



The Oslerian

A Message from the President

Joan Richardson

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Most organizations and institutions operate either on the calendar year or the fiscal year. The American Osler Society's year ends with its annual meeting and begins when the enormous silver latch key is passed from the prior year's president to the new president. This year the latch key was passed on to me. It is a great honor to be selected to lead this very special group, and I accept it with gratitude and a good deal of trepidation. The upcoming year will bring many opportunities for growth, new initiatives, and strengthening our operations.

Although I have attended every AOS meeting since 2003, made my first presentation at the 2004 meeting held in Houston/Galveston, and did a five-year stint as AOS treasurer, many of you may be unfamiliar with my background, what I do, and how I came to be involved in the American Osler Society.

I was born and raised in San Angelo, a small town out in West Texas. It's not the end of the world, but you can see it from there. All my family—mother, father, sisters, aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins lived there. They all spoiled me rotten and let me run wild and do anything I wanted to do as long I didn't kill anybody, break the law, or do anything to embarrass the family.

Our family doctor, Dr. Powers delivered me and took care of me until I left for college. Rumor has it that when he delivered me, he looked at me and then looked at my mother and said, "Well, Mrs. Richardson, you can't get me for malprac-

tice on this one!" In those days, emergency room physicians were non-existent, so I had many off-hours meetings with Dr. Powers in the ER to get lacerations stitched up, a broken nose set (the result of an errant baseball), and various other broken bones and sprains attended to.

When I announced to my parents that I was going over to Austin for college, and then I was going to medical school to become a doctor, their first words were, "Well, you have to talk to Dr. Powers about that". So, I did, and it was a memorable meeting. When I told him what I had in mind, he reached around to his bookcase, grabbed his copy of *Dorland's Medical Dictionary*, handed it to me, and said, "In that case, you're going to need this". He was right about that. He then went on to say that at the current time, there are not very many women going into medicine, but that he thought that was going to change. And he was right about that as well. Then, he paused and stated, "Joan, my impression is that there are a lot of people around who would say that a woman going into medicine will have to be twice as smart and work twice as hard as a man to get half as far." Actually, I'm still trying to decide whether he was right about that or not.

After four years in Austin at the University of Texas, the epicenter of all things football, burnt orange and white, country-western, and Willie Nelson, I found myself at the University of Texas Medical Branch, Galveston in the freshman medical school class of 150 students--



**President
Joan Richardson
55th AOS President
Installed at the 2024 Annual
Business Meeting.**

President's Message (*Continued from page 1*)

-135 men and 15 women, and at that time the largest number of women ever to be admitted to UTMB. Dr. Powers was indeed prescient.

I have a great affection, in fact, an irrational affection for the University of Texas Medical Branch. UTMB raised me; taught me medicine; taught me how to be a doctor; and gave me wonderful role models. Like my parents, UTMB let me run wild and do just about anything I wanted to do. My first day on the faculty was July 1, 1974, and in those 50 years, UTMB has given me every opportunity and every position I could ever want—even some jobs I didn't want to do or didn't think I could do. But afterwards, I was glad for the chance to do them.

In 2001, Dr. John McGovern and then UTMB President, Dr. John Stobo had a shared vision and collaborated to establish the John P. McGovern Academy of Oslerian Medicine. Dr. McGovern's vision was to establish an academy consisting of members of the UTMB faculty who would dedicate a portion of their time to study and learn about the life and teachings of William Osler and then to develop and implement strategies to acquaint UTMB students and faculty with Osler, his contributions, and the lessons to be learned from his life. I don't know who selected the original six faculty or the criteria used for their selection, but I was fortunate to be one of those selected, and so began my ontogeny as an "Oslerphile" and my discovery of the American Osler Society. That is a good story, but for another time.

I am currently Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at UTMB and have held that position since 2008. By training, I am a pediatrician and neonatologist. What drew me back to UTMB 50 years ago from San Diego, California was the opportunity to start a neonatal intensive care unit from scratch. But that is another story for another time. My days as Chair are numbered now, as I have decided to step down once my successor is named. Retirement is not in the plans, however, and as soon as possible, I want to return to the NICU to take care of babies and spend more time teaching medical students. Being Chair has been an incredible experience, but that is also another story for another time.

I want to conclude this first edition of my "President's Message" by giving you my take on our 2024 meeting and sharing with you my plans for the upcoming year. Some of this information is a recapitulation of the material found in the minutes of our annual business meeting, but I think it is important information and worth repeating with a few embellishments.

This year's interesting, interactive, and highly successful meeting in Kansas City marked the conclusion of Rolando del Maestro's productive and innova-

tive presidency and marked the bittersweet conclusion of Renee Ziemer's remarkable fifteen-year tenure as Administrator of the AOS and the glue that has so effectively held the organization together.

