

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

The Student View

Rutgers RWJMS Orthopaedic Surgery Interest Group Newsletter

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The Student View

Rutgers RWJMS Orthopaedic Surgery Interest Group Newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Orthopaedic Surgery Interest Group (OSIG) newsletter! We're excited to share highlights of our recent activities, community achievements, and celebrate the growing interest in orthopaedic surgery amongst our students.

Inside this edition you will find:

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Year-in-Review

Over just this past semester OSIG held **17 events**, totaling **34 events** over the course of the 2024-25 academic year. This included a range of **educational lectures, hands-on workshops, social mixers, conferences, and immersive learning experiences** - not only for RWJ medical students, but also for our colleagues from partner institutions and Rutgers undergraduate students as well.





These events helped strengthened **cross-institutional collaboration** while expanding access to orthopaedic education for learners at every stage at Rutgers. We strive to carry this momentum into the new year and additionally extend a warm welcome to our incoming first-year medical students.

Year-in-Review

To kick off the summer, OSIG hosted the fourth iteration of the **Orthopaedic Surgery Summer Immersion Program**, featuring two separate week-long sessions for five rising second-year medical students exploring orthopaedics as a potential specialty. Led by second-year students **Megan Hsu** and **Puvin Dhurairaj** under the guidance of **Drs. Brian Katt** and **Thomas McPartland**, this year's cohort expanded beyond Rutgers RWJMS to include participants from institutions in California and Virginia, highlighting the program's **growing national reach** and appeal.

Session One Participants



Nicolina Zappley
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



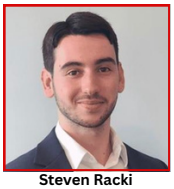
Jacob DeAnnuntis
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



Joseph Torkieh
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



Danielle Krinsky
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



Steven Racki
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson

Session Two Participants



Garrett Galaida
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



Harini Srinivasan
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



David Guevara
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson



Elena Shaw
Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine

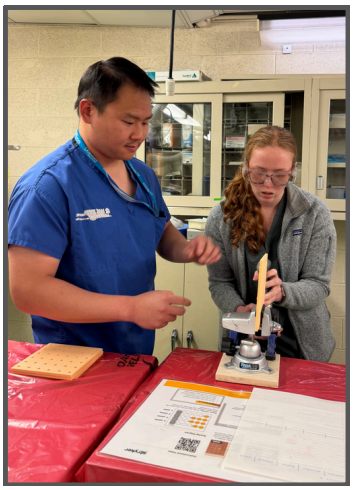


Michael Draves
California University of Science and Medicine

Throughout the program, students gained comprehensive exposure to the field of orthopaedics as they **rotated through clinics and operating rooms** across multiple subspecialties, including sports medicine, trauma, joints, and pediatric orthopaedics. In addition to clinical experiences, participants engaged in **resident-led educational lectures**, **interactive journal clubs**, and **hands-on workshops** focused on suturing techniques and the use of Stryker surgical tools. These immersive experiences provided students with both the practical skills and the professional insights needed to make informed decisions about pursuing orthopaedic surgery. Collectively, these opportunities fostered confidence, curiosity, and a deeper understanding of the specialty for our students.









Year-in-Review

With the start of the new year, OSIG welcomed **59 new members** from the Rutgers RWJMS Class of 2029 expressing interest in orthopaedic surgery. To help foster connections with upperclass mentors, OSIG, in collaboration with the RWJMS' chapter of the **Association of Women Surgeons (AWS)**, organized a social mixer where first years could ask questions about different specialties, and gain valuable tips for navigating challenges in medical school. A great way to foster early community, mentorship, and excitement for the year ahead.



To further support incoming and current RWJ medical students interested in orthopaedics, faculty advisor **Dr. Brian Katt**, met **one-on-one** with **31 students** across all years. These personal meetings provided students the opportunity to receive individualized advice on their strengths and areas for improvement - guiding students to become strong residency applicants when the time comes.

