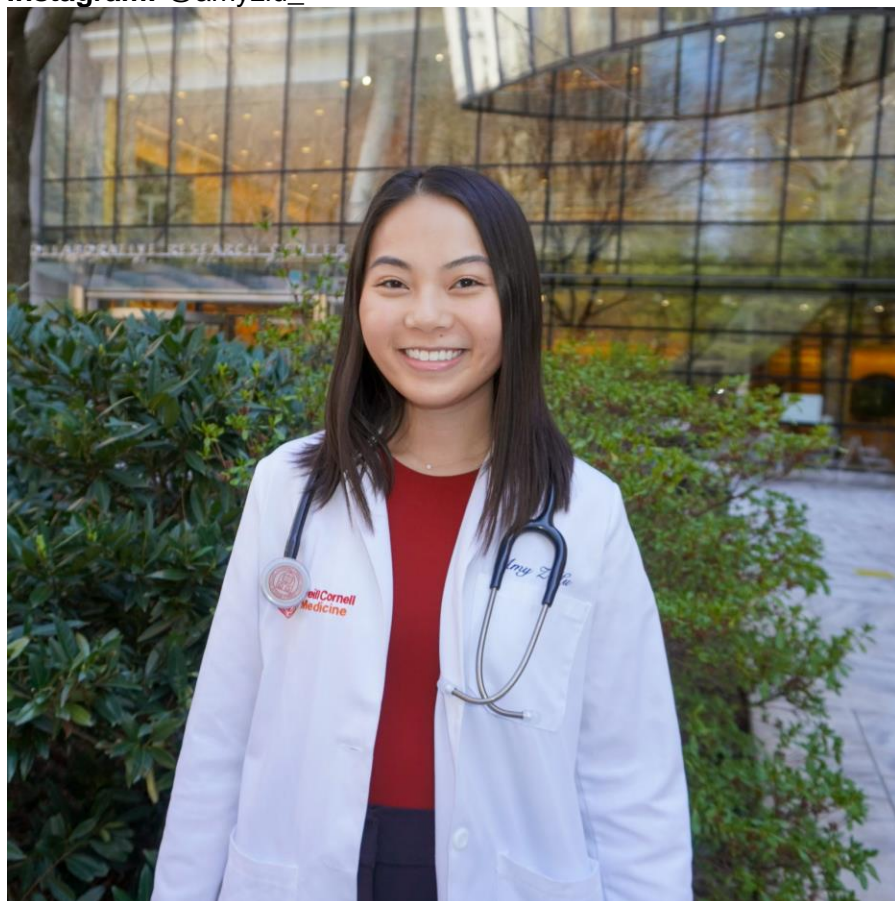
**Amy Lu**, she/her/hers

**Hometown:** Ottawa, ON and Dallas, TX

**Undergraduate:** Johns Hopkins University '21

**Medical School:** Weill Cornell Medicine '26

**Instagram:** @amyzlu\_



Amy is a second-year MD candidate at Weill Cornell Medicine. She was born in Ottawa, ON and immigrated to Dallas, TX when she was 8. She attended Johns Hopkins University, where she double-majored in Molecular and Cellular Biology and Spanish with a minor in Visual Arts. As an undergraduate student, she studied stem cell-mediated bone repair at the Johns Hopkins Hospital, served as a Spanish-speaking patient advocate for immigrants, and was a classroom assistant at the Baltimore Museum of Art. After college, she spent a gap year as an orthopedic surgery clinical research coordinator at Massachusetts General Hospital. At Cornell, Amy is an executive board member for the Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group, Sports Medicine Interest Group, Women in Medicine, and Weill Cornell Running Club. She is also a case manager for refugees at the Weill Cornell Human Rights Center, art editor for the school's humanities journal, and research fellow at the Hospital for Special Surgery. In her free time, Amy enjoys running, painting, reading, and trying new restaurants in NYC!