The meeting was organized to promote more student involvement in the AOS. To do so, we held the meeting Saturday, Sunday, and Monday to enhance student attendance and diminish conflicts with their clerkship rotations. An afternoon session was added to the last day to allow for more abstract presentations. Through the support and generosity of Mario Molina, ten travel awards were funded to support conference attendance of ten students with the highest ranked abstract submissions. The AOS agreed to support travel in the amount of \$500 for two residents with the highest ranked abstracts. In addition, monetary awards in the amounts of \$1000, \$750, and \$500 were designated for the top three student presentations.

The Program Committee, including myself, Mike Malloy, Barbara Thompson, James Wright, Bob Mamlock, and Grayson Jackson reviewed 92 abstracts: 51 from students, including 6 Bean Award submissions; 6 from residents; and 35 from members and guests. Many thanks to the reviewers and to Renee Ziemer for their participation in the process of review and selection. Along the way, abstracts were withdrawn, and individuals selected encountered conflicts which prevented their attending the meeting. Ultimately, 56 total abstracts were presented by 26 students, including 3 Bean awardees; 3 residents; and 26 members and guests.

Of the 26 students, 15 were from the University of Texas Medical Branch; 4 from McGill; 3 from University of Kansas; and one each from University of Pennsylvania, University of South Florida, University of South Carolina, and University of Exeter. McGill swept the three monetary awards for student presentations with Yoel Yakobi, Meygan Brody, and Saman Arfaie garnering first, second, and third place, respectively.

The Bean Award Committee, the keepers of our flagship outreach program for medical students, announced the five award winners for the upcoming year. These were selected from thirty-eight applications, the largest number in AOS history. The awardees for the upcoming year are:

- Katherine Sheffield (UTMB, Galveston)
- Oscar Li (Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine)
- Ahmed Nahian (Lake Erie College of Osteopathic Medicine), Noah Hoonhout (New York Institute of Technology College of Osteopathic Medicine)

President's Message (Continued from page 2)

- Jacinta Lomba (Howard University College of Medicine}.

We look forward to hearing their presentations at next year's meeting.

Meeting attendees numbered about 110 and enjoyed an outstanding, interesting venue planned by Chris Crenner and his Local Arrangements Committee that included a reception at the University of Kansas Health Education Building on Saturday night and our banquet and Presidential Address at the World War I Museum and Memorial on Sunday night. Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the meeting. Special thanks to Pete Travers who spent his meeting attending to the audiovisual needs, making sure the slides appeared in a timely and accurate fashion, and fighting with some very combative microphones.

I hope everyone in attendance had an opportunity to meet our new Administrator, Lydia Lujan. Lydia lives in Pasadena, California and works in the offices of Mario Molina. She attended her first AOS meeting under the tutelage of Renee Ziemer. Renee will continue orienting Lydia through June, and Lydia is hard at work making plans for the 2025 AOS meeting scheduled for May 2-5, 2025, in Pasadena. Welcome aboard, Lydia.

Currently, the American Osler Society has just under 270 members, including Fellows, Active members, Emeritus members, Trainee members, and Honorary members. At the Kansas City meeting, we added 7 new Fellow members, 14 Active members, and 15 Trainee members.: Two Honorary members were also inducted: Lily Szczgiel, who for 34 years served as chief reference technician at McGill's Osler Library, and Renee Ziemer, whose work with the AOS is admired and appreciated by all of us.

Rolando del Maestro's innovative leadership in the past year to increase the engagement of students and residents in the AOS, humanities, and history of medicine has yielded very positive results as evidenced by trainee participation in the Kansas City meeting and their robust submission of high-quality abstracts. His leadership has also set the stage for the upcoming year, and I am committed to bringing the following initiatives begun and recommended in 2023-2024 to fruition in the upcoming year:

Pilot the Development of a Medical Student International Scholarship

This represents a collaboration between the American Osler Society and the London Osler Club to develop and pilot a scholarship, the goal of which is to interest medical students in North America and Europe in doing research in the history of medicine and humanities early in their careers with the hope that these experiences would result in long-term interest and scholarship in

these fields. A three-year pilot program is in development with 2 students per year at an estimated cost of \$6000 per year per student. Of the estimated \$36,000 needed, we have raised \$21,200 and will proceed in establishing the selection process.

Future Conferences Subcommittee

Mario Molina has agreed to chair this subcommittee to develop guidelines for our future AOS annual meetings. The costs incurred by the annual meeting are no longer covered by registration fees and donations and are no longer sustainable. We must re-evaluate our choice of location, hotels, food, evening events, transportation, and all other items associated with the meeting.

Fundraising Subcommittee

Tino Bernadett will be chairing this important subcommittee. Although a relatively small organization, we have great aspirations and to realize them, we will need to find additional funding. We are in the process of moving our endowment from Fidelity to Morgan Stanley to get a better return on our investment as well as more consistent investment advisory support. The subcommittee will also be considering other opportunities for fund raising including dues restructuring as well as opportunities for philanthropy.

