



GLOBAL SURGERY STUDENT ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Global Surgery Student Alliance

PREPARED BY
SIERRA STINGL AND ALLISON ROLLINS

CONTENTS

03

FORWARD

04

CHAPTER STATISTICS

07

EQUITY

08

A YEAR IN REVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS

09

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

10

ACS EVENT

11

A YEAR IN REVIEW: EVENT
DETAIL

16

NATIONAL TEAM UPDATES

22

THANK YOU TO SPONSORS

23

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRS

Dear GSSA Members,

2020 was a year of personal and professional challenge, through which the GSSA community transformed for the better through critical reflection and collaboration. We may not have been able to come together in person as we had in the years before, but that did not prevent us from uniting on global surgery research, advocacy, and education as we always have, despite the personal and community challenges we all faced.

The Covid-19 pandemic has single-handedly changed the way we view education. Although GSSA had launched virtual content at the beginning of 2020, the rapid transition of our 4th annual Symposium hosted in partnership with the University of Utah to a virtual platform marked the beginning of a field-wide movement to virtual education. A change that had started as a novel initiative was quickly scaled for safety, and ultimately we saw virtual programming grow to meet its potential. We mobilized to host many more global surgery education webinars for students and trainees and also the launch of our Global Surgery Curriculum. Furthermore, our team and our chapters used the virtual setting to create more inclusive and accessible collaborations with multiple virtual hackathons and our first virtual networking event in partnership with the American College of Surgeons Operation Giving Back & Resident and Associate Society

Global Surgery Work Group and InciSioN. Our chapters also used the virtual platform to open locally hosted lectures and programming to all students and trainees, reaching beyond just chapter members.

Another critical part of our 2020 journey started as May ended, and our communities had to reckon with the murder of George Floyd and also the previous killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other Black and Brown individuals. We decided, as a community, that our commitment to global surgery and health equity also held us accountable to working towards health equity as it related to the lethal impacts of racism and racist systems on morbidity, mortality, and the life experiences of our fellow classmates, colleagues, and communities. We published our #BlackLivesMatter statement to stand in solidarity, but our work did not end there: we launched new events for HBCUs, an equity initiative to challenge our perceptions and practices, and continued to center diversity and humility in all we did.

We start 2021 with strength, resilience, and a renewed focus on equity and justice in our work. We stand transformed, perhaps forever, but with the energy and plasticity ingrained in students and trainees. And we look to carry the lessons of our training and our community to bettering the lives of our current and future patients.

