STEM Potential

Medical Student Webinar 2022

| Jan. 29th & 30th, 2022 (EST) |

FREE ON ZOOM

LINK ON STEM Potential WEBSITE

Overview: 10 Sessions

- David Geffen School of Medicine
- Lewis Katz School of Medicine
- Tufts University School of Medicine
- Sidney Kimmel Medical College
- Yale School of Medicine
- Schmidt College of Medicine
- Duke University School of Medicine
- Harvard Medical School
- Miller School of Medicine
- Washington University School of Medicine

Contents

Mission Statement

STEM Potential is a platform through which STEM students all across the globe can give and receive advice about academic and personal life, providing a collaborative environment for like-minded students to connect and act as both mentors and mentees. We encourage STEM students to not only recount their personal experiences but also ask questions of any kind that will be answered in real time. Our intention is to connect students with diverse backgrounds and similar interests to foster empowering interactions between students. Everyone has a particular background with varied perspectives to offer other students on the platform, even though we may not recognize the power of our stories. Our individual backgrounds as people prove that there is no one path to succeeding in STEM. We envision a community of people that are unafraid to build their network and use every opportunity to broaden their perspective of STEM. As the saying goes: knowledge is power.

The STEM Potential Discord Community

While in school over COVID, we noticed that many of our fellow students, especially from underrepresented backgrounds, are hesitant or even afraid of pursuing their studies and a career in STEM. They lack access to mentors and information from professionals who are already in their careers. In February, we created an online discord called STEM Potential that currently has over 11.2K students—mostly in their 20s—from 105 countries! Along with a team of 20 moderators, we created an environment that fosters discussions in 85 different chat rooms. Our discord consists of high school, college, medical, masters, Ph.D. students, and more. The platform humanized social media, allowing students to chat and livestream with others of like-minded interests. With a common passion for STEM, our members form immediate bonds, share unique perspectives from diverse backgrounds, and ask many questions. The discord is free to join for students of any age, level, or STEM background. More information about joining the discord can be found on page 26.

Jan 29th, 2022 (all EST)

David Geffen School of Medicine
12:00-1:00 PM

Hristos Courellis
MD/PhD Candidate

Arun Chakravorty
MD/PhD Candidate

Teddy Chung
MS3

Lewis Katz School of Medicine
1:00-2:00 PM

Noah Thornton
MS1

Manan Parekh
MS3

Megan Thompson
MS1

Shenyece Ferguson
MS3

Tufts School of Medicine
2:00-3:00 PM

Krishna Mandalia
MS1

Sabrina Lima
MS1

Akari Miki
MS1

Gabriella Scheiner
MS1

Sidney Kimmel Medical College
3:00-4:00 PM

Ashini Panchal
MS1

Rehana Persaud
MS1

Yash Reddy
MS1

Benjamin Shook
MS1

Yale School of Medicine
4:00-5:00 PM

Olamide Olawoyin
MS4

Gabriela de Queiroz Campos
MS2

Jafar Al Souz
MD/PhD Candidate

Danielle Miyagishima
MD/PhD Candidate

Arielle Richey Levine
MS1

Jan 30th, 2022 (all EST)

Schmidt College of Medicine
12:00-1:00 PM

Tofunmi Oshodi
MS1

Melisa Rodriguez
MS2

Shiv Krishnaswamy
MS4

Michael Leary
MS4

Duke University School of Medicine
1:00-2:00 PM

Camryn Thompson
MS1

Alissa Arango
MS1

Sage Atkins
MS1

Gabriela Nisly
MS1

Harvard Medical School
2:00-3:00 PM

Sam Sadler
MS3

Jean Filo
MS2

Miller School of Medicine
3:00-4:00 PM

Donovan Dowers
MD/MPH, 3rd Year

Hannah Zwiebel
MD/MPH, 3rd Year

Gaby Llano
MD/MPH, 3rd Year

Amanda Nwaba
MD/MPH, 3rd Year

Washington University School of Medicine
4:00-5:00 PM

Jana Liese
MD/PhD Candidate

Lyra Morina
MD/PhD Candidate

Dante Nicotera
MS1

Ahmed Hanafy
MS1

The following agenda for the ten sessions contain a set of questions created in advance for our panelists. However, the chat function will be open during each session, and we encourage you to ask any questions that you may have. We will be prioritizing your questions!

Following the agenda, you will find the biographies of each of our panelists!

Medical Student Webinar
AGENDA

Welcome
Introduction

Jackie Brenner & Ashini Panchal

Each panelist will give a brief introduction.

Part 1: Q&A ‖ About The School

- What are the best and worst parts of your school?
- Why did you choose your specific school?
- If you are in a specific program, why did you pick that route?
- Beyond being a student, what extracurriculars are you involved in (e.g. research, shadowing, clubs)?

Part 2: Q&A ‖ Panelists' Backgrounds

- What is your background as an applicant?
- What were your statistics when applying to medical school?
- How important do you think statistics are relative to extracurriculars and personal experiences?
- What do you think made you stand out as an applicant?
- How were you able to convey your interest in medicine and relate it to your experiences?
- What obstacles did you face in your path to medical school and how did you overcome them?
- If you took a gap year, what did you do during it and how did it contribute to your application?

Part 3: Final Advice

- If you could go back in time and do it again, would you do anything differently?
- Do you have any advice for students applying during COVID?

Closing Remarks

Jackie Brenner & Ashini Panchal

Please Note:

Since the chat function on Zoom will be open, students will be able to type questions during the webinar. Please do not hesitate to ask questions to our panelists as you see fit.

UCLA

Teddy Chung

(he/him)

University of California, Berkeley,
B.A. in Integrative Biology, B.A.
in Psychology, Minor in French

David Geffen School of Medicine,
Class of 2023

Theo/Teddy Chung is a third-year medical student at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. Over his three years, he has been part of the Medical Students Council, serving in the role of Social Committee. His research interests have primarily been in the field of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery, with projects ranging from health disparities that plague transgender patients seeking gender-affirming procedures to outcomes-based rhinoplasty studies. Outside of medical school, he plays tennis, having won three national titles for his undergraduate club tennis team.

