



CMS NEWS

The Chicago Medical School Newsletter

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Dean's Message

CMS News

Spring 2024

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Cover Image: Alyson Brinkman, May Li, and Kayleen Knoll celebrate their residency matches on Match Day.

Contact Information:
Office of the Dean
Chicago Medical School
Rosalind Franklin University
3333 Green Bay Road
North Chicago, IL 60064
www.rosalindfranklin.edu/cms



Greetings from the Dean's Office!

It's been a busy and exciting time at Chicago Medical School this Spring! Since I last wrote to you, we've had several celebratory events on campus, and now we're preparing for commencement week. The Class of 2024 will be graduating on May 31, and leading up to that day, we will be celebrating student accomplishments in many forms in a series of events that includes the Alpha Omega Alpha Induction Ceremony

and the inaugural CMS Student Awards Ceremony. I am so proud of the feats our students accomplish in their studies, research, and clinical care – as well as making an impact with their leadership and community service – and I look forward to the coming opportunities to celebrate their achievements.

This spring, we've already had several opportunities to celebrate with the Class of 2024. On March 15, we had the pleasure of holding the first fully in-person Match Day ceremony since 2019, after four years of virtual or hybrid celebrations. It was wonderful to be on campus with our students and their loved ones, sharing in their joy as our graduating seniors discovered where they will be completing the next phase of their medical careers. Congratulations to the Class of 2024 for achieving a 98% match rate! This success is evidence of your hard work, resilience, and determination, and I look forward to seeing what you'll accomplish in residency and beyond.

Following the Match Day ceremony, we had further reason to celebrate as we welcomed 28 members of the Class of 2024 into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. This is an honor that shines a light on one of the most important aspects of becoming a health care professional: developing the skills needed to provide compassionate and humanistic care to all patients and to preserve the human connection in healthcare.

In the past few weeks, we've celebrated other students for their clinical research and outstanding leadership qualities. CMS students presented 90 posters at the recent M3 Clinical Poster Day, and 13 students earned prizes for their posters and presentations. And at last month's RFU Student Leadership Awards Ceremony, 15 individual CMS students and 10 CMS-led student organizations received awards in recognition of their contributions to the university community. You will find more details

about these accomplishments within the pages of this newsletter.

I also want to recognize the remarkable creativity and talent displayed by our student body in recent events such as the Synapses Salon and the student theatrical production of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead. In an environment like medical school that places so much emphasis on academics and scholastic achievement, I am amazed and impressed that so many students have carved out the time to exercise their creativity with these artistic pursuits. In addition to providing an outlet for creative expression, I believe that these endeavors will help you become the compassionate, well-rounded individuals you must be to deliver excellent patient care in your future careers.

In addition to all the wonderful accomplishments of our students, I also want to recognize the achievements of our CMS faculty, who were honored for their research, teaching, and service at the University Faculty Awards Ceremony earlier this month. Please join me in congratulating Joanna Dabrowska, PhD, PharmD, who received the Morris L. Parker Research Award; David Everly, PhD, who received the Rosalind Franklin Award for Excellence in Teaching; Paul Hung, MD Class of '10, who received the Rosalind Franklin Award for Excellence in Service; Anne Lee, MD Class of '08, PhD Class of '07, who received the Deans' Award for Diversity and Inclusion; and Brian Feinstein, PhD, who received the Board of Trustees Research Award and the Deans' Award for Diversity and Inclusion. One of the greatest strengths of CMS is our faculty and the creativity, wisdom, experience, and care they bring to their teaching, mentorship, scholarship and leadership.

As the academic year comes to a close, we are already looking ahead to next year as we prepare for the future Class of 2028. In April, we welcomed 82 potential members of this class to our campus for Admitted Student Visit Weekend, a program of events where admitted students toured campus,

engaged with faculty and current students, attended student and alumni panels, and heard presentations about campus and academic life from CMS and RFU leadership.

As we prepare for the next academic year, we are always looking for new opportunities to expand our students' options for completing their clinical rotations. To that end, I am proud to announce a new affiliation agreement with Froedtert South, a comprehensive regional healthcare system serving the southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois communities for 120 years. Froedtert South provides services primarily through the Froedtert Pleasant Prairie Hospital and several clinical locations. We have also finalized an affiliation agreement with Palmdale Regional Medical Center in the Los Angeles area. This 190-bed acute care facility serves a total population of approximately 517,000 people in the desert communities surrounding the Antelope Valley in southern California. I hope that the addition of these two new clinical affiliations will enhance and enrich the clinical experiences we provide for our students.

In order to continue to evolve to meet the needs of our community, we've recently launched our new CMS Strategic Plan for 2024-2027, following a nine-month long strategic planning process. The creation of the plan was a comprehensive endeavor aimed at charting a course for excellence and innovation in medical education, research, and community engagement. The process was coordinated by a dedicated steering committee and included a Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) analysis; an inclusive retreat that brought together students, staff, faculty, administration, alumni, and community members; and several on-campus meetings to develop objectives that were guided by strategic viewpoints. Through leveraging the strengths of the community, and by focusing on the plan's identified priorities of Educational and Translational Experiences, Culture, and Resource Development, the school is poised to make significant strides in fulfilling its mission and

shaping the future of healthcare. Details of the plan will soon be made available on the school's website.

I'll close this message by sharing some exciting alumni news. Our alumni continue to show their generosity through their interactions with our students and their financial contributions to their alma mater. Most recently, the CMS Class of 1973 - led by Drs. Joe Sanfilippo, Melvin Roseman, Ian Love, Craig Joseph, Ronald Rawitt, and Jerry Tarnoff - has come together to honor their 50th anniversary of graduation by establishing a permanent named endowed fund in honor of their class. The annual proceeds of this fund will help underwrite the investment of CMS students' well-being services, under the direction of the school and university. Additionally, 56 donors have come together to raise more than \$300,000 for the Dean Emeritus Theodore Booden, PhD, Endowed Opportunity Scholarship! These donations honor Dr. Booden's legacy and continue his good work of empowering the aspirations of CMS students through scholarship support.

I've also had the pleasure of welcoming several alumni to campus, and traveling to meet with alumni in Boston. Douglas M. Olken, MD Class of '95, visited campus this month with his son who is interested in coming to CMS. Dr. Olken's father is also a CMS

alumnus (graduating with the Class of '66), so I am delighted with the prospect of welcoming a third generation to our school! Rania Agha, MD Class of '02, also visited campus, to discuss her interest in developing a dermatology elective for our students as well as mentoring students. During my recent trip to Boston, I was able to have dinner with Kwan Kew Lai, MD Class of '79; Ram Chavali, MD Class of '90; Niloufar "Nilli" Paydar-Darian, MD Class of '10; and Mina Farahani, MD Class of '14. I always relish these opportunities to catch up with alumni and hear about their lives and their careers.

Our next issue will feature news about commencement and surrounding events. As we wrap up this academic year and count down the days until summer, I wish all our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends an enjoyable and happy summer, and I look forward to what the next academic year will bring.

Sincerely,

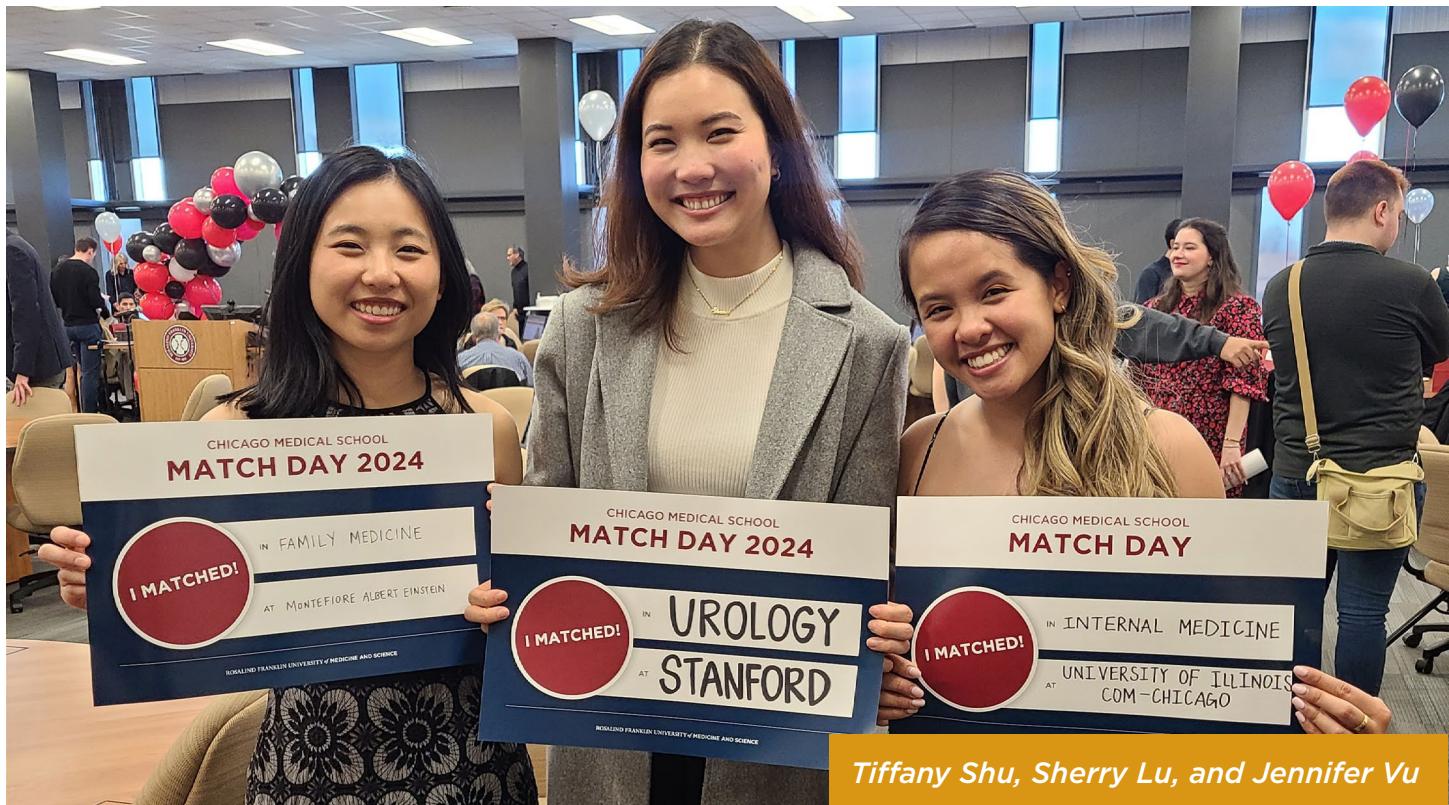


Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD
Dean, Chicago Medical School
Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs, RFUMS



On Match Day, Dr. Chatterjee ▶ was joined by Dean Emeritus Theodore Booden, PhD, who came to celebrate the achievements of the fourth-year students.

Match Day!



Tiffany Shu, Sherry Lu, and Jennifer Vu

On March 15, Chicago Medical School celebrated Match Day with the Class of 2024, sharing in the students' joy and festivities during this rite of passage as years of hard work came to an exciting culmination. After four years of virtual or hybrid Match events, this marked the first year since 2019 that the entire class, together with their family, friends, and other loved ones, were able to gather on campus for a fully in-person celebration.

Following a countdown to 11:00 AM, CMS students joined graduating medical students across the country in simultaneously opening their envelopes to reveal their residency placements, discovering where they will be completing the next phase of their education. After graduating on May 31, members of the Class of 2024 will disperse across 27 states (plus Washington, D.C.), heading to residencies in locations including Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, University of Chicago Medical Center, Brown

University/Rhode Island Hospital, Stanford Medical Center, John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, Loyola University Medical Center, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Mayo Clinic School of Graduate Medical Education, Boston University Medical Center, MedStar Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C., Naval Medical Center San Diego, and Penn State Health Milton S. Hershey Medical Center.

