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## NYMC Synapse Issue 31

School of Medicine Student Senate, New York Medical College

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# NYMC Synapse

Transmitting news to the students of New York Medical College  
June 2021, Issue 31

The NYMC Synapse is a newsletter published by the NYMC Student Senate for our classmates, faculty, administration and other students at NYMC. We highlight news from student senate, medical education, student affairs, and financial planning, give important updates for each class and highlight big events, outstanding students, and extraordinary professors.

Keep an eye out for these newsletters about once a month and don't miss out on the amazing things that are happening at NYMC!

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## [A Round of Applause to the NYMC Community](#)

By Roy Miller

When we will look back on this past year and a half, it will always hold distinct memories and emotions. It is fair to say, we lived through what history books will talk about for years to come.

In the start of 2020, I was ecstatic. I had just been accepted into NYMC, and looked ahead to a summer abroad in Europe before starting school. Little did I know this would all be turned upside down. I remember the initial blissful ignorance of the oncoming pandemic. Then the transition from denial, to fear and anxiety as things began to close down. As we settled into the day to day of life in lockdown, I was able to stop stressing about how many times I washed my hands as it became routine, and moved on to thinking about what my first year of medical school might look like. To be honest, I considered deferring my first year. I was unsure if I wanted to start medical school, something I strived for my entire life, under these circumstances. However, it was the words of my mentors who reminded me that no time is the perfect time, and witnessing the sacrifice of those on the front line that not only motivated me to go, but fueled my fire to make the most of it. After arriving at NYMC, and becoming enveloped in our unique community, I now know I could not have made a better choice, and that I was exactly where I needed to be.

So, when we look back in a few years, what will we remember as the members of the NYMC community who lived through these times together?

*The class of 2021* learned that the sacrifice of treating patients is not just in time and effort. Medicine is ever-changing, unpredictable, and as we know dangerous. As aspiring physicians they pushed through, and with courage completed their clinical rotations all the while completing non-traditional residency interviews. Congratulations to all of you, and after an amazing MATCH we wish you all the best of luck as you go on to make an impact in your respective fields.

*The class of 2022* had to adapt quickly. Before coming into the fall semester, it was unclear whether they would even have in-person rotations. Fortunately, they were able to begin their journey through hospital wards, masks on, and were eager to learn. The rigor of third year was met with the added difficulty of feelings of isolation from peers, but they remain resilient and found a way to succeed.

*The class of 2023* felt the sharp change from the excitement of a normal first year to gathering restrictions and online learning. Furthermore, being the closest resource to us incoming first years left them with the added role of easing us into school and ensuring us that we too will find our place here at NYMC.

*The class of 2024* had to reinvent the wheel. What does medical school look like online? How do we forge connections with peers we have never met in person? It was the sheer will to connect, and a sense of camaraderie that allowed us to thrive in this new environment. Virtual hangouts, online study groups, and an eagerness to reply to a group message strengthened our bonds and assured us we all were there for one another.

To the NYMC community, we give you a huge round of applause for your ability to forge a new path through adversity, together.

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## **Letter from the SOM Student Senate President**

Dear NYMC SOM Students,

As our incredible recent graduates begin residency, the Class of 2022 starts their final year of medical school, my fellow classmates in the Class of 2023 prepare for clinical rotations, and the rising M2s enjoy their summer experiences, I wanted to take a few moments to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the next academic year.

The COVID-19 pandemic tested our profession in unimaginable ways. As medical students, we faced unique challenges in pre-clinical learning, clerkship experiences, and residency applications. In addition to our academic commitments, we've had to also balance the social isolation that accompanies physical distancing requirements and constant concern for our loved ones amidst this health crisis. In many ways, we were forced to find certainty during very uncertain times.

These trials and tribulations were met with remarkable solutions and unwavering enthusiasm. M1 students found meaningful ways to connect with each other and transformed numerous events such as NYMedTalks and Convocation of Thanks into a virtual setting in a truly eloquent manner. Upperclassmen spearheaded volunteer initiatives from the outset of the pandemic all the way through providing valuable assistance with COVID-19 vaccination efforts. The Anti-Racism Task Force and Implicit Bias Trainings sought to challenge our current practices and perspectives, affirming our commitment as individuals and a community to equity and diversity. Research efforts and productivity reached new heights even given the extenuating circumstances.

In the resiliency program sessions we attend, our peers promote the concept of the growth mindset, loosely based on the idea that talents can be developed and learning is a dynamic process. More simplistically, I believe the essence of the growth mindset is the pursuit of progress and self-improvement that makes us human. While there will always be factors out of our control (as evidenced by the global pandemic of the past year-and-a-half), we can control our reaction to events in a manner that promotes this progress and improvement.

In that spirit, Student Senate will be working diligently to foster camaraderie and student wellness, enhance curricular opportunities, and encourage diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our medical school experience. We plan on returning to more in-person activities (pandemic/public health guidance permitting) and once again infusing our campus with positive energy. This way, we will come out of the pandemic and recent events vastly improved and better able to provide compassionate care. Enabling humanism through resilience in medicine is not only a key tenet of being a physician, but it's central to our identity as an NYMC community. I look forward to seeing this identity continue to grow as we embark on a new school year. Wishing you all a wonderful summer!