Arun Chakravorty

(he/him)

Cornell University, B.A. in
Computational Biology

David Geffen School of Medicine,
MD/PhD Candidate, Class of 202

Arun is a 4th year MD-PhD candidate at UCLA-Caltech. Since completing his pre-clinical years at UCLA he has been a PhD candidate at Caltech and explores spatial transcriptomics, a method to identify the location of RNA transcripts within single cells in their native tissue. By identifying spatial patterns in signaling pathways, he hopes to identify fundamental regulators of tissue physiology and disease. He graduated from Cornell with a BA in Computational Biology, and afterwards worked at Rockefeller University as a research assistant in neuroscience. On the side he enjoys music, photography, 3D-printing, and taking care of his plants.

UCLA
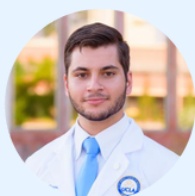
Hristos Courellis
(he/him)

University of California, San Diego, B.S. in Bioengineering, 2015

University of California, San Diego, M.S. in Bioengineering, 2015

David Geffen School of Medicine, MD/PhD Candidate, Class of 2026

Hristos Courellis is a 2nd year PhD student in the UCLA-Caltech Medical Scientist Training Program. During his time at UCSD, Hristos conducted computational and systems neuroscience research with an emphasis on applying machine learning and signal processing techniques to study the neurophysiology of patients diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder and Parkinson's Disease. During his pre-clinical years at the David Geffen School of Medicine, he continued to conduct research with functional neurosurgeons at Ronald Reagan and Cedars-Sinai Medical Centers, was Co-Chair of the AANS student chapter at UCLA, and participated in various clinical volunteering and outreach activities. He is now conducting his graduate research at Caltech where his thesis work centers on understanding neuronal circuit function in Epilepsy patients. His current clinical interest is in Neurosurgery, and his goal is to remain in academic medicine.

Temple

Noah Thornton
(he/him)

University of Mississippi,
B.S. in Biology, 2021

Lewis Katz School of Medicine at
Temple University, Class of 2025

Noah is a current M1 at the Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University (LKSOM) from Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He graduated from the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss, Hotty Toddy!) with a B.S. in Biology and minors in Chemistry and Society and Health ('21). At Temple, he is in the dual-degree M.D. and M.A. in Urban Bioethics program. Prior to medical school, he has been heavily involved in cancer research, studying cellular metabolic profiles in metastatic breast cancer, as well as working in a cancer hospital over the last 5 years. Noah has a big interest in continuing to analyze ethics in healthcare, from an urban bioethics and end-of-life care perspective. Some of his favorite med-related (ethics and cancer mainly) reads have been Elderhood by Louise Aronson, The Emperor of All Maladies by Siddhartha Mukherjee, Being Mortal by Atul Gawande, and The Soul of Care by Arthur Kleinman. Currently, he works for Altius Test Prep as a certified MCAT Mentor where he has been able to help hundreds of pre-meds on their journey to becoming a physician.

Megan Thompson
(she/her)

University of Richmond
B.S. in Biochemistry, 2019

Virginia Commonwealth
University
M.S. in Biochemistry, 2021

Lewis Katz School of Medicine at
Temple University, Class of 2025

Megan Thompson is a current first year medical student at Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. She graduated from the University of Richmond in 2019 with a B.S. in Biochemistry. She completed the CERT post-baccalaureate program at Virginia Commonwealth University in 2020 and continued on to complete her Master of Science in Biochemistry in 2021. She wants to go into orthopedic surgery and hopes to get involved with orthopedic research this summer. In addition to her M.D., she is working towards completing her MA in Urban Bioethics at Temple.

Temple

Manan Parekh
(he/him)

Rutgers University, 2019

Lewis Katz School of Medicine at
Temple University, Class of 2023

Manan Parekh is currently a third-year medical student at Temple University. His academic interests include otolaryngology and maintaining wellness in medicine. In his free time he likes to play basketball, make art, listen to music, and help out other medical-bound students with his TikTok account @mananparekh611, where he showcases what medical school is like. You'll find him talking about his big priorities in life, health, time, family and friends. Being in medical school has been incredibly fun and incredibly challenging, and he loves to take a few moments every day trying to find something that went well, even if 90% of it went horribly. He will be spending a year to do research in sleep surgery after he finishes 3rd year and hopefully he can become an otolaryngologist one day. He is looking forward to meeting all the attendees. Brooklyn fans better come through.

Shenyece Ferguson
(she/her)

Harvard University, B.A. in
Neuroscience, 2019

Lewis Katz School of Medicine at
Temple University, Class of 2023

Shenyece Ferguson is a third-year medical student at Lewis Katz School of Medicine at Temple University. She is from Long Island, NY and graduated from Harvard College ('19) with a B.A in neuroscience. During her time in college, she completed neuroscience research involving MRI imaging, which sparked her interest in neurology and radiology. In medical school, she has served as a member of the school's Student Diversity Council and Antiracism and Anti-bias Curriculum Taskforce. Ultimately, she has chosen to pursue radiology as a career. In her free time, she enjoys watching and playing tennis, reading, and spending time with her friends.

