



JOHNS HOPKINS WPHLS



History of The Women's Pre-Health Leadership Society

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WPHLS was founded in 2008 by a JHU alumna, Neha Deshpande, and former pre-medical advisor, Kirsten Kirby. It was modeled as a pre-medical chapter of the American Medical Women's Association to serve as a campus organization dedicated towards advancing women in medicine as well as women's health in the Greater Baltimore community. They envisioned the goal of WPHLS being to facilitate a unique community of women to promote empowerment, mentoring, networking, and collaboration. Neha and Kirsten also co-led and organized the first-ever Women's Leadership Conference that was first held in the spring of 2010.

Kirsten Kirby, M.S.Ed.
JHU Office of
Pre-Professional Advising
Former Assistant Director



WPHLS Fall 2012 Events



CONVERSATIONS IN MEDICINE



MED STUDENT MIXER



PRESIDENTS DAY OF SERVICE

MESSAGE FROM OUR ADVISORS



Dear WPHLS alumnae—

I think you would be proud of all the work that WPHLS continues to achieve both on and off campus, as they organize lectures, community service projects, and the annual conference. They continue to grow and evolve as they have not lost sight of the mission to “inspire and empower one another, while addressing the current healthcare and professional issues and concerns facing all women, and promoting the next generation of female physicians and scientists.” Hopefully, future plans will offer more networking between WPHLS undergrads and alumnae--reuniting with old friends is always welcomed, and the undergraduates would greatly benefit from your collective wisdom and life experiences as medical students.

Sincerely,
Ms. Snyderman and Dr. Fisher

Advice Column

Advice from Srona

My advice for current members (mostly relevant for applications):
The most important thing I've learned is to turn in your materials early, but don't stress about turning it in so early that you sacrifice content and quality. I turned in my primaries in August and finished secondaries in early November and am still getting interviews. However, I think this advice is more applicable for M.D./Ph.D applicants because they review these later in the cycle and there are far fewer to go through.

Show your personal statement (and other essays, if applying to dual degree programs) to MANY people for feedback because you often find help in unlikely places. I showed my essay to a friend thinking that it was more or less done (it had gone through edits from the Writing Center, med students, etc.) but his comments really helped me change things around and present what I was trying to say more originally.

MY BIGGEST ADVICE FOR UNDERGRADUATES WOULD BE TO ALWAYS REFLECT WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND ASK YOURSELF WHY?

These are the main things I've learned so far, but I've got a ways to go until the end of this process so I'm sure there's more I'll pick up on by the end. Anyway, hope this helps and that school is going well!

Advice from Annie

My biggest advice for undergraduates would be to always reflect what you are doing and always ask yourself why? You will be much happier if you follow your heart rather than listen to what others want. Don't be afraid to take risks and try something different or new. Now is the time to make mistakes and figure out what you like and don't like (you're still young).

NEHA DESHPANDE



Class of 2010

Kirsten Kirby and I cofounded WPHLS back in 2008 when literally no one supported it, funded it, or thought it was possible. By the time I graduated Hopkins in 2010, it had already come so far and we had our first women's conference that spring. I am so impressed that WPHLS is still strong and in action!! Now I am at Harvard med school and national treasurer of the American medical women's association (which I think you all should definitely join in med school!!!)

ANNIE WU



Class of 2011

After graduating from the JHU class of 2011 as a Molecular and Cellular Biology Major, I knew that I wanted to learn about lab research more in depth and really engage in research full time. Thus, I was really fortunate to find a position in a Pancreatic Cancer lab at Johns Hopkins Medical Institute as a full-time research technologist, and I absolutely love it. With a more mature mindset and in depth as well as broad exposure to the medical and scientific fields, I feel as if I am more prepared to pursue further schooling in the future that will be important for my career and life goals.

TIFFANY NG



Class of 2011

I graduated a semester early from Hopkins, and worked in a biomaterials research lab at JHU for a semester while waiting to hear back from med schools. I decided to attend the University of Pennsylvania for their MD program. This past summer, I volunteered at an orphanage in China for children with medical needs (congenital heart defects, autism, spina bifida, cleft lip/palate, etc.). I'm currently in my second year of med school, and about to start in the clinics in January.



FAREEDAT OLUYADI

Advice from Faredat

Greetings to my beloved WPHLS girls! Hopkins was definitely a terrific time (especially with WPHLS!!), but like all good things, it must come to an end. I can't believe my first semester of medical school is already coming to a close. Thinking back to August, my first month at Mount Sinai School of Medicine (which btw the name may be changing into "Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai!") seems like a lifetime away. So many courses, events and developments have occurred during that time, it is amazing to reflect on how much I have learned in just a mere 3 months! Sadly, medical school is the bulk of my time right now as I am adjusting to the workload, and don't really have much wiggle room to pursue a great deal of fun extracurriculars. However, I am part of the Wellness Committee, serving as the Co-Chair,

ensuring my classmates and I are striving for good wellbeing in these strenuous years of our medical training.

