

WHAT IS AMSA?

THE PRE-MEDICAL CLUB AT NYU

- A resource for support, advice, and academic guidance.
- An organization committed to promoting social consciousness through volunteerism.
- A network of communication among students.
- A forum of discussion for topics in modern science and medicine.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Meet the Board	2
"Does Race Exist?"	3
Ethics in Medicine	3
Looking Ahead	4
Alternative Clubs	4

The Pulse

ISSUE 1

SEPTEMBER 2004

Welcome Back! A Message from the President

On behalf of the AMSA board, I would like to welcome all new and returning students to the American Medical Students Association. For those who are new to the university or know little about AMSA, our primary objective is to develop a sense of community among pre-health students at NYU. During the upcoming year, our members will have the opportunity to partake in community service activities, interact with fellow pre-health students, and attend pre-medical review sessions.

The board is dedicated to providing a pool of information to all members. As a freshman at NYU, the pre-medical curriculum can frustrate even the most diligent students. To ease the transition, AMSA has developed a "Pre-Med Buddy Program" for all underclassmen. At the beginning of the school year, each freshman and sophomore will be paired with an upperclassman who will serve as a mentor

throughout the school year. We strongly believe that each incoming premed student can benefit from the experiences of those who have already completed the curriculum.

As for myself, I am currently a senior in CAS majoring in psy-



chology and minoring in chemistry. I am also a tutor at the Weinstein Learning Center. I spent my last summer working in the Basic Science Lab in the Cardiothoracics Department at NYU Med. I am a big football fan and an even bigger golfer. I am a die-hard JETS fan and when Phil Mickelson won the Masters, I had tears in my eyes. In New York, it is very hard to find a true golf fan, so if you share my passion, don't hesitate to e-mail me.

To all pre-meds,

best of luck with your academic endeavors. We are here to assist all students in whatever premedical endeavors that they might decide to pursue. We look forward to meeting many new students during the upcoming year. Study hard and please do not hesitate to contact the rest of the board members or myself if you have any questions. We are here to help you guys, so please, take advantage of our services.

Best of luck,
Yasha Modi, President

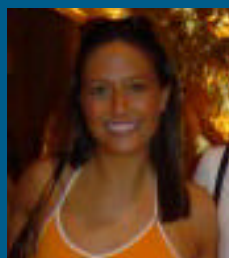


Meet the Board

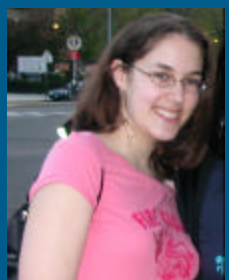
Vice President,
Marguerite Balasta



Secretary,
Kathryn Michalak



Community Service
Chair,
Jessica Friedland



Webmaster,
Neil Raswant



Balasta — I am a senior majoring in Biology with a minor in Math and History. Although I will be graduating May 2005, I plan to take a year off before going to medical school in order to do more research. I encourage all members to use AMSA as a resource for answering any questions or concerns academic, professional, and otherwise! Please do not hesitate to contact me at mab359@nyu.edu. I wish you all a great year.

Patakis — I am currently a senior in CAS majoring in Biochemistry and minoring in Philosophy and Economics. I am a teaching assistant for General Chemistry and I work in NYU Medical Center's Admitting Department every weekend. I have been an active member of AMSA since my freshman year. I look forward to holding AMSA's Gen. Chem. review sessions this year and I hope to increase communication between AMSA and NYU's other science related clubs. Feel free to contact me at gjp217@nyu.edu if you have any questions!

Michalak — I am currently the head of AMSA's Buddy Program, which offers an opportunity for underclassmen to have an upperclassmen mentor who can aid them in any pre-medical questions and issues they have. I also volunteer at NY Foundling Institute, which is home for children with disabilities. Please feel free to email me with any questions you have about the Buddy Program or anything else at kem251@nyu.edu.

Horne — I am a senior majoring in Mathematics with a minor in Biology. I am graduating in May, and I plan to do research for a year before beginning medical school. For the past three summers, I have worked in a genetic HLA lab for a study to reduce Type 1 Diabetes. One of AMSA's goals is to develop relationships and build support between pre-medical students. Being a pre-med student is not easy! So, if you have any problems or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me at jlh292@nyu.edu. Take advantage of AMSA for volunteer opportunities, science review sessions, and many other activities.

Friedland — I am a co-chair of the community service committee and hoping to plan some great events this year to get all you pre-meds involved! I'm a junior majoring in biology and minoring in anthropology. This year I'm undertaking the all mighty trio of Orgo, Molec Cell and MCATs, so when you're stressed, I feel your pain! When I'm not tutoring, volunteering in the pediatric wing of the NYU Med Center, or, of course, studying, I'm usually in the gym, napping, or congregating with my friends, often on the 7th floor of kimmel, so come by and say hi! I wish all you guys a great year and feel free to email me at jrf252@nyu.edu with any questions or comments about AMSA community service events, or really anything at all!

Vohra — I'm a sophomore living in Guam (NYU at the Seaport). I'm a pre-med fine arts major and a chem minor (as are the rest of you pre-meds out there :) I love doing community service, which is why I am who I am, the co-community service chair of AMSA. I'm also the community service chair of CAS Student council. I was a coordinator of the OutReach program, which consisted of 100 freshmen and 30 leaders doing community service all over New York City for four days before the start of orientation. I'm very proud to be part of the AMSA community and honored to be selected as a board member.