Krishna Mandalia

(he/him)

University of Southern California,
B.S. in Human Biology, Neuroscience, and Business Finance, 2021

Tufts University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

The Heller School for Social Policy & Management at Brandeis University, Class of 2025

Krishna Mandalia is currently an M1 at the Tufts University School of Medicine (TUSM) and is a recent graduate of the University of Southern California (USC). Krishna studied Human Biology, Neuroscience, and Business Finance while at USC and was the chapter founder and president of USC's Startup Grind – a club for aspiring entrepreneurs across all industries. Krishna sought to further his education in both medicine and business administration through his matriculation in a 4-year MD, MBA dual-degree program, focusing on physician executive management. Krishna is an avid clinical researcher with 10+ publications in spine surgery and sports medicine orthopedic surgery. Currently, Krishna hopes to pursue orthopedic surgery as a specialty and works for the current Chief of Sports Medicine at Tufts Medical Center and the Chief of Sports Medicine at New England Baptist Hospital. In addition, Krishna has experience in the biotech startup space as he worked on the product development of the first ever dementia screening iOS application – Mindset. Krishna is the current President of the TUSM Sports Medicine Club, President of Artificial Intelligence in Medicine Club, and serves as the Academic Chair of the MD, MBA M25 cohort. In his free-time, Krishna enjoys cooking, obsessing over the Lakers, and CrossFit.

Akari Miki

(she/her)

Tufts University,
B.S. in Biochemistry, 2019

Tufts University School of Medicine, MD/MPH Candidate, Class of 2025

Akari Miki is a first-year medical student pursuing a MD/MPH dual degree at Tufts University School of Medicine. A daughter of immigrants from Japan, she speaks English, Japanese, and Spanish. Interested in nutritional epidemiology during her undergraduate and growth years, she pursued research related to popular diets (such as vegetarian, Paleo, and Mediterranean) and technology tools for assessing dietary intake and physical activity. Further, she developed her interest in geriatrics through volunteering with an organization that supports the wellbeing and independence of Boston's older adults. As a medical student, she hopes to gain experience serving this population and be involved in initiatives to promote age-friendly communities and health systems. Outside of medicine, she enjoys taking ballet classes, learning languages, and playing with her dog.

Tufts

Sabrina Lima
(she/her)

Rutgers University, B.A. in
Biological Sciences & Minor in
Nutrition, 2021

Tufts University School of
Medicine, MD/MPH Candidate,
Class of 2025

Sabrina Lima is a first year Haitian-American dual degree student at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston. She is pursuing a joint MD/MPH degree due to her passion for underserved communities and providing equitable healthcare to all individuals- an interest which was highlighted through her missionary work in the Dominican Republic. Sabrina also serves as the TUSM M25 class president and the Historian of the TUSM Student National Medical Association (SNMA). With hopes of potentially becoming a pediatrician and partnering with non-profit organizations, Sabrina hopes to open clinics in urban communities and provide care to immigrants and other underserved populations. Outside of medicine, Sabrina enjoys weight-lifting, açaí bowls, singing, and theatre.

Gabriella Scheiner
(she/her)

Stanford University, B.S. in
Biomechanical Engineering, 2018

Tufts University School of
Medicine, Class of 2025

Gabriella Schreiner is from Norman, Oklahoma, and moved to California to attend Stanford for undergrad. She has always been interested in science, and has always wanted to help others through healing. In school, Gabriella was also drawn to creativity and building, which led her to major in Biomechanical Engineering. She's super interested in the intersectionality of technology and medicine, and as a half-Filipino woman, she hopes to push for more space for women and underrepresented minorities in surgery and tech. Her transition from undergrad to medical school was long but worth it, as she spent one gap year on MCAT/applications, another year working at a Biotech startup in San Francisco, and a third year taking courses at Tufts through their Bridges to MD program.
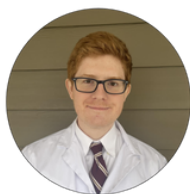
Jefferson

Ashini Panchal
(she/her)

Pennsylvania State University, 7-year BS/MD program

Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Class of 2025

Ashini Panchal is from Anaheim, California and is a first-year medical student at Sidney Kimmel Medical College in Philadelphia. She is a part of the 7-year BS/MD program, affiliated with Penn State and Thomas Jefferson University. She has always wanted to be a pediatrician and hopes to specialize in critical care. After completing her undergraduate years, she worked on research aiming to improve the safety and efficiency of patient care during robotic-assisted surgeries by implementing teamwork and workspace interventions through a human factors framework. She is currently working on research projects pertaining to pediatric critical care, and hopes to learn more about the field. Outside of STEM, Ashini has been dancing for 15 years and was on Penn State Jadhoom during her undergraduate years.

Benjamin Shook
(he/him)

McGill University,
B.A. International Development and East Asian Studies, 2012

University of London, M.A. in Asian Politics, 2014

Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Class of 2025

Ben Shook is an MS1 at Thomas Jefferson University's Sidney Kimmel Medical College (SKMC). He is a non-traditional student who comes to medicine from a career in crisis management. Beginning in the private sector, Ben worked as a Hong Kong-based analyst for Goldman Sachs' Crisis Management Center. His road to medical school began when he left Hong Kong to become a humanitarian worker. The new role took him to Jalalabad and then Kabul, Afghanistan as Safety Advisor followed by Deputy Country Director for the International NGO Safety Organization (INSO). In these positions he provided safety advice for non-governmental organization (NGO) workers operating in high-risk environments. Ben developed a passion for science and service which led him to SKMC, where he works as a committee member for student-run clinic JeffHOPE, tutors post-baccalaureate students, and will be researching the incidence of xylazine-positive urine drug screens in substance use disorder patients. In his free time, Ben likes to hike, travel, and read Sherlock Holmes stories.

Jefferson

Yash Reddy

(he/him)

Pennsylvania State University, 7-year BS/MD program

Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Class of 2025

Yash Reddy is a current MS1 at Sidney Kimmel Medical College, and is a member of the BS/MD program in cooperation with Pennsylvania State University. Outside of medicine, he loves supporting all the Dallas sports teams (yes, including the Cowboys), playing tennis, and finding the best spots in town for an early morning hike. He is currently interested in orthopedic surgery, but is keeping an open mind until he begins rotations. Yash is also passionate about clinical research, specifically in the field of orthopedics and sports medicine. While in medical school, his research has been focusing on risk factors associated with rotator cuff repair and total shoulder arthroplasties.