CMS Dean **Archana Chatterjee**, MD, PhD, expressed pride in the students who "have completed the first step in fulfilling their calling—a lifelong commitment to the health and well-being of their patients."

"Starting medical school at the beginning of the pandemic, they had to adapt to online classes, disruptions to clinical rotations, and virtual residency interviews, to name but a few of the challenges they have overcome to get to this day," Dr. Chatterjee

added. "Their indomitable spirit, hard work, and focus have brought them this far and will stand them in good stead as they enter the next phase of their medical education through residency training. We are incredibly proud of their achievements and grateful for the opportunity to educate this next generation of doctors."

Chicago Medical School achieved a 98% match rate, compared to the national match rate of 93.8%. Top specialties chosen by the Class of 2024 included internal medicine, family medicine, pediatrics, emergency medicine, and psychiatry.

Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



Dr. Antwione Haywood



Chelsea Lieu and Ryley Lee



Dr. Jeanette Morrison, Dr. Brenda Affinati, Dr. Biana Kotlyar, Dr. Lalita Prasad-Reddy, Dr. Susanna Calkins, and Dr. Judy Potashkin.



Sarah Arora



Aisha Ahmed and Radhwa Ramadan



Landon Wood



Kiril Kolev



Patricia Bucci and
Rohan Pisharody



Sakina Burhani



Gaurav Inamdar
and Suvan Hukkoo



Alyson Brinkman, May Li, and Kayleen Knoll



Kylea Barnes and Robert DeBlander



Emma Steffer, Alivia
Blumenstein, and Hillary Lai



Faustina Adams, Sarah Arora, Dr. Brenda Affinati, Perry Lim, Sherry Lu, Alyson Brinkman, and May Li.

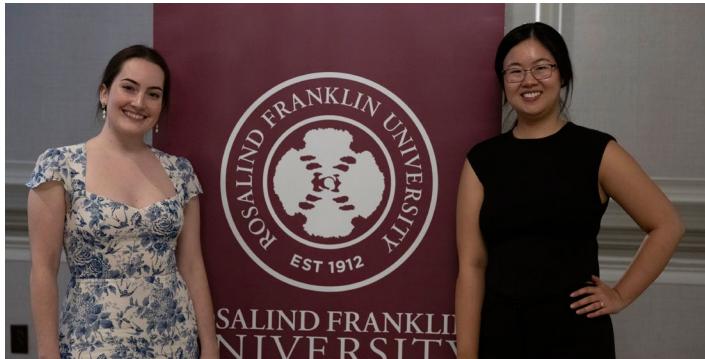
Gold Humanism Honor Society

Following Match Day on March 15, twenty-eight members of the CMS Class of 2024 were inducted into the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS) during a luncheon held in Skokie. The GHHS is an international organization that recognizes medical students for their integrity, compassion, and dedication to service. Students are nominated by their peers and approved by faculty and staff.

The CMS chapter of GHHS is dedicated to humanism in medicine, working on service projects and initiatives throughout the year. Student-led GHHS initiatives include transgender and abilities workshops to build on inclusive pre-clinical medical education; educational campaigns in cooperation with the university's Interprofessional Community Clinic to

distribute information on vaccines, chronic pain, and pelvic health; volunteering at the Northern Illinois Food Bank; and distributing posters for Thank a Resident Day at our clinical sites.

"Humanism is innately woven into medicine, yet it is critical to take time to consciously and actively appreciate human connection and patient centered medicine. Our chapter has done so in broad strokes across our campus, our communities, and our clinical sites," May Li, CMS '24, said in a speech given during the induction luncheon. "I believe that our chapter has successfully acted as a leader in the RFU community, creating opportunities to interact and understand each other. I am excited to see our chapter and our class flourish as excellent doctors in their prospective fields.



I am confident that they will embody compassion, empathy, humanism to their patients, families, communities, and to each other.”

Congratulations to the members of the Class of 2024 who were recognized for their commitment, competence, and compassion:

Faustina Adams
Murad Alostaz
Anant Amar
Sarah Arora
Fatima Baig
Christopher Bell
Abhinav Birda

Alivia Blumenstein
Alyson Brinkman
Patricia Bucci
Alex Chen
Yasmine Choroomi
Reid Colliander
Keaton Erickson

Rianna Flores
Anna Gomez
Rajiv Gummadi
Joseph Gung
John Hoy
Kiril Kolev
May Li

Perry Lim
Sherry Lu
Aman Mohapatra
Abigail Pont
Cole Roblee
Tiffany Shu
Emma Steffer ■

Clockwise from top left: Dr. Brenda Affinati, associate dean for clinical affairs, with Faustina Adams. Dr. Amanda Lund, assistant professor and assistant education director of internal medicine, recipient of the 2024 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award. Dr. Melissa Chen, clinical director of the ICC and co-director of the P2H2 course. Dr. Archana Chatterjee, dean of CMS, with Sarah Arora. Dr. Jeanette Morrison, vice dean for medical education, and executive vice dean for CMS. Alyson Brinkman and May Li.

Student Theatrical Performance: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

On May 3 and 4, students in RFU's Performing Arts Club presented the university's first-ever theatrical production: a performance of *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*, an existential tragi-comedy by Tom Stoppard that follows the adventures of two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The production, which was directed by Oly Khowash, SGPS '27, was entirely student-run and featured a cast and crew that contained 16 CMS students — including first-year medical students **Mike Letz** and **Elizabeth Donovan** in the title roles.

The Performing Arts Club was founded this year by **Krishi Korrapati**, CMS '27, who served as Production Manager for the play. The club is dedicated to providing a platform for all types of

creative pursuits, and one of its stated goals is to "contribute a sense of levity and soul" throughout the RFU community. Past events have included improv nights, poetry exchanges, scene reading workshops, and an originally written murder mystery party. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* is the club's first full-length performance.

After months of work, the show opened in Rhoades Auditorium on May 3. The cast performed to a total audience of 176 across both shows, including many students, faculty, staff, and CMS leadership. We were proud to see the talent, creativity, and humor displayed by our students as they put on this wonderful show for the university community! ■



The cast and crew



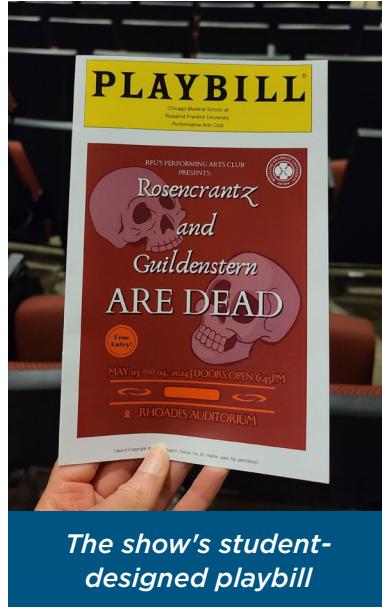
Elizabeth Donovan and Mike Letz
after the opening performance



Opening night in Rhoades Auditorium



Oly Khowash, Elizabeth Donovan,
Matthew Zimring, and Mike Letz
during rehearsals



The show's student-
designed playbill



Krishi Korrapati as the
Tragedian Queen



Elena Karahalios and
Jasmine Sindelar as
Gertrude and Claudius

Cast and Crew (CMS students in bold):

Oly Khowash, SGPS '27: Director, Polonius, Horatio

Mike Letz, CMS '27: Rosencrantz

Elizabeth Donovan, CMS '27: Guildenstern

Matthew Zimring, CMS '27: Player

Talia Kahn, CMS '27: Ophelia

Kayla Little, SCPM '26: Hamlet

Jasmine Sindelar, CMS '27: Claudius

Elena Karahalios, CMS '27: Gertrude

Allie Casper, CMS '27: Spy, Prop Master

Alexis Lightbourn, CMS '27: Tech and Prop Master

Connor Cameron, CMS '27: Lights and Visuals

Asher Mir, CMS '27: Sound

**Dani Hawryluk, CMS '27: Tragedian King,
Ambassador, Prop Assistant**

Krishi Korrapati, CMS '27: Production Manager,

Alfred, Tragedian Queen, Ambassador

**Surya Gudivada, CMS '27: Tragedian Poisoner,
Laertes**

Kaitlyn Bali, CMS '27: English King, Fortinbras

Eliza Mundenmaney, CMS '27: Spy, Solider

Paras Sahani, CMS '27: Pirate

Christopher Kwie, SGPS '27: Pirate



The RFU Photography Club at the Chicago Botanic Garden. (All photos in this article were taken by members of the club)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT: RFU Photography Club

The RFU Photography Club is a student organization that invites students to learn and practice the art of photography in a collaborative and supportive environment. Open to student photographers of all experience levels, the club encourages its members to develop their skills as a form of storytelling and artistic expression.

Naosuke Yamaguchi, CMS '26, founded the club, and he and **Brandon Woo**, CMS '26, developed the

club during their M1 year. The RFU Photography Club became an official student organization in August 2023, with Naosuke and Brandon — by then in their M2 year — serving as president and vice-president, respectively.

“RFU Photography Club provides a welcoming space for RFU community members to share their passion for photography as a creative art form,” Naosuke said. “While photography was once limited



Members of the RFU Photography Club during an outing to Millennium Park.

to those who could manually expose and develop film, today, the medium is accessible to the majority of people through the digital format. Creativity can be inspired from the environment around you, and I see RFU Photography Club as an opportunity for everyone to grow their passion for photography and learn from one another. Grab your camera (your phone is great too), and go take some photos!"

Members of the club learn the various techniques of photography and then put those skills to use during photo walk events in the Chicagoland area. The club has organized outings to places like the Chicago Botanic Garden, Millennium Park, and local forest preserves. These trips give students opportunities



Naosuke Yamaguchi at the opening reception of the Photography Club's "Serotonin Boost" exhibit.



The RFU Photography Club at Middlefork Savanna Forest Preserve.

to cultivate curiosity and creative expression, as they take photographs with a focus on intentionality and artistic vision.

In March, students had a chance to display some of the photographs they had taken on these club outings, or in their free time. The RFU Photography Club organized its first exhibit — titled “Serotonin Boost” — on campus in the university’s Scholl Gallery. The exhibit featured “personal representations of joy via moments in time” captured in original photographs composed by members of the club.

After the club’s spring elections, the Photography Club will move into the next academic year under

the leadership of co-presidents **Logan Holland** and **Asher Mir**, both CMS '27. The co-presidents expressed their appreciation for photography as a means of exploring the world around them while also giving them a much-needed break from the stress and pressure of medical school.

"Keeping up my photography practice is super important to me. Photo Club has been a wonderful space," said Logan. "I'm continuing to learn and see things from different perspectives through the RFU community. That's something I really enjoy about photography: the perspective possibilities are seemingly endless. There is always more to learn."

