

Office of Student Support Newsletter

SMHS celebrated and honored LGBTQ+ Pride Month: Our own Dr. Lorenzo Norris interviewed Dr. Jeffrey Akman who was George Washington University's first openly gay Vice President and Dean. LGBTQ+ Pride isn't just a month long event that ends on June 30th, it's ongoing! Presented by GWell Center for Health Care Professionals, the SMHS Office of Student Support, and the SMHS Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the series will feature the members of the SMHS community who have helped lay the groundwork that makes the school a destination where our LGBTQI+ patients, students, trainees, faculty, and staff receive care, learn, and work with PRIDE. Be on the lookout for future interviews to learn more about our incredible community! Our inaugural interview with Dr. Akman can be found on the [GWell Center for Health Care Professionals Website](#).

Pet Photo Submission

The staff in OSS love our pets. We are asking you to submit photos of your pets for an opportunity to win a **giftcard to a pet supply store**. Whether they are dressed up in a health/medical outfit or simply in their natural cuteness, please send pictures to smhsstudents@gwu.edu with the subject line "Pet picture submission." Pictures may be featured on our website too!

Student Advisory Board Openings

We have openings for our [advisory board](#) for students in all of the health science departments. Please click on the link to view vacancies by program. You would be instrumental in helping our office grow our resources to better assist you and your fellow SMHS peers! For more information please email us at smhsstudents@gwu.edu

Join the Wellness Committee

Notice for **Health Science** Students: The Dean's Wellness Committee strives to help GW SMHS students maintain their wellness and lead a balanced life while pursuing their academic degrees. We do this by creating wellness centered activities and events, as well as keeping in contact with students about how they're doing and offering support in any way that we can. With life returning to campus for the 2021-2022 school year, we are very excited to have more in-person wellness events and are looking for other students to join our committee! While traditionally composed of only medical students, we are hoping to add students from health science programs so we can help more students stay well! For more information on joining, please email smhsstudents@gwu.edu

An Interview with Senior Associate Dean Reamer Bushardt

What were some of the struggles you encountered as a graduate student and how did you overcome them?

I had an incredible experience as a graduate student studying pharmacy at the University of South Carolina. At the time, I cannot say I ever felt like I was facing a struggle although there were certainly things that were more challenging than others. For people that know me well this won't be a surprise, but I put a lot of attention into planning my work and personal lives. But life is good at presenting unexpected obstacles or opportunities. The first challenge was seeing a sibling, who was also a roommate for a couple years during college, face some academic trouble early on and then lose some scholarships. Despite being a straight A student in high school, he fully embraced and excelled at the social aspects of college and got into academic trouble early on. Fortunately, he recovered and went on to success. But his experience definitely influenced how I viewed and approached my own time in school. The second challenge arose halfway into my training to become a physician assistant. I was a newlywed attending the Medical University of South Carolina and my wife was finishing her degree in education and early childhood at another university. This meant that we lived apart for most of our first year of marriage. Fortunately, we made it work but being separated from your best friend and spouse was hard. It took a lot of hard work, creativity, and understanding to get through this time.

What do you think sets GW SMHS apart from other schools in the country in regards to education and resources?

There are so many wonderful attributes about GW and opportunities within the School of Medicine and Health Sciences that I wish I would have had as a student. For SMHS students who train on-campus at GW's Foggy Bottom campus in D.C. or the Virginia Science & Technology Campus in Ashburn, VA, they are literally at the center of American political life and surrounded by countless organizations that are driving the future of healthcare, scientific discoveries, public policy, and education. Whether their interests are in domestic or global humanitarian issues, clinical or translational science, human rights, civic engagement, the arts, health policy and financing, information and medical technologies, students can tap into unique and transformational educational experiences in the communities that surround our campuses. Our students can have internships and fellowships within the NIH or FDA, opportunities for advocacy efforts with DC-based professional associations on Capitol Hill, or complete experiential training with world-class clinicians and researchers in SMHS, the GW Medical Faculty Associates, GW Hospital, and Children's National Hospital. For community-based service learning, there are incredible opportunities students can connect with such as health equity-focused course electives offered by Health Sciences, a variety of programs in the Rodham Institute (SMHS) and the Honey W. Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service (GW), the Antiracism Coalition (SMHS), and Clinical Public Health Summits (SMHS). As an aside, my wife, three daughters, and I moved to D.C. at the end of 2016 as I joined the SMHS faculty. While we are officially locals, we still explore the D.C. area like tourists almost every weekend. The rich history, cultural and culinary diversity of this community is probably more than anyone can fully take in over a lifetime, but I encourage students to dive in.