Best,  
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## **Reflections on M1 Year During a Pandemic**

By Katherine Lo

Wow - what a year! I'm sure it's an understatement to say that this year was anything but expected. And as we near the end of the 2020-2021 school year, I thought it would be nice to hit rewind and reflect a bit on this unprecedented year.

As an M1, I vividly recall the multitude of emotions I carried with me while entering medical school in August - uncertainty about what student life would be like during a pandemic, concern about the rising COVID numbers and state of the world, nervousness about how academically rigorous medical school would be, and yet excitement to finally begin the chapter of my life I had been working towards for so many years. It was clear that M1 year would be atypical in many respects - no boat cruise or ice cream social during orientation, housing restrictions, minimal in-person classes, virtual Friendsgiving, etc. For me, this "new reality" brought initial challenges of navigating loneliness and finding ways to feel at home in a mostly virtual student body, on top of the imposter syndrome and academic adjustment that often accompanies M1 year.

Many of my peers share a similar sentiment - Hugh Thompson shared that "not being able to meet many of my classmates due to the pandemic was something I missed out on during my first year." Bardia Khanderhoo, recalls that "as a commuter, it was especially challenging to connect with my classmates with housing restrictions and other facilities closures we unfortunately had to take to keep the student body safe." For Saral Patel, "finding ways to maintain exercise during COVID was a challenge. Exercise is important for my mental wellness and it was hard to find ways to exercise safely, especially in the Winter."

Still, the M1 class found remarkable ways to adapt to this new learning environment and make the most of their first year of medical school. Hitting the

ground running, first year students Harli Weber and Rachel Thommen organized a multi-club initiative to encourage the NYMC community to register to vote. Jessy Rosen and Gillian Hecht worked to establish NYMC's Culinary Medicine Interest Group, which has evolved into its own Area of Concentration. Several M1s got involved in anti-racism efforts and other initiatives to constantly improve the medical school curriculum. And in spite of the safety mandates and occasional technological snafu, the M1s found ways to build a sense of community through virtual versions of NYMC traditions - Friendsgiving, NYMedTalks, Convocation of Thanks, Student Celebration Day, and even the NYMC song parody just to name a few.

With the vaccine rollout underway and many aspects of "normal life" slowly returning, many M1s are looking forward to new opportunities that will come with M2 year. Many are eager to interact with their peers and professors in in-person small classes and to enjoy the student camaraderie that will come with more in-person events. Saral mentions looking forward to getting clinical experience, and Sasha Sunday is excited to get more involved in community service efforts.

Looking back on this year, we all have a lot to be proud of and grateful for. Sasha shares, "starting the Environmental Club is something I am proud of accomplishing this year" and for Hugh, it was "adjusting to medical school during COVID times, both academically and socially." Ethan Krug mentions feeling "especially lucky that we were able to have an in-person Anatomy Lab experience." Priyanka Patel shares, "I am extremely grateful for the amazing friends I made this year. Without their support, love, and constant jokes, I would not have been able to find the happiness I've found in med school during COVID." Rohan Patel puts it perfectly - "Being able to meet a lot of like minded people that I hadn't met before is something I am incredibly grateful for. I know I'm going to be friends with a lot of these people for the rest of my life. That's helped me through the first year of med school and will help me going forward for the rest of my medical education."

Cheers to us, Class of 2024! I hope everyone has a wonderful summer, and I'm looking forward to seeing you all this Fall!

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## **A Retrospective on Year 3**

By Matthew Holstein

As third year comes to a close, it brings up an opportunity to reflect on what the experience has been like. The relief of actually having in person third year rotations was instantly met with the realization that we were being sent to fulfill the new role of the third year student. Freshly masked faces in the hospital, I'm sure I'm not the only one whose mind was racing with thoughts like, "where do I even go," "did I forget something at home," "how do you even present a patient... wait, what do you even say to patients?!" The world of firsts in third year was truly exciting. Your first patient, your first procedure, your first presentation, your first group of residents that you worked with. It feels like it was yesterday. As time went on, things became more routine. Interviewing patients became easier, the presentations became coherent, and constantly changing rotations every few weeks just became a normal fact of life.

Running into classmates on rounds, silently saying hello as your respective services crossed paths became a highlight of the day. The nod of acknowledgement or brief smile and subtle wave quickly asserted itself as the ultimate sign of respect between two students following along on rounds. You could tell what service they were on, and how much they enjoyed it, simply by the look on someone's face. It felt refreshing running into people you'd normally see every day studying in the library at the WMC Panera, and catching up, hearing what they liked about third year, and what they wanted to be when they grow up.

Of course, there's also all the new attendings, residents, PAs, NPs, nurses, and the other hospital staff that you meet along the way. There's a whole wide range of personalities that help make the hospital run and end up having a major impact on our experiences, really contributing to what makes each of our third year experiences unique.