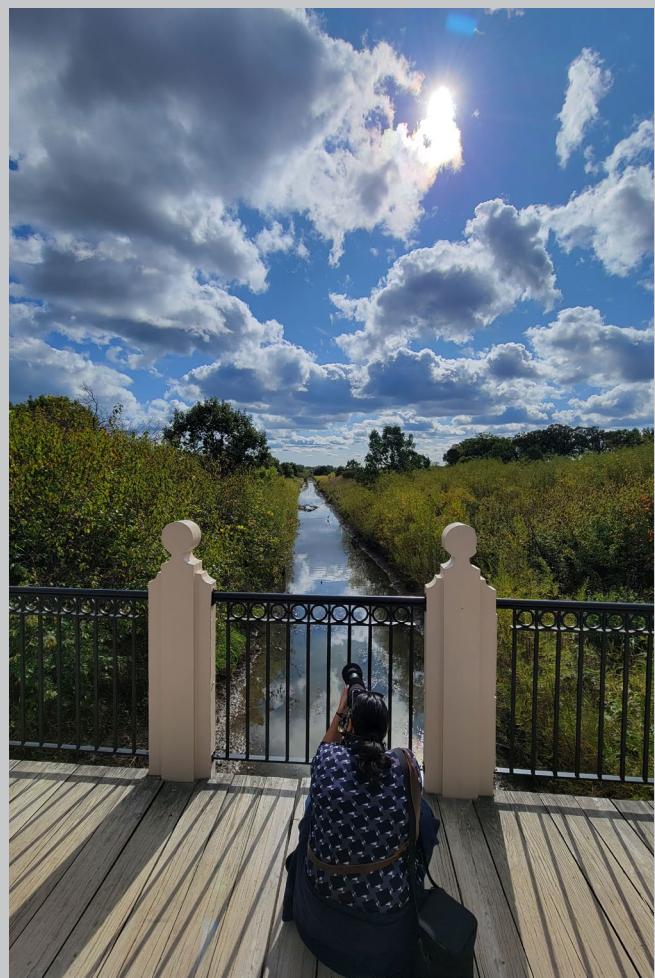
"I never imagined I'd find time to explore new hobbies alongside my medical studies," said Asher, "but joining the RFU Photo Club has been instrumental for de-stressing and expanding my photography skills amidst the demanding curriculum."

The club will continue to provide RFU students with a creative outlet through its meetings, photography outings, and future exhibits. Members will grow their photography skills while getting to know their classmates.

"Photography Club was an amazing outlet to explore our creativity. It built a small, welcoming community where everyone could express themselves as individuals and learn about each other's interests or ideas," said Brandon Woo, the club's founding vice-president. "You come for the photos and stay for the people." ■



Students at the "Serotonin Boost" exhibit.



The RFU Photography Club at Middlefork Savanna Forest Preserve.



A photograph taken by Logan Holland, CMS '27, and displayed as part of the "Serotonin Boost" exhibit.

M1 & M2 Bowling Night

In March, the CMS Class of 2026 Lipschultz learning community hosted a bowling night. M1s and M2s had a fun evening at Bowlero Waukegan! ■



RFU Faculty Awards

The RFU community celebrated our wonderful faculty in a ceremony held on May 2. Several faculty received awards in recognition of their teaching, research, and service. Congratulations to the CMS faculty who were honored for their dedication to the school, its mission, and its students.

Brian Feinstein, associate professor of humanities and health care, received the Board of Trustees Research Award, presented to a junior faculty member who has shown promise in research activities in their published work and grantsmanship.

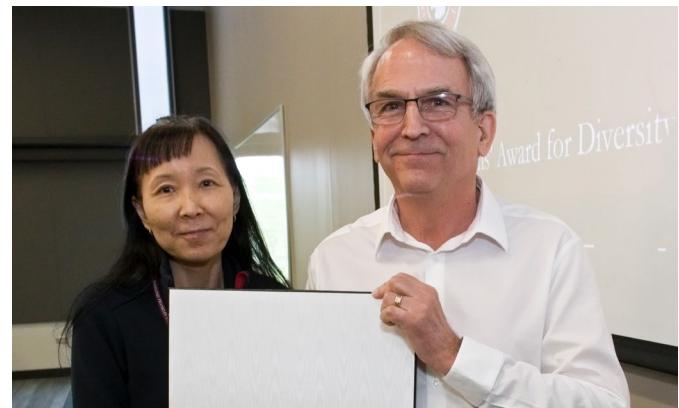
Joanna Dabrowska, PhD, PharmD, associate professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology and neuroscience, received the Morris L. Parker Research Award, presented for meritorious research achievement in medicine or related health sciences.

David Everly, PhD, associate professor of microbiology and immunology and executive chair of Foundational Sciences and Humanities, received the Rosalind Franklin Award for Excellence in Teaching, presented in recognition of meritorious teaching in the health sciences.

Paul Hung, MD, program director for the psychiatry residency program and assistant professor of medicine, received the Rosalind Franklin Award for Excellence in Service, presented to a faculty member who has made outstanding service contributions to the university.

Anne Lee, MD '08, PhD '07, assistant professor and co-course director of the Clinical Anatomy course, and **Dr. Brian Feinstein** were co-recipients of the Deans' Award for Diversity and Inclusion, awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to developing a culture of diversity and inclusion at the university. ■

From top to bottom: Dr. Joanna Dabrowska. Dr. David Everly (center) with Dr. Joseph Reynolds and Dr. Neelam Sharma-Walia. Dr. Paul Hung. Dr. Anne Lee with Dr. William Frost.



St. Baldrick's Day

RFU held its annual St. Baldrick's fundraiser on campus on April 10, inviting volunteers to shave their heads to raise awareness and funds for children's cancer research. Several students and faculty member "shavees" participated in the event, shaving their heads in solidarity with children undergoing cancer treatment.

The fundraiser, which was hosted by the Pediatrics Interest Group, raised almost \$3,000. All proceeds

went to the St. Baldrick's Foundation, a non-profit organization that raises money for childhood cancer research. St. Baldrick's is the largest charity funder of childhood cancer research grants.

We thank everyone who came together to help raise funds and awareness for this important cause. For more information or to make a donation, visit <https://www.stbaldricks.org/events/RFU24>. ■



Updates from the ICC

The student leaders of the university's Interprofessional Community Clinic have provided updates on several ICC initiatives from this spring.

Human Trafficking Lunch and Learn

The student-led Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC) hosted its very first Lunch and Learn presentation on April 8, 2024, organized by the ICC's Equity and Inclusion Committee. This session's topic focused on Human Trafficking and was presented by Dr. Janis Quinn, assistant professor for RFU's College of Nursing. Students, faculty, staff, and university leaders from the RFU community joined ICC leaders for this Lunch and Learn. Dr. Quinn defined human labor and sex trafficking, provided background and data on trafficking in the U.S., and discussed the importance of the healthcare provider's role in understanding and identifying potential signs of trafficking. Dr. Quinn explained how human trafficking intertwines with medical care, including mental health, reproductive/sexual health, quality of life and trauma.

Throughout her talk, Dr. Quinn emphasized how healthcare providers should offer a safe space, build trust, and provide peer support while keeping in mind cultural and gender issues. Overall, this presentation elucidated the importance of promoting culturally and linguistically responsive care, while offering patient-centered care in a trauma-informed setting.

Breast Cancer Education Event

In April, the ICC Community Outreach Committee hosted a "Breakfast and Self-Breast Exams" community event at the Mongolian Heritage Center



The human trafficking "Lunch and Learn" presentation.

in Prospect Heights, IL to promote early breast cancer screening and self-breast awareness and provide education, empowerment, and resources to the Mongolian Community. An educational health presentation was developed in part by student groups including the Women's Health Interest Group (WHIG), Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA), and the ICC Community Outreach panel, and collaborations with community organizations such as the Consulate of Mongolia in Chicago, Illinois Association of Free and Charitable Clinics (AmeriCorps VISTAs), Mongolian Health Association of America, Mongolian Health Professionals, Mongolian Community Center, and Equal Hope (a non-profit organization that offers free or low-cost breast care). A special thanks to the CMS ECR team for the loan of the breast forms. The event also provided breakfast from a local Mongolian business, free vitals screenings, and an opportunity to learn about and register for the ICC.



The "Breakfast and Self-Breast Exams" community event.

The event brought in 50 participants between the ages of 27 and 79, with 60% reporting not having health insurance. Over 30 new patients were registered with the ICC and Equal Hope! The ICC continues to create strong community partnerships and engage students with various community organizations.

Community Introduction for ICC Leaders

The new ICC student leaders hosted a successful orientation to the community with community representatives from Mano a Mano, Brushwood Center, Clean Power Lake County, MolinaCares, and Northern Illinois Food Bank. Students got an overview of our northern Lake County Community. Eddie Solito, our dedicated food bank volunteer who attends every week, received an award from the students for his dedication. Thank you to the Heart of the City for providing the site for this event.

For more information on our hyperlocal communities, check our Introduction to the northern Lake County Community, a guide created by ICC students and faculty: bit.ly/icc-nlc-guide. ■



Providing education about self-breast exams.



The ICC-hosted community introduction.

News from the Office of Clinical Affairs

The CMS Office of Clinical Affairs has some exciting updates on new clinical sites, recent site visits, and visits to the RFU campus from our clinical partners.

New Affiliation Agreements

CMS is pleased to announce two new affiliation agreements which will expand our students' options for completing their clinical rotations!

- **Froedtert South** is a comprehensive regional healthcare system that has served southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois for 120 years. Froedtert South provides services primarily through the Froedtert Pleasant Prairie Hospital and several clinical locations.
- **Palmdale Regional Medical Center** is a 190-bed acute care facility located in the Los Angeles area, serving a total population of approximately 517,000 people in the desert communities surrounding the Antelope Valley in southern California.

We welcome these new clinical partners, and we look forward to seeing how the new sites will enrich the clinical experiences and opportunities available to our students.

Site Visits and Visits to Campus

CMS leadership representatives regularly visit our clinical sites, and we invite their leadership to come visit our campus, in order to keep our partnerships strong and ensure that we continue to mutually benefit each other. By regularly meeting with site directors, program directors, and volunteer clinical faculty from our various sites, we make sure that our medical students, the hospitals and other clinical sites, and the patients are getting what they need from our clinical partnerships.



In recent months, CMS leadership has visited **Advocate Christ Medical Center**, **Advocate Lutheran General Hospital**, **Ascension Saint Alexius Medical Center**, and **Elgin Mental Health Center**. Here on campus, we've welcomed **Trevor Lewis**, MD '92, chair of emergency medicine at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County. Dr. Lewis was hosted by Dr. Brenda Affinati, and he met with Dean Archana Chatterjee, Dr. Jeanette Morrison, Dr. Frank Maldonado, and Dr. Michael Allswede to discuss strengthening the relationship between Cook County Health and RFU. We also welcomed **Illinois State Senator Julie Morrison** and leadership from the **Lake County Children's Advocacy Center**. And finally, we met with leadership from our two new clinical affiliates: CMS leadership went to Froedtert South to have dinner with site leadership, and we welcomed leaders from Palmdale Regional Medical Center, who visited the RFU campus in April after CMS leadership traveled to Los Angeles in February to visit the site. ■



Dr. Archana Chatterjee, Dr. Brenda Affinati, and Dr. Frank Maldonado with Palmdale senior leadership at Palmdale Regional Medical Center.



CMS leadership (Dr. Archana Chatterjee, Dr. Brenda Affinati, Dr. Michael Zdon, and Dr. Frank Maldonado) with Froedtert South leadership (Ric Schmidt, President, CEO & General Counsel; Susan Ventura, Executive Vice President; Linda Wohlgemuth, Senior Vice President & COO; Tom Kelley, Vice President & CFO; Joe Ford, Vice President, Froedtert South Medical Group; Tom Ambro, MD, Vice President & CQO; Sri Davuluri, MD, Intensivist and Chairman, Critical Care Department; and Kunal Patel, MD, Intensivist).

Below, starting from left on previous page: Dr. Brenda Affinati with CMS alumnus Dr. Trevor Lewis at CMS. Dr. Affinati with students and site leadership at Advocate Lutheran General Hospital. Dr. Affinati with Sen. Julie Morrison (third from right) and leadership from the Lake County Children's Advocacy Center at CMS. Dr. Marko J. Jachtorowycz and Dr. Affinati at Ascension Saint Alexius Medical Center.





Student Leadership Awards

The university celebrated the wonderful accomplishments of our students on April 28 with the annual Student Leadership Awards Ceremony. These awards recognize outstanding individual student efforts and those of entire organizations, in areas such as community service, research, mentorship, and diversity and inclusion.