How have student resources expanded since you were a graduate student? My health professional training experiences were largely contained within the fields I was studying, with occasional team-based experiences in the clinical setting. Today, whether in the classroom, in the community as a part of service learning, or online, there is tremendous growth (and value) in interprofessional learning and volunteerism. The expanded access to digital resources, like TalkSpace for mental health counseling support, are also improving access and creating flexibility for students. The important national focus on the well-being of our health workforce is also resulting in more wellness resources for GW students, and GW faculty like Dr. Lorenzo Norris and Dr. Leigh Frame are setting the bar nationally for cutting-edge curricula and support services focused on well-being and whole person health. Finally, SMHS has invested in experts in learning and experienced practitioners in cognitive skills training, and they are sharing important

insights with GW students about the connectedness of cognitive and affective processes along with practical techniques that help students learn and retain knowledge better and ace their exams.

How do you think the pandemic will change healthcare delivery in the future? Some obvious examples are greater adoption of telehealth and digital health technologies, which have been essential to our response to the COVID-19 pandemic but also managing myriad acute and chronic issues for patients and families all over the world. At GW, we held a Digital Health Summit in April 2021 with global thought leaders and GW faculty on these issues, and it was great to see so many SMHS students participate. SMHS faculty and students were also involved in rapidly assimilating the latest clinical and scientific evidence about COVID-19 to share with clinical teams in the GW Hospital and the GW Medical Faculty Associates. Bringing the latest, best evidence together with observations of frontline clinicians helped shape a continuously learning health system that improved the way we could care for our community and save lives. I would like to see health care more broadly adopt this type of behavior across all facets of care -- from access, safety, quality, cost, patient and family experience, and the well-being of our health care workforce.

As a clinician and scientist, it has been painful to observe the polarization, seemingly politically oriented, around the novel coronavirus, vaccine safety and efficacy, and public health measures in the United States. Further, it has been heartbreaking and compelling to observe how specific groups, specifically individuals from underrepresented groups and socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, experience the worst effects of COVID-19 with more severe disease overall and greater loss of life. I hope we can embrace proven public health measures for preventing and rapidly responding to a disease like COVID-19 and commit ourselves to addressing the underlying conditions and social determinants that have driven the harsh health inequities during the pandemic. We have also seen how essential and valuable the members of the U.S. health workforce as well as the clinical and translational science community are to a major public health crisis, like COVID-19. The courage, creativity, dedication, innovation, and care shown since early 2020 is really inspiring to me. GW faculty, medical residents and fellows, scientists, and students were front-and-center in the battle against this viral pandemic.

Calling All Applicants - SMHS Peer Tutoring

We are still looking for peer tutors in all classes.

If you are interested in applying to become a peer tutor (a paid, hourly position), please contact Nick Atlas, Senior Academic Advisor, by emailing SMHSstudents@gwu.edu! In this email, please provide your degree program, your year in the program and explain why you are interested in applying for this position. Upon receipt of your email, Nick will provide next steps in the application process.

Resource Corner

Talkspace

As a reminder, you have FREE access to your very own therapist. As part of your teletherapy plan, you have unlimited texting and 4 (30 minute) live video sessions with your therapist per month. Sign up [here](#) if you haven't already!

Writing Tutor

You have access to meet with our writing tutor for every writing assignment that you have. All you have to do is send us an email asking to meet with our writing tutor and we will set everything up for you. The tutor is a wonderful resource to help with citing information, general grammar use, argument development etc.

Peer Tutoring

If you feel as though you are struggling in a course, or if you are doing alright and just want a little extra help, and would like a tutor please send us an email with the exact course you want a tutor in and we will do our best to identify someone to begin tutoring you.

Recorded Workshops

We record all of our workshops and post them to our website. Please take a look at the ones we have done so far, they can be found [here](#).

Inspirational Corner

“Do what you can, with what you’ve got, where you are.” Squire Bill Widener of Widener’s Valley, Virginia

Contact Us

Don’t hesitate to contact us if you would like some tips on time management, study skills, or any other supplemental instruction! Mental health in need of some mending? We can direct you for some help there as well. Check out our website, oss.smhs.gwu.edu, for more information.

You can also contact our team by emailing SMHSstudents@gwu.edu or calling 202-994-2818.

Vol. 4 - July 2021