The main focus of the year though was the patients. Finally, after two years of being in the classroom we got to see patients. There were patients of all varieties that left a major impact on all of us throughout the year. Whether it be the super kind patient, the patient that made you realize you still have a lot to learn, the patient whose family came to you to ask questions. The most memorable has to be the patient whose care was positively impacted directly by your intervention, whether it was a piece of history you thought to ask that nobody else did, a test you asked about ordering, something you noticed that nobody else did, or in any other way you may have stepped up at that time. These are the people we'll remember most in 20 years, and the times we proved why it's good to have a third year on the team.

I'm happy for all of my classmates in the Class of 2022 for finishing the year, and wish everybody the best of luck going into our final year! I hope the Class of 2023 also enters their third year excited and open-minded to the possibilities that are about to unfold.

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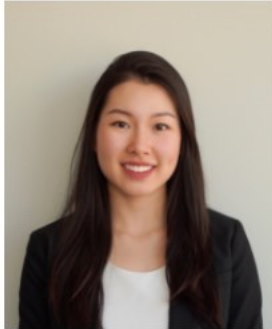
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## **P2P Professionals of NYMC Awardees**



The Peer 2 Peer (P2P) Committee is excited to announce the latest winners of the **“Professionals of NYMC” award**. This spring, students were eager to recognize their peers for their contributions to the community - we received many nominations from members of all class years! We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who was nominated for working hard to make the NYMC community an even better place, and uplifting their peers while doing so. The winners of the Spring 2021 Professionals of NYMC Award are:

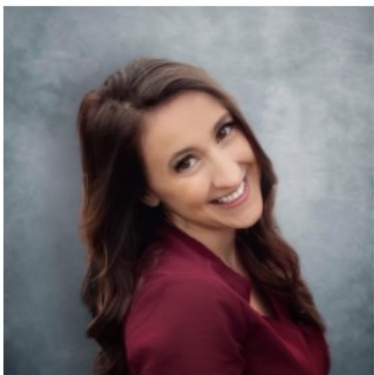
**Class of 2021: Carmen Chen & Niki Song**



Both are extraordinary individuals that have always offered support and an ear for hard times. Carmen always manages to put time aside in her schedule to sit, walk, and talk with you when needed. Even though Niki has been through hardship, she pushes through and succeeds, still managing to be an awesome friend. Would not have made it through medical school without them. I am sure multiple people feel the same way!



**Class of 2022: Carly Roe**



I worked inpatient with Carly and she was someone who took an impressive amount of initiative. She functioned as an intern from day one, which takes a lot of courage and enthusiasm to jump right into. She was always asking what more she could help with, getting lunch for and making sure her interns took a five-minute break to eat, and was just generally attentive and helpful. She was willing to spend a long time with patients on the floor even when she wasn't asked to. She went the extra mile both behind the scenes in preparing her patient presentations, notes, and following up on consults and family phone calls, as well as explaining things to her patients thoroughly and compassionately. She is really high-energy and always ready to make things easier for anyone she works with. She is respectful, attentive, and enthusiastic, and will be great in

whatever she goes into!

**Class of 2023: Rajkumar Pammal**

Raj is an incredible human being and someone who is constantly on a mission to improve NYMC and enrich our student body. From his work in the Student Senate, M1 Orientation Committee, the Resiliency Program and the Health Policy Roundtable, Raj has clearly demonstrated a commitment to help influence our school and he has done so in a way that reflects his character. He always works to build people up and form meaningful professional relationships. He is the first person I think of when I hear the word "professional" and he embodies this title and so much more. He consistently utilizes his position to advocate for students and enhance our experience at NYMC. I know he sacrifices a significant amount of his free time to help wherever he can. Raj is an extremely thoughtful, considerate, and approachable person, all qualities I find to be at the heart of professionalism. I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award!



**Class of 2024: Peter Xiong**



Peter always makes sure to go above and beyond for his friends and his peers. As a course rep for History of Medicine, he demonstrated strong leadership skills by creating and sharing his own detailed study guide to help the class with the material. He even held office hours in Block 1 for people to ask him questions. Peter is the type of person who stays up late talking to someone about a subject they're struggling with, making sure that they get it by the end of the night. Peter does not do this out of obligation - he does these things because he truly cares about success for all and is willing to go the extra mile to ensure that everyone can excel. He is always willing to help out his friends outside of academics and never hesitates to offer rides and help his classmates run errands. These qualities make him an asset to any team or task he is a part of. Peter is very caring and trustworthy, and I know that if I ever reached out to him for anything, he wouldn't hesitate to help. I could not imagine this year without Peter.

**P2P would also like to recognize the following students who were nominated for the award:**

**Class of 2022:** Marissa Contento, Victoria Hung, Andrew Miller, Norah Sadek, Tiffany Wong

**Class of 2023:** Redab Alnifaidy, Marianna Jolly

**Class of 2024:** Megan Claypool, Moe Hakim, Riley Mayne, Marco Salazar, Nick Vecchio, Katie Yang

Congratulations to all of the winners and nominees; thank you for all that you do to enrich our community! Additionally, thank you to those who took the time to nominate and recognize the outstanding efforts of your peers.

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