Congratulations to the following CMS-affiliated groups for winning student organization awards:

- The **Global Health Interest Group** received the **Student Organization of the Year Award**.
- The **American Muslim Medical Student Association** received the **Rising DEI-Focused Organization Award**.
- **EMS Advocacy** received the **Program of the Year Award** for their High Performance Lab.
- The **RFU Photography Club** received the **New Student Organization of the Year Award**. (See pages 12-14 to read more about the Photography Club!)
- The **Latino Medical Student Association (LMSA)** received the **Outstanding DEI Project**

Award for their *Dia de los Muertos* and *Cafecito* programming.

- The **Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association (APAMSA)**, the **Philippine Medical Association (PMA)**, the **South Asian Multicultural Organization for Student Activities (SAMOSA)**, the **Student National Medical Association (SNMA)**, and the **LMSA** won the **Outstanding Collaboration Award** for their second annual Community Dinner.

Congratulations to the 15 CMS students who received individual awards during the ceremony!

Kyujin Sohn, CMS '25, received the **Excellence in Educational Service Award**, which recognizes a student who has dedicated their time and resources to furthering the education of RFU students and/or the community.

Angelica Arzuaga, CMS '26, received the **Team Unity Award**, which recognizes outstanding contributions involving meaningful programming

and/or service to the local community that may involve collaboration with other organizations, academic departments, or offices on campus.

Gloria Essien, CMS '26, received the **Dr. Rosalind Franklin Rising Student Award**, which recognizes a student who has tirelessly left a mark wherever they go, while being intentionally devoted to the highest standard in programming and having a deep commitment to social justice.

Jordyn Greenbaum and **Rishabh Arvikar**, both CMS '26, received the **Student DEI Board Member Award**, which recognizes members of the Student Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Board who have actively participated in advisory board meetings and contributed relevant insight and support to their peers through collaboration while staying true to their mission every step of the way.

Aroosha Aamir, CMS '26, received the **DEI Stewardship Award**, which recognizes an individual who exhibited notable dedication and consistency to providing mentorship related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Melissa Levin, CMS '25, received the **Stewardship Award**, which recognizes a student leader who has demonstrated outstanding stewardship within student organizations, demonstrating leadership while also assisting to develop the leadership abilities of their fellow members.

Aayush Kaul, CMS '26, received the **Excellence in Sportsmanship Award**, which recognizes an intramural sports participant or leader who has provided excellent leadership, sportsmanship, and service within the intramural program at RFU.

Nathaniel Ung, CMS '26, received the **Ambassador for Student Fitness and Wellness Award**, which recognizes a student who demonstrates a commitment to fitness and wellness for fellow RFU students, while providing inspiration and positivity

to the fitness journey of their peers through their attitude and care for others within the community.

Alan Wang, CMS '25, received the **Commitment to Research Award**, which recognizes a student leader who promotes research and the creation of new knowledge within their student organization or activity, by assisting other students in their mission of research, participating in an outstanding research project directly, and/or incorporating leading edge research into the mission of their organization.

Sahil Sharma, CMS '25, received the **Outstanding Community Service Award**, which recognizes a student who has helped serve the community through clinical service, volunteering, or fundraising activities.

Harsh Patel, CMS '26, received the **Outstanding Ambassador Award**, which recognizes students who have gone beyond the call of duty to promote RFU to prospective students.

Donia Momen, CMS '25, Student Dean for the 2023-2024 academic year, received the **Student Voice Award**, which recognizes a student who has provided excellent representation of the student body in their leadership role.

Finally, two CMS students received Student Leadership Awards. These awards are given to one student from each of RFU's six schools, with a seventh "At-Large" recipient being chosen from among the entire university student body. Students are nominated by faculty, staff, or students, and then the Deans select the final recipients. Congratulations to **Michael Hunter Green**, CMS '26, who received the **Chicago Medical School Student Leadership Award**, and to **Caroline Madigan**, CMS '26, who received the **At-Large Student Leadership Award**! Michael and Caroline were selected for their exemplary leadership qualities, including commitment, dedication, and service to the university and the community. ■

All School Research Consortium

The university held its 19th annual All School Research Consortium (ASRC) on March 20, showcasing research from RFU students, postdoctoral trainees, residents, and undergraduate research interns. The day-long, student-run event serves as a vehicle to bring the university scientific community together, encourage communication across disciplines, and educate graduate and professional students. The program featured scientific symposium talks, poster presentations, and a keynote address on evolutionary immunogenomics by Luis Barreiro, PhD, professor of genetic medicine at the University of Chicago. The day concluded with the annual “Art from the Benchtop” exhibit, featuring creative works produced and inspired by research experiences at RFU.

Congratulations to **Brittany Wilson-Mifsud**, CMS '26, who received the CMS award for Best Scientific Research Talk for her presentation “Use of Human Polarized Intestinal Epithe Cell Monolayers to Determine Hazard of Proteins with Agricultural Biotechnology Applications,” and **Rebecca Silver**, CMS '26, who received the CMS award for Best Research Poster for her poster titled “Integrative Genomic Profiling of Newly Diagnosed Prostate Tumors Progressing on Surveillance.” Additionally, dual MD/PhD student **Roni Klein**, CMS '24, SGPS '26, received the SGPS award for Best Scientific Research Talk for her presentation “Targeting NLRP3 Splicing Variants with Antisense Oligonucleotides to Control Pathological Inflammation.” ■



Brittany Wilson-Mifsud with Bob Marr, PhD



Rebecca Silver with Bob Marr, PhD



Students, faculty, and staff at the keynote address



Roni Klein with SGPS Dean Joe DiMario, PhD

CMS Representation at AAMC CGEA Conference

Several CMS faculty and students attended the AAMC's Central Group on Educational Affairs (CGEA) spring conference, held in Milwaukee on April 4–5, where they presented posters detailing aspects of the educational experience at Chicago Medical School.



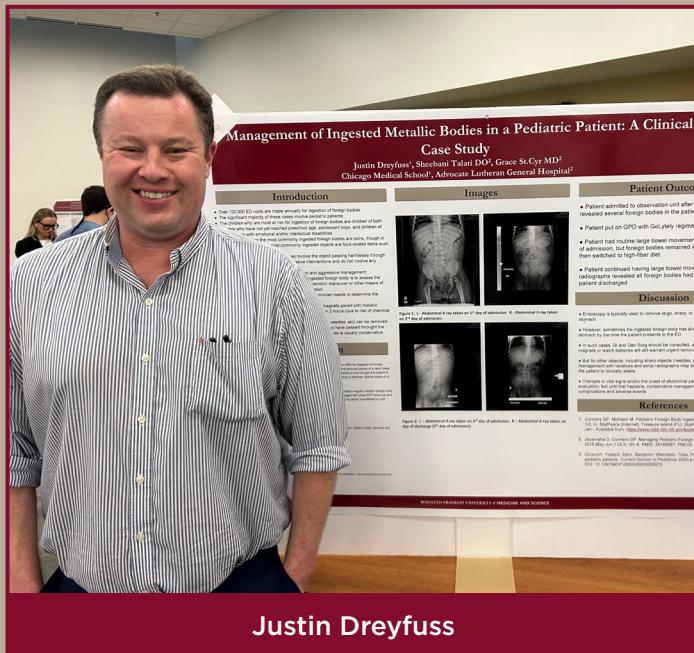
Anne Lee, MD '08, PhD '07, co-course director for the first-year Clinical Anatomy course, along with M1 students Jefferson Sun, Brianna Lau, Katalina Kuzanga, and Sabina Kalata, presented a poster titled "The Lee Flipped Anatomy Lab (LFAL): A Novel Pedagogic Method for the Clinical Anatomy Lab," which described the teaching format Dr. Lee has used in her special teaching labs during the anatomy course, in which groups of students take turns teaching and learning as they rotate through different stations in the gross anatomy lab.

The CMS Office of Medical Education presented two posters at the conference: Sheryl Juliano, MA, Assistant Dean for Curriculum and Instruction; Jeanette Morrison, MD, Vice Dean for Medical Education and Executive Vice Dean for CMS; Lalita Prasad-Reddy, PharmD, Assistant Dean for Basic Science Education; and Kim Fasula, PhD, Director of Assessment and Interprofessional Education, presented a poster titled "A Description of Innovative Student Feedback Channels to Aid in Programmatic Improvement for Medical Curricula," and Dr. Fasula and Dr. Morrison also presented

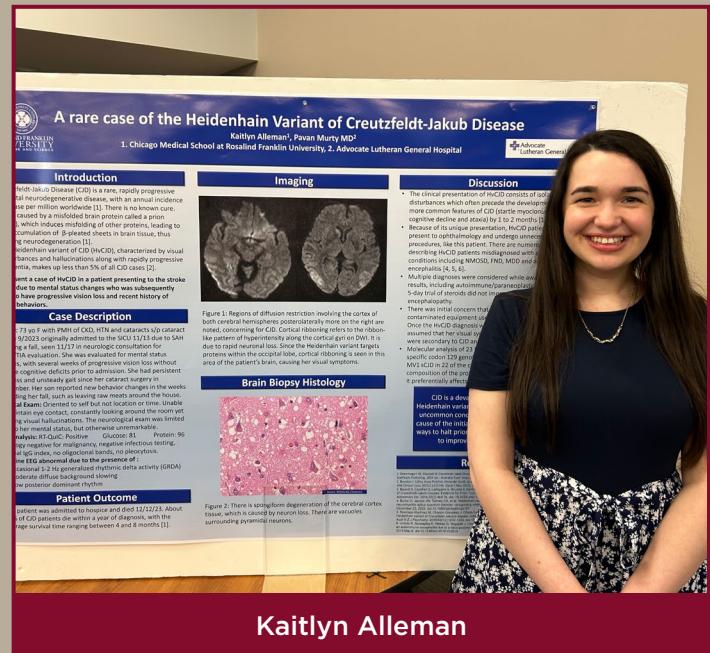
a poster titled "Framework for Distinction Opportunities in Medical Education."



M3 Clinical Poster Day



Justin Dreyfuss



Kaitlyn Alleman

CMS held its 9th annual M3 Clinical Poster Day on May 2, giving students from the Class of 2025 a platform to present posters detailing the clinical cases they had encountered during their clerkships. Students described rare cases and interesting experiences from their clinical encounters, presenting a total of 90 posters which were judged by faculty.

Thank you to all the students, staff, faculty, and judges who came to support our third-year students, and congratulations to the following students who received prizes for their oral presentations, the organization of their posters, and overall excellence:

Best Student Presentation

- 1st Place: **Angela Yu and Wilson Yang** — “A Case of Latrogenic Severe Tricuspid Regurgitation with Bidirectional Interatrial Shunt after Transcatheter Mitral Valve Repair (TMVR)”
- 2nd Place: **Dowon Kim** — “Benign Eccrine Spiradenoma”
- 3rd Place: **Ola Kierzkowska and Naif Mansury** — “Hypercoagulability Secondary to Protein

Losing Enteropathy Caused by Celiac Disease: A Rare Case”

Best Organized Poster

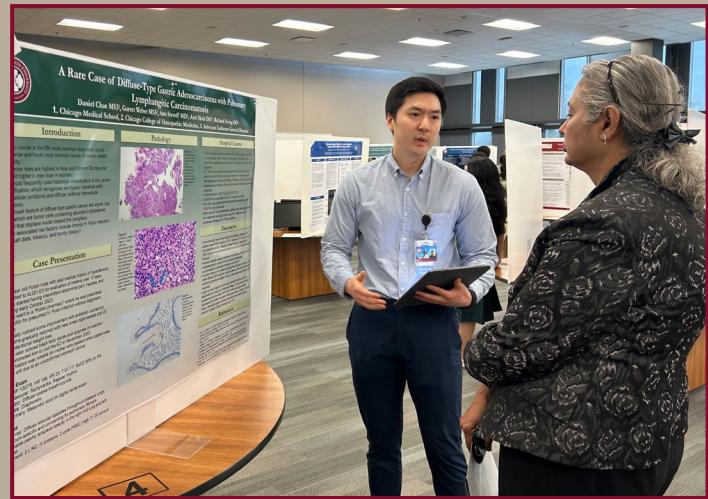
- 1st Place: **Sahil Sharma** — “Lessons Learned from a Lingering Morel-Lavallée Lesion: A Case Report”
- 2nd Place: **Argineh Shahbandari** — “Hemophagocytic Lymphohistiocytosis Secondary to Anaplasmosis”
- 3rd Place: **William Palivos** — “Rare Case of Post-Traumatic Pulmonary Embolism”