## MIDWEST GREAT LAKES REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

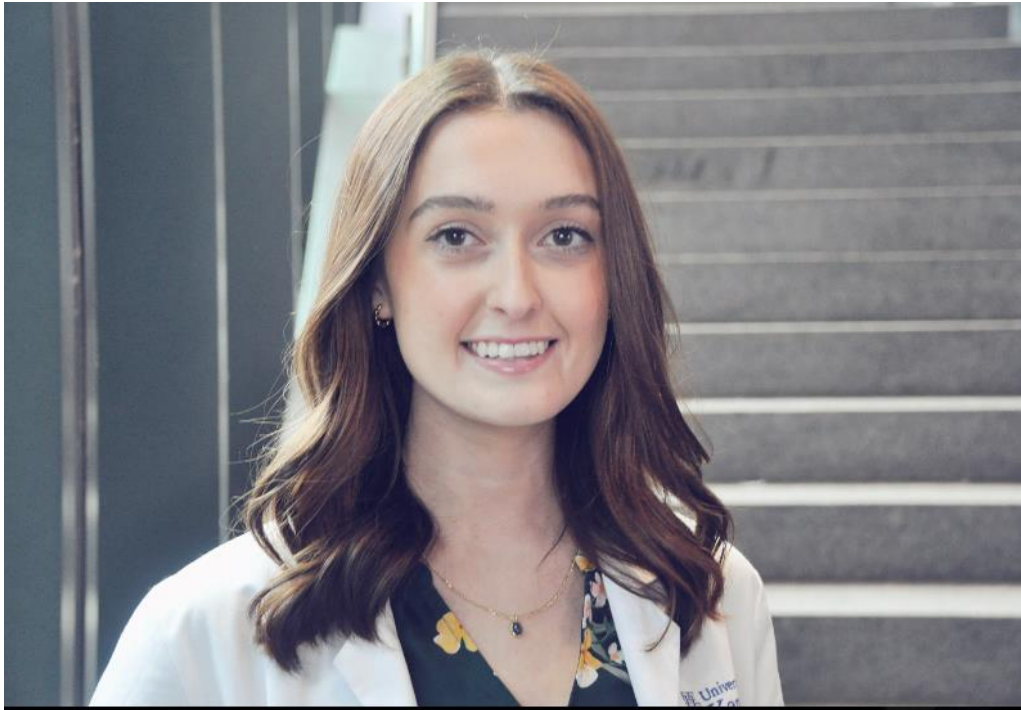
**Mackenzie Donoho**

**Hometown:** Bardstown, KY

**Undergrad:** University of Kentucky, 2020

**Medical School:** University of Kentucky College of Medicine, 2025

**Twitter:** [@DonohoMackenzie](#)



Mackenzie is a third-year medical student at the University of Kentucky College of Medicine in Lexington, KY. She was raised in Bardstown, KY, earned her degree in Neuroscience, and completed a capstone project on intraventricular hemorrhage in neonates. Throughout medical school, she has cultivated experiences in leadership aimed at helping other medical students achieve success, including through her role as Academic Resource Chair in which she mentored first-year medical students. She also served on the executive board of her school's student-run clinic as Physician Liaison to provide the uninsured population of Lexington access to medical care. She is currently pursuing research in transplant medicine, as well as the historical evolution of surgical techniques, and is interested in a career in general surgery. She will serve as Apprentice Instructor of the Surgical Skills elective at her medical school during this next year in a continued effort to provide mentorship to other medical students, one of her strongest passions. In her spare time, Mackenzie enjoys playing with her dog, trying out new coffee shops, and going to the movies with her husband.

## MIDWEST GREAT PLAINS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Laura Kasper

Hometown: Geneva, Switzerland

Undergraduate: University of Southern California - 2013

Graduate (if applicable) Yale University - 2021

Medical School: Rush Medical College - 2025



Laura Kasper is a third-year medical student at Rush Medical College and earned her MPH at Yale University. Originally from Switzerland, she came to the US to attend film school at the University of Southern California. After working in the Hollywood film industry for four years, she switched gears and decided to pursue medicine. While at Rush, Laura conducts surgical outcomes research, focusing on differences between urban and rural populations, as well as serves as a Peer Advisor & Tutor. Outside of medicine, she enjoys downhill skiing, cycling, hiking, and trying out new recipes in her Instant Pot.

## **NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Ariana Ginsberg:

Hometown: New York City, NY

Undergraduate: Johns Hopkins University

Medical School: Tufts University School of Medicine

Twitter: @arianaginsberg



Ariana Ginsberg is a fourth-year medical student at Tufts University School of Medicine. Ariana grew up in New York and obtained her undergraduate degree in Neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University. Prior to medical school, Ariana conducted neuroscience research at Hopkins and worked in a colorectal surgical practice in New York. She is currently involved in clinical research at Tufts, is on Tufts Student Council, and takes Boston Ballet classes in her free time. Ariana is an aspiring pediatric surgeon whose passion for surgery ignited during her college days while shadowing in a variety of surgical specialties and working as a Child Life volunteer in the Hopkins pediatric emergency department. She believes in the power of mentorship and community support for women surgeons and medical students; she is looking forward to another wonderful year working with her colleagues at AWS in pursuit of these goals. Outside of medicine, Ariana loves running, classical ballet, and finding the best bagels in every city.