ANUSHA JAYARAM & BLAKE HAUSER

2020 Co-Chairs, Global Surgery Student Alliance

THE 2020 NATIONAL TEAM

VPs of Internal Affairs

Sierra Stingl
Sam Simister

Regional Representatives

Helen Li
Michael Flores
Philip Hong
Joshua Webb
Sarah Rapaport
Cassidy Parshall

VPs of Research

Shahyan Rehman
Connor Peck
Bathsheba Wariso

VPs of Residents/Trainees

Myles Dworkin
Ashley Rosenberg
Megan Still

VPs of Education

Andrew Rees
Natalie Pawlak
Nensi Ruzgar

VPs of Advocacy

Kristin Cardiel Nunez
Tara Ahmadi
Caroline Wight

VPs of Finance

Ann Pongsakul
Caroline Canning

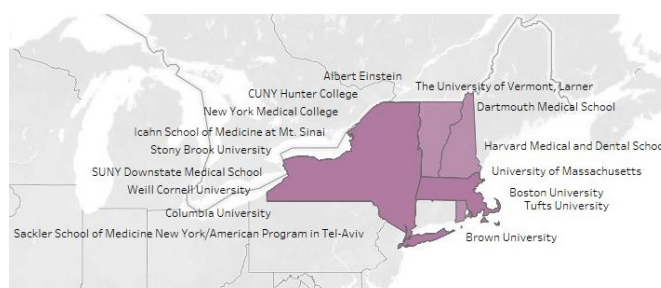
OUR CURRENT STATE

GSSA MEMBERSHIP IN 2020

CENTRAL REGION



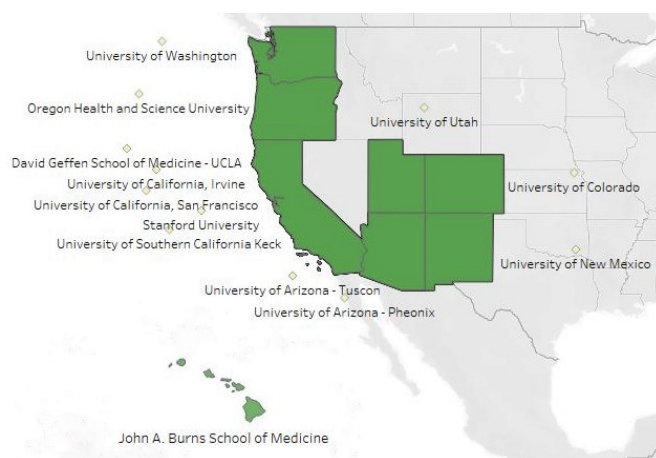
NORTHEAST REGION



MID-ATLANTIC REGION



WEST REGION



SOUTH REGION

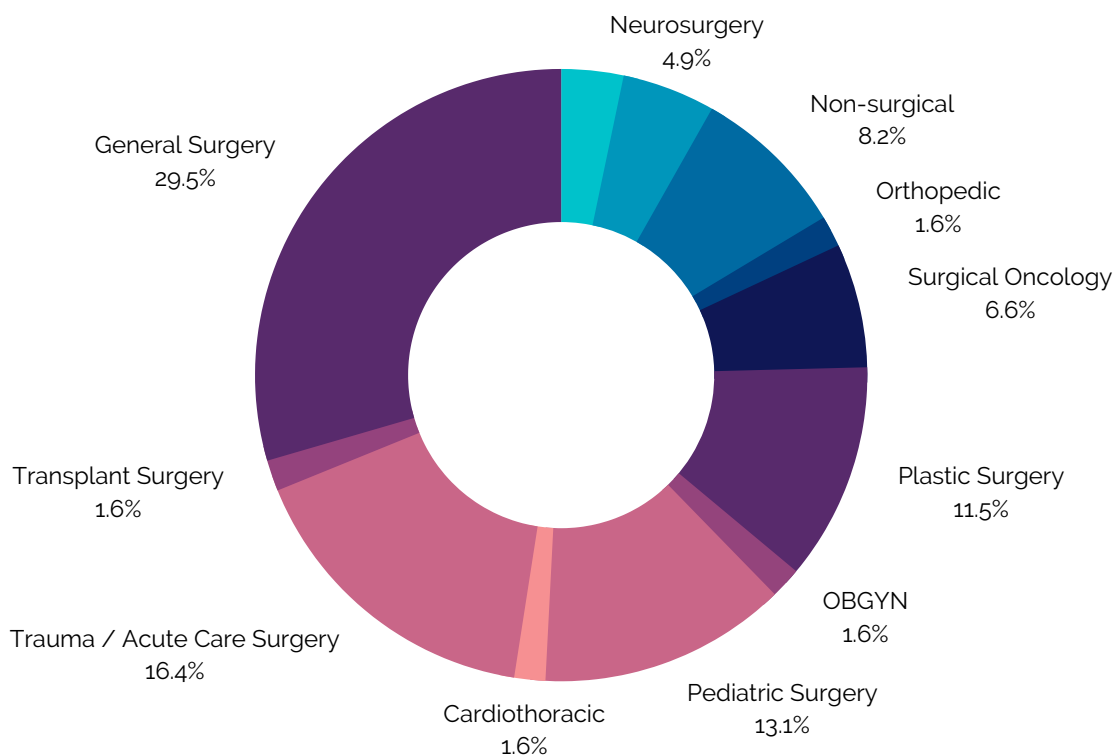


Our GSSA chapters grew by nearly 48% in 2020. We currently have **80** medical school chapters and **16** undergraduate chapters. In 2020, we estimate there were over **2,400 members** ranging from undergraduate to residents.

**Data was sourced from an internal survey, of all 96, 55 chapters responded (57.2%).

GSSA CHAPTER ADVISORS

Specializations of GSSA Faculty Advisors

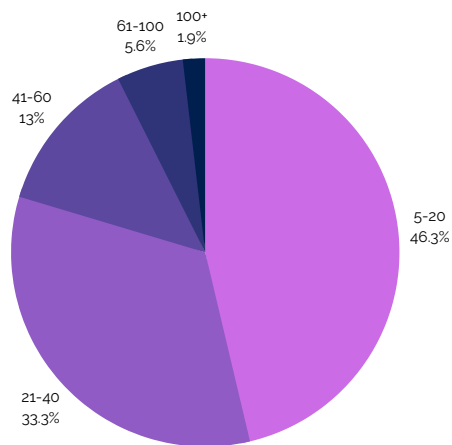


In 2020, nearly 53 faculty advisors, worked with chapter leadership, and represented 12 specialties. The most common specialty represented was **General Surgery**, followed by **Trauma & Acute Care Surgery** and **Pediatric Surgery**.