OSIG 2024-25 EVENTS WRAPPED

34 Events

6 Bio-Skills Workshops

24 Educational Talks and Mixers

4 Fracture Conference and Grand Rounds

Countless Conferences with Lasting Memories

Event Highlights

Inaugural Undergraduate Pathways Panel

OSIG x SMIG Sports Medicine Panel

Splinting and Casting Workshops x2

Inaugural OSIG x DRIG x SMIG Ultrasound Workshop

M4 Match Celebratory Brunch

Highland Park 5K Fundraiser Run

Women in Orthopaedics Dinner



Year-in-Review



Since the start of the new academic year, under the guidance of second year **Regina Garvey**, OSIG hosted **3 bio-skills workshops** designed to help students strengthen their technical skills in controlled, hands-on environments. The series kicked off with an interactive **Suture Skills Workshop**, followed by an **Applied Anatomy Lab**, and **Splinting and Casting Workshop** all under the guidance of RWJ orthopaedic surgery attendings and residents. Highlighting the orthopaedic department's strong commitment to medical student education and mentorship.

During the **Suture Skills Workshop**, OSIG students from all class years had the opportunity to develop and refine fundamental suturing techniques using both suture kits and pig's feet. These **essential skills** will translate directly to success during surgical rotations and beyond.





Building on this momentum, OSIG also hosted a highly successful **lower extremity splinting and casting workshop**, with enthusiastic participation from students and residents across all training levels. During the session, students practiced applying short-leg splints and casts and even gained hands-on experience using a casting saw to safely remove them.



Furthermore, OSIG hosted an **additional 16 events** this semester including an Introduction to Orthopaedics talk by department chair, **Dr. Charles Gatt**, who outlined the key steps to becoming a **competitive residency applicant**. OSIG also partnered with the **Rutgers chapter of the American Medical Student Association** to host the **Second Pathways Panel**, giving undergraduate students the opportunity to hear from current medical students about their experiences at RWJMS.

Year-in-Review



OSIG wrapped up the semester with the latest iteration of its **Women in Orthopaedics Panel**, featuring **Drs. Christina Herrero** and **Jaclyn Jankowski**, along with PGY-2 resident **Hannah McIlwrick**. The panelists shared their experiences navigating the traditionally male-dominated specialty of orthopaedics and offered insight, mentorship, and advice to current female students in medicine. These are important conversations to continue, and OSIG remains committed to fostering dialogue that **supports** the **development** of an even stronger, more **inclusive orthopaedic community** for future students.

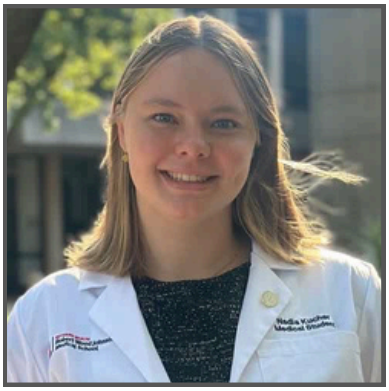
First-Year Experiences



Zac DeCurtis

"OSIG has been incredibly helpful in exposing me to the field of orthopaedics by **connecting me with upperclassmen and residents** who were happy to share their experiences, advice, and honest perspectives. I've been able to shadow in both clinic and the OR, which has helped me understand what day-to-day orthopedic practice truly looks like and **solidified my interest in the specialty**.

My favorite OSIG event was the **splinting and casting workshop**. It was a great hands-on introduction to basic orthopedic skills and gave me a better sense of how orthopedics blends technical work with clinical decision-making. **Getting to practice these techniques made the specialty feel more tangible and exciting**. I also loved the opportunity to talk with and learn from residents!"



Nadia Kucher

"OSIG helped me in showing me what kinds of opportunities exist for medical students to engage in orthopedics. For example, conferences, grand rounds, or shadowing opportunities. One of my favorite events was the **casting workshop** because it **gave me a chance to learn tangible skills**, but also **start building a relationship with the residents**."

How Has OSIG Shaped Your Exposure to Orthopaedics?



Tarik Saleh

OSIG has done an amazing job for anyone genuinely interested in learning more about orthopedics through the events they hold, the resources they share, and the availability/responsiveness of not only the E-board but also our **physician mentors**. Through these experiences, I have gained a better understanding of not only the field itself, but also the many different avenues one can take when pursuing a career in orthopedics.

By attending events such as **fracture conferences, grand rounds**, and the **various panels** we have had over the past couple of months, I have begun to feel more comfortable with the orthopedic jargon used when attendings/residents speak to us. Beyond the group events themselves, being able to interact with classmates from **diverse backgrounds**, some of whom came in with prior orthopedic experience, was also a great way to learn.