Governance Subcommittee

James Wright, now First Vice-President, and I will be co-chairing this subcommittee, and our goal is to review the by-laws and terms of reference for all the committees. We will be talking with past and present committee chairs along with past and present officers seeking their advice as to needed updates and amendments to our operating rules. Suggestions from any of you would be most appreciated.

Annual Budget

We have never had a formal budget, but circumstances have finally overtaken us, and we must clearly estimate our annual revenues and expenses as accurately as possible and couple our fiscal management with our strategic objectives. I will be seeking assistance from our Treasurer Andrew Nadell, Lydia Lujan, and others including Renee Ziemer, in working to put this together very soon. I hope to have substantial progress in all these initiatives in the next 5 to 6 months and appreciate any feedback from the membership. Email me at jrich@utmb.edu.

It is indeed my honor to serve as the 55th President of the American Osler Society, and I look forward to the year ahead and to sharing my secrets, stories, and observations with you.



AOS Annual Business Meeting Kansas City, MO. May 6, 2024

[Dr. Rolando Del Maestro](#) called members to order. A moment of silence was called to commemorate members who have died during the previous year: Steven Berk, John Blair, and William Roberts. Also, Dr. Fye shared his best wishes to Dr. Jerry Barondess on behalf of the American Osler Society, who will turn 100 years of age in June 2024. Dr. Del Maestro called for additional agenda items, and none were identified. Minutes from the Annual Business Meeting on May 24, 2023, printed in *The Oslerian*, were approved after a motion for approval, second of the motion, and membership final approval.

The **Secretary's report** included report on minutes recorder in several meeting over previous 12 months.

The **treasurer's report was presented by Mario Molina on behalf of Andrew Nadell**. Despite having \$720,000 in the bank, expenses have been up. Last 2 meetings have been more expensive, and board made decision to have 2 administrative professionals (Renee and Lydia) over a limited period in an effort to facilitate a seamless transition. At this point we are trying to identify new revenue opportunities as well as expense reduction.

The **Finance Committee report was presented by Tino Bernadett**. Tino brought forward the proposal that the AOS banking be transferred to Morgan and Stanley for reasons which have been outlined previously. Tino felt that the returns on our investments (was 16% for last year, with a 10 year-average of 6% with Fidelity, expected to be significantly higher with Morgan and Stanley), and client interactions would improve with Morgan Stanley as compared to Fidelity. Morgan and Stanley would be able to provide significant help for the AOS during the future campaigns to raise further funds. Tino put forward this proposal at the Annual Business Meeting of the AOS on May 6th and this proposal was passed.

The **Oslerian editor's report was presented by Michael Malloy**. One change over the last year was to dedicate two pages of the Oslerian to scholarship produced by students. Another addition to how to display scholarship is the Blog that has been managed by Michael Stanley, which provides another alternative for dissemination of scholarship and manuscripts. Team still working on how to socialize blog and increase traffic to it. There was also discussion regarding the addition of an annual supplement with an associated DOI, in which selected abstracts can be developed into a manuscript and be indexed.

The **Nominating Committee report was presented by Chris Boes**. The report provided the following updates: Mike Jones (Past President 2020-2021), John Bullock, Becky Jones, Kelsey Klaas are rotating off BOG. Joan Richardson (President), Jim Wright (First Vice President), Gaby Frank (Secretary), Andrew Nadell (Treasurer), Rolando Del Maestro (Past President 2023-2024), Chris Boes (Past President 2022-2023), Robert Mennel (Past President 2021-2022), Bruce Hoekstra (2026), Susan Kelen (2025), Sutchin Patel (2025), Alice Rhoton-Vlasak (2026), Michael Stanley (2025), David Wolf (2026), Priya Dave

(*ex officio*), Michael Malloy (*ex officio*), Rob Stone (*ex officio*), Herbert Swick (*ex officio*), Leonard Wang (*ex officio*) are staying on BOG. The recommendations of the Nominating Committee for Board vacancies were approved as follows: Skip Harris as Second Vice-President; and Chris Crenner, Matthew Edwards, Tee Guidotti as members-at-large.

The **Membership Committee report was provided by Jim Wright**. There were **14 Active membership applications that were approved for 2023-4**: Ian Anderson, Sanjay Bindra, Noel Brownlee, Sachin Dave, Robert Dubin, Brian Garibaldi, John Jarrell, Mark Millard, Sarah Peart, Scot Remick, Katarina Sawtelle, Mindy Schwartz, Richard Wardrop, Jon Willen. The BOG voted and approved the following **7 Fellow membership applications**: Dennis Costakos, Richard Gunderman, John Looney, Hal Scofield, David Tate, Nadeem Toodayan, Zaheer Toodayan. There were **2 trainee membership through Bean Award approved**: Sophia Hu, Neevya Balasubramaniam. There were **13 non-Bean award trainee membership applications approved for 2023-4**: Julianne Cairns, Christopher Doan Noah Hoonhout, Melissa Houinsou, Jacob Jasper, Sachi Khemka, Ioannis Kournoutas, Grace Lee, Kedar Mate, Nathaniel Rogers, Luke Schwerdtfeger, Carine Tabak, Abicumaran Uthamacumaran. **The BOG voted and approved the nomination of Lily Szczygiel for Honorary Membership**. Lily was a reference librarian for the Osler Library for over 30 years.