Krishnaswamy — I am a senior doing an Economics major and Spanish and Chemistry minors in CAS. I am serving as the Chair for the AMSA board. I will be working on establishing an addendum to the existing Pre-med Buddy Program by pairing-up juniors and seniors with first and second year medical students. Best of luck this year, especially with the sciences! Feel free to contact me with any questions. rrk209@nyu.edu

Raswant — Hey guys! My name is Neil Raswant and I am the webmaster for AMSA. I am a junior majoring in Mathematics, with a minor in journalism. I work at C.V Starr Laboratories of Molecular Pharmacology, located in the upper east side, as well as, working in EMS for the past four years in New Jersey. I am a big Yankees fan, so feel free to call me if you get tickets to any extra tickets to any games this year. AMSA is a good opportunity for all undergraduates to turn to for support and guidance in the whole medical school application process. Have a good year and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Butala — I am a junior in CAS and am majoring in chemistry and minoring in mathematics. On weekends, I volunteer at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in the pediatric oncology unit and during the week I am an academic tutor for Streetsquash. In my free time I like to snowboard and play tennis. I am the editor of The Pulse and we look forward to feedback on any issues you feel we can help you with, so if you have any ideas to share, feel free to contact us.

Vice President,
George Patakis

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Treasurer,
Jennifer Horne



Community Service
Chair, Rishi Vohra



Chair, Rupa
Krishnaswamy



Editor of the
Pulse, Alap Butala



Does Race Exist?

by Bamshad M Olson S

“Look around on the streets of any major city, and you will see a sampling of the outward variety of humanity: skin tones ranging from milk-white to dark brown: hair textures running the gamut from fine and stick straight to thick and wiry. People often use physical characteristics such as these—along with area of geographic origin and shared culture—to group themselves and others into ‘races.’ But how valid is the concept of race from a biological standpoint?” -MJB and SEO, sciam December 2003

For the full article visit www.sciam.com

Ethics in Medicine: A Response to “Does Race Exist?” by Alap Butala

Groundbreaking scientific discoveries have often been stifled by the presence of fallacy in preexisting religious or social canon. Yet, once these obstacles were overcome, the quality of life improved for all. Plato believed that comprehension of metaphysics was beyond most men as per our limited capacity to perceive the world around us. Regardless, he found a means by which to categorize the extant population into classes of gold, silver, and bronze. Now, in a day and age where the boundaries of our perception advance with each new invention, it seems as if our worldview is being attacked. The credence of our old creed has been debilitated by the onslaught of new forms of intelligence. Molecular biology and genetics, coupled with gene splicing, cloning, stem cell research, and a whole slew of techniques involving DNA have brought compelling

evidence forth by which to re-evaluate society.

As far as race is concerned, we sometimes question its relevance today as its rudiments lie in the old world of slavery, imperialism, and hierarchy. Race is merely a relic of the past with decreasing importance in modern society. Africans are black, Indians are red and/or brown, Asians are yellow, and others are white, but so what. If we look inside, the way Plato did, with our newfound capability to scan the genome, we can identify much more than “gold, silver, or bronze” individuals. By examining certain polymorphisms within our genome, called Alu genes, we can replace the race war with a formal, medically relevant grouping system. We will be able to prevent, rather than cure, and we all know that this is the better alternative.

However, one would argue

that this new alternative has negative consequences. It could potentially relegate people to various domains, reducing the opportunistic appeal of today’s society. If the majority sees itself as negatively branded; whether medically, intellectually, physically, or in any other unforeseen capacity; prior to being fully realized, the result would be a collective decrease productivity. Of course the nature v. nurture debate is still as heated as ever and we know that the environment brings genes to life, just as much as genes donate to it. It seems as though the benefits of any given practice are to be appreciated. Nonetheless, when the contraindications are strong, various means can be devised by which to utilize this information while maintain confidentiality and security. As its potential value is incalculable, this issue will surely come up again.

Do you agree, disagree? Do you have an interesting idea for an article? E-mail us your thoughts, and you may be printed in the next issue of *The Pulse*!

Looking Ahead!



Pre-med Buddy Program

Have questions about being pre-med? Feel anxious about classes or teachers? Just looking for someone to talk to? Then sign up to be paired with a mentor!

Medical Student Buddy Program

Looking for insight into life at medical school? Do you have concerns or questions about the application process? If so, sign up to be paired with a medical student from NYU Medical School!

Unite for Sight

This is a community service organization that is dedicated to improving awareness about health and vision. Our mission is to prevent blindness! We are holding a Vision Screening Day on **October 2** and an ongoing Eyeglass Drive. Want to be involved? Then contact Yasha and see how you can help!

Making Strides Against Breast Cancer

Come with friends and enjoy a leisurely stroll through Central Park—and help cure breast cancer at the same time! Sign up to be a volunteer and/or a walker for AMSA's team on **October 17!** If interested, please e-mail Marguerite at mab359@nyu.edu and Rishi at vohra@nyu.edu

Review Sessions

Taking General Chemistry, Organic Chemistry, and/or Physics? We hold review sessions the week of each and every exam! So watch out for upcoming reviews advertised on our listserve or the website.

Face Painting Day at St. Vincent's Hospital Pediatrics Ward

More information coming soon!

Other Health Related Clubs;

MedEcs
Bioethics forum
BioSociety
BSSO
Draper Society