Rehana Persaud

(she/her)

Elizabethtown College, B.S. Biology
Minor in Psychology, 2019

Drexel University
M.S. Biomedical Studies, 2021

Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Class of 2025

Rehana Persaud is a current MS1 at Sidney Kimmel Medical College in Philadelphia. Prior to medical school she attended Elizabethtown College where she majored in Biology and minored in Psychology. Rehana also spent two years at Drexel University where she obtained her Masters of Science in Biomedical Studies. Outside of medicine she loves writing, dancing, hiking, and spending time with her family. She currently has an interest in both Pediatrics and OB/GYN. Rehana currently serves as a Student Admissions Program Director and a mentor to high school students in the HealthCare Collaborative Program.

Yale

Olamide Olawoyin
(she/her)

Philander Smith College, B.S. in
Biology, 2016

Yale University School of
Medicine, Class of 2022

Olamide Olawoyin, originally from Nigeria is a fourth year MD student at the Yale School of Medicine. She is an aspiring urologist and will be starting residency this fall. She completed her undergraduate degree at the Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas. Prior to matriculating at Yale, she worked as a research technician at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. Her research work has focused on translational and clinical research in cancer immunotherapy, breast and prostate oncology. These have resulted in publications in top-tier journals including Cell, Cancer Discovery and Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery. Olamide is passionate about social justice, global health, and increasing diversity and inclusion in medicine. At Yale, she served as co-leader of the US Health Justice course, co-vice president of the Student National Medical Association, and coordinator of the Health Professional Recruitment and Exposure pipeline program. She is also one of the co-founders of International Students in Medicine. For her contributions to increasing diversity and inclusion of minority students at Yale, Olamide is a recipient of the Robert Rock/Thereem Rehman Student Activism Award. She also enjoys teaching clinical skills courses to first year medical students. Outside of medicine, she enjoys watching TV, reading historical fiction novels, furniture assembly, brunching, exploring the beautiful parks in New England, and travelling.

Gabriela de Queiroz Campos
(she/her)

Brown University, B.S. in
Cognitive Neuroscience,
2019

Brown University, M.A. in
Psychology, 2020

Yale University School of
Medicine, Class of 2024

Gabriela de Queiroz Campos is a second-year student at Yale School of Medicine from São Paulo, Brazil. Gabi graduated from Brown University in 2019 where she studied Cognitive Neuroscience. During undergrad, she conducted research on the relationships between sleep patterns and ADHD symptom presentation, which she continued through her master's in Psychology. At Yale, she is currently involved in Psychiatry research on bipolar disorder and qualitative research on the experiences of trans men with endometriosis. Notably, she is also a mentor at F-1 Doctors, a platform supporting international pre-health and medical students. Gabi is very passionate about mental health, reproductive rights, and medical education. She hopes to continue her work in these areas throughout medical school, eventually pursuing a career in Psychiatry.

Yale

Jafar Al Souz
(he/him)

University of California Irvine, B.S. in Microbiology and Immunology, 2017

Yale University School of Medicine, MD/PhD Candidate, Class of 2027

Jafar was born and raised in Amman, Jordan, where he lived for 19 years prior to immigrating to the United States. Owing to his experiences throughout his immigration journey, Jafar became keen on pursuing a career in medicine. He also became strongly involved in research during his time as an undergraduate student, leading to two years of post-baccalaureate research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), where he worked on mechanisms of autoimmune disease. Jafar is currently a 3rd year MD/PhD student at Yale School of Medicine, and is pursuing a PhD in Immunobiology with a focus on immune responses in lupus nephritis. Outside of school, Jafar is a team member of Elevation Med Prep (elevationmedprep.org), which is a social enterprise by Yale School of Medicine students focused on making medical school admissions consulting accessible to everyone by offering MCAT tutoring, personal statement reviews, and mock interviews.

Arielle Richey Levine
(she/her)

University of Pennsylvania, B.A. in Criminology and Hispanic Studies, 2016

Columbia University–Institute of Human Nutrition, Vagelos College of Physicians & Surgeons, M.S. in Human Nutrition, 2020

Yale University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

Arielle Richey Levine is an MS1 at Yale School of Medicine (YSM). Currently, she is serving as Medical Student Council President, Orthopaedics Interest Group Co-Leader and an interpreter (Spanish-English) at HAVEN, the student-run free clinic at Yale. Her research interests revolve around intersectionality within orthopaedic trauma surgery–including medical education/training, quality of outcomes/cost and nutrition. She looks forward to continuing to advocate and care for vulnerable populations in clinical, research and educational settings. Arielle arrived at YSM after wide-ranging forays into the social sciences and humanities, as well as exploring and climbing in the great outdoors across the world–all of which she continues to integrate into her daily life and outlook in the medical field. She juggles her various interests and responsibilities thanks to the unwavering support of her 5-year-old labradoodle, Angelica, and her family and friends.

Yale

Danielle Miyagishima
(she/her)

New Mexico State University,
B.A. in Biology, 2015

Yale University School of
Medicine, MD/PhD Candidate,
Class of 2024

Originally from Las Cruces, NM, Danielle earned her BA in Biology at New Mexico State University in 2015 before starting at Yale to pursue her MD-PhD later that year. In 2017, she began her PhD in Genetics and joined the laboratory of Dr. Murat Gunel, where she is focusing on employing various single-cell and next generation sequencing technologies to understand the molecular basis of meningioma tumorigenesis and microenvironment. Danielle has been involved in collaborative research studying neurovascular genetic abnormalities and has published work in The New England Journal of Medicine, JAMA Neurology, and Nature Medicine. After completing her joint degrees, Danielle hopes to go on to train in neurosurgery, where she aspires to emulate her mentors in becoming an active neurosurgeon-scientist. Danielle is an active member of the Yale community and is dedicated to mentorship and encouraging others to pursue the surgeon-scientist training. She is a co-founder of the Yale Neurosurgery Interest Group, the Cushing. For her leadership in neurosurgery, she was elected as one of two medical students per year to the Young Neurosurgeons Committee of the American Association of Neurological Surgeons for the 2021-2023 term. She is also passionate about biotech and is Head of Research & Development of Life Sciences at the Dev Effect, Director of Clinical Operations at Nucleate New Haven. Danielle is enthusiastic about mentorship and inclusion and has served as a member of Diversity and Inclusion Committees of the MD-PhD program (past) and Yale Neurosurgery Department (present), as well as on the MD Admissions committee, and serves as a mentor in many capacities to undergraduates at Yale and beyond.