The **Program Committee report was provided by Joan Richardson**. Joan thanked the local arrangement committee for all the hard work in organizing an outstanding meeting. Committee was chaired by Joan and included G. Jackson, M. Malloy, B. Mamlock, B. Thompson, and J Wright. Next year's meeting will be in Pasadena, CA in May 2-5, 2025, and will be chaired will be Jim Wright. This year's meeting was the first to run over a weekend with the intention to facilitate trainee's attendance. Also, students' presentations were preferentially scheduled for Saturday and Sunday. The majority of abstracts were presented by students.

The **William B. Bean Student Research Award Committee report was presented by Skip Harris**. One of the highlights was the automatization of the application process, which led to 65 started and 38 completed applications. Only 5 were selected for award, yet at least as many others would have been meritorious of award as well. Applications included students from 22 different medical schools, and awards included under-represented schools.

The **John P. McGovern Lectureship Committee report was provided by Chris Boes**. Dr. Emmet was the McGovern speaker in 2024.

The **Historian-Archivist's report was provided by Herbert Swick**. Osler library has re-opened, and AOS in collaboration with Osler library actively working on hiring an archivist. One additional accomplishment is that now there are 2 student members in the committee.

The **Publications & Media Activities Committee report was presented by Pete Travers**. Some difficulties with meeting registration website were identified and resolved. There is still not much traffic in website's blog, however web strategies are being considered to improve blog's visibility. All communications for the committee were conducted via e-mail.

Rolando Del Maestro provided the President’s report.

AOS subcommittees were created.

The Future Conference Sub-committee will be led by Mario Molina and will address not only venues, but also expenses, target audience, etc.

The Fundraising Subcommittee will be led by Tino Bernadett who will address fund raising opportunities, potential endowments, etc.

The Governance Subcommittee will be led by Jim Wright and was tasked to address optimal length of leading positions. It was discussed by many who have held leadership positions within the organization, and committee chairs that by the time they become familiar with tasks and implement changes, it is time to rotate off position. Other issues to consider will include terms of reference and committee structure.

The AOS/OCL Task Force and International Student Scholarship Program: The AOS communications will pilot the medical student program for student participation in research studies in England, 2 students a year for 3 years. A similar program is being considered by the OCL for medical students from England to do research in North America.

AOS member to be part of the Osler Library Board of Curators. Tino Bernadett was selected for the position with the expectation of attending all virtual meetings and one in-person meeting per year.

AOS Journal: Mario Molina and Mike Malloy discussed options for an AOS journal or modified Oslerian.

The following changes were made to AOS bylaws, both the Bean Award Chairperson and the Editor of the Oslerian Newsletter, will now be positions/ members of the BOG and this change will be one that the Governance subcommittee will consider implementing in the bylaws.

Another important discussion item was the consideration of an Osler Librarian Endowment campaign.

Rolando Del Maestro introduced Joan Richardson as AOS’s incoming president. Joan expressed her appreciation for Rolando Del Maestro (outgoing president) and adjourned meeting.

Upcoming American Osler Society Annual meeting will take place in Pasadena, California May 2-5, 2025. There is still no reserved venue for 2026’s meeting.



COMMITTEE	CURRENT CHAIR	CURRENT MEMBERS	NEW CHAIR	ROTATES OFF	NEW MEMBERS
Bean Award	J. Harris	K. Klaas, S. Moss, T. Frank	No change	K. Klaas, S. Moss, T. Frank	TBD
McGovern Award*	C. Boes	M. Jones, B. Mennel	R. Del Maestro	M. Jones	None
Lifetime Achievement Award	L. Drevlow	J. Howell, F. Neelon, H. Swick	No change	J. Howell	None
Nominating*	C. Boes	B. Mennel	R. Del Maestro	M. Jones	None
Finance	F. Bernadett	F. Bernadett, M. Molina, M. Stone	No change	No change	None
History & Archives Committee	H. Swick	S. Arfaie, R. Del Maestro, M. Hague-Yearl, D. Kratz, R. Stone, L. Wang	No change	None	None
Membership#	J. Wright	L. Geldenhuys, S. Kelen, P. Kernahan, D. Wolf,	J. Harris	J. Wright	TBD
Media & Technology Committee	P. Travers	G. Frank, J. Klaas, M. Malloy, M. Abdalla, J. Crevero, M. Stanley	No change	G. Huston	None
Annual Meeting† – Program Committee	J. Richardson	G. Jackson, M. Malloy, B. Mamlock, B. Thompson, J. Wright	J. Wright	G. Jackson, M. Malloy, B. Mamlock, J. Richardson B. Thompson	J Harris, TBD
Annual Meeting – Local Arrangements Committee	C. Crenner		M. Molina	C. Crenner	TBD