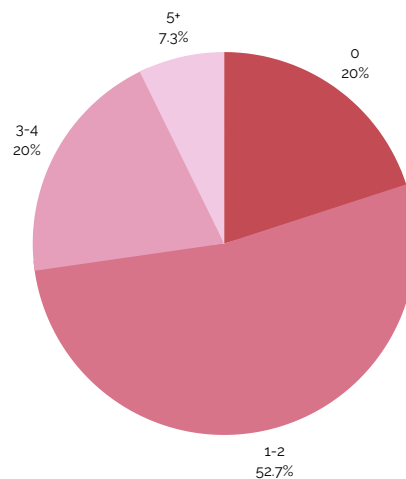
GSSA chapter advisors are invited by GSSA chapter leaders to become a part of the national organization and as such, can act as a resource for trainees at any institution, including institutions that are just working to develop their global surgery presence. Further, GSSA chapter advisors are key contacts for guiding interested students in organizing regional and national global surgery events.

COVID IMPACTS ON CHAPTERS

NUMBER OF MEMBERS, BY CHAPTER

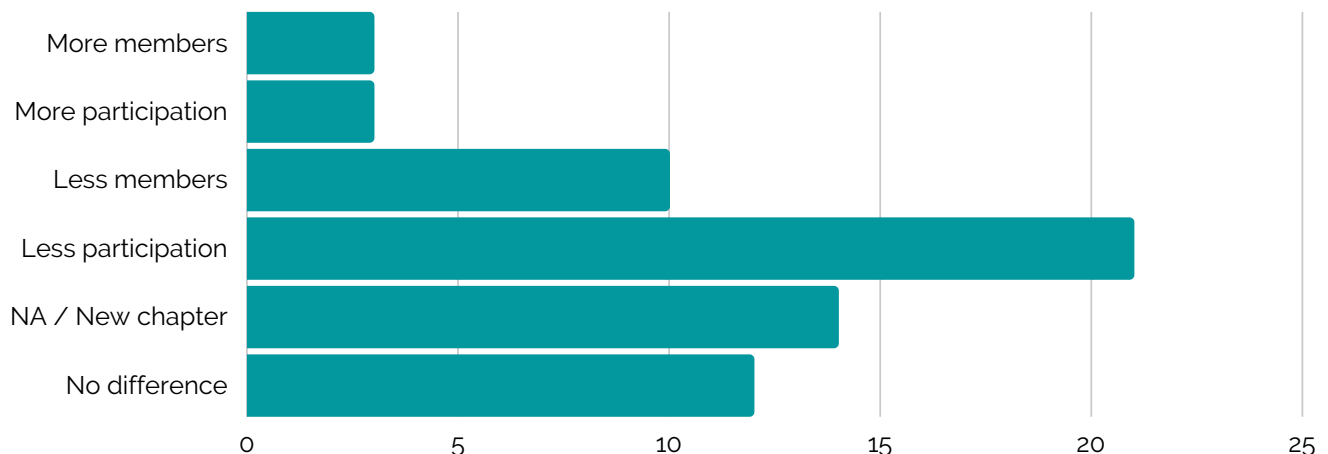


EVENTS PER SEMESTER, BY CHAPTER



In 2020, **our chapters** faced new challenges with the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students faced interruptions to their schedules, gaps in their training, and fewer members or participation. However, students embraced the virtual format and continued to engage their members in innovative ways. Over half of chapters had at least 1-2 events per semester, though many noted less participation.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON CHAPTERS



MOVING TOWARD EQUITY

FORMING THE EQUITY INITIATIVE

In light of the events of 2020, many medical schools across the country began to face their own histories of racism and inequity. Even so, GSSA recognized a need for students to engage with, reflect upon, and educate each other about issues surrounding equity in the global surgery field. A workgroup was formed of chapter leaders and national team members to focus on creating events that were set to roll out in 2021.

GSSA Equity Initiative Mission:

- **We commit to becoming more equitable partners within the field of global surgery through continuous self-reflection, education, and open conversation and collaboration with our global surgery community.**
- **We hope that the GSSA Equity Initiative creates a safe but challenging space for US students and trainees to critically examine their own biases, motives, and the end impact of their global surgery work.**

[Read more about our initiative here](#)

#BLACK LIVES MATTER

Dear GSSA Members,

We are writing today to stand in solidarity with our community members who have for far too long been adversely affected by systemic racism and oppression in the United States. To our Black classmates, patients, co-residents, attendings, and allied health staff, we apologize for the great pain inflicted upon you by our corrupt criminal justice system. We condemn the racist violence which resulted in the senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and countless others. As global surgery advocates, we believe that it is important to actively work towards ending racism, as we know it is a deeply rooted cause of disparities seen across global surgery and all of health care. Without learning, understanding, and actively working against the present-day consequences of colonialism, we cannot truly unwind and rebuild equal communities and health systems.