Best Overall Poster

- 1st Place: **Sabahat Raees and Justin Dreyfuss** — “Graves Disease Associated to Endometriosis, and an Endometrioma Rupture as a Complication: A Case Study Presentation”
- 2nd Place: **Christina Guyn and Neha Patchipala** — “Bouveret Syndrome as an Underlying Cause of Pneumobilia”
- 3rd Place: **Charles Humes** — “Considerations for General Anesthetic Use in Early Second Trimester Pregnancies: A Case Report” ■



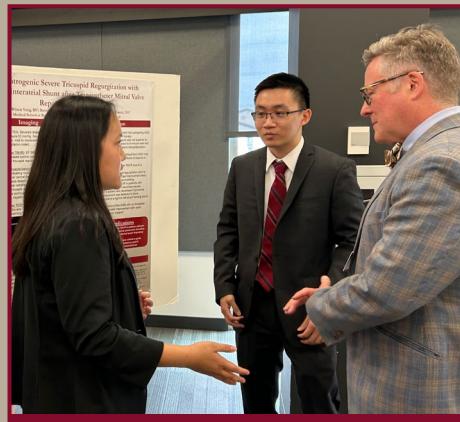
Umar Rehman with faculty judge Robin Dyer, MD



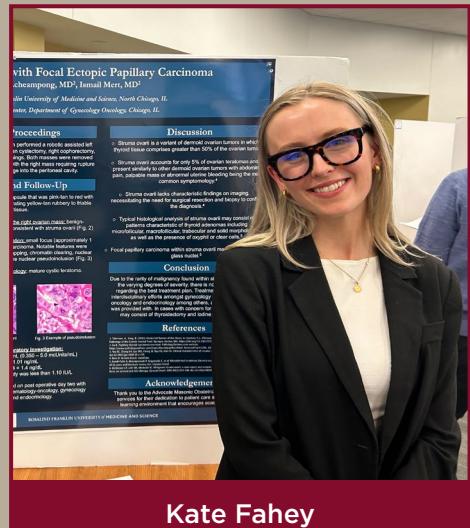
Daniel Chae presenting his poster to
Dean Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD



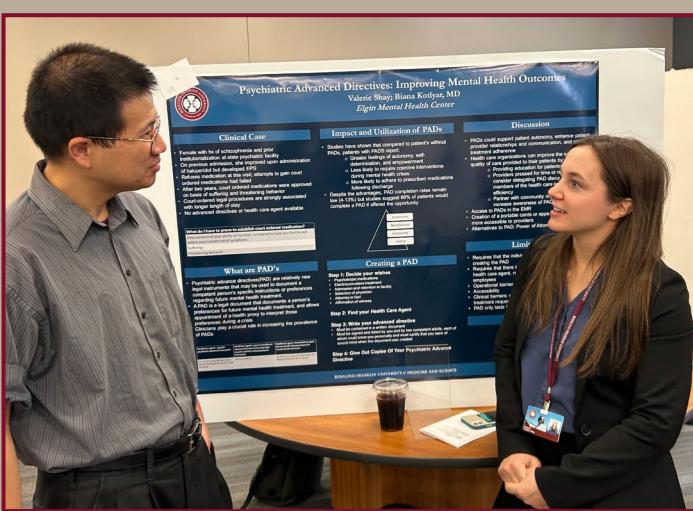
Radhika Patel



Angela Yu and Wilson Yang
presenting their poster to
Michael Allswede, DO



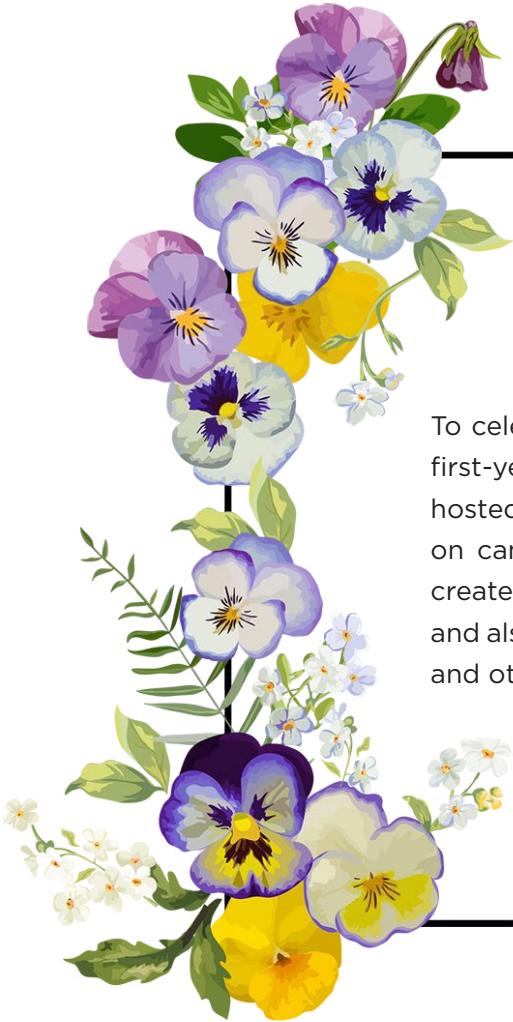
Kate Fahey



Valerie Shay presenting her poster
to Paul Hung, MD



Zain Anwar and Ismail Sayeedi presenting their
poster to Hector Rasgado-Flores, PhD



M1 Bouquet-Making Workshop

To celebrate the first day of April, our first-year students in Portes House hosted a bouquet-making workshop on campus. Students were invited to create their own floral arrangements and also received gift bags with snacks and other wellness goodies. The event promoted student wellness while also celebrating the arrival of spring. ■





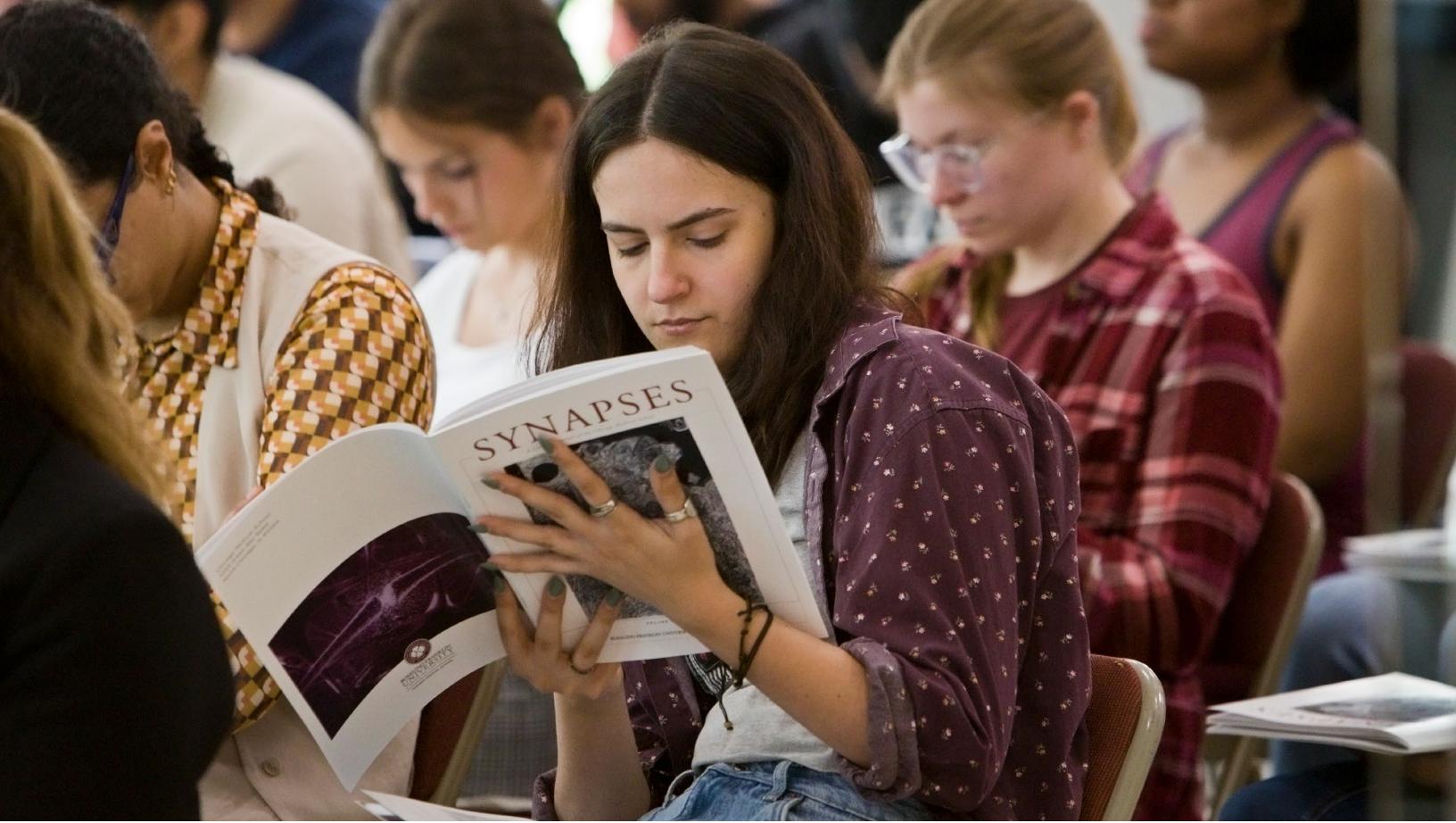
CMS Students Take First Place in SimWars Competition

Congratulations to the four CMS students who competed in and won the 2024 Illinois Emergency Medicine "Sim Wars" competition! On April 6, **Martin Pelletier**, CMS '26; **Andrew Zwijack**, CMS '25; **Krista Rooney**, CMS '25; and **Bryce Alderson**, CMS '26, competed as the "RFU Resuscitators" and emerged victorious, winning first place among the Illinois medical schools who sent teams to the University of Illinois College of Medicine Peoria for the competition.

Sim Wars is a simulation-based competition where teams of medical trainees are presented with complex clinical scenarios and must provide patient care in front of a panel of physician judges. During each round of the competition, each team is provided a challenging clinical case to solve, using

a high-fidelity simulation mannequin that exhibits symptoms and clinical findings. Students must work together to solve problems and treat their "patients," and the teams are scored on their clinical skills as they diagnose and manage these unknown cases. The judges consider each team's teamwork, communication, procedural skills, and problem-solving in their evaluations.

The CMS team went into the competition as the underdogs, as their team was composed of M2s and M3s while most of the other Illinois teams were composed of M3s and M4s. We're very proud of these exemplary students who represented CMS at the event and put their passion for emergency medicine to good use to win the competition! ■



8th Annual *Synapses* Salon

Chicago Medical School held a salon and art exhibit on May 9 to celebrate the release of the eighth volume of *Synapses*, the school's creative journal, which publishes fine art, photography, poetry, fiction, and non-fiction submitted by CMS students, faculty, staff, alumni, residents, and fellows. The salon featured presentations by **Tamara Maatouk**, CMS '27; **Talia Kahn**, CMS '27; **Leo Kelly**, MD, associate professor of medicine and director of clinical education; **Peter Pham**, CMS '27; and **Elliot Levine**, MD '78, assistant professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, who read poems, discussed their drawings and performance art, and reflected on their non-fiction essays. **Hector Rasgado-Flores**, PhD, Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, and **Becky Beiber**, CMS '27, contributed live music to the event with a piano and flute duet.