* Chaired by the most recent living Past President and include the 3 most recent living Past Presidents

Chaired by the Second Vice-President

† Chaired by the First Vice-President

YOUNG OSLERIAN VIEWS

Unveiling Osler's Legacy: A Student's Reflection on the Annual Meeting in Kansas City

By Jack Plewa

What an experience. What an honor. To be in the presence of so many amazing healers, all practicing or having practiced Oslerian medicine in their careers. Kansas City treated us well, allowing us to convene at the Westin at Crown Center, a beautiful and perfectly central location to share ideals, exchange stories, and talk history. From Dr. Bernard Karnath's insightful talk on Sir William Osler himself to Dr. Jong Lee's captivating presentation on the Mayo Brothers, the conference was a platform for rich discussions on influential figures who have shaped the landscape of modern medicine.

The meeting boasted 59 presentations across 9 different subject categories, showcasing a significant growth compared to the 27 papers presented at the 32nd annual meeting held in Kansas City in 2002. One particularly thought-provoking session was led by Dr. Michael Emmett, who presented the John P. McGovern Award Lecture, that delved into the intersection of medicine, genocide, Nazi atrocities, and postwar justice. His exploration of medical eponyms, including the renaming of conditions previously attributed to individuals associated with Nazi ideology, shed light on the ethical complexities within medical history. For instance, the renaming of Asperger's syndrome to autism spectrum disorder and Churg-Strauss syndrome to eosinophilic granulomatosis with polyangiitis, despite the latter's creators not being Nazis, exemplifies the broader impact of historical associations on medical nomenclature.

The William B. Bean Student Research Award recipients, including Sophia Hu, Saman Arfaie, and Neevya Balasubramaniam, presented engaging research spanning topics from gender affirmation surgery to Leonardo Da Vinci's medical contributions, enriching the conference with diverse perspectives. Building upon this diversity, the presentations were categorized under themes such as Osler Connections, Contemporary Discourse, and Museum Worthy. The presentations offered insights into various facets of medical history and practice. Of particular note was Grayson Jackson's discussion on the historical legacy

of transgender medicine in Galveston, TX, underscoring the ongoing importance of equitable healthcare access. Moreover, the Contemporary Discourse section featured presentations exclusively led by medical students, covering diverse topics from women's health to euthanasia and artificial intelligence. This underscores the vital role of the younger generation in driving discussions on modern medical issues and advocating for positive change in the healthcare landscape.

Amidst the intellectual discourse, the conference also provided opportunities for networking, cultural exploration, and culinary delights. Attendees enjoyed complimentary meals and optional receptions at notable local landmarks, such as the University of Kansas Medical Center and the National World War I Museum and Memorial, enriching the overall experience beyond the academic realm.

Exploring Kansas City's vibrant culture, from its bustling free streetcar to quaint tea houses, added an extra layer of enjoyment to the conference experience. The city's charm complemented the scholarly pursuits, creating a memorable blend of academic and leisure activities. As I left Shang's Tea House with only a cup of tea in hand, my bank account breathed a sigh of relief, knowing it had escaped the temptation of beautifully crafted jewelry and Japanese tea sets. Overall, attending the annual meeting of the American Osler Society was a rewarding experience. It offered not only academic enrichment but also cultural immersion and networking opportunities. From the socio-medical history of hotdog eating contests to William Osler's views on medical hypnotism, there was a plethora of topics to engage in productive discourse.

As I reflect on the wealth of knowledge shared and connections made, I look forward to future conferences and the continued exploration of Oslerian principles in modern medicine. If you're interested in delving further into the abstracts presented, visit the Osler Society website here. Stay tuned for further details and application information later this year regarding the upcoming annual meeting, scheduled to take place in Pasadena, CA from May 2nd to 5th, 2025.

Jack Plewa is a second year medical student in an MD-PhD program at the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas.

YOUNG OSLERIAN VIEWS



Student Presence at Kansas City Meeting Readily Apparent

This year’s AOS Meeting hosted an abundance of medical students, residents, and fellows. Of the 57 abstracts presented, 26 were presented by students. Topics ranged from the history of anesthesia (Mary Weaver-UTMB), Frontier Medicine (Chris Richter-UTMB), Palliative Care and Euthanasia (Meygan Brody-McGill), to Transgender Surgery (Bean Winner, Sophia Hu-U. Penn). A number of student abstracts demonstrated a contemporary subject matter flavor, from gender affirming surgery and care to examining the impact of technology on the evolution of contemporary medicine.