FAU

Tofunmi Oshodi
(she/her)

Columbia University, B.A. in
Psychology, 2016

Hunter College of Education,
M.S. in Adolescent Special
Education, 2018

FAU Schmidt College of
Medicine, Class of 2022

Tofunmi Oshodi is a fourth-year medical student at FAU Schmidt College of Medicine, heavily passionate about social justice advocacy, education equity, and the power of psychiatry. Tofunmi grew up in Orlando, FL and attended Columbia University for her undergraduate degree, receiving a B.A. in Psychology in 2016. Upon graduating college, Tofunmi joined Teach For America and taught English and Social Studies in a South Bronx middle school for two years. Tofunmi's experience as a daughter of Nigerian immigrant parents, former special education teacher, and Black woman in medicine, has fueled her commitment to serve and advocate for communities that have been historically marginalized and disenfranchised.

Shiv Krishnaswamy
(he/him)

University of Florida, B.S. in
Biochemistry, 2018

FAU Schmidt College of
Medicine, Class of 2022

Shiv Krishnaswamy is a fourth-year medical student at the Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, FL. At Florida Atlantic University, Shiv served as a Director for the Healthcare Careers Outreach Program (HCOP) which involved teaching and mentoring 6th to 12th grade students on the basics of medicine, healthcare practices of doctors as well as facilitating anatomical dissections and leading clinical-based simulations. He is also the founder of the Biomedical Bootcamp Program (BMBC) which provides high school students with opportunities to create 3D models and technological applications for addressing community healthcare needs, improve their candidacy to college STEM programs, and receive informal mentoring from College of Medicine and College of Engineering students. He has been involved with numerous research projects, poster presentations, and publications spanning across multiple fields including Orthopedic Surgery, Cardiology, Neurology, and Infectious Disease. Outside the world of medicine, Shiv plays pickleball professionally and has traveled to more than 20 national tournaments in over 10 states during the past 2 years. He also has been teaching pickleball at numerous country clubs in his local community for 1 year.

FAU

Melisa Rodriguez
(she/her)

Florida International University,
B.S. in Biological Sciences, 2020

FAU Schmidt College of
Medicine, Class of 2024

Melisa Rodriguez is a second-year medical student at FAU Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine in Boca Raton, FL. She was born in Cuba and grew up in Miami, where she studied Biological Sciences at FIU during her undergraduate years. One of her hobbies is filming videos for her YouTube Channel, where she shares weekly vlogs about her journey through medical school and advice for students interested in medicine. Within medicine, Melisa is interested in Internal Medicine and Family Medicine, specifically Geriatrics and Rheumatology. One of her main academic goals is becoming a competent patient-centered clinician and continuing to learn throughout her career. Some of her extracurricular activities include leadership in the Geriatrics Interest Group and Family Medicine Interest Group at FAU. In her free time, Melisa enjoys planning a healthy lifestyle which includes home workouts, meal preparation, journaling, and singing as an outlet for mindfulness and wellbeing.

Michael Leary
(he/him)

Florida Atlantic University, B.S.
in Biochemistry, 2016

FAU Schmidt College of
Medicine, Class of 2022

Michael grew up in South Florida and went to college at Florida Atlantic University. Before attending medical school, he conducted research at the National Institute of Health on oxycodone addiction. Currently he is a fourth-year medical student at the Florida Atlantic University Schmidt College of Medicine interested in the field of Anesthesiology. His hobbies include photography of Florida's wildlife, Kayaking and cooking Vegan and Vegetarian food.

Duke

Camryn Thompson

(she/her)

Duke University, B.S. in Biology and a Minor in Chemistry, 2021

Duke University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

Camryn Thompson is a first-year medical student at Duke School of Medicine. She also attended Duke University for undergrad, where she majored in biology and minored in chemistry. Her hometown is Ashburn, Virginia, just 30 minutes outside of Washington, D.C. Some of her notable experiences include working as an ophthalmic technician in her hometown, serving on the executive board of a 501(c)3 non-profit called National Student Response Network, and conducting pathophysiology research in a cardiology lab. In her free time, she enjoys snowboarding, sculpting, and watching scandal documentaries. She did not take a gap year, and loves mentoring students in the medical school application process.

Sage Atkins

(he/him)

UNC Chapel Hill, B.S. in Biology, 2021

Duke University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

Sage Atkins is a first-year medical student at Duke University School of Medicine. Before medical school, he attended undergrad at UNC Chapel Hill and majored in Biology after earning an associate degree from community college. Sage grew up on a farm in a rural town in North Carolina (with a population of around 1000 people). During undergrad, he participated in research related to Epstein-Barr Virus, worked as a firefighter, and was heavily involved in student mental health by co-founding a peer support program on campus called Peer2Peer. Sage is currently unsure what field of medicine he will go into but will be keeping an open mind going into clinical rotations. In his free time, he enjoys playing musical instruments, spending time with friends, and watching stand-up comedy.