"This annual event celebrates creativity in all its vibrant forms, from visual arts and works of poetry and prose, to performance art," said CMS Dean

Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, during her welcome remarks. "I'm happy to be here with you all today as we take this opportunity to pause from our busy lives and appreciate the immense talent of our CMS community, as showcased by this creative journal and by our scheduled speakers today."

Synapses, as a creative journal that focuses, in part, on works examining the experiences of medical students, physicians, and scientific researchers, has always aimed to bridge the gap between art and science. The journal encourages its contributors and readers to consider the role of art in medical education, and its impact on patient care. With this in mind, **Jeffrey Bulger**, PhD, director of bioethics and humanities and editor-in-chief of *Synapses*, opened the program with a discussion on the art of medicine — the ways in which art, writing, and other creative endeavors can help medical students and practicing physicians to become better doctors.

“The literary arts, such as fiction, can significantly enhance our capacity for compassion,” he said. “The immersive experience of walking in another’s shoes through narrative transportation not only enriches our understanding of life events but also cultivates our emotional resilience.” Dr. Bulger went on to explain that engaging with the humanities can reduce stress, prevent burnout, expose a person to different perspectives, and promote compassion and empathy, concluding, “As we continue to face the challenges of medical education and clinical practice, it is crucial that we harness the power of the arts and humanities.”

The first featured speaker was first-year student **Tamara Maatouk**, whose intricate ink drawing titled “Viscera (Labyrinth No. 13)” was chosen for the cover of this year’s volume. The artwork, created with black and white ink pen, features a dense network of drawings containing hundreds of hidden images and messages. Tamara explained that the work was not intended to communicate one meaning, but rather a series of moments. “Meaning is nothing without moments — moments of happiness, joy, anger, anguish, all of it — these moments that make us who we are and define us,” she said. “The only way that we can understand and experience this life is through moments.”

Peter Pham, another first-year medical student, talked about his performance art piece “Hanging by a Thread,” a lyra aerial dance performance that features Peter suspended in midair, supported only by an aerial hoop hanging from the ceiling. Before

playing the video of his performance, Peter explained that it was inspired by “the internal and external pressures we all feel every day to keep achieving, keep obtaining, and keep moving forward.” In his performance, Peter used movement and music to depict the constant pressures and urgencies that can leave people feeling like they are hanging by a thread.

The event also featured poetry readings: first-year student **Talia Kahn** read her poem “Finding a Way,” which explored the subject of genetic engineering and its potential impact on the field of medicine, and CMS faculty member **Dr. Leo Kelly** read his poem “Drawn to the Shore,” a reflection on the soothing and magnetic quality of nature.

The event’s final speaker was CMS alumnus and faculty member **Dr. Elliot Levine**. Dr. Levine talked about his non-fiction essay titled “The Clinical Importance of Empathy.” Dr. Levine’s essay was inspired by his wife’s work as a special education classroom assistant in the Chicago public school system. He explored the idea that empathy is an innate human trait which can be lost as we grow up and advance in our educational pursuits, unless we take the time and effort to retain it. Empathy, Dr. Levine concluded, is a crucial trait that should be highly valued.

The full journal can be found at www.bit.ly/synapses2024. The submission cycle for next year’s volume will open in the fall. ■



From left to right:
CMS faculty
member Dr. Kuhn
Hong with his
painting “Crossing
the River.”
Tamara Maatouk,
CMS ’27.
Peter Pham, CMS
'27.

Student Mentors of the Month

Chicago Medical School's MedLEAD program matches first- and second-year students based on similar interests and characteristics in order to develop a mentoring relationship. The first-year mentees receive peer support and guidance, while the second-year mentors gain valuable leadership and mentorship skills. Each month, first-year

students can nominate their mentors for special recognition in order to show their appreciation!

We appreciate our mentors and all the hard work they do to help their fellow students. Congratulations to the following Mentors of the Month for February, March, and April! ■

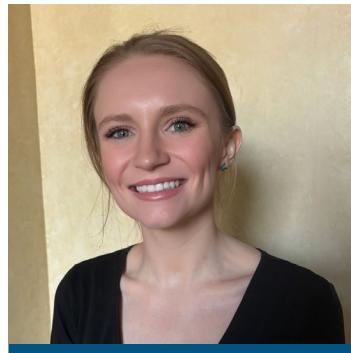
February



Rana Yakshi Tafti

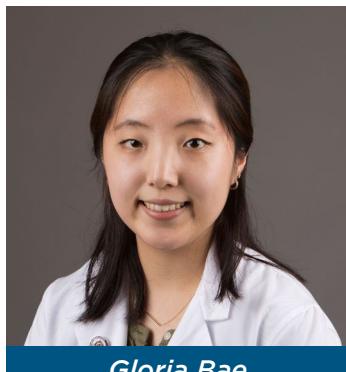


Sophia Galluccio

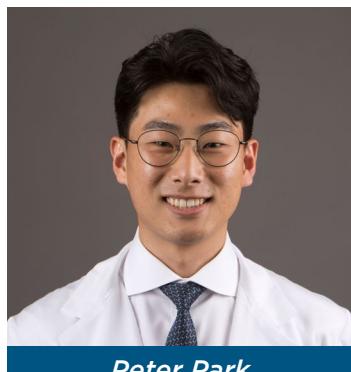


Clara Gannon

March



Gloria Bae



Peter Park



Nicolo Villasis



George Peek

April



Bella Niedermair



Abby Farkash



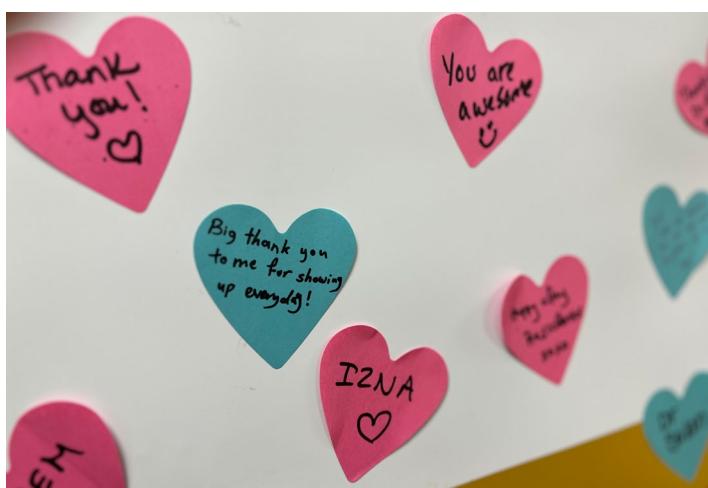
Sarah Tiba

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

Resident Appreciation Day



Chicago Medical School's internal medicine residency program at Northwestern Medicine McHenry celebrated residents on **National Thank a Resident Day** — an annual day, led by the Gold Humanism Honor Society (GHHS), to recognize resident physicians and their contributions to medicine. The residency program team provided banners, personalized thank-you notes, cake, and other treats to show appreciation for our residents and everything they do. ■



Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

Psychiatry Poster Competition



Psychiatry residents with the faculty members who served as judges for the poster competition.

CMS psychiatry residents presented their research at the 17th annual poster competition on April 11. First, second, and third place winners will be announced during the upcoming psychiatry graduation dinner in June. ■

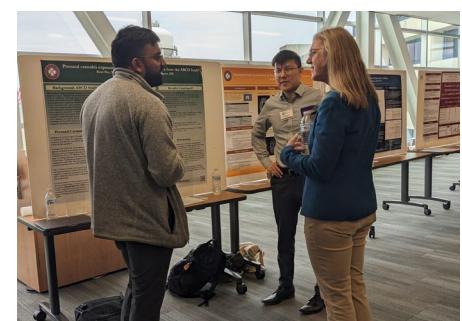


PGY-2s James Estaver, MD, and Sidra Parveen, MD, presenting their poster to judge FHCC attending Dr. Joshua Williams.



PGY-4s Alex Cupler, MD, and Gina Rickert, DO.

PGY-1 Paulina Pys, MD '23, and PGY-2 Ria Datta, MD '22.



PGY-1 Ryan Shu, MD, and PGY-2 Nithin Edara, MD, presenting their poster to judge Lise Eliot, PhD.

Graduate Medical Education (GME) News

Other GME News



Ms. Elsa Ravi Kurien, Director of Graduate Medical Education and Continuing Medical Education, has successfully completed the **AAMC Graduate Medical Education Leadership Development Certificate Program**.

To successfully complete the program, participants are required to attend two educational modules, create and implement an Action Learning Project at their institution, and present a poster of their Action Learning Project at the spring Group on Resident Affairs (GRA) spring meeting.

Ms. Kurien has attended two educational leadership modules, engaged in meaningful dialogue with core faculty, peers and colleagues to advance GME at their institution, implemented an action learning project, and presented the project at the national AAMC GRA spring meeting in San Francisco last spring.

Based on the AAMC GRA's Institutional GME Leadership Competencies, the course curriculum was developed to expand the focus on competencies pertinent to the institutional GME leader, DIO, or other individual providing leadership at the central, institutional office. Today's GME leaders are challenged with significant and increasing responsibilities that extend to the educational, fiscal, and administrative health of the institution's GME enterprise; the institution's compliance with local, state and federal laws and regulations; the support and development of residency program directors; and importantly, the well-being of residents. They are also expected

to lead by example, to create and role model a leadership style that enhances the contribution of GME and exemplifies a learning culture within the environment and beyond. Ms. Kurien joins 800+ graduates from institutions across the country who have earned this certificate.

Hekmat B. Khoukaz, MD, PGY-2, internal medicine resident, received **Resident Physician Award of Excellence** in April in recognition of consistently providing exemplary patient care to veterans at the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC). Dr. Khoukaz was identified by FHCC staff and colleagues as being admirable and demonstrating selfless dedication to duty, and he was described as "the Internal Medicine Residency Program number-one pick for role model for all physicians to emulate." Dr. Khoukaz will also serve as one of the CMS/FHCC internal medicine residency program's Co-Chief Medical Residents starting July 1. ■



Alumni News

CMS Alumni Share Their Expertise with Students

Over the last several months, CMS alumni have come to campus or connected with students on Zoom to share their experiences and impart knowledge and advice during a variety of special events.



Dr. Kimberly Darez

Kimberly Darez, MD '04, CPE, president of Endeavor Health Elmhurst Hospital, and **Joyce Marie Jones King**, MD '19, attending physician and vice chief of the Department of Family and Community Medicine at Lake Forest Hospital, participated in a Black Professionals Panel held on campus on February 27, focusing on the theme of "Hope on the Horizon." The panel, organized by the CMS chapter of SNMA, featured Black professionals from RFU and the greater Chicago

area who shared their experiences navigating the nuances of professional spaces and talked to students regarding how they have found success within their respective journeys.



Dr. Jorge del Castillo

Jorge del Castillo, MD '75, MBA, and **Monica Branch**, MD '17, MS '13, participated in RFU's second annual "Navigating Health Professions Education as a First-Generation/Non-Traditional Student" virtual panel on February 28. The six panelists, all RFU alumni who were first-gen and/or non-traditional students during their time in medical school, gave advice and discussed the challenges they had faced.



Dr. Monica Branch



Dr. Peter Orris

Peter Orris, MD '75, MPH, came to campus in April to participate in a Climate Workshop for the first-year medical students' Clinical Foundations of Medicine course. During the workshop, physicians from various specialties spoke to students about the impacts of climate change on human health. Dr. Orris gave the workshop's opening lecture to the M1 class, and then he led a breakout session on the topic of environmental degradation and the way it directly and indirectly affects human health.



Dr. Monique Jones

Monique Jones, MD '93, director of URiM student success at CMS, delivered a virtual presentation to the CMS community on April 16 as part of a speaker series organized by the university in recognition of Black Maternal Health Awareness Week. In her presentation, titled "Disparities in Maternal and Infant Health/Mortality," Dr. Jones discussed the factors that contribute to disparities in maternal mortality, and what can be done to reduce those factors.



