

EMSAP Newsletter #3, May 2023

Fall semester 2022 closed with a Holiday Meeting at Vulcan Park, where EMSAP alumni and telemedicine guru Eric Wallace, MD (pictured below) gave an inspiring talk to current EMSAP students.



Eric Wallace talking to EMSAP students at Vulcan Park

Interviews: Interviews occurred February 16th rather than in late January to accord with dates of other BS/MD programs. Accepted students were notified on March 10th and had until May 1st to accept. Some waited until late in the evening on May 1st to accept.

About 400 high school seniors applied to EMSAP. The medical school selected 36 students to interview on Zoom, the dental school selected 6, and the optometry selected 3. 21 students were **offered admission** to the Heersink Medical school, 3 to the dental school and 1 to the optometry school.

In January, EMSAP students met with Dr. Grabowski for a **productive meeting** in Volker Hall about the desired profile of EMSAP students entering medical school, scholarships, and other matters.

In January, EMSAP students auditioned for the UAB Bioethics Bowl team and Anna Townsend, Ayona Roychowdhury, Abigail Haider, Hudson O’Neil, Sai Garlanka, and James Shi won spots. They practiced twice a week with Professor Pence until the competition on April 15th.

Post-Covid, EMSAP students still felt a lack of community on campus and asked if they could continue an innovation developed during the pandemic, of being assigned a “family” led by a “mother” for social activities, such as miniature golf.

We continued this practice with 5-6 families and 1-2 activities during the two semesters.

31 EMSAP students enrolled in the Spring EMSAP seminar in **Narrative Medicine**, where they read and studied five books about the lives of physicians and made 31 presentations about physician-authors. EMSAP students also did 31 workshops where their writing was critiqued and/or praised by other students, including an experimental class using Chat GPT. Students in the class wrote and re-wrote 4 graded essays.

In February, Professor Pence sponsored 8 students for the 5K run associated with the Mercedes Benz Marathon and some excellent times were recorded.



EMSAP students with Professor Pence at 5K Run

In March, as they finished medical school, EMSAP alumni matched well across the country: Siddhu Srikakolapu, former President of the SGA at UAB, matched in Dermatology at the U. South Carolina, Charleston; Kelly Jiang, matched in Anesthesiology at Georgetown; Alok DeShane in Radiation Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering in New York City; Vidushi Sinha in Pediatric Neurology at Cohen's Children Hospital in New York City; Natalie Voss Garcia in Dermatology at Baylor; Ankit Bansal in Ob/GYN at UAB; Caitlin Horne in Emergency Medicine at the U. of S. Carolina, Columbia; Angela Chieh in Radiology at UC-Irvine; and Joanne Thomas in Ophthalmology at Emory, and Brynna Paulukaitis, MD/PhD at Wash. U, matched to a research-track in psychiatry at Duke! Alex Cruz Walma finished dental school at Harvard and is pursuing a MD degree at the University of North Carolina. His

brother David Cruz Walma returned from getting a PhD at Oxford to complete a fellowship in dentistry at UAB.

In March at an EMSAP meeting, EMSAP students debated the best major for premed students in a classic **Raft Debate** where after talks, the audience decides the lone survivor. Senior Sara van Winkle successfully defended Physics and won. A video of this debate is on YouTube.



Sara van Winkle wins RAFT Debate

During March and April, all students accepted to enter EMSAP from outside Alabama visited campus with their families to decide whether to come to UAB (because of interviews only on Zoom, they had never visited before). Professor Pence and his EMSAP assistants met with them as they visited the EMSAP seminar, the Raft debate, or the medical school. He did the same with EMSAP alumni who returned for visits.

In April, the EMSAP students on the **Bioethics Bowl** team traveled to Boston, competing against teams from Harvard, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, and other colleges. In the overall competition, this UAB team finished in the top six of 32 teams. The team deeply appreciated contributions to defray costs of this trip from former members of UAB Bioethics Bowl teams, such as Rachael Rosales, Kevin Jiang, Chris Graves, Jennifer Ghandhi, and Mallick Hossain, as well as from EMSAP alumni Marius Heersink, Lindsey Goodman and Victor Chin, as well as a contribution from Marnix Heersink. At different times, the team met for an hour with EMSAP alumni Rachael Rosales and Suzanne McCluskey, both now professors at Harvard's Brigham and Women's Hospital. Rachael also judged in the competition.



The 2023 UAB Bioethics Bowl Team

Professor Pence gave endowed talks at Loyola University, Chicago, Carleton College, and Southern Mississippi University, as well as organizing sessions in Vancouver, Denver, Cincinnati, and Boulder, Colorado.

By late April, **the incoming EMSAP class** had been determined and 16 students entering in medical slots, 2 in dental slots, and 1 in the optometry slot. The 19 new students will bring the total number of active EMSAP students in four classes to 75, active students.

In April, Professor Pence took the graduating seniors to a lunch, where some of them re-connected, as they had scattered into different majors over their last two years and rarely seen each other.



Senior Lunch

In late April, the **EMSAP Graduation Dinner** occurred at the Redmont Hotel. EMSAP teaching awards went to Jessica Thames Chambliss in Public Health,

Heather Bruns in Immunology, and Winston Lancaster and his team in Gross Anatomy. Andrew McDonald won the EMSAP Alumni Award and gave a nice talk. Cindy Bright won the EMSAP Staff Appreciation Award.



The last days of April saw **Commencement and Awards**, where 16 seniors graduated, most off to the Heersink School of Medicine. Sara van Winkle entered the MD/PhD program at Baylor and Charlene Mansour the Cornell-Weill School of Medicine in Manhattan. Abi Kamath and Charlene Mansour won Goldwater Scholarships in 2022, as did Nikhita Mudium and Ethan Wan in 2023. EMSAP students were selected as Miss UAB two years in a row, with Ummu Bah replacing Sumedha Bobba in 2023. In 2023, Daniel Elston won a Fulbright Scholarship to study in Czechoslovakia and was one of three seniors selected to be Outstanding Undergraduates of the College of Arts & Sciences, along with Sara van Winkle and Lillian Kennedy. Ritika Samant finished her year as President of the Student Government Association, becoming the 4th EMSAP SGA President in the last decade. Abi Kamath, Soumya Khanna and Ritika Samant and were named Outstanding Seniors in Neurosciences, Anna Ulrey and Daniel Elston were Outstanding Students in Philosophy. Anna Ulrey published her own paper on medical weight discrimination in *Clinical Ethics*, a standard medical journal.

Lillian Kennedy and Soumya Khanna finished a year as excellent EMSAP assistants, replaced by Ummu Bah and Grace-Anna Perry for the coming year.