Duke

Alissa Arango

(she/her)

University of Florida, B.S. in Applied Physiology and Kinesiology, 2019

Duke University, M.S. in Biomedical Sciences, 2020

Duke University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

Alissa Arango was born and raised in Miami, Florida. As the child of Cuban immigrants, Alissa grew up alongside her brother, mother, and grandmother. Upon graduating from high school, Alissa attended the University of Florida where the university employed her as the team seamstress for the Gator Football team. After graduating in 2019, she attended Duke University to pursue a Master of Biomedical Science in hope of one day furthering her career by becoming a physician. In the spring of 2020, she graduated and later took a job at Organicell Regenerative Medicine where she assisted in coordinating and managing Phase I/II clinical trials at the Miami start-up. Her interest in human physiology and clinical trial experience, together with a desire to more directly improve quality of life, led her to Duke University School of Medicine where she is set to graduate in 2025. Her current professional interests are in hand and spine orthopedic surgery.

Gabi Nisly

(she/her)

Johns Hopkins University, B.S. in Neuroscience, 2018

Duke University School of Medicine, Class of 2025

Gabriela Nisly is a current MS1 at Duke University School of Medicine. She grew up in Iowa City, IA, and received her bachelor's degree in Neuroscience with a minor in Music from Johns Hopkins University in 2018. After graduating from college, she moved to Brazil to live with family and teach English, before returning to the US to work as an Americorps VISTA member at an education non-profit in Baltimore. She started medical school at Duke after two gap years, and her current interests include global health, women's health, and LGBTQ+ health. Outside of medicine, she loves reading, trying new restaurants, and going on hikes with her dog!

Harvard

Sam Sadler
(she/her)

Duke University, B.S. in
Neuroscience & Global Health
with a Minor
in Chemistry, 2019

Harvard Medical School, Class of
2023

Sam is an MS3 at Harvard Medical School. Born and raised in Dallas, Texas, she graduated from Duke University ('19) with a B.S. in neuroscience and global health. She continues to pursue this academic intersection at HMS, where she serves on the Secretariat Team for the Global Neurosurgery Committee of the WFNS and collaborates with the Program for Surgery and Social Change (PGSSC). Alongside her colleagues at HMS, Sam has launched a platform titled "Unconditional Publishing" to highlight the narratives of medical students living with illness, health conditions and/or disabilities. She has also been involved in numerous national and international COVID-19 projects, including co-founding the National Student Response Network (NSRN) to connect willing health professions students with volunteering opportunities. Outside of medicine, she is a certified group fitness instructor and loves fashion! Sam posts about her life on TikTok (@SadlerSammie) where she strives to normalize the med school experience by sharing her life in and outside of the hospital.

Jean Filo
(he/him)

University of Delaware, B.S. in
Biology and Liberal Studies with
a Minor in Business
Administration and Biochemistry,
2020

Harvard Medical School, Class of
2024

Jean Filo was born and raised in Damascus, Syria. He immigrated to the United States during the Syrian revolution. He continued high school in Delaware and went to the University of Delaware where he majored in biology and liberal studies, and minored in business administration and biochemistry. During undergrad, he was the president of the Entrepreneurship Club and found a committee for interprofessional healthcare collaboration. Though he was rejected from an early acceptance into medical school program, he applied again to medical school in the subsequent year and was accepted to Harvard Medical School. Currently, he enjoys spending time with friends, Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and recording his podcast, "diary of a syrian kid."

University of Miami

Donovan Dowers
(he/him)

University of Miami Miller
School of Medicine, MD/MPH
Candidate, Class of 2023

Donovan is a third-year MD/MPH student at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, business owner, and gay AF! His career interests include adolescent health, LGBTQ+ health, mental health and wellness, burnout prevention in the medical field, medical leadership and healthcare administration. He also is continually working to expand his math and science tutoring business, ChemCoach LLC! His astrology signs are Virgo sun, Capricorn moon, and Capricorn rising (#earthy!). Outside of school and his business, Donovan enjoys taking care of his two cats and two dogs, cooking, eating, working out from home on his Pelotón, charcuterie board creation, thrifting, and audiobooks.

Gaby Llano
(she/her)

University of Notre Dame, B.S.,
2019

University of Miami Miller
School of Medicine, MD/MPH
Candidate, Class of 2023

Gaby is a third-year medical student at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She was born and raised in Miami and attended the University of Notre Dame for her undergraduate education. At Miller, Gaby was the project manager of the San Juan Bosco student-run free clinic for local underserved populations and is involved in the pediatrics interest group and with other like-minded student organizations. She currently conducts research with the Family Navigator Program at the Mailman Center for Child Development and with the American Association of Caregiving Youth. Being the older sister to a sibling with Down syndrome, Gaby has a passion for working with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She has a long history of volunteering with various disability advocacy groups and has worked in genetics laboratories during college. She also researched in a Sleep, Stress, and Memory lab at Notre Dame that she found while pursuing her major in Neuroscience and Behavior. With a minor in Art History, Gaby enjoys spending her free time in museums or traveling around the world. She loves hanging out with family and friends, reading, playing or watching sports, and spending time out on the water. Her current interests lie in the field of pediatrics and she is excited to be a part of this panel.

University of Miami

Hannah Zwiebel
(she/her)

Tufts University, B.A., 2018

University of Miami Miller
School of Medicine, MD/MPH
Candidate, Class of 2023

Hannah Zwiebel is an MD/MPH candidate at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine who has participated in research in the areas of pediatric mental health, maternal and fetal health, and school-based medicine. She is interested in pediatric health disparities, educating children in underserved communities about mental health and wellness, and expanding school-based medicine programs to increase children's access to quality healthcare. She is excited to be pursuing a career in pediatrics. Outside of medicine, she loves riding her bike along the beach, doing Peloton workouts, yoga, cooking, and playing pickle ball.