## **SOUTH REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

**Ryann Maciejewski**

**Hometown: Columbus, OH**

**Undergraduate: University of Cincinnati '20**

**Medical School: Tulane University School of Medicine '26**

**Twitter: @RySki22**

**Instagram: @ryannscarb**



Ryann is a second-year medical student at Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans. Before starting medical school, she earned a bachelor's degree in Medical Sciences from University of Cincinnati and a Masters of Clinical Anatomy from Tulane University. Drawn to surgery early on, she is the President of Tulane AWS, where she has the opportunity to explore her interest by interacting with surgery attendings, residents, and fellow classmates who shared similar career goals as her. She also serves on executive boards for Orthopedic Surgery Interest Group, Surgical Oncology Interest Group, the Orientation Committee and as a class representative for the student organization of academic excellence. She is an aspiring orthopedic surgeon and is involved in the Medical Student Orthopedic Society. Ryann is incredibly excited for the opportunity to work with AWS fostering a community and facilitating collaboration and connections for women in surgical specialties across the South Region. In her free time, Ryann enjoys spending time with family and friends, baking, crafting, spoiling her dog, and exploring new restaurants.

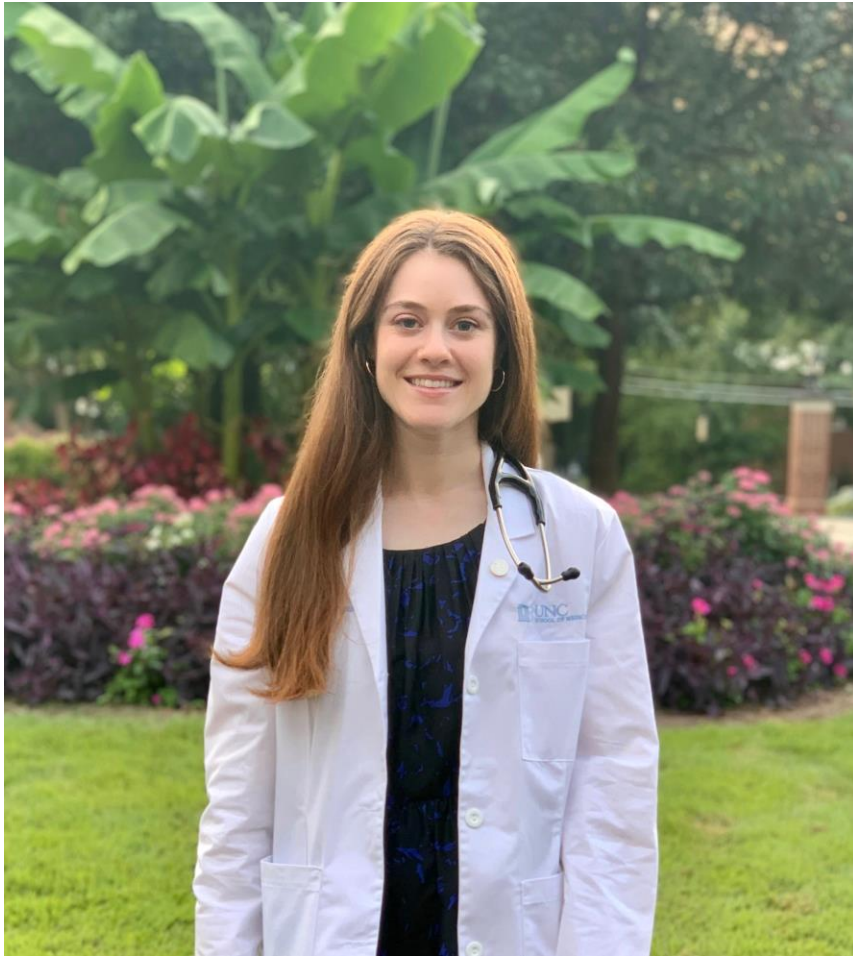
## **SOUTHEAST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

**Katherine Drew Marapese**

**Hometown: Wilmington, NC**

**Undergraduate: United States Naval Academy '20**

**Medical School: University of North Carolina School of Medicine '25**



Katherine Drew Marapese is an MD/MBA Candidate at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine and Duke University's Fuqua School of Business. She received her Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from the United States Naval Academy in 2020. As a member of the Global Health Scholarly Concentration Program at UNC, Katherine Drew enjoys pursuing her interests in global surgery, access to care, and patient-reported outcomes through various collaborative efforts. She volunteers at UNC's Student Health Action Coalition Medical Clinic and previously led the care management team. She is looking forward to exploring health sector management and policy while completing her dual MBA at Duke before returning to clinical practice. She aspires to a career in surgery. Katherine Drew is excited to join the AWS National Medical Student Committee as Southeast Regional Representative.