Favorite OSIG event:

My favorite event this year was the S**plinting and Casting Workshop**. This was a cool way to get our hands dirty and **learn from the residents** at RWJUH. Working with our partners, we learned not only what supplies to use for a lower extremity cast or splint, but we also learned how to identify landmarks on the leg that we had just learned about in anatomy - a great way to **tie everything together**.





Overall, the event was a very cool way to get a glimpse into one of the procedures regularly performed by orthopedics. Shoutout to the residents for taking the time to come down and join the session, and a special shoutout to **Dr. Paul Romeo** for his great demonstrations and for **walking me through my first splint**!

Rutgers RWJMS Medical Student Orthopaedic Surgery Symposium

This September, OSIG hosted the second annual **Rutgers RWJMS Department of Orthopaedic Surgery Medical Student Symposium**, providing students with the opportunity to showcase their research to peers and faculty. The symposium featured **17 podium presentations** from students in their first to third year, a powerful showcase of the developments happening in orthopaedics and a testament to how deeply engaged our students are in advancing the field through research.





This year's symposium was organized by second-year medical students **Benjamin Blitz** and **Alexander Winters**, under the guidance of **Dr. Brian Katt**. Their leadership and dedication made the event a success from start to finish.

Dr. Peter Filtes opened the symposium with an engaging guest lecture, sharing his personal pathway into orthopaedics and highlighting the vital role of mentorship in medical training. A special thank you to **Drs. David Kirschenbaum**, **Paul Romeo**, and **Jared Sain** for moderating the student presentations and offering thoughtful feedback to each presenter, helping ensure a meaningful experience for all participants. And a massive congratulations to **George Asrian (MS2)**, **Steven Racki (MS2)**, and **Fthi Hassan (MS1)** for their respective first, second, and third placement recognitions for their exceptional presentations and research contributions.



George Asrian
Implementation and Outcomes of a Preop Infection Prevention Protocol in Joint Arthroplasty



Steven Racki
Malpractice Coverage Among Team Physicians: A National Survey of Liability Risk in Professional Sports



Fthi Hassan
Impact of Preoperative Cervical Degeneration on Postoperative Cervical Alignment in Adult Spinal Deformity

OSIG National Reach: M2 Student Research

Rutgers RWJMS OSIG students continue to make an impact through expanding **interinstitutional collaborations**, with many conducting productive research at renowned institutions such as New York University, Hospital for Special Surgery, Jersey City Medical Center, and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center **over this past summer**. We are proud to highlight some of the places where our students have built connections, showcasing the growing **national reach** and influence of RWJMS OSIG.



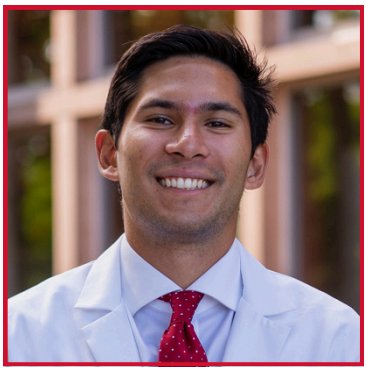
Regina Garvey
NYU Orthopaedic Surgery Summer Externship Program



Timothy Royse
Independent Research - Hospital for Special Surgery



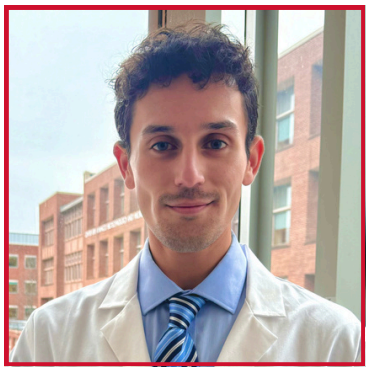
Neal Dalal
Beth Israel Carl J Shapiro Orthopaedic Research Internship



Jacob DeAnnuntis
Research Fellow - Jersey City Medical Center



Emily Mickelsen
Research Intern - UCSF Orthopaedic Trauma Institute



Benjamin Blitz
Research Fellow - Rutgers RWJMS



Neal Vasireddy
Medical Student Summer Research Fellowship - Hospital for Special Surgery



Joseph Torkieh
Independent Research - NYU



Thuy-Mi Le
Research Fellow - Jersey City Medical Center

Student Highlights - AOA Inductees

We are proud to celebrate the induction of **Ryan Stadler**, **Jhillika Patel** and **Henry Resnikoff** as members of the **Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Society**. We congratulate all three on this well-deserved honor, which recognizes excellence in scholarship, leadership, and service.



