



KERN NATIONAL NETWORK
FOR FLOURISHING IN MEDICINE
Character. Caring. Practical Wisdom.

KNN Connection | April 6, 2023



KNN Students Lead Change as Future Physicians at Conference

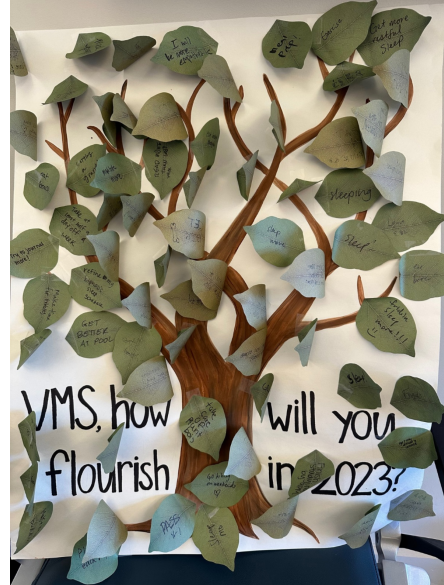


Last month, KNN students convened at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN, for the first KNN Student Conference. Developed for and by KNN students, the conference served as a space for learners to discuss their experiences in medical school, address challenges they encounter as future physicians and create the essential space to envision a brighter future for the field of medicine.

Over 50 medical students across 15 schools attended the inaugural conference, with sessions organized by over 20 student leaders from KNN student chapters across the nation. Activities

centered around the [KNN framework for flourishing](#) and [Kotter's Change Model](#), deepening engagement by training and inspiring the next generation to transform clinical learning environments and advance flourishing throughout their journeys in medicine.

Upon arrival, students were met with a poster displaying a tree—similar to the KNN framework for flourishing—where Vanderbilt students had shared ways they want to flourish this year.



Throughout the conference, learners had many opportunities to consider the question, "what does flourishing mean to you?" and share their thoughts. For KNN student officer Natalie Stratton from the Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW), flourishing is the sweet spot.

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"Flourishing to me is the sweet spot.

It's the sweet spot between searching for your perfect place/environment but also blooming where you're planted. It's the sweet spot between being passionate and dedicated to something you love while still recognizing that it's just one part of your complex/multifaceted identity.

It's the sweet spot between working hard and consciously leaving space for creativity, exploration, and play. It's the sweet spot where purpose, initiative, joy and connection all cross paths.

It's the balance, meeting point, Venn diagram, and sweet spot that "fills your cup" to help you thrive."

NATALIE STRATTON
MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN

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During the three-day conference, faculty supported the event. As one example, Travis Crook, MD, of the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine helped turned student visions into reality. Using a glass jar analogy activity, Dr. Crook used rocks to represent core values, gemstones as elements that bring joy and sand to signify the fluctuating responsibilities of daily life. Both jars held the same amount of items, but the purpose of the activity showed that prioritizing core values and things that bring joy first will ultimately preserve balance amongst the ebbs and flows of life.



From beginning to end, student-led sessions demonstrated an understanding of the contributions learners can make, and the importance of evaluating systems in place by forming strategic visions to enact change. KNN student officer Munachimso Uzodike of Dell Medical School co-led a workshop titled “Removing Obstacles” which emphasized that the prevention of physician burnout in practice starts in the clinical learning environment.

MCW student Julia Bosco led the “Where Do We Go from Here?” final brainstorming session and introduced the concept of overcoming situational inertia—by building a guiding coalition between rising M3s with M1s/M2s, students aim to stay connected and learn from each other with hopes to exponentially grow the student network.

Using the KNN framework for flourishing, Kotter’s Change Model and [KNN Online Community](#), students talked through methods to implement future conversations on equity in medical institutions and ways to partner with existing like-minded organizations. Students also introduced pre-planning ideas for the 2024 KNN Student Conference, like integrating more faculty with students to learn and grow alongside each other in medical education.

Flourishing Student Awards were presented via certificates recognizing students who most embodied the key constructs of the KNN’s work—character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing—during the conference. MCW student Chase LaRue received the most peer nominations and KNN student officer Olivia Viscuso of Dell Medical School had the second-most nominations.

After the conference, students expressed feeling welcomed, respected and valued, and aimed to apply session takeaways at their schools’ KNN chapters. KNN colleagues Tara Fikejs and Joëlle Worm attended the event to support learners. Both witnessed first-hand the hard work, time and dedication that students invested into making the inaugural conference a success.

“Originally, this conference was scheduled just days after COVID-19 shut everything down, but it came back bigger and better! I am grateful to have been a part of this project and it added to my flourishing to witness the students’ camaraderie, creativity, leadership and openness. The students embody what character, caring and flourishing means for their profession, themselves and the community—the future of medicine is in good hands.”



