



**Weill Cornell  
Medicine**  
International  
Medical Student  
Education

# NEWSLETTER



## Summer 2024





# Notes from the Directors

We are pleased to share the Spring 2024 update from the Office of International Medical Student Education (IMSE).

Since our last newsletter, the IMSE Office has renewed partnership agreements with medical schools in South Korea and signed new agreements with schools in France, Italy, Lebanon, and Pakistan. We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our WCM and affiliate sponsors, department coordinators along with their residents and fellows for assisting us in facilitating these partnerships by accepting international students to rotate under their guidance.

This past Spring, medical students continued to participate in great numbers in many of our programmatic offerings such as the Global Health Grand Rounds and the Introduction to Global/ Local Health Equity Course. These events are highlighted in detail within this newsletter.

Fourth-year students, who participated in a funded international clinical elective, presented posters at the Spring 2024 International Fellows Reception highlighting their experiences. Thank you to our donors for their continued support and a BIG THANK YOU to Dr. Lynford for attending and giving a speech on the spot.

On June 7th, Yoon Kang, MD, Senior Associate Dean for Education, and the Richard P. Cohen M.D. Professor of Medical Education, spent her last day at WCM. Dr. Kang has been appointed the new Vice Dean of Education and the Ruth L. Gottesman Chair in Education at Albert Einstein College of Medicine. Under Dr. Kang's leadership the Office of International Medical Student Education moved under the Medical Education umbrella of WCM. It has been an honor to work under Dr. Kang's leadership. We wish you the best in your new endeavors!

Lastly, this past spring we bid farewell to one of our dearest colleagues, Ms. Dianne Young. After working for twenty plus years serving the global health program at Weill Cornell, Dianne retired as of May 31, 2024. We have depended on Dianne for her broad knowledge and insight. Her hard work and support of 100s of visiting international students over the years is to be applauded and this retirement is certainly well earned! We thank Dianne for her dedication to the program and wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

Wishing you a safe and healthy summer!

## Laura & Radhika

Co-Directors, Office of International Medical Student Education



### Laura Greisman, MD, DTM&H

Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine  
Dept. of Medicine, Section of Hospital Medicine

### Radhika Sundararajan, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor of Medicine  
Dept. of Emergency Medicine & Center for Global Health



# Global Health Grand Rounds



Dr. Alexandre Naime Barbosa

We were delighted to invite a speaker from our partner institution, Faculdade de Medicina de Botucatu, Universidade Estadual Paulista (UNESP) in Brazil as our first Global Health Grand Rounds speaker for Spring 2024. Dr. Alexandre Naime Barbosa, Head of the UNESP - Infectious Diseases Department, and Scientific Director of the Brazilian Society of Infectious Diseases (SBI) spoke on the impact of climate change on global health. His talk also touched on some failures to fight dengue in addition to strategies to prevent the spread. He reminded us that it is important to become familiar with common global diseases and not just those predominantly in the United States – especially as our changing climate expands the reach of various tropical diseases. Our second speaker for Spring 2024 was Dr. Giancarlo Francese, Senior Program Officer for Integrated Development at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Dr. Francese discussed developing long-acting contraceptives for women in low- and middle-income countries. Using end-to-end product development as an example, Dr. Francese illustrated how to use barriers to create strategies for solutions.



Dr. Giancarlo Francese

IMSE's Global Health Grand Rounds are held via ZOOM and are offered for 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>TM</sup>. Please visit the events page on our website at <https://international.weill.cornell.edu> for upcoming lectures and the link to permitted recorded lectures.





# Global Health Curriculum

In summer 2024, four first-year students will be traveling internationally to complete service-learning projects and research abroad. Under the guidance of their WCM mentors and assigned mentors from our partnering sites, these students will be traveling to Pakistan and Thailand.

Approximately thirty percent of the Class of 2025 submitted an application to complete an international clinical elective during Spring 2025. These students hope to gain insights into the unique challenges faced in delivering healthcare in international settings. One student summarized the potential impact of an international clinical elective as the opportunity to “observe and engage with healthcare systems where policy and practice are interconnected to, enhancing my adaptability and innovative capabilities in diverse medical settings.”