Amanda Nwaba
(she/her)

Vanderbilt University, B.A. in
Medicine, Health and Society,
and in Classics with a Minor in
Chemistry, 2018

University of Miami Miller
School of Medicine, MD/MPH
Candidate, Class of 2023

Growing up in Maryland with a mother and several aunts who worked in various medical fields, Amanda Nwaba was fascinated by the medical knowledge they showed whenever friends or relatives sought medical attention; from a young age, she knew she would one day study medicine. Participating in medical missions in her family's home in Imo State, Nigeria, instilled in her that as a physician, she would have a responsibility not only to her patients, but also to the larger community. After graduating from Vanderbilt University in 2018 with a double major in medicine, health and society, and in classics — with a minor in chemistry — Amanda spent a year at the FDA participating in vaccine design research and then joined the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, attracted by both the diversity and opportunity in South Florida, as well as the Miller School's commitment to public service. At Miller, she has been involved in the Student National Medical Association and Student Government. Amanda is currently pursuing her MD/MPH degree and plans to apply for an Ob/Gyn residency in the fall. The vision she has for her career will integrate her passions for medicine, health equity, and medical education.

Washington University

Jana Liese
(she/her)

University of South Carolina,
B.S. in Biochemistry and
Molecular Biography, 2020

Washington University School of
Medicine, MD/PhD Candidate,
Class of 2025

Jana Liese is a current MS1 in the MD/PhD program at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. She graduated in 2020 from the University of South Carolina with a BS in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology before completing a postbac fellowship at the National Institutes of Health where she focused on pandemic influenza viruses. Her research interests include protein biochemistry, structural biology, viral replication mechanisms, and vaccine development. Clinically, she is interested in pathology and infectious disease specialists. Outside of school, she enjoys rock climbing, theater, dance, and spoiling her two guinea pigs.

Dante Nicotera
(he/him)

The Catholic University of
America, B.S. in Biology and
Psychological & Brain Sciences,
2020

Washington University School of
Medicine, Class of 2025

Dante is currently a first-year MD student at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. He was initially drawn to medicine by his experiences working with pediatric populations, which included two summers during undergrad as a camp counselor at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp, a camp in Connecticut for children with serious illnesses. His favorite experiences during undergrad included being an active member of his university's Orientation program, as well as volunteering at Children's National Medical Center. He also conducted research within the biology and psychology departments. Following undergrad, Dante took a gap year in which he completed a year of service at Christ House, a medical respite facility in Washington, D.C. for men experiencing homelessness who have acute medical needs. Arriving to Washington University, Dante has begun to explore these passions within medicine, serving as part of the leadership for an interdisciplinary clinic, and joining research within the pediatric otolaryngology department. Outside of medicine he is currently training for a half-marathon, and is an active instrumentalist as member of the Wind Ensemble at WashU and the pit orchestra for the "Med School Musical." His favorite part of medical school so far is the sense of community between his classmates and the friendships he has made!

Washington University

Lyra Morina
(she/her)

University of Maryland College
Park, B.S. in Cell Biology &
Molecular Genetics and
Economics, 2021

Washington University School of
Medicine, MD/PhD Candidate,
Class of 2025

Lyra was born in Prizren, Kosovo and spent most of her childhood moving throughout Africa and learning in diverse environments. She has loved science for as long as she can remember and her fascination with cells and the human body grew as she engaged in a broad range of research experiences: human mRNA, plant genetics, mosquitoes, autophagy in cancer biology, and human T cell immunology. She is currently fascinated by cancer immunology in which she intends to pursue her PhD. To solidify her decision to train within an MD-PhD program, she sought out many opportunities for research and clinical exposure in college. Making this decision was not simple. She decided to make it her mission to help future generations find this information more easily and started her Instagram account @mdeephdee. She is so excited to meet you all and share what she has learned along the way!

Ahmed Hanafy
(he/him)

Washington University, B.S. in
Neuroscience with a Minor in
Computer Science, 2021

Washington University School of
Medicine, Class of 2025

Ahmed Hanafy is a first-year medical student at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine (WUSM). He was born in Alexandria, Egypt but grew up in Seattle, WA. He graduated from Washington University in St. Louis in 2021 majoring in Neuroscience with a minor in Computer Science. In undergrad, he was the Co-President of the Muslim Students Association as well as on the leadership team for multiple other student groups. In addition to being a Generation Google Scholarship Recipient, he was also an Annika Rodriguez Scholar and Gephardt Institute Civic Scholar. His most notable project in undergrad is working alongside a couple of students to develop an optical character recognition software for the student-run health clinic at WUSM. He is currently the Co-Social Chair for the Student National Medical Association as well as one of the Co-Presidents and founders of the Medical Muslim Students Association at WUSM. Ahmed is currently considering going into some kind of surgery but is still trying to figure out what kind. Outside of academics, he loves to watch and play soccer and basketball as well as play video games.

Joining the Discord

1. Go to **stempotential.com** and click on banner

2. **Create a discord account** if you haven't already

3. Click on and fill out the survey in the **#start-here channel**
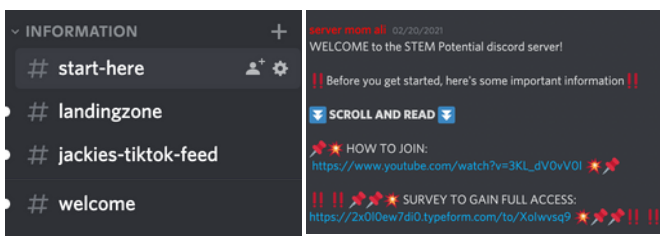
4. Input password from end of the survey into #welcome channel
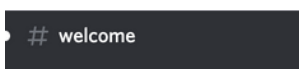
5. Enjoy being a member of the STEM Potential community!
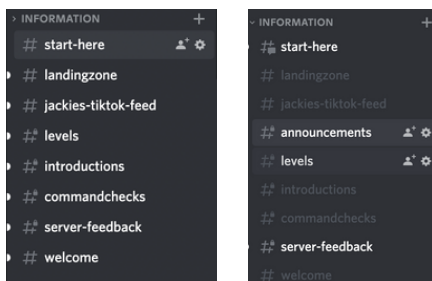
Zoom link for Medical Student Webinar can be found here!
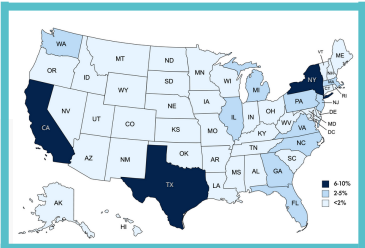
Discord Demographics