Student presence was apparent at receptions as well as the presentation sessions and provided a boost to the energy of the meeting. I very much enjoyed my first AOS conference experience. First year medical

student Nikki Sheffield (UTMB) commented, “it was a great opportunity to meet fellow UTMB Osler student scholars and interact with UTMB faculty as well as get to know Oslerian student and faculty devotees from other institutions. I learned a lot from the presentations, was very well fed (☺), and got to spend some time exploring the culture of Kansas City. Overall, I had a wonderful experience and can’t wait for next year’s conference in Pasadena, CA.” Varesh Gorabi, a 2nd year student at UTMB commented, “I was a first-time AOS meeting attendee, and it was such a wonderful experience to be surrounded by medical professionals who also value the humanities and the lessons history can present. The talks were fascinating and mind-opening. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this unique interdisciplinary and intergenerational conference.

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Dr. Arisbei Pérez and his wife, Dr. Liuba Borrero. *Right:* Dr. Perez Zooming with CSB, “el viejo profesor,” on 14 October 2023.

Journal of an Oslerian

Un Estudiante de Santiago de Cuba

Last fall, I received an e-mail message from Arisbei Pérez, a third-year internal medicine resident at the Hospital Militar Joaquín Castillo Duany in Santiago de Cuba. He had read one of my articles on Sir William Osler and wanted to know more. This led to a regular and mutually rewarding correspondence, including Zoom sessions. I have sent him various articles and books, and he is spreading “the Osler flame” among his fellow residents.

Arisbei’s command of English surpasses my facility with Spanish, but accurate communication remains a bit challenging. I therefore sent him questions, to which he responded in Spanish. Mercedes Lopez Rodriguez, who teaches Spanish at the University of South Carolina, translated his responses into English. Presented here are my questions and his responses.

Where were you born, who were your parents, and what did they do?

My parents, still alive, are named Alcida and José Enrique. My mother worked as housewife, and my father worked as a veterinarian in the region, but he was also a lover of traditional Cuban music; he played the “tres” [a three-course chordophone of Cuban origin, usually with six strings]. My mother and he ended their relationship before my birth. I grew up with my mother and my grandparents.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in the town of San Benito de Mayarí with my small primary school and a basic secondary school. I remember my frequent visits to the institution's library.

How did you decide to be a physician?

From a very young age, I decided to become a doctor. My family was always closely tied to illness (my mother and my uncles had congenital myopia; my grandfather had coronary artery disease). My grandfather was dedicated to making home remedies and curing certain diseases with traditional methods (he was highly regarded in the community). From a young age, I saw people coming in sick and leaving recovered. One day I watched a graduation of doctors on television, and it moved me so much that I decided to “someday

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be like them."

How did you decide to concentrate in internal medicine?

It is hard to say, during my early years in medical school, I was a fan of Dr. House because he knew precisely "What's wrong with the patient?" This has always been interesting to me. Being able to embark on that endless journey from symptom to diagnosis. My professors at the university, inheritors of the clinical method, also motivated me with their rounds.

What are your favorite areas in internal medicine?

Several areas pique my interest, including hematology, rheumatology, and, above all, infectious diseases.

Tell me about your wife, and what she does.

My wife and I met in pre-university, but it was during the fourth year of medical school that we reconnected and got married. We have been married for five years. She is a specialist in pediatrics. She practices at the Hospital Infantil sur Dr. Antonio María Béquiez César in Santiago de Cuba.

Do you have any hobbies? Tell me about them.

My principal hobby is reading. I love immersing myself in a good book during my free time.

Of the books and articles that I have sent you, which are your favorites and why?

"Aequanimitas" is undoubtedly my favorite book. At the time I corresponded with you, I was going through a difficult time in my career. Burnout and heavy patient loads were looming over me. Reading Osler was touching. I had read him digitally before, but it was not the same. Reading him in physical form, being able to touch it, gave it added value. That rekindled the flame that was being extinguished. Understanding that this profession is full of sacrifices.

What are some of your favorite quotations from Sir William Osler's writings, from your reading of The Quotable Osler?

If I had to choose a quote from "The Quotable Osler," I would go with these:

Number 140—Tolerating uncertainty:

An anxious feature of the life into which you are about to enter, a feature that will press hardly upon the finest spirits among you and ruffle their equanimity, is the uncertainty which pertains not alone to our science and art, but to the very hopes and fears which make us men. In seeking absolute truth, we aim

at the unattainable and must be content with finding broken portions.

Number 223—Medicine is the only worldwide profession:

Medicine is the only worldwide profession, following the same methods, acting with the same ambitions, and pursuing the same ends. This homogeneity, which is its most striking characteristic, is not shared by law or by the Church, at least not to the same degree.

Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

I would like to thank you for taking the time to respond to a simple resident, and for igniting my curiosity about the history of medicine and ethics. For showing me that the art of medicine is global and that wherever medicine is loved, humanity will also be loved.

I rejoice especially in Arisbei's enthusiasm for the *Aequanimitas* collection of Osler's essays, having sent him my spare copy of the 2004 Spanish translation by the late Dr. Manuel Fuster Siebert (1944–2008). Dr. Fuster, a pediatric cardiologist who practiced at the University of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Spain, also translated into Spanish Michael Bliss's 1999 biography of Osler, the 2001 annotated compilation of Osler's essays by Shigeaki Hinohara and Hisae Niki's, and the 1908 *Alabama Student* compilation of Osler's biographical essays. Is there a need for a Spanish translation of *The Quotable Osler*?

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More AOS Meeting Student Experiences

Presenting at this year's AOS conference in Kansas City has been one of the highlights of my medical school experience so far. I'm so grateful to the AOS, to McGill's Osler Library, and to the Del Maestros in particular for allowing my entry into the world of the medical humanities—I truly feel as though I've found my niche. Working on my own project and learning from the research of other presenters led me to reflect on—and challenge—some fundamental medical concepts. I've grown in my critical thinking skills, in my understanding of what it means to heal and to give care to others, and in my appreciation for the evolution of medical practice through time.

Meygan Brody, M.D., C.M. Candidate 2026 McGill University

Oslerian Opinions

On the Way to Extinction Medicine

By Devin Kellis

Beginning

“Where did we come from?” As a newly minted undergraduate teeming with existential crises, I often considered such questions. Unabating curiosity, a desire to help others, and supportive advisors steered me towards applying to MD-PhD programs. Concurrently, in December 2016, my inquisitiveness led me to study Macquarie University’s massive open online course, “Big History: Connecting Knowledge” on Coursera.

As popularized by Professor David Christian, the topic had caught the eye, and pockets, of Microsoft co-founder and billionaire Bill Gates. The course spanned the big bang to the deep future, including lights out for humanity. In the last sentence of my last essay for the course, I adopted an aim to “... apply and build on this knowledge in a way that will promote a positive future for humanity.”

Later, in 2017, I stumbled upon Oxford philosopher Nick Bostrom’s 2013 paper, “Existential Risk Prevention as Global Priority,” in the journal *Global Policy*. After reading it alongside Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entries on metaphysics and the nature of time, I found myself more curious than viscerally engaged.

Unknown to me at the time, Bostrom’s Future of Humanity Institute was home to two burgeoning, billionaire-funded, and consequentialist leaning moral philosophies-turned-social movements: Effective Altruism (EA) and longtermism. The former argues for applying rationality to do the most good one can, while the latter claims that this means acting to ensure humanity’s long-term future goes astronomically well.

Oxford philosophers William MacAskill, Toby Ord, and Hilary Greaves have been central to both movements.

Renaissance

Fast forward to 2022, a year marred by COVID-19, climate change, and escalating nuclear tensions. These global health threats held prime mental real estate for me, now a third year MD-PhD student in Biomedical Science (Neuroscience Track) at the University of South Carolina School of Medicine Columbia. Meliorative health care efforts focused mainly on existing patients, here and now (e.g., vaccination campaigns, the planetary health movement, and efforts by the International Physicians for the

Prevention of Nuclear War).

Around mid-year, David Christian’s new book, *Future Stories*, re-exposed me to existential risk vis-à-vis content in Toby Ord’s book, *The Precipice*. Compared to health care, Ord shows more concern about the impact of global threats on future generations and their long-term potential (e.g., becoming “posthuman” and spacefaring). However, according to the website Giving What We Can, he also donates much of his income to “global development and poverty.”

By August 2022, having now viscerally appreciated humanity’s vulnerability, I started conceptualizing what I called “extinction medicine.” The same month, I e-mailed Émile Torres, then philosophy PhD student at Leibniz University Hannover whose writing forewarned of longtermism’s consequentialist bend. I asked to join his upcoming winter 2022-2023 course on the ethics of human extinction. Surprisingly, he said yes.

According to Time magazine’s Charlotte Alter, several years earlier, in 2013, MacAskill had encouraged a young Sam Bankman Fried (SBF) to get rich and fund charities. SBF’s later cryptocurrency exchange FTX earned billions and financed the FTX Future Fund, a philanthropy aiming to preserve humanity’s long-term future (also advised by MacAskill). During Émile’s course, FTX collapsed due to SBF’s fraud.

Émile’s earlier arguments garnered some legitimacy.

The Extinction Thesis

In March 2023, Dr. Charles Bryan was making his usual rounds, kindly greeting students in the library, asking what they were up to. When approached, I told him of my work related to establishing the prevention of human extinction as a goal of medicine. He showed great interest. Soon, we were writing together.

