



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

## KNN Connection | April 17, 2025

# ENACTING A FLOURISHING FUTURE IN MEDICINE

### Reflecting on the 2025 KNN Student Conference



Last month, KNN students gathered at Creighton University School of Medicine in Phoenix, AZ, for the third annual **KNN Student Conference**. Organized for and by KNN students, over 130 medical students from across 36 institutions were in attendance. This year, the conference theme “Connect, Advocate, Inspire: Enacting a Flourishing Future in Medicine,” encouraged students to support one another in self-reflection toward fulfilling their professional purpose and to learn advocacy skills to apply to their medical school setting.

KNN program office members Joëlle Worm, Lamya Augusthy and Justine Espisito attended to support the student-led conference. Throughout the three-day event, a common theme that repeatedly emerged was “relationships” and how critically necessary they are to prioritize in life; the conference gave learners spaces to be vulnerable and delve into topics they otherwise would not often get to explore in clinical learning settings.

Conference sessions centered around the topics of reframing failure, building flourishing into a resume, aligning one’