Ryan Stadler
MS4

Congratulations to **Ryan** on his junior induction as a member of AOA. Ryan's strong work ethic is reflected in his research on shoulder arthroplasty outcomes in patients with diabetes and cervical spine disease, as well as complications following endoscopic spine surgery. This work culminated in his first-author publication, "**Rare Complications in Endoscopic Spinal Surgery: A Narrative Review of Unique Cases**." Beyond his academic and research accomplishments, Ryan continues to challenge himself outside the classroom, recently completing the Philadelphia Marathon a strong reflection of his discipline and personal achievement.

Jhillika, senior AOA inductee, has been a pivotal member within the OSIG community. She is a **founder** of the **Orthopaedic Surgery Summer Immersion Program** and has continued to play a key advisory role in ensuring the success of the program in following years. In addition to her leadership, Jhillika was recently inducted into the **Gold Humanism Honor Society** in recognition of her commitment to patient-centered care and was named a recipient of the **Formica Riggs NJ Physicians of Tomorrow Scholarship** from the American Medical Association as well. Her dedication to mentorship and service exemplifies her commitment to supporting her colleagues and future trainees in medicine.



Jhillika Patel
MS4

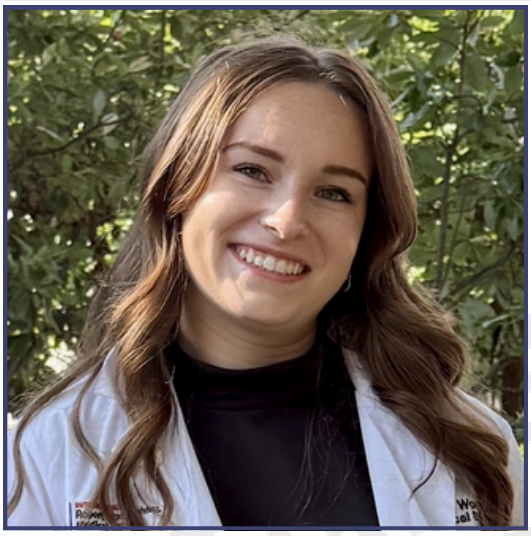


Henry Resnikoff
MS4

Finally, we are proud to recognize **Henry**, an accomplished **MD/PhD** student, who recently defended his dissertation titled "**Fibronectin Matrix as an Instigator for Endothelial Dysfunction**" and was recognized as a senior member of the AOA Honor Society. Additionally, Henry was inducted into the **Gold Humanism Honor Society**, a recognition of his commitment to compassionate care and leadership in his medical training. Furthermore, he recently published his work titled "**A Novel Fibronectin-Binding Peptide Reveals Dynamic Intermediate Structures During Matrix Assembly**" in *Scientific Reports*. Together, these honors highlight Henry's remarkable balance of scientific inquiry and humanistic values as a future provider.

Welcome to the 2025-26 EBoard

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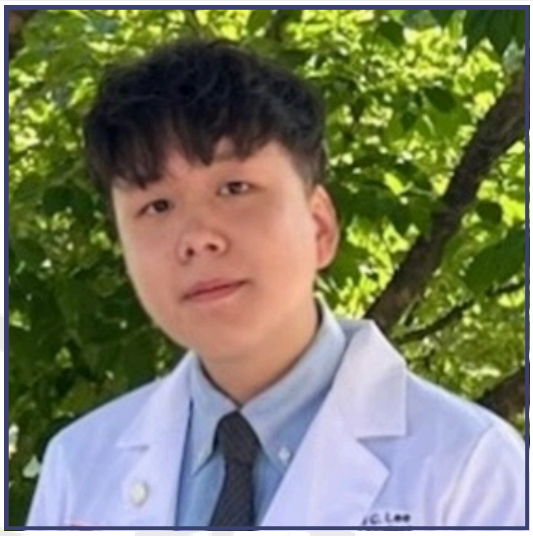
Dana Woodruff

President

Undergraduate: George Washington University

Fun Fact: When I lived in DC, I used to take the same Soul Cycle class as Kamala Harris's husband.

What Are You Most Excited About? Collaborating with the rest of the E-Board to plan events for the interest group! I'm excited to continue OSIG's success in offering early exposure to orthopedics and helping students build skills to thrive on their sub-internships and beyond.