## Global/Local Course

Eleven students from the first-year class participated in the Introduction to Global/Local Health Equity Course offered by the Office of International Medical Student Education. Developed to run parallel to the Spring Clinical Skills Preceptorship for the first-year students, this optional companion course allows the students to engage in self-directed learning and reflection as they navigate weekly themes related to social and structural determinants of health in the diverse patient population of NYC. The goal of this course is to emphasize that at the core of ‘global health’ is the concept of health equity and that medical students can and should be advocates for health equity at home in their local communities in addition to learning from colleagues around the world. This course introduces these themes before the students embark on their clinical rotations and acts as a precursor to their required Health Policy course offered in their 4th year. During the reflection session, students talked about language barriers, food and everyday lifestyles, insurances and access to healthcare, social system impact on raising children, and local manifestations of global health issues. While this course was an eye-opener for some of the students who participated, it was well enjoyed. These students became familiar with the multidisciplinary nature of the US healthcare system in the setting of different cultures. Thank you to Shakirah Ssebyala, M3 student, for helping to facilitate the reflection session.



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“...implementing small steps, one provider and patient at a time can culminate into profound change and improvement at the systemic level.” Michelle Ho, Class of 2027.



# Spring 2024 International Fellows Reception

With our donors' continued support, the Office of International Medical Student Education funded nineteen students in undertaking an international clinical elective this past spring. Nineteen students completed a clinical elective abroad at one of our partnering sites in Spring 2024. These students traveled to Australia, Austria, Costa Rica, France, Peru, Qatar, Scotland, South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey. These students presented posters at the Spring International Fellows Reception highlighting their clinical international elective experience and what they learned about how healthcare is delivered in international settings.



Abderhman Abubashem



Artine Arzani



Evan Balmuth



Diksha Brahmbhatt



Leslie Bull



Emily Cheng



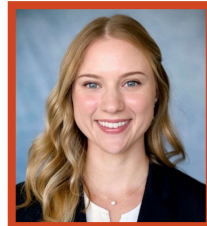
Indrani Das



Michaela Dwyer



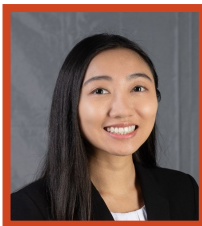
Arsalan Haghdel



Nataliya Karashchuk



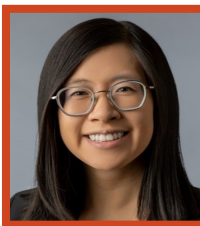
Grant Luhmann



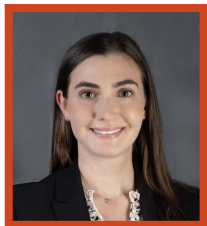
Briana Lui



Emily Manin



Jodie Nghiem



Samantha Phillips



Harlan Pietz



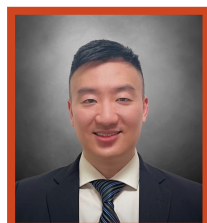
Devin Ray



Eric Takoushian



Crystal Wang



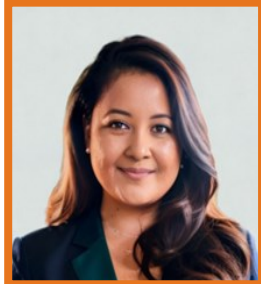
George Zhou



# Global Health Distinction



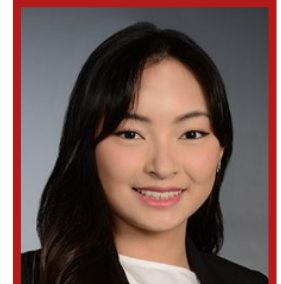
Taylor Brashear



Indrani Das



Reine-Marcelle Ibala



Joyce Lee

Congratulation to Taylor Brashear, Indrani Das, Raine-Marcelle Ibala, Joyce Lee, Natalie Nguyen, Luiza Perez, Eric Takoushian, and Crystal Wang! These members of the Class of 2024 received the Global Health Distinction based on their active participation in global health activities throughout their time at Weill Cornell. Student support of our global health program is very important, and the Office of International Medical Student Education recognizes this. These students demonstrated initiative, leadership, and longitudinal commitment to global health work.