## **SOUTHWEST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Nazanin Kermanshahi

Hometown: Tehran, Iran

Undergraduate: University of California, Davis

Medical school: Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine

Instagram: nazaninker9

Twitter: @nazaninker9



Nazanin is a rising third-year medical student. She came to the United States at age 18 to receive her degree in Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior from the University of California, Davis. As the first in her family to attend college, pursue a medical degree, and study in a different country, she discovered the value of mentorship early on in her career. She is passionate about creating opportunities for women to discover their love for surgery and providing accessible information and resources for their success on this path.

She served on the 2022 AWS Southwest Regional Conference planning committee. She has also served as the AWS secretary, Student American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics (SAOAO) vice president, the Health Outreach through Medicine and Education student-run clinic education coordinator, and on the Student Government Association Diversity committee at her medical school. She received the Inaugural American Association of Latino Orthopaedic Surgeons (AALOS) Medical Student Symposium 2023 award. In her spare time, she enjoys listening to audiobooks, hiking, practicing Spanish, and trying new recipes and workouts.

## **WEST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Heather Martin, 2d Lt USAF

*She/Her/Hers*

Hometown: Aurora, Colorado

Undergraduate: Carthage College – '18

Medical School: Rocky Vista University – '24

Instagram: @heather.martin.rvu



Heather is a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force and a DO candidate at Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine. She grew up in Colorado and attained her undergraduate degree from Carthage College in Kenosha, WI where she earned her Bachelor of Arts majoring in Chemistry and Neuroscience. Prior to medical school, Heather conducted molecular and behavioral neuroscience research at the University of Colorado, Boulder. During medical school, Heather has served as Class Council President, President of OBGYN Club, Event Coordinator for the Student Association of Osteopathic Military Physicians and Surgeons, Chair of the Student Researcher of the Year Committee, and Vice Chair of the Osteopathic Medical Student Coalition. She is passionate about furthering access to opportunity for professional development within AWS and is eager to work with the other representatives on the National Medical Student Committee to provide exciting new opportunities to members of AWS this year. Heather is pursuing residency in general surgery and intends to complete a fellowship in Trauma and Critical Care Surgery. Outside of work, she enjoys snowboarding, book club, and Cross-Fit.

## **EUROPE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Aava Param  
Hometown: Vancouver, Canada  
Undergraduate: University of St Andrews  
Medical School: University of Edinburgh  
Instagram: aavaparam



Aava Param is a final year medical student at the University of Edinburgh, in their Canadian medical program partnered with the University of Alberta. From her first day of medical school, Aava knew that she was passionate about pursuing a career in surgery and sought after any opportunity to become involved in the community. She has served as president of her universities Surgical Society and ENT society, while also serving on executive committee for the orthopedic society, Incision UK, neurosurgical society, BOMSA, and AO Trauma. She has also been heavily involved in surgical research, working on projects at the University of Edinburgh, UBC, and Cornell University, with hopes to pursue a career in academic surgery in the future. Outside of medicine, Aava is incredibly passionate about advocacy. At the age of 15, she founded a non-profit organization, Empowering Tomorrow's Girls, that raises funds and awareness for young girls' access to education globally. Further, she is part of In2MedSchool, which supports students from underprivileged backgrounds in pursuing a career in medicine. Aava is an avid tennis player, runner, and coffee connoisseur!

## CANADA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Rebecca Lozano-Franco

Hometown: Montreal

Undergraduate: NA

Medical School: McGill University

Twitter: @rlozanofranco

Instagram: @reb.lf



Rebecca is a second-year medical student at McGill University and will be starting her first term as the Canada Regional Representative. She is also the incoming president of the AWS Chapter at her own university. Although she was born and raised in Montreal, her parents' Mexican and Italian cultures have significantly shaped the way she connects with her community. Ever since starting medical school, she has been interested in women's health, mentorship, wellness, and improving patient outcomes. Her wide-ranging interests have led her to consider a career in obstetrics and gynecology. Outside of medical school, Rebecca enjoys exploring her artistic side through ballet and indulging in her love of literature.