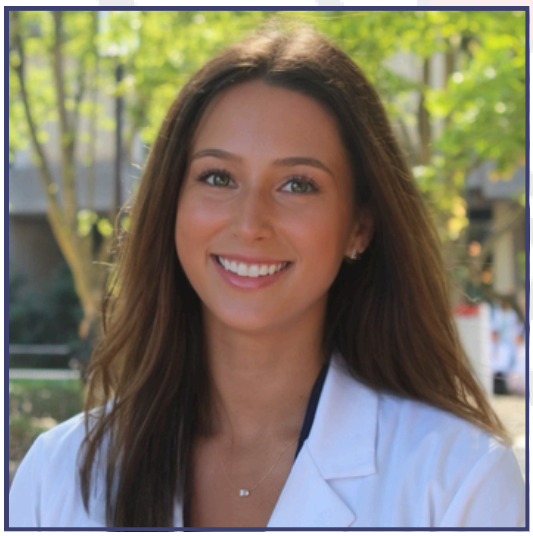
Michael C. Lee

Vice-President

Undergraduate: University of Rochester

Fun Fact: My middle name is just the letter C. I love writing poems and worked as a scientist at a pharmaceutical company for three years before med school.

What Are You Most Excited About? Collaborating with peers and leveraging my experiences to help lead exciting current and emerging initiatives to ensure an unparalleled orthopedic experience for our colleagues and to preserve our longitudinal relationship with alumni, faculty, mentors, and students.



Catelyn Woelfle

Bio-Skills

Undergraduate: Franklin & Marshall College

Fun Fact: I was a collegiate soccer player, and I am a current Pilates instructor.

What Are You Most Excited About? I am most excited about bringing and sharing my passion for orthopedics through my role on the OSIG EBoard and helping RWJMS students stand out as exceptionally prepared candidates for sub-internships and residency.



Anisha Prakash

Alumni Outreach & Mentorship

Undergraduate: Barnard College

Fun Fact: My roommate and I have a kitten we named Dobby, inspired by the Harry Potter instrumental music we study to.

What Are You Most Excited About? I'm excited to help make orthopedics feel accessible through hands-on exposure and mentorship, and just build a supportive community in an often intimidating field.

A Note from the 2024-25 Eboard

As we pass OSIG into the capable hands of the incoming Executive Board, we want to take a moment to sincerely thank everyone who made this year so meaningful. OSIG truly thrives because of its community, and none of what we accomplished would have been possible without the support of our advisors, mentors, and peers. It has been an incredible privilege to serve an organization that fosters such enthusiasm, collaboration, and connection, and to share a year filled with diverse events and memorable moments. **To everyone who attended, supported, and believed in OSIG - thank you. This group is what it is because of you.** We are excited to watch OSIG continue to grow and flourish in the years ahead, and we are deeply grateful for the memories and friendships formed along the way!

2024-2025 Executive Board

Nicolina Zappley, Megan Hsu, Regina Garvey, and Puvin Dhurairaj



Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

Fracture Conference*

Monday mornings at 7:30 AM in MEB 102 at RWJUH and via Zoom

Grand Rounds*

Thursday mornings at 7:30 AM in MEB 102 at RWJUH and via Zoom

***Dress code**: white coat, business casual. It is recommended that medical students sit in the first two rows of the lecture hall in MEB 102.

The link for the Department Calendar can be found here

Departmental Social Media

For residency **YouTube** click **here**

For residency **Instagram** click **@rutgersrwjortho**

Stay Up to Date on Everything OSIG!

OSIG Social Media

You can find recordings of our previous events in **OSIG playlist** on the Residency **YouTube** click **here**

For OSIG **Instagram** click **@rutgers.osig**

For OSIG **Linktr.ee** click **/Rutgers_OSIG**

For Alumni

- We are in the process of building and expanding our alumni network. Our goal is to have connections nationwide to benefit our students and graduates alike.

- If you would like to **update your contact information**, please click **here** or scan the following QR code:

- OSIG is committed to providing the best learning experiences for our students and growing a vibrant alumni community through networking events. If you would like to contribute to our cause, please use the following link to **make a donation** or scan the following QR code:

Special thank you to Yuri Han for her time and exceptional attention to detail in creating the artwork for the title page of this newsletter

Written By: Puvin Dhurairaj & Anisha Prakash

Edited By: Nicolina Zappley & Dr. Brian Katt