Now that I am on the other side, I would say, for those who are planning to matriculate straight from college, start thinking early how you can maintain a balanced life outside the tedious four walls of the classroom. Because, medical school can very quickly and easily become all you do and this will inevitably lead to burn out in a mere few weeks. You want to think of medical school as a marathon (not a sprint!). For those who are on the fence of applying now or taking a year off, I would say if you already feel a year off might be very appealing or feel very tired of school, I say go for it. The intensity of medical school can bring out all the "what-ifs" and doubts in the forefront of your mind, and you want to make sure you do not have any big regrets that may hinder you from soaking in the difficult but rewarding moments of your early medical training.

I really do miss you all and Hopkins (I know, I know, surprising right!) and if there is anyway I can help in making the medical school process and decision making a little easier, you have me at your disposal <3.

Best wishes to the graduating class and the future leaders of this wonderful leadership society, WPHLS.



Some more Alum:



DANI HIMELFARB



SHEILA RAZDAN



ANITA RAM



LISA STROUSS



SRONA SENGUPTA



WPHLS CONFERENCE 2012



More Alumni Updates:

Dani Himelfarb

After graduation I began working as a Research Associate at the Lieber Institute for Brain Development at the JHMI campus. I work in the Cognitive Neuroscience & Imaging Genetics division doing research on how genetic abnormalities influence the brain's processing of motivational information. I am also applying to med school during this gap year. My advice to current members would be to keep your gap year options open and apply to as many positions and programs as you can.

Srona Sengupta

I have been working in a translational psychiatry lab at the med campus during my gap year and applying to M.D./Ph.D. programs. This and my applications have kept me really busy! I'm currently in the interview stage which last until February. After continuing to work until June, I plan to take my summer off to travel with friends and spend time with family before starting school.

Sheila Razdan

I am currently a first year at the University of Maryland School of Medicine. I am part of the Medical Spanish program, the Primary Care Track, and the Medical Alumni Association Student Advisory Council. I would be happy to answer any questions about Maryland or general questions about the application process/life as a medical student.

Anita Ram

Anita Ram graduated in December 2011 with a B.A. in Public Health Studies. She is currently living in Bangalore, India and is conducting research at St. John's Research Institute through the US Fullbright Scholarship. Her project focuses on the rising prevalence of obesity in urban India, particularly among IT employees. She is currently applying to medical school, which she plans to enroll in next fall. Anyone interested in applying to medical school while living abroad or in applying for the Fullbright can contact Anita with questions.

Lisa Strouss

I started my first year at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia this past August. I'm really happy here--love the school and the city. I think my main advice is to choose a medical school that focuses on the same things you like. I did research at Hopkins, but I knew that I didn't want to do research as a career. Although there are plenty of research opportunities at Jefferson, the main focus is on patients and clinical care, which matches my goals and interests as well. Besides that, I just want to say that Hopkins prepared me really well for medical school, so all the hard work will be worth it! Please tell anyone interested in Jefferson that I would be happy to talk to them.

WPHLS FALL SEMESTER ACTIVITIES

BALTIMORE SUN EVENT

This fall, WPHLS was able to raise over \$900 from the Baltimore Sun Subscription Fundraising Event! We also partnered with Kaplan to offer a free MCAT Practice Test on campus to all Hopkins students. Both events ran very smoothly and we are looking forward to the Kaplan MCAT Auction in the Spring. Lastly, WPHLS sweatshirt spirit wear was a hit!

FACES OF HOMELESSNESS

Deborah, a former nurse and recovered drug addict, came to us on October 5th through the Baltimore Faces of Homelessness Speaker's Bureau. She shared her personal struggles with HIV and homelessness with WPHLS and members of the Hopkins Community.

RICE RACES

"Rice Races" was held on Monday, November 12, 2012 during dinnertime at Nolan's. The way the event worked is WPHLS members set up laptops in Nolan's already open to the website necessary to start the races. We used the website, www.freerice.com. Each student was given 3 minutes to answer as many problems within the subject of biology and health. The highest scoring student won a grand prize of a TV screen, and other high scoring participants were given small gifts. It was a fun and relaxing event that did not take a lot of organizing, that I definitely recommend we should continue. The only thing I would change is the event length. I originally made it a four hour event, but only two hours were necessary.

ORIENTATION PANEL

WPHLS members Nikita Gupta, Katherine Simeon, Claire Lyons, Jessica Lee, and Ashley Choi were a part of a panel for the freshman orientation week's Hop101 Session. Including their own experiences as examples, they talked to freshman about what it's really like to be pre-health at Hopkins and what opportunities Baltimore offers that can help them decide if they would like to pursue a career in healthcare. The event had a good turnout with interested students, and was very successful.

PANTY DRIVE

WPHLS partnered with Power Inside, an organization that serves women impacted by incarceration, street life and abuse, to donate new underwear to women in jail in Maryland. About 5,000 women that cycle through jail at any one point and about 1/2 are homeless and have no family to help them while they are in jail. During the week of October 15th, 2012, WPHLS members collected donations from students and faculty, giving out delicious baked goodies and tea around campus. With the donations collected, over 60 new pairs of underwear were donated.

ADMISSIONS REPS

Valerie Mazza, Sharon Welling, and Paul White joined us on October 8th to answer questions about the medical school and the MD/PhD admissions processes at Hopkins.