## ASIA/AUSTRALIA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

**Preetha Dhanalakshmi Saravanan**

**Hometown: Bangalore, India**

**Medical School: Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, Bangalore - India**

**Twitter: @Preetha\_ds**



Preetha D S is a second-year medical student of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Karnataka, Bangalore - India. Being a hardworking and studious student, good at both curricular and extracurricular activities. She aspires to be a surgeon, who puts her patients and their needs first. As a science student in her school, she has chosen engineering over medicine after her school education, due to her strong commitment towards medical sciences. In her school days, she did a project on cryoablation techniques to immobilise the cancer cells and minimise the cancer effect in body cells. Enthusiastic medical student joined medical college immediately after her school education, her goal is to develop minimally invasive methods of surgery with faster recovery time and enable the use of technology for the betterment of services. She is an active member of rotary club, being a part of its various events including spreading health awareness like hypertension and diabetes among the individuals. She is backed by several achievements in music including keyboard, harmonium, and Hindustani vocals. She is an accomplished fencer too.

## **LATIN AMERICA REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

Beatriz Laus P. Lima

Hometown: Indaiatuba, Brazil

Medical School: Universidade São Francisco '25

Twitter: @beatrizlauss

Instagram: @bia\_lauss



Beatriz Laus is a fourth-year medical student enrolled at Universidade São Francisco (USF), Brazil. She has served as Latin America Regional Representative of the Association of Women Surgeons (AWS) in the past year, and she is currently a team member of the Outreach Committee of AWS. She is also a member of the Advocacy Nacional Team of InciSioN Brazil and Director of events for InciSioN Global; her role is to promote Global Surgery and its aspects, aiming to reach safe, equal, and affordable care for the population. Furthermore, she is the current IMG Liason for Women in Neurosurgery (WINS), where she is responsible for creating content for IMGs who aim to apply for residency in the USA. Her medical interests include Neurosurgery, Global Health/Surgery, and Gender Equity.

## **AFRICA/MIDDLE EAST REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE**

### **Taraf Jaro**

Hometown: Virginia, USA and Qatar

Medical School: Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in Bahrain

Twitter: @TarafSJaro



Taraf Jaro is a fourth year medical student at the Royal College of Surgeons Ireland in Bahrain. Having grown up in Virginia and Qatar, her exposure to a plethora of cultural backgrounds has shaped her passion for equitable policy and quality access to healthcare globally. She has served as IFMSA-Bahrain's Standing Committee for Human Rights and Peace Officer, and secretary of RCSI Bahrain's AWS chapter. Her research interests include improving surgical outcomes in low-resource settings and trauma systems. Through her role as her university's Research Officer, she aids in providing the student body guidance and training in research. She highly values the impact of effective mentorship, crediting its contribution to empowerment whether in the OR or on the research stage. Aiming to merge the two, she is excited to serve as this year's Regional Representative for Africa/Middle East to provide that benefit to our global network of students to cultivate an empowering culture for women in surgery! She enjoys reading, exploring coffee shops, and quality time with friends and family.

## CHAPTER CONSULTANT

**Margaret Botros, She/They**

**Hometown:** Wichita, KS

**Undergraduate:** Harvard University '17

**Graduate:** Harvard Divinity School '19

**Medical School:** Washington University in Saint Louis School of Medicine '25

**Instagram:** @maggy.botros



Margaret (Maggy) is a third-year medical student at Washington University in Saint Louis School of Medicine. She graduated from Harvard University with a degree in Molecular Biology and Modern Standard Arabic, after which she pursued a Master's degree at Harvard Divinity school where she studied theological bioethics, with a research focus in Islamic jurisprudential tradition surrounding surgical interventions on the body. She returned to the Midwest for medical school, where she developed an interest in plastic and reconstructive surgery. Her research interests remain with the medical humanities, primarily focusing on surgical and anatomical ethics. Her career aspirations are to pursue training as an academic plastic surgeon, with a continued engagement in ethical and socio-medical research. In addition to her research and medical training, Margaret is deeply engaged with WashU's chapter of the Association of Women Surgeons, serving on the executive board since 2020 and starting and managing its Instagram since 2021. Beyond medical school, she enjoys tutoring, designing and creating elaborate Halloween costumes, and spending time with her husband and bich-poo.