We understand that these issues will not resolve overnight, and we are committed to supporting a generation of healthcare professionals and allies who actively work to see an end to racism and all health disparities. To our Black peers, we are here for you, to amplify your voices and to stand in solidarity for your fight. To our non-Black peers, it is our duty as humans and global surgery advocates to educate ourselves and to actively challenge ugly injustices our Black peers face for doing activities our privilege allows us to do daily.

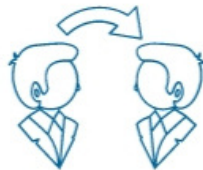
In Solidarity,

The GSSA National Team

A YEAR IN REVIEW

GSSA Highlights from 2020

Mar



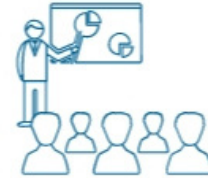
2020 National GSSA Symposium
hosted by the University of Utah
School of Medicine on March 14th

Oct



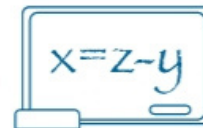
"The Future of the OR," co-hosted
by GSSA, Incision Global, RAS-
ACS GSWG, and ACS Operation
Giving Back. An event to dovetail
the American College of Surgeons
2020 Congress on October 24th.

Feb



**2nd Annual Florida Regional
Hackathon** on February 22nd
with FIU, UM, UCF, and UF

Oct



West Coast Hackathon on
October 9th-10th hosted
virtually with the University
of California, Irvine, School of
Medicine

Nov



**Northeast Regional
Hackathon** on November 6-7.
Hosted by Brown University,
School of Medicine

THE 2020 NATIONAL GSSA SYMPOSIUM

by the University of Utah, School of Medicine

In March 2020, the University of Utah held the 4th Annual National Global Surgery Student Alliance Symposium. With a rising number of COVID-19 cases across the country, the conference was transitioned to a virtual live-stream format.

It was themed “**Innovation for the Global Surgery of Tomorrow**” and brought together leaders within global surgery and medical devices to facilitate mentorship and discussion about the future of global health. Keynote speakers included Dr. Sherry Wren, Dr. Pierre Theodore, Dr. Charles Mock, and Dr. Ray Price.



Dr. Sherry Wren

Vice-Chair Surgery
Stanford University



Dr. Charles Mock

Global Health Director
Washington University



Dr. Ray Price

Director of Global Surgery
University of Utah



Dr. Pierre Theodore

VP of Innovation
Johnson and Johnson

THE FUTURE OF THE OR

Co-hosted by GSSA, Incision, RAS ACS Global Surgery Working Group, and ACS's Operation Giving Back

The Global Surgery Student Alliance, Incision Global, and the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons Global Surgery Workgroup all partnered with the American College of Surgeons (ACS) Operation Giving Back to host “The Future of the OR.” This event for students and trainees interested in global surgery took place to dovetail the American College of Surgeons 2020 Congress in October. As the events of the congress were transitioned online due to COVID-19, our satellite session was as well. We hosted a panel series with expert speakers on the topics of Surgical Capacity, Advocacy and Policy, Education - Training to be a Global Surgeon, Research, Equity and Ethics, and Humanitarian Efforts.



Surgical Capacity

Dr. Catherine DeVries
Dr. N. Roy
Dr. Maryam Ali Khan
Dr. Katayoun Madani

Research

Dr. Sudha Jayaraman
Dr. Adeline A. Boatín
Shahyan Rehman
Anusha Jayaram

Advocacy and Policy

Dr. Emmanuel Makasa
Dr. Kris Torgeson
Dr. Manon Pigeolet
Dr. Issy Marks
Davina Daudu
Deen Garba

Equity and Ethics

Dr. Bethany Hedt-Gauthier
Dr. Heaven Tatere
Dr. Matt Bobel
Makinah Haq
Eliana Kim

Education:

Training to be a Global Surgeon

Dr. Faye Evans
Dr. Megan Vu
Dr. Parisa Fallah
Dr. Ahmadreza Abbaslou
Sierra Stingl

Surgical Capacity

Dr. Catherine DeVries
Dr. N. Roy
Dr. Maryam Ali Khan
Dr. Katayoun Madani

A YEAR IN REVIEW

A Transition to Online

In light of the impacts of COVID-19, the GSSA national team and chapter leadership groups were able to **bring their events to a wider audience utilizing online platforms**. The idled hands of health profession students temporarily withdrawn from clinical and in-person responsibilities opened the field for the several new initiatives. We created community through virtual social events and hosted educational webinars, panels, screenings, journal clubs, and series detailed below! All of the following can be found on YouTube channel linked [here](#).