MED STUDENT DINNER

WPHLS members attended dinner at Brewer's Art on November 29th with first year Hopkins medical students, including WPHLS alumnae Nikki Jiam and Allie Miller.

BLAST PROGRAM

As a relatively new member of WPHLS, I'm always eager to get involved in as much as possible. But over the summer, I felt like something was missing from my experiences so far. I was a newly appointed member of a group I was so proud of, a group that had a mission of empowering young women like myself as we all fight our way towards our goals of becoming health professionals. But, as I sat on my couch in August, I thought about all of the girls who weren't as lucky as myself, who didn't have a group to help them accomplish their goals. I decided that I wanted to do something about that.

And so, the BLAST (Bringing Ladies And Science Together) Mentoring Program was started this fall with the goal of reaching out to middle school girls in Baltimore City Public Schools to foster a genuine interest in the sciences. Our mission is to enrich young minds, encourage the pursuit of knowledge outside of the classroom, and empower young women to develop the confidence and self-esteem necessary for all future endeavors.

We're currently in the middle of our pilot session, where we hold weekly mentoring sessions with a group of girls from our partner school. Every week, we prepare an hour-long science or engineering lesson plan that is followed by an hour of discussion and homework help.

The development of such a program felt like natural extension of the community service efforts that the women of WPHLS are already involved in. Our group was founded with the intention of creating an environment that supported our pre-medical goals while addressing the issues that women in science careers face - so reaching out to help the needs of local girls was an obvious choice.

After a few months of writing and re-writing proposals, emailing and meeting with local charter schools, and submitting a few grants, we finally had a product we thought could make a real impact with the Baltimore community. We chose to partner with the Maryland Academy for Technology and Health Sciences, whose principal, Ms. Rebekah Ghosh, is a Hopkins alum herself, and was extremely excited to get the program off of the ground. The enthusiasm about BLAST was felt on campus, as well - we now have over 55 Hopkins women who share our passion signed up to be involved in the program development.

Our pilot session with MATHS will be completed in late January, after which we'll be meeting with MATHS and BLAST members to regroup before we start a spring session. It is our hope that from here, we'll continue to grow interest at Hopkins and among the middle schoolers to maximize our impact. So even though there's a lot of planning and development in our future, but with leadership from WPHLS members, I'm really excited to see the program take off.

-Katie Duffy



Conversations in Medicine: CIM

As the Co-Chair of the Conversations in Medicine Symposium, I helped to plan two events for the fall semester. The first was a dinner followed by a speech by Drs. Gerome Groopman and Pamela Hartzband, a married couple who are noted doctors on the Harvard Medical School faculty. Their talk centered on the ability to recognize your own “medical mind,” which can help you make decisions if your doctors disagree with each other or with you! Our second event was a

speech by Dr. Sanjay Desai, the director of the Osler Medicine Training Program- the internal medicine residency program at JHMI. He spoke about the future of medicine, and how current students will largely have a large impact on the way medicine is pursued and conducted in the very near future. Both events drew over 100 attendees, and we recognize very positive feedback about all the speakers.

Claire Lyons

Upcoming in Spring 2013:
Theme for the Spring 2013 Conference will be:
“Careers in Medicine: Exploring Medical Specialties”

SUMMARY

WPHLS has had a busy fall semester. Our crowning achievement was starting a new science mentoring program for girls, called Bringing Ladies and Science Together (BLAST). Each week we bring female Hopkins students as mentors to the Maryland Academy of Technology and Health Sciences (MATHS), a local charter school whose principal is a Hopkins alum, for fun science projects and homework help. The goal of the program is to increase interest in science among High School girls. The pilot session started in December and will run into January, and the second session will begin in February. We received interest from over 50

Hopkins students to be mentors and almost 15 MATHS girls. BLAST was the brainchild of dedicated WPHLS member, Katie Duffey. The Conversations in Medicine committee also continued on its successful path, inviting Drs. Jerome Groopman and Pamela Hartzband to campus in October, and Dr. Sanjay Desai in November. Both lecture events were attended by over 150 Hopkins students and faculty.

WPHLS also held the \$2/Day Challenge again, and invited a speaker from the Faces of Homelessness Speakers Bureau to better understand the multifaceted issue. In October, we held a Panty Drive Fundraiser and raised \$110 to benefit incarcerated women, who often go their entire sentence with only one pair of underwear. The money was given to a nonprofit, Power Inside, to provide the women with more panties. We also participated in the President's Day Of Service, during which we worked at the Interfaith Center assembling care packages for a homeless shelter. Representatives from the Hopkins SOM admissions committee were also invited to speak to our members during one of our general body meetings. In November, we organized a networking dinner with medical students from Hopkins SOM to help connect our members with mentors, which was very successful. WPHLS also held a Rice Races event at Nolans, in which we had students play an online trivia game that donates free rice for every correct answer. Our fundraising committee raised almost \$900 through a Baltimore Sun fundraiser for the WPHLS general fund this semester. Finally, we ended the semester with a holiday social and some new WPHLS gear, 1/4-zip sweatshirts, for our members.