Dr. Ken Lee

Ken Lee, MD '17, met with CMS students in the Anesthesiology Interest Group to discuss the field of anesthesiology and the interventional pain subspecialty, in a virtual event held in May. ■

Alumni News

Recent Alumni Visits



Hosts Debra Gierut, MD '91, and Brian Corrigan hosted CMS Dean Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD; Frank Maldonado, MD; Brenda Affinati, MD; and George Rattin from CMS, along with alumni and guests including Arthur Strick, MD '61; Sumana Yeturu, MD '96 and her husband, Dr. Christian Thiim; Cambria Kang, MD '99; Sidney Fisman, MD '74 and wife Marilyn Fishman; and Shahed Ghanimati, MD '08 and husband Gabriel Gomez, MD '08.



CMS Dean Archana Chatterjee and Debra Gierut, MD '91, take in a Laguna Beach sunset during a January alumni event in California.



Dean Archana Chatterjee with Romeo C. Ignacio Jr., MD '97, MS '97, MS '93.



Sidney Fishman, MD '74, and his wife Marilyn with Arthur Strick, MD '61, and George Rattin from the RFU alumni office.

Other Alumni News

George Bakris, MD '81, appeared on the European Medical Journal podcast to discuss the role of music in medical practice, as well as hypertension and ambulatory blood pressure monitoring.

Jason Luke, MD '06, was appointed associate director of clinical research at UPMC Hillman Cancer Center in Pittsburgh.

Sean Tabaie, MD '09, MS '05, was appointed member-at-large on the board of directors of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Brian P. Flanagan, MD '11, was elected chair of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery for the northwest region of Northwestern Medicine. ■



Vilmary Friederichs

Research Center Coordinator
Center for Brain Function and Repair
Time at CMS: 31 years

Celebrating her 31st anniversary with RFU, Vilmary Friederichs serves a central role in the university's scientific community as the Research Center Coordinator for the Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair. She is the primary liaison between the Principal Investigators in the Center and other university entities, entrusted with managing grant accounts, overseeing and reconciling expenses, and ensuring the financial solvency of lab obligations. She also works with the Office of Sponsored Research, IACUC, and IRB to navigate grant-related concerns and ensure regulatory compliance.

Vilmary embarked on her journey at RFU in a part-time position as a switchboard operator and a receptionist. She vividly recalls those early days in the marble lobby, filling in for Ms. Eleanora Tanner and being the first face everyone saw upon entering the university. This role provided her with numerous opportunities to meet people across the university. She is still deeply appreciative of Dr. Frank Naeymi-Rad, who gave her entry into this wonderful workplace and experience in the world of technology.

After a year in that position, Vilmary became secretary for the Department of Cell Biology and Anatomy (CBA), then chaired by Dr. David McCandless. He showed great confidence in Vilmary's skills and intellect, and he opened a new dimension for her in the academic world. She was soon promoted to Administrative Assistant of CBA, and broke new ground in her knowledge and opportunities, for which she is forever grateful.

In 2004, Dr. William Frost became the Chair of CBA. Because they had already worked well together in the department prior to his promotion, Dr. Frost asked Vilmary to take on greater responsibility in her administrative role, and Vilmary rose to the challenge. He rewarded her efforts and promoted her to Senior Administrative Assistant and then to Department Administrator roles, where she continued to serve the department faithfully.

After approximately 25 years in CBA, the university restructured its research and academic departments. Under the leadership of Executive Vice President for Research, Dr. Ronald Kaplan, Vilmary was asked to continue on the research side in the new role of Research Center Coordinator. Seven years into this position, Vilmary continues to feel blessed with opportunities to learn and grow further.

Born in Puerto Rico, Vilmary relocated to Illinois with her parents as a young adult. Interestingly, a recent DNA test connected Vilmary's ancestry to Portugal and the Basque Region of Spain. One of her passions is traveling with her husband Bob of thirty years. This new information about her genealogy inspired them to

travel recently to these regions of Europe, where Vilmary has been fascinated to learn more about her roots and their different ways of living.

In her free time, Vilmary enjoys hiking, cooking new recipes, and spending quality time with her husband and two daughters, one of whom graduated from the Clinical Counseling program at RFU in 2021! Vilmary is also especially involved with her faith and the community it brings.

Her thirst for knowledge and eagerness to broaden her understanding have been constants in Vilmary's life. She feels deeply privileged to work with so many brilliant and driven individuals on a daily basis and derives immeasurable satisfaction from learning from those around her. Vilmary believes there are always opportunities to grow and see things from a new perspective.

Another reason Vilmary has enjoyed working at the University for so many years is because this environment cultivates respect for diversity. She appreciates the collaboration with her many different colleagues and is grateful to take part in a community where everyone shares knowledge and supports each other's personal and professional growth.

Vilmary looks forward to continued growth at Rosalind Franklin University, which has given her so many unforeseen opportunities. She is also incredibly grateful to the many mentors and people who helped and believed in her during her time here — too many to mention by name. ■

School and University Events



RFU students, faculty, and staff attended the 37th annual *Dance for Health Equity, and Educational Excellence* (formerly known as the *Dance for Diabetes*) held March 2 at the Lakehurst Events Center in Waukegan. The event raised more than \$33,000 to support patient care at the Interprofessional Community Clinic.



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, Dean of CMS and Senior Vice President for Medical Affairs for RFU, gave the State of the Medical School address, titled "Past, Present & Future" on March 7 along with CMS leadership. Representatives from each CMS office and department summarized accomplishments and goals for their area.

School & Department News

Awards & Accomplishments



Dr. Yvette Castañeda

Yvette D. Castañeda, PhD, MPH, MBA, research assistant professor of foundational sciences and humanities and community engagement core lead for RFU's Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research;

Amanda Simanek, PhD, MPH, associate professor of humanities and health care and director of the Center for Health Equity Research; and Kristin Schneider, PhD, professor of psychology and associate dean of research in the College of Health Professions and behavioral health lead in the

university's Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC), have been awarded funding from the Chicago Center for Diabetes Translation Research for a pilot project titled "Feasibility of Addressing Food Insecurity as an Integral Part of Diabetes-Related Healthcare."

The study will assess 1) the acceptability, among ICC patients living with diabetes who are experiencing food insecurity, of enrolling in an online food delivery service and 2) the feasibility, among clinic staff and the university's community partner, Adelante Center, of enrolling ICC patients in the service and providing tailored nutritional counseling, as well as testing the impact of the intervention on diabetes-related healthcare outcomes.

The investigators will work with **Melissa Chen**, MD, clinical director of the ICC, to conduct the study. The overall goal is to help inform the design of a larger-scale intervention aimed at addressing social inequities that drive the disproportionately high burden of diabetes in certain populations and geographic areas of Lake County. The

investigators are eager to meet with students who are interested in participating for research elective credits.



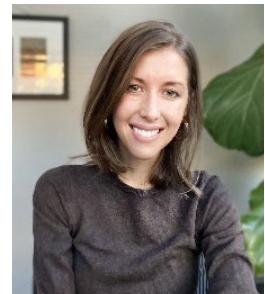
Weihang "Valerie" Chai, PhD, director of the Center for Genetic Diseases and professor of microbiology and immunology, received a \$236,850 grant from the National Institutes of Health for her research study

"Identification of a Novel Tumor Suppressor of Melanoma and UV-induced Genome Instability."



Dr. Amanda Simanek

Nicole Ferrara, PhD, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Neurobiology of Stress Resilience and Psychiatric Disorders, has been accepted to the NIH Early Career Re-viewer program and will be reviewing grants on the Biobehavioral Regulation, Learning and Ethology Study Section.



Nandita Gupta and **Eliza Hofman**, both CMS '25, have been elected as Co-Chairs of the Illinois Psychiatric Society (IPS) Medical Student Committee, while **Jacob Schuman**, CMS '26, was elected as Vice Chair of the committee. The IPS Medical Student Committee is a collection of medical students from all medical schools throughout Illinois whose goal is to foster an environment that supports better patient care, establishes relationships that will benefit the practice of

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psychiatry, and creates a chance to make an impact on the community.



Nandita Gupta



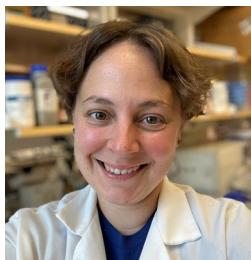
Eliza Hofman



Jacob Schuman



an award for his presentation at the Chicago Radiological Society's annual conference, held at Rush University. Despite the conference primarily targeting residents, Neil's exceptional performance led him to receive the highest score for his presentation and subsequent Q&A session. Neil's project uncovered a notable correlation between the incidence of acute stroke in patients with active COVID-19 infection. Additionally, his research project shed light on crucial imaging findings indicative of acute cerebrovascular disease, often observed on CT and MRI scans.



Erin Howe, PhD, assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular biology, received a four-year, \$594,000 American Cancer Society grant to study "Mechanisms of Targeting Endosomal Trafficking in Immune Recognition of Breast Cancer Metastases."



Holly Hunsberger, PhD, assistant professor of neuroscience, Center for Neurodegenerative Disease and Therapeutics, received the CMS Scheppele Scholar Award for her research focused on gaining a better understanding of menopause transition and how this impacts sleep, mood and the brain. Dr. Hunsberger was also awarded a grant from the Alzheimer's Association to study the mechanisms underlying neuropsychiatric symptoms in Alzheimer's disease.

Amanda Lund, DO, assistant professor and assistant education director of internal medicine, received the 2024 Leonard Tow Humanism in Medicine Award, which recognizes a faculty member who demonstrates clinical excellence and outstanding compassion in the delivery of care. Dr. Lund received the award at the Gold Humanism Honor Society induction luncheon on March 15.



Neil Kelekar, CMS '26, co-authored an abstract titled "Acute Stroke Among Patients with COVID-19: A Retrospective Review of Cases" and was honored with

Marissa McCarthy, lead administrative coordinator in the Department of Clinical Sciences, received a Winter

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2024 GEM Award from the university. GEM Awards are quarterly awards that recognize RFU staff members who “Go the Extra Mile” to make the university a better place.



Daniel A. Peterson, PhD, professor of neuroscience and director of the Center for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine, received the Bernard Sanberg Memorial Award for Brain Repair from the American Society for Neural Therapy and Repair (ASNTR) in recognition of his significant research contributions. The award was presented to Dr. Peterson at the ASNTR's 31st annual conference, held in Clearwater Beach, Florida.



Juan Medina-Echeverria, MS, CMS '25, class president, has been accepted into the Kaiser La Salud Permanente program in San Jose, CA, and has been granted a scholarship to participate. The program offers an intensive four-week psychiatry sub-internship

clerkship where participants will have the opportunity to expand their medical knowledge, develop interviewing and doctor-patient relationship skills, and learn about system-based practices in training.

“This remarkable opportunity is a testament to the dedication and passion I’ve poured into my medical education thus far,” said Juan. “As I embark on this exciting journey, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities that lie ahead and a profound sense of responsibility to make the most of them. The Kaiser La Salud Permanente program represents not only a significant milestone in my medical education but also a pivotal moment in my journey toward becoming a compassionate, skilled, and culturally competent physician. I eagerly anticipate the knowledge, skills, and experiences that await me during my time at Kaiser La Salud Permanente, and I am committed to seizing every opportunity for growth and learning. Thank you to Dr. Rasgado, Dr. Kotlyar, and everyone at CMS who has supported me along this journey — I am deeply grateful for your unwavering encouragement and belief in my potential.”

Dr. Peterson also received a two-year, \$434,225 National Institutes of Health grant for his study “Selective Targeting of CNS Cells in Vivo for Multiple Transgene Delivery and Neuronal Reprogramming.”