Applying to Residency

In the summer of 2020, the GSSA National Team launched an “Applying to Residency” webinar series. In this 10-part program, GSSA shed some light on how to incorporate global surgery into residency for student applicants to surgical and anesthesia programs within the United States. Panelists included current residents from across various surgical subspecialties to speak about what they considered when applying, how to incorporate global surgery work into residency, and their own career paths in the field. Each webinar was specialty-specific and included the following fields: General Surgery, OBGYN, Anesthesia, Orthopedics, Neurosurgery, Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery, Otolaryngology, Ophthalmology, Vascular Surgery, and Cardiothoracic Surgery. All webinars were recorded and posted to our YouTube channel.

Journal Clubs

This year we hosted the first official “**GSSA journal clubs**” and had many successful events:

- **“Viewpoints, Letters, and Correspondence”** with Dr. Dominique Vervoort
- A discussion of **“Global Surgery 2030: evidence and solutions for achieving health, welfare, and economic development”** with Dr. Mark Shrim
- **“Globalization of national surgical, obstetric and anesthesia plans: the critical link between health policy and action in global surgery”** with Dr. Paul Truche and Dr. Kee Park
- **“Global Surgery Pro-Con Debate: A Pathway to Bilateral Academic Success or the Bold New Face of Colonialism?”** co-hosted by the FIU GSSA Chapter and attended by several of the paper’s primary authors



Webinars

- **“Ethics in Global Surgery”** featuring speakers Dr. Abdullah Salleh, Dr. Alreem Al-Hinai, and Tessa Robinson as they discussed the ethical framework for global surgery formulated at the 2019 Bethune Round Table. Participants worked through break out session case studies discussing important ethical issues within the field of global surgery.
- **“Plastic Surgery: Short Term Medical Missions and Surgical Capacity Building – Can Both Frameworks Coexist?”** featuring global plastic and reconstructive surgeons Dr. Amanda Gosman and Dr. Marc E. Walker
- **“Intro to Global Neurosurgery & Career Development”** featuring global neurosurgeons Dr. Gail Rosseau, Dr. Sandi Lam, and Dr. Roxanna Garcia.
- **“Journey Through Global Surgery: From Trainee to Pediatric Surgery Attending”** featuring Dr. Robin Petroze
- **“Global Obstetrics and Gynecology”** featuring Dr. Barbra Levy, Dr. Valera Macias, Dr. Sabrina Cervantes, and Dr. Lina Roa
- **“Anesthesiology and Global Surgery”** featuring Dr. Michael Lipnick & Dr. Faye Evans as they discussed innovation and their experiences within the field.
- **“Research and Global Surgery”** featuring Dr. George Dyer and Dr. Bethany Hedt-Gauthier, as they discuss ethical involvement, partnership, and how to get involved.
- **“How and Where to Begin Writing Editorials in Academic Surgery”** featuring Dr. Dominique Vervoort
- For our undergraduate members, **“Introduction to Your GSSA: A Virtual Meet & Greet on Global Surgery Involvement in Medical School,”** featuring several of our current and former national team members: Anusha Jayaram, Dr. Parisa Fallah, Sierra Stingl, Caroline Wight, Nensi Ruzgar, Natalie Pawlak, Connor Peck, Philip Hong, Cassidy Parshall, and Dr. Megan Hermann

Schools take their events National

Vanderbilt University, School of Medicine

- The Vanderbilt University GSSA Chapter launched a national Global Surgery Virtual Seminar Series in April of 2020. Their installments included Global Anesthesia led by Dr. Camila Walters and Dr. Matt Kynes, Global Ob-Gyn led by Dr. Christopher Sizemore, Dr. Lindsey Zamora, and Dr. Laura Ha, and Global Neurosurgery led by Dr. Thompson and Dr. Bonfield and residents Dr. Reynolds and Dr. Yengo-Khan.
- They also shared a seminar on “The History of Global Surgery Initiatives at Vanderbilt: Origins & Lessons Learned” highlighting their partnership in Kijabe. Panelists included members from the Vanderbilt Dept of Surgery (Dr. and Mrs. Tarpley, Dr. Rondi Kauffmann, Dr. Britney Grayson), Vanderbilt Dept of Anesthesia (Dr. Mark Newton, Dr. Camila Walters, Dr. Matt Kynes), and Kijabe Panelists (Mary Mungai, Dr. Jack Barasa, Dr. Chege Macharia, Dr. Peter Nthumba).