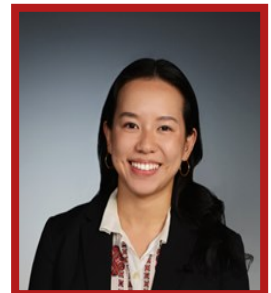
Natalie Nguyen



Luiza Perez



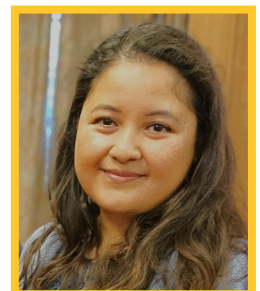
Eric Takoushian



Crystal Wang

# Barbara Slifka Global Health Award

The Barbara Slifka Global Health Award was established to honor Barbara Slifka, a generous supporter of our global health education program. The 2024 recipient of this award is Indrani Das, a member of the Class of 2024, who matched in Emergency Medicine at Stanford University. The award, which carries a cash prize, recognizes an individual who showed exceptional leadership in global health throughout medical school. Congratulations to Indrani and many thanks to Ms. Slifka for her generosity and support throughout the years.



Indrani Das







# Visiting International Student Program

The Visiting International Students Program at WCM allows foreign medical students to obtain exposure to world-class medical care provided at Weill Cornell and its affiliated hospitals such as Hospital for Special Surgery. Six hundred and forty-four students from around the globe applied to the program in 2023-2024 academic year and one hundred and twenty-three were placed in an elective. This program is very competitive and while applications are reviewed as they are received, only the best of the best are chosen to pursue an elective.

We recently heard from Ami Mehta, a previous Visiting International Student from Kasturba Medical College in India, who rotated at Weill Cornell in January and March of 2023. Ami rotated in Malignant Hematology, Geriatric Medicine, and Nephrology. Here is what Ami had to say for each elective.



Ami Mehta

**Malignant Hematology:** This rotation was emotionally powerful. One of the biggest takeaways from this rotation was how the attending physician delivered bad news, with empathy and compassion. In contrast, watching a patient with leukemia go into remission was one of the most joyful and satisfying moments I experienced.

**Geriatric Medicine:** There is no better teacher than experience itself and this rotation reaffirmed this. This elective was an eye opener to the unique challenges in caring for this vulnerable population. This elective taught me to deliver holistic care, with the focus on ensuring a patient's quality of life, not merely extending it. **Nephrology:** This rotation gave me experience in managing patients from socioeconomically and culturally diverse backgrounds. It taught me that with a multidisciplinary approach, extensive research, and engaging family members, I can better help patients understand their disease.

Every one of these experiences has been transformative in my personal and professional development. I am thrilled to share that I matched in the Internal Medicine residency program at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center! This wouldn't have been possible without the support of my family and the influential mentors and caring friends I met along this journey! I look forward to this exciting new chapter of my medical career!





# Bidding Dianne Farewell



Dianne Young, MPH, the International Electives specialist of the Office of International Medical Student Education announced her retirement effective May 31, 2024. Dianne was dedicated to supporting the Visiting International Students and the Global Health Programs at Weill Cornell for over twenty years. Dianne joined Weill Cornell after completing her Master's in Public Health at Hunter College, CUNY.

Dianne's dedication to the program grew the program from about twenty applications when she started at Weill Cornell to about 650 per academic year today. Impressively, Dianne supported thousands of foreign medical students rotating at Weill Cornell from around the world.

These students appreciated the familial support that Dianne extended while they were in NYC! who look to you as their extended family while they are on rotation in NYC! Despite her busy schedule, Dianne was always ready to lend a helping hand wherever it was needed and as such, she often assisted with the Global Health Curriculum for the Weill Cornell Students. Upon hearing of her retirement, a WCM student sent a note that captured Dianne wholeheartedly.

"...What truly sets you apart, however, is your ability to listen. In a society that often values speaking over listening, you have shown us the power of lending an ear and truly hearing what others have to say. Whether it's a word of encouragement, a piece of constructive feedback, or simply a compassionate shoulder to lean on, you have always been there to listen without judgment and respond with empathy. In doing so, you have not only made us feel heard but also validated our experiences and perspectives in a way that is both affirming and empowering..."

Dianne's persistence for helping students, enthusiasm, advocacy for students and her loyal commitment to the global health program was simply extraordinary.

Dianne will be greatly missed by the IMSE Office, WCM and the visiting international students from around the world.





# Snaps from Spring 2024



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Under the leadership of the department of Medical Education of Weill Cornell Medicine College, The Office of International Medical Student Education (IMSE) oversees global health education for WCM students and visiting International medical students at WCM.

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Radhika Sundararajan, MD, PhD  
Savita Birbal, MA



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