Presentations & Publications



Maureen Benjamins, PhD, assistant professor of medicine at CMS and senior research fellow at the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI), in partnership with colleagues from SUHI, the Medical College of Wisconsin, and Advocate Aurora Research Institute, co-authored a paper titled “Associations Between Religiosity and Medical Mistrust: An Age-Stratified Analysis of Survey Data from Black Adults in Chicago,” published in the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*.

Connor Cameron, CMS '27, and **Martin Pelletier**, CMS '26, co-authored “An Inside Look at High-Performance, Hands-On Training,” published on the EMS1 website. The article details a continuing education airway procedure clinic for local paramedics that was developed and

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hosted by students and faculty with the EMS Advocacy organization at CMS.



Connor Cameron



Martin Pelletier

of Medicine in Detroit. The hybrid event featured an interactive discussion on leadership development in academic medicine.



Dr. Chatterjee presenting at Wayne State University.

Weihang "Valerie" Chai, PhD, director of the Center for Genetic Diseases and professor of microbiology and immunology, co-authored two publications: "Human CST Complex Restricts Excessive PrimPol Reprimering at Stalled Forks by Suppressing p21," published in *Nucleic Acids Research*, and "Conditional Depletion of STN1 in Mouse Embryonic Fibroblasts," published in the journal *Bio-Protocol*.



Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School, presented two lectures on May 7 at the University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB) as part of the UTMB's Provost's Lecture Series: "Demystifying Vaccine Development and Licensure in the United States" and "Being the CEO of Your Own Career."

Dr. Chatterjee also presented "Being the CEO of Your Own Career" in April at Wayne State University School



Lise Eliot, PhD, professor of neuroscience, Stanson Toshok Center for Brain Function and Repair, authored an article titled "Remembering the Null Hypothesis When Searching for Brain Sex Differences," published in the journal *Biology of Sex Differences*. She also presented a poster titled "The Human Brain Is Not Sexually Dimorphic" at the conference *Sexually Dimorphic Circuits and Behaviors*, held March 3–6 at the HHMI Janelia Research Campus in Ashburn, VA.

Dr. Eliot also appeared in the documentary *Fluid: Life Beyond the Binary*, which was broadcast March 28 on the Canadian Broadcast Company's longest-running television program, *The Nature of Things*. Dr. Eliot was one of six international scientists interviewed for the documentary, which addresses the science of gender and sex fluidity.

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Eliza Hofman, CMS '25, presented a poster titled “I'll Call for Pen and Ink and Write My Mind”: A Review of Physiological and Neural Effects of Narrative Medicine” at the American Psychiatric Association Annual Conference, held May 4 in New York City.



Throughout April, several CMS students and faculty participated in a series of presentations in honor of Minority Health Month. In this second annual series organized by the RFU Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, each speaker addressed a topic relevant to healthcare in underserved communities and healthcare.

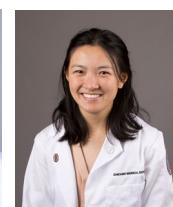
- **Med Jimenez**, CMS '25, presented “The Universal Health Care Act: A Bridge to the Health Equity Gap in the Philippines” on April 5. He discussed challenges and barriers to rapid and effective dissemination of health access in the Philippines, and the transformation the Philippine healthcare system is currently undertaking following the passage of the Universal Healthcare Act in 2019.
- **Jenny Lee**, CMS '27, presented “East Complements West: Perspectives of Mental Health and Mindfulness for Low Income Vietnamese Immigrant Women” on April 5. She discussed a project for making alternative treatments like mindfulness culturally sensitive among low-income Vietnamese immigrant and refugee women in the U.S.
- **Paul Hung**, MD, program director for the psychiatry residency program and assistant professor of medicine, and **Barbara Vertel**, PhD, professor of cell biology and anatomy, presented “Embracing Neurodiversity in Healthcare Learners...and Educators” on April 24. They discussed often-overlooked strengths that neurodiverse students and teachers bring to the medical education table,

and how recognizing and utilizing diversity — including neuro-diversity — in healthcare learners and educators can enhance patient care and student wellness.

- **Kaitlyn Bali**, CMS '27, presented “The PI in AAPI” on April 29. She discussed healthcare for Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders (NHPI) — the most underrepresented group in medicine — and the importance of promoting health equity for this frequently overlooked population.
- **Nimah Rasheed**, CMS '25, and **Zohaib Satti**, CMS '25, CHP '26, presented “What the People Do Not Say: A Discussion of Mental Health in South Asian Communities” on April 30. They discussed the burden of mental health challenges within the South Asian community and the underutilization of therapeutic resources, and ways to bridge the cultural gap to help those in need of support.



Med Jimenez



Jenny Lee



Dr. Paul Hung



Dr. Barbara Vertel



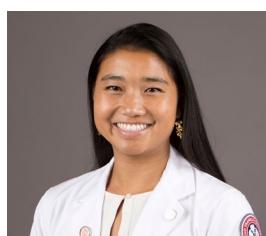
Kaitlyn Bali



Nimah Rasheed



Zohaib Satti



Brianna Lau, CMS '27, was first author on an article titled “Chest Wall Pain After Single-fraction Thoracic Stereotactic Ablative Radiotherapy: Dosimetric Analysis from the iSABR Trial,”

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Elliot Levine, MD '78, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, recently published two articles: "Use of Algorithms to Predict Disease in Obstetrics: A Clinical Perspective," published in the *Archives of Gynecology and Obstetrics*, and "The Expanding Role of Sonography for the Diagnosis of Deep Infiltrating Endometriosis: Results of a Large Case Series," published in the *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics*.



Martin speaking at Northwestern Memorial Hospital.



Frank Maldonado, MD, professor of medicine and executive chair of clinical sciences, participated in an online public service activity on May 1 with Mano a Mano Family Resource Center. Dr. Maldonado participated in a Spanish-language Facebook Live interview and educational activity on the topic of asthma, discussing causes, risk factors, triggers, and treatments. This is the third presentation Dr. Maldonado has given to the Hispanic community as part of Mano a Mano's *Informados y Conectados* (Informed and Connected) program, and he is scheduled to do another presentation, on COPD, in August.



Hector Rasgado-Flores, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, gave a special medical grand rounds presentation on April 17 as part of a speaker series organized by the university in honor of Black Maternal Health Awareness Week. In his presentation, titled "Reproductive Rights and Social Justice," Dr. Rasgado-Flores discussed the role of healthcare providers in delivering reproductive health care and services amid the complex political climate in the United States.



Martin Pelletier, CMS '26, FP-C, was selected to give an oral presentation on his research at RFU at the 2024 Illinois College of Emergency Physicians (ICEP) Ginny Kennedy Palys Annual Symposium, held May 2 at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Martin's presentation was titled "The Use of Ketamine for Prehospital Sedative-Assisted Intubation."

- "The Michael Reese Foundation Center for Health Equity Research: Taking a Community-Driven Approach to Addressing Health Equity in Lake

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County, IL" was presented on May 14 as part of the Lovell Federal Health Care Center's annual VA Research Week event, Building Community Through Research.

- "How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love My Inner Science Communicator (And How You Can Too!)" was a keynote address delivered at the Wisconsin Public Health Association's Annual Public Health Conference, held May 23 in Wisconsin Dells, WI.

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Justin Whalley, PhD, assistant professor of foundational sciences and humanities, Center for Cancer Cell Biology, Immunology, and Infection, was selected to present a talk titled "Linking Innate Immune Variation in Health and Sepsis through Gene Expression and Epigenetics" at the Human Immunology - Genes and Environment conference, held in Cambridge, UK in May.



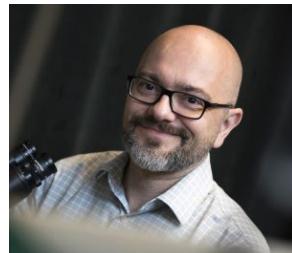
Dr. Whalley also gave two local presentations: in March, he delivered a virtual CMS medical grand rounds presentation titled "Infection at the Molecular Level: Host Variability, Sepsis Challenges, and COVID-19 Insights," and in April, he was invited by the Rotary Club of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff to speak to their members about the research and therapeutic potential of using CRISPR for genome engineering, as well as the ethical considerations involved.

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Carl White, PhD, associate professor of physiology and biophysics, and **Donghee Kim**, PhD, professor and chair of physiology and biophysics, presented a poster titled "Functional Coupling of Cell Em and Ca₂₊ Oscillations in

Carotid Body Type I Cells" at the Physiology Summit, an annual meeting of the American Physiological Society, held April 5 in Long Beach, CA.

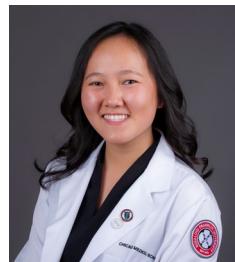
Dr. Kim also presented an invited talk at the summit titled "Regulation of Cell Membrane Potential Ca₂₊ Signaling in Carotid Chemoreceptor Cells."



Dr. Carl White



Dr. Donghee Kim



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Angela Yu, CMS '25, presented her poster titled "Exploring the Relationship Between Caregiver Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), Parental Distress, and Parenting Behaviors: Does Caregiver Sex Matter?" at the 2024 Society of Pediatric Psychology Annual Conference, held April 25-27 in New Orleans.

Events and Other News

Neil Bradbury, PhD, professor of physiology and biophysics, Center for Genetic Diseases, was featured in a *Chicago Tribune* article highlighting his book *A Taste for Poison: Eleven Deadly Molecules and the Killers Who Used Them*. Dr. Bradbury also discussed his book during a program at the Frankfort Public Library District on April 9 in Frankfort, Illinois.



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Archana Chatterjee, MD, PhD, dean of Chicago Medical School, was consulted for a *Scientific American* article titled “Vaccine Advances Could Help Decrease Influenza’s Toll.” Dr. Chatterjee shared her expertise on influenza vaccine innovation, providing commentary and background information for the article.

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Regina de Leon Gomez, MD, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology, commented for the *Chicago Health* article “The Kid Question,” which discussed how global unrest and climate instability are impacting young peoples’ decisions whether or not to have children.



Antwione Haywood, PhD, associate dean for student affairs, was invited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) to chair the Comprehensive Evaluation Visit for Denver College of Nursing in Colorado. The HLC accredits colleges and universities in the United States, and maintains a peer corps of faculty and administrators from its member colleges who serve as reviewers in all stages of the accreditation process.

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Holly Hunsberger, PhD, assistant professor of neuroscience, and **Ning Wang**, PhD, assistant professor of microbiology and immunology, were selected to



Dr. Holly Hunsberger



Dr. Ning Wang

attend the AAMC Early Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Seminar, held February 20-23 in San Diego, CA. The seminar provides women at the assistant professor level with foundational leadership knowledge and skills that will enable them to achieve their career goals and thrive as a successful leader in academic medicine and science.



Sarah Schuck, director of the CMS Dean’s Office, has been selected to serve on the President’s Cabinet to represent RFU staff. Sarah joined RFU in 2003 and has served as director of the Dean’s Office since 2018. She has been an active member in the newly-relaunched Staff Council, where she currently serves as chair.

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On March 13, RFU hosted Margaret M. McCarthy, PhD, from the University of Maryland School of Medicine as Dr. McCarthy presented on “Sex Differences in the Brain at the Intersection of the Nervous, Immune and Endocrine Systems.” This event was part of the university’s **Molecular and Cellular Sciences Seminar Series**,

which hosts speakers who are distinguished scientists from all biomedical fields. ■



Dr. Lise Eliot, Dr. Margaret McCarthy, and Dean Archana Chatterjee.



During Chicago Medical School's annual Admitted Student Weekend, April 26-27, prospective students who have been admitted to CMS toured the RFU campus and several clinical sites, including the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center (FHCC). 82 admitted students attended the event.

We want to hear from you!

To submit information or news for upcoming issues, contact Candice Kosanke at candice.kosanke@rosalindfranklin.edu.



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