105 countries

50 states

Level of Life

- Middle School 0.60%
- PhD 0.90%
- Medical School 1.41%
- Masters 1.41%
- Full Time Job 1.51%
- Other 2.01%
- High School
- College/University 63.05%
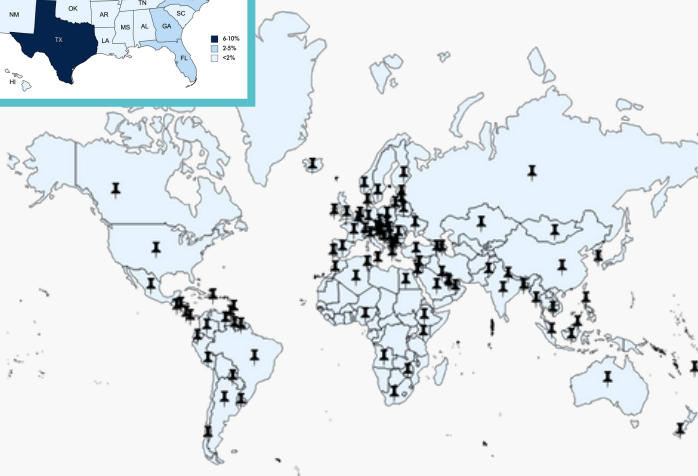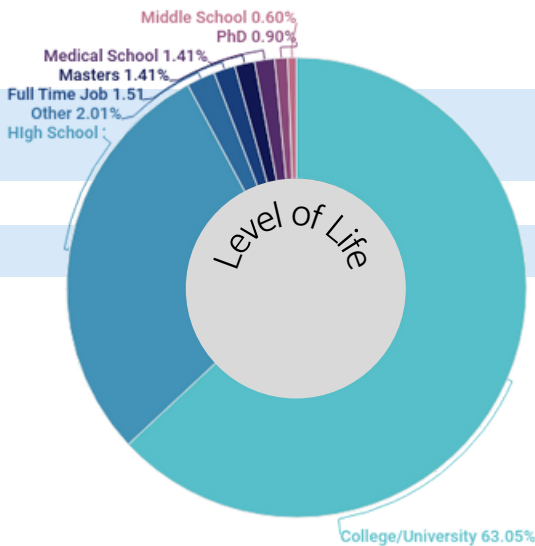
11,837
MEMBERS

32% applying to med school

89

Discord Chat Rooms

CHAT ROOMS FOR...

Introductions

Career Advice

Subject Help

Discussions

Book Club

Emotional Support

& MORE!

Future Goals

In creating a welcoming environment for members to exchange information, we hope to grow this community as we believe that every individual has valuable advice to give and receive.

Through carefully analyzing chats in the discord, private messages with moderators, and the evolution of users' questions on Jackie Brenner's TikTok, we've come to recognize how multidimensional the issues of STEM are. By watching students collaborate on the discord for new projects, sharing research/job opportunities, and helping each other with anything from homework questions to daily life, we appreciated how each member's unique background–whether it be their race, culture, or socioeconomic status– supports that no path in STEM is identical.

Our team has received many messages from members of our community explaining how the discord has guided them, particularly in academics and applying to schools. One memorable user from India direct-messaged Jackie Brenner on the discord seeking advice on how to apply to college in the United States as an international student. As they spoke, this student told her how excited but nervous he was about coming here, as he does not know anyone at Penn State, the school he is looking at. Although Jackie did not have all of the answers to his questions, she reassured him that she could introduce him to other students at Penn State from her previous experiences.

Through this story, and many others that we cannot even begin to recount, we recognize that despite how interconnected the world is, still so many people struggle to make meaningful connections with individuals who can guide and support them on their journeys. As students from a variety of disciplines and even professors navigate through the 89 channels in the discord, there is still a fundamental element missing. We are aware that finding someone with similar characteristics/backgrounds is a challenge that is prevalent in the STEM community. As we continue to connect with more students and professionals from all disciplines, we recognize that there is no existing space for people to give back to STEM, even if they have the desire to.

Even though our discord contains people from 94 different countries, there is still room for improvement. We envision creating a platform that will not only give students the ability to find a specific person to turn to, no matter what level of life they are at, but also provide advice in a public setting. We hope that what is currently a discord community can expand into a mentorship program, which reaches beyond simple academic questions. In doing so, we can support the many students that have the drive but lack the resources.

To respond to the increasing interest for deeper connections, we aim to expand our community to address these systematic gaps and connect individuals based on their unique backgrounds, experiences, and interests to make STEM more accessible and inclusive. We believe that every student can harness the potential of STEM through STEM Potential.

Acknowledgments

We would like to express our thanks to all the panelists for taking the time out of their busy schedules to share their passion for STEM with all of our members.

Today's event would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the STEM Potential team who volunteered to make this event possible. Thank you for your commitment to spreading the mission of STEM Potential.

Lastly, we want to thank each and every member of the STEM Potential Discord for creating an environment that fosters growth and maintains a space where students and professionals can share their passions, expertise, and support especially a particularly challenging time with COVID-19.

Our Team

Jackie Brenner   Ashini Panchal   Shockey Sanders   Anna Garren   Noah Thornton

Lauren Bouchereau   Colette Kaufman   Jeanne Tran   Valerie Voytsekhovskaya

Josh Steif   Andrew Baeder   Emilee Stenson   Saana Teittinen-Gordon