University of Minnesota, School of Medicine

- UMN Global Surgery Ethics journal club highlighting the article "Ethical considerations in global surgery" by E. Steyn published in the British Journal of Surgery in 2019. Discussions were guided by Dr. Matt Bobel.
- UMN GSSA Webinar: “Surgical NGOs in the Time of COVID-19: A Case Study from Honduras” featuring Dr. Merlin Antúnez, Medical Director of The Holy Family Surgery Center operated by One World Surgery (OWS) and located one hour northeast of Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras. This webinar presented a discussion about how COVID19 has affected Honduras and s-NGOs such as One World Surgery.
- "Global Surgery Multidisciplinary Panel": Surgeons from general surgery, orthopedics, OBGYN, and OMFS spoke about their backgrounds in global surgery, learning experiences, and the initiatives they have been a part of. The discussion included topics for trainees about how to obtain research/surgical experiences abroad, expand experiences, and augment their residency application.

Schools take their events National

University of Pennsylvania, School of Medicine

- Shared a webinar with the national membership featuring Dr. Jordan Swanson, who served as Director of Surgical Innovation at Operation Smile, as he discussed care in low-resource settings.
- 6th annual Penn Global Surgery Symposium with the theme “Partnerships for Global Pediatric Surgery,”

VCU School of Medicine, ACCESS Program

- The GSSA National Team co-hosted an international screening event with the ACCESS (Acute Care and Systems Strengthening in Low Resource Settings) Program at the Virginia Commonwealth University, School of Medicine. We coordinated a private YouTube-live virtual screening of "The Checklist Effect," a 45-min documentary on the need for safe surgery around the world. Following this screening we hosted a live Q&A session with the Director, Lauren Anders Brown, and one of the surgeons from the film, Dr. Ed Fitzgerald.

Harvard Undergraduate

- The National Team co-hosted the webinar “Sustainable Models in Pediatric Global Surgery” with the Harvard Undergraduate Global Surgery Chapter. The installment featured a discussion of how non-profit World Pediatric Project (WPP) has built a sustainable model to deliver pediatric surgery with WPP Co-Founder, Jeff Gallagher, and Chief Program Officer, Sarah Iracane.

The University of Miami, School of Medicine

- Featuring their own Dr. Barth Green, a renowned global neurosurgeon, the University of Miami chapter brought to us an event titled “Global Surgery: Endless Opportunities for One Doc to Level the Playing Field”

OUTREACH

GSSA Newsletter

Since 2017, GSSA has been putting together quarterly newsletters to highlight some of the global surgery and Ob/Gyn projects that have been done worldwide.

Each issue includes interviews with global surgeons, member submissions, chapter spotlight as well as film and book recommendations. Subscribers receive newsletters via email. Previous issues are available online here.



Global Surgery Student Alliance Newsletter

GSSA Bulletin

GSSA has a bi-weekly bulletin, where the subscribers can find updated information on upcoming events, GSSA announcements, available opportunities, common links, social media and submissions. Since summer 2020, new sections have been added to the bi-weekly bulletins on social justice/ Black Lives Matter and medical education. Subscribers receive the bulletins via e-mail.



Global Surgery Student Alliance
Events, Opportunities, and Reminders

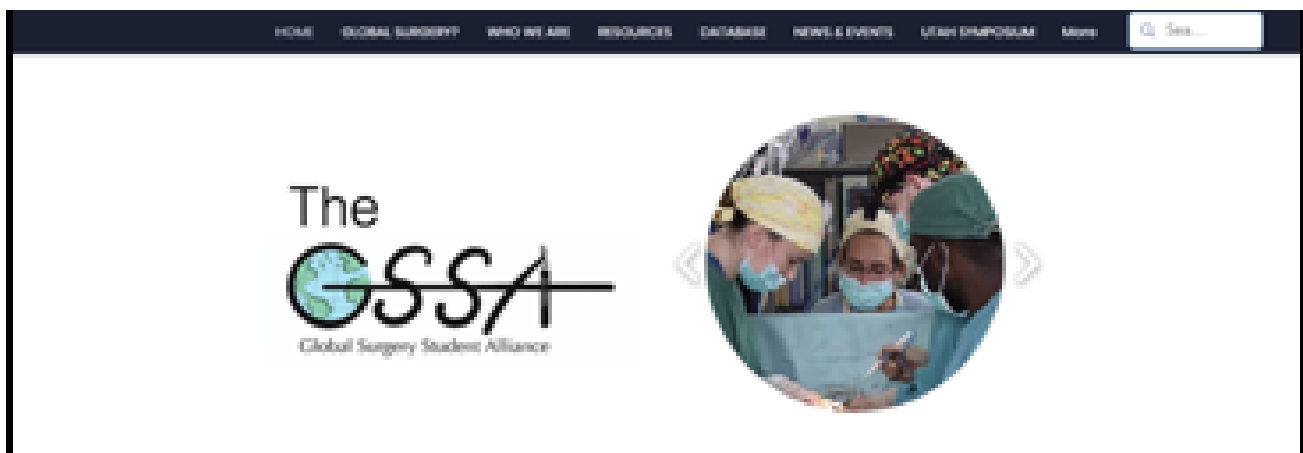
SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

