

American Association for the Surgery of Trauma Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee essay contest: voices of the future

Karen Brasel

The American Association for the Surgery of Trauma Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (AAST DEI) committee was established in 2019 by President David Spain. The work of the committee furthers the mission of the AAST: the AAST is dedicated to discovery, dissemination, implementation, and evaluation of knowledge related to acute care surgery (trauma, surgical critical care and emergency general surgery) by fostering research, education and professional development in an environment of fellowship, collegiality, inclusion, diversity and equity.

One of the objectives of the committee is to provide career development opportunities for surgeon scholars and leaders from diverse backgrounds. The path to scholarship and leadership begins early, and one of the committee's first activities was to sponsor an essay contest for medical students, residents and fellows that we hoped would go along with attendance at the 2020 AAST meeting. We will have to wait to welcome the outstanding winners of the essay contest in person but are thrilled to be able to publish their essays here. Their words and voices are powerful.

These four outstanding essays responded to one of the following two prompts:

1. How can diversity, equity and inclusion be improved in acute care surgery/the AAST?
2. Why I am interested in/have chosen acute care surgery as my career/how I want to impact the field of acute care surgery?

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FIRST PLACE

Voices of the trauma bay

Manuela Ochoa, MD, was born in Pereira, Colombia. She graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and a Master of Public Health. She obtained her MD from Texas A&M College of Medicine and is currently a second-year general surgery resident at UT Southwestern Medical Center hoping to specialize in trauma/critical care. She is also a former Peace Corps Volunteer with a passion for culture, languages and art, and hopes to work in global surgery.

Rethinking diversity, equity and inclusion in an acute care surgery setting

Pranaya Terse is currently a second-year medical student at the University of Maryland, School of Medicine. She graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park with a biochemistry degree in 2018.

SECOND PLACE

An opportunity

Jacob Kirkorowicz, MD, completed his undergraduate studies at New York University, his master's degree in Global Health at Duke University and his Doctor of Medicine Degree at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is now a trainee in general surgery at Kaweah Delta Healthcare District in Visalia, California. Jacob is passionate about trauma surgery, critical care medicine and providing surgical services to underserved patient populations.

Diversity, equity and inclusion in acute care surgery: a multifaceted approach

Bethany Strong, MD, MS, completed her medical education at Harvard Medical School in 2012 followed by general surgery residency at Brigham and Women's Hospital finishing in 2019.

During her surgical residency research years, she additionally completed a Preventive Medicine residency at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, where she focused on injury and violence prevention through work at the Maryland Department of Health, Baltimore City Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and advocacy on Capitol Hill. She is currently a second-year acute care surgery fellow at University of Maryland Medical Center. Dr Strong is a board-certified preventive medicine physician and general surgeon working as an advocate for social change.

Contributors I wrote this as an intro for the American Association for the Surgery of Trauma Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (AAST DEI) essay contest on behalf of the DEI committee. There should actually be no author listed other than the AAST DEI committee. The focus should be on the contest winners.

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Author note The CONTRIBUTORS section MUST be eliminated

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