- Tara Fikejs, BSBM

Congratulations to the KNN student leaders for hosting a fruitful inaugural conference! We anticipate the transformational work you will continue to plan and apply throughout your journey as change agents within the profession of medicine.

More on the KNN Student Network

The KNN student network offers engagement opportunities through chapters at eight local sites, with additional sites coming soon. Other opportunities include the virtual KNN [Becoming](#) event series and the KNN [online community student group](#).

KNN CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS DEADLINE APPROACHING

KNN Conference Call for Abstracts — Deadline Next Week

Are you working to advance character, caring, practical wisdom and/or flourishing in medicine? Do you have a promising program or innovative practice to share?

We are accepting submissions for the KNN Conference in the form of:

- Presentations
- Workshops
- Roundtables
- Posters



Learn More and Submit

Submit your work by **next Friday, April 14, 2023**, and share the call with colleagues and learners working in spaces encompassed by the [KNN framework for flourishing](#).

FOSTERING AN OPEN INQUIRY MINDSET

National Week of Conversation

April 17-23 marks [National Week of Conversation](#), which emphasizes dialogue as a way of overcoming division and cultivating connection. In the spirit of transformative conversations, the [KNN Bridging Initiative](#) team has developed a postcard on fostering an open inquiry mindset. Share this resource with your

Cultivating an Open Inquiry Mindset

- Open to learning from others and taking an interest in their perspectives
- Committed to seeking truth
- Willing to challenge my own and others' assumptions
- Respect different points of view
- Practice intellectual humility

Adapted from the Courageous Dialogue Toolkit by Barbara Whitlock and Karen E. Butler with Deborah Turner Kie and Catherine Lantry

Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine

Learn more at: knncharactermedicine.org

team electronically or download the print file with crop marks to produce an 8.5" x 5.5" postcard.

Digital Postcard

Print File

UPDATES, EVENTS & RESOURCES

Updates

Attending a GEA Conference This Spring? Meet Up With KNN Colleagues!

The KNN's Kimara Ellefson will be speaking at regional AAMC GEA conferences this spring:

- **NEGEA:** April 13-15 | Burlington, VT
- **CGEA:** April 18-20 | Indianapolis, IN

If you are attending or in the area and would like to meet up with KNN colleagues for dinner, please let us know. [Email Suzette Svoboda-Newman](mailto:Suzette.Svoboda-Newman@mcw.edu) with interest.

Join the KNN Team!

The KNN program office is growing and looking to add a [Learning Consortium Program Manager](#) and a [Communications Consultant](#) to the team. We welcome applications through the links provided here.

Upcoming Events

April 28, 2023, Virtual | MCW Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education | Understanding Medical Professional Identity and Character Development Symposium

In this symposium, the Kern Institute at Medical College of Wisconsin will convene medical education researchers, instructors and others to engage on the state of professional identity formation research, the goals, and interests of attendees, going beyond the confines of reductionist approaches. The fully virtual session will run from 8:00 am - 12:30 pm CT.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

May 3 - 5, 2023, Washington, D.C. | 2023 AAMC Health Workforce Research Conference

The AAMC conference is the premier gathering of researchers, educators and policymakers to discuss emerging issues related to the nation's health workforce. This year's theme is: The Next Normal: How Do We Make It Better for the Health Workforce? The conference will return to an in-person format with a limited virtual attendance option.

[LEARN MORE >](#)

Resources

- [Transformational Times, March 31, 2023](#) | MCW's Kern Institute for the Transformation of Medical Education publishes the *Transformational Times* e-newsletter weekly to deliver stories of hope, character and resilience from its community.



- [Fostering True Diversity for Excellence in Medicine](#) | Richard Gunderman, MD, PhD, explores ways to rethink medical education and how learners can maximize their fullest potential in caring for others.
- [Take 5: Providing Support for Learners Who Are Lactating \(Video\)](#) | Watch Mayo Clinic's Dr. Venk Bellamkonda provide five tips for supporting and creating caring systems for lactating learners.
- [Introduction to Global Human Flourishing](#) | Hear perspectives from the Global Scientific Conference on Human Flourishing on how people flourish across cultures alongside innovative strategies.

About the Kern National Network

The **Kern National Network for Flourishing in Medicine (KNN)** is a national movement focused on integrating four foundational elements within the profession of medicine: character, caring, practical wisdom and flourishing. We advance this work by connecting and convening stakeholders across the health ecosystem, catalyzing transformative initiatives, and influencing policy and systems change.

Kern National Network | knn@mcw.edu | [website](#)



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