The Global Surgery Student Alliance (GSSA) has developed a strong social media presence for engaging with our organization members, as well as the broader global surgery community both nationally and internationally. We hold active accounts on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Our most interactive account is Twitter, where we have **more than 4,000 followers** and are growing every day. We primarily use our social media platform to educate our followers about the goals of global surgery, as well as elevating the voices of advocates from the global surgery community. This year, we have used the account to organize a series of educational events about residency programs and career planning on global surgery, which have been successful in recruiting an audience of students, trainees, and doctors from across the world. Our future plans for growing our social media presence are focused on designing advocacy campaigns centered around different causes in global surgery.



THE WEBSITE

Our website, globalsurgerystudents.org, has been connecting students with an interest in global surgery to the GSSA since 2016. In the past year, we have created new pages to enable continuous access to educational materials, including webinar series, educational materials, and social justice initiatives. Additionally, we have new pages to house archived events for continued access and a calendar of events to keep students and trainees up-to-date on upcoming opportunities. Lastly, we have updated the overall style of the website interface to promote ease of use. With these new resources and updates, the website has seen unprecedented increases in overall traffic, form submissions, and contact with GSSA leadership. Our future plans to improve the website include a survey of GSSA members to better understand which content is most useful and most desired and an enhanced calendar interface to showcase both nationally organized and chapter-hosted GSSA events.