Our first article, co-authored with Daniel Sokol, President of the Osler Club of London, focused on how physicians might fill the gulf between the field of “Existential Risk Studies” and medicine in the historical context of Sir William Osler. The piece ended up in the *BMJ* and, while it was under review, a windfall from *The Pharos* materialized.

Dr. Bryan was asked to write a companion to Dr. Jerry Fisher’s publication, “Osler’s Deadliest Diagnosis.” He invited me to join. The timeline was tight. I provided comments, although my contribution was chiefly conceptual. We ended the article with a

Opinions and Poetry

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variant of what I call the Extinction Thesis: “contributing to the postponement of human extinction should, we suggest, be included among the goals of medicine.”

The thesis conceals many intricacies, some more obvious than others. For example, consider whether *Homo sapiens*’ evolution into another species counts as an extinction to be postponed by health care professionals. This is quite different from aiming to prevent an extinction involving mass morbidity and mortality.

Further, adopting an evolutionary definition of health could imply that preventing the termination of our species’ lineage is *the* goal of medicine.

54th Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society

Dr. Bryan encouraged me to present similar ideas at the 54th Annual Meeting of the American Osler Society. I was unfamiliar with the society and had concerns about the effect of flying on the environment, but I agreed. Dr. Bryan unfortunately could not attend.

The crux of the first half of the talk, largely Dr. Bryan’s conceptualization, concerned the concept of *technê* (i.e., craft or profession).

I drew parallels between philosophy and medicine’s struggles for disciplinary hegemony during the Greek Enlightenment, which Dr. Bryan informed me of, and what might emerge between EA, long-termism, and medicine. These three efforts share the common goal of health promotion. However, stronger forms of longtermism may imply that medicine’s emphasis on existing rather than future generations is wrongheaded.

This dovetailed into EA, longtermism, and Osler’s shared concern with the “Promethean gap” (i.e., a presumptive gap between humanity’s technology and wisdom). The threat environment preceding Osler’s 1919 proclamation that, “there must be a very different civilization or there will be no civilization at all,” was also likened to ours today.

While Osler suggested that the virtues of philanthropia, philotechnia, and philosophia may foster a better civilization, I asked, “does medicine need a new *technê*?” This was with respect to human extinction, and I argued that the answer was yes.

After all, no socially recognized profession has explicitly adopted a duty to postpone, or prevent, human extinction (however one might define it). Likewise, no existing code of ethics orients such an



POETRY CORNER



In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies
blow
Between the crosses, row on
row,

That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grown
In Flanders fields.

In remembrance of the AOS Annual Meeting visit to the WWI Museum in Kansas City, MO., on May 5th 2024. Poet: John McCrae (1872-1918) born in Ontario, Canada was a poet, soldier, and physician.

effort towards beneficence and the minimization of social harm. These are realities that I find absurd.

I ended by proposing a new *technê*, extinction medicine.

Extinction Medicine: End or beginning?

Émile recently summarized career struggles of mine with a question, “how is it that one works within a field that doesn’t exist?” This has been a challenge for me due to doctoral program requirements that limit interdisciplinarity.

I have received a surprising amount of support from program administrators. However, surprisingly, human extinction has been viewed by some as not “biomedical enough.” My program also requires experimentation, which I made two attempts at through the lens of Terror Management Theory and implicit bias research. For better or worse, I am now pursuing a master’s instead of a doctoral degree.

There may be room for optimism. Submissions are open for an American Medical Association Journal of Ethics special issue entitled *Existential Health Care Ethics*. Slated for release in August 2025, it will consider questions of import to the concept of extinction medicine.



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This year’s meeting was notable for the large medical student presence. Of the 92 abstracts submitted 44 came from medical students and there were 26 student presentations. The youthful presence made for exhilarating conversation and hope for the future of the American Osler Society.

Looking Ahead to Pasadena, CA



The 55th meeting of the American Osler Society (AOS) will be held in Pasadena, California, from May 2-5, 2025. We enthusiastically await your arrival. The weather in Pasadena is usually perfect at this time of year. Save the date now!

Call for Abstracts for 2025 Annual Meeting in Pasadena, CA, May 2-5, 2025

Abstracts should be sent by e-mail to: administrator@americanosler.org and must be received by 15 November 2024. Abstracts submitted by e-mail will be acknowledged. Detailed submission guidelines will appear in the August *Oslerian*.



The AMERICAN OSLER SOCIETY exists to bring together members of the medical and allied professions, who by common inspiration are dedicated to memorialize and perpetuate the just and charitable life, the intellectual resourcefulness, and the ethical example of Sir William Osler, who lived from 1849 to

We’re on the Web!

√ us out at: www.americanosler.org

AOS Members — Please forward to the editor information worth sharing with one another as well as “Opinions and Letters”. - MHM (mmalloy@utmb.edu)