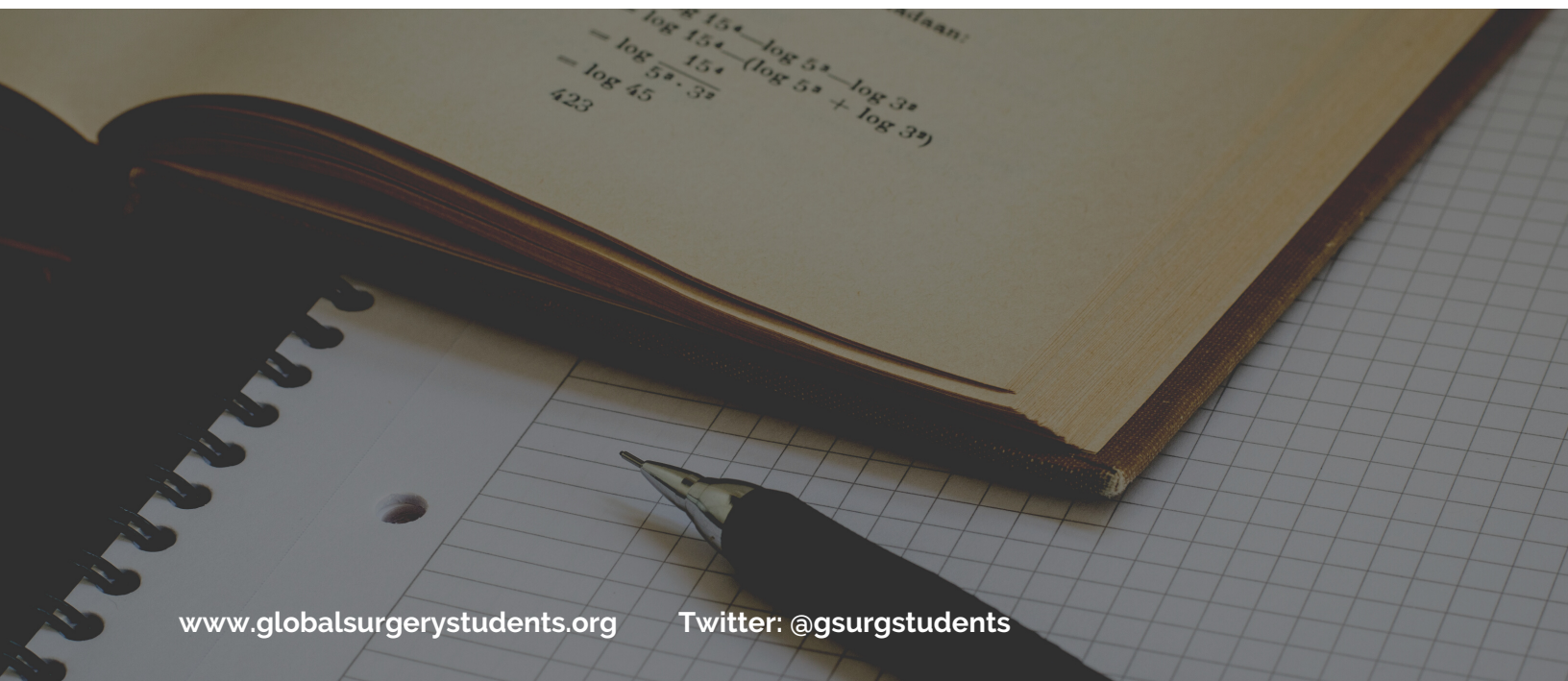


EDUCATION

Policy Document: working with faculty leaders the GSSA Education team is producing a policy document that outlines the importance of global surgery education for medical students to help students advocate for global surgery education at their home institutions.

Research Curriculum: working with the GSSA Research team, GSSA Education is developing a Global Surgery Research curriculum that will be a free resource for students and trainees involved in global surgery research.

Global Surgery Curriculum: with the generous support of distinguished global surgery faculty, GSSA Education has been developing a Global Surgery Curriculum. The first batch of lectures in the curriculum is already published on GSSA's website, with more exciting topics currently being produced.



RESEARCH

Collaborative Projects and Research: The research team has worked on multiple projects with students in the US and abroad - most notably the ISOMERS (International Survey Of Medical students Exposure to Relevant global Surgery) study, led by Incision, in which the GSSA research team served as the coordinating body for the US working group.

For ISOMERS, we provided feedback on survey design, coordinated survey dissemination with chapter leaders and will provide feedback/edits on the manuscript prepared by InciSioN leadership

Outreach: We hosted our first official diversity outreach event and global surgery informational seminar at Meharry Medical College. This seminar included discussions about global surgery access, research opportunities, and medical student fellowship in the field of global medicine

We also submitted an **umbrella IRB** to be housed at the University of Utah for approval for a GSSA-led research study to be performed in 2021 that will assess distribution, involvement, and student motivations for engagement in global surgery

Please see the reference below for some of our academic work presented in 2020

The Global Surgery Student Alliance Database: Connecting and Empowering Global Surgery Trainees, Dr. Andrew E. Giles, Dr. Na Eun Kim, Parisa Fallah, Gavin Ovsak, Anusha Jayaram, Dr. Ambar Mehta, Dr. Adriana G. Ramirez, Dr. Megan Still, Dr. Sudha Jayaraman

Quickshot Presentation at the 15th Annual Academic Surgical Congress (ASC) in February 2020

RESIDENTS AND TRAINEES

The residency team has worked on multiple projects during 2020. Their focus has been working towards the development of a database of global surgery opportunities in residency to be made available publicly. A survey was created with IRB approval. The survey was accepted to be disseminated through the Association of Program Directors for General Surgery service. The survey was distributed to program directors Spring 2021 and the database creation is in progress. A database of virtual communication boards for different countries was developed and piloted. With COVID-19 there was limited success, and the project will be further discussed when travel is more available. The database of students/faculty/residents participating in global surgery was updated. Several virtual programs were held discussing the Ethics of Global Surgery, Global Neurosurgery and Global Pediatric Surgery. A third VP residents was added to the team in 2020.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

We are always looking for US schools interested in building a chapter at undergraduate institutions, medical and dental schools. See our current chapters [here](#). Reach out to globalsurgerystudents@gmail.com if you are interested in starting a chapter & for access to our [**building a chapter toolkit!**](#)

Also check out our other resources available here:

- Learn more about global surgery with our [**YouTube videos**](#), [**Webinars**](#) & [**Education Curriculum Series**](#)
- Get ideas in [**Our Toolkits**](#)
- See our list of [**Global Surgery Articles**](#)
- Keep up to date with our [**News & Events**](#)
- Follow us on social media:
 - [**Facebook**](#), [**Twitter**](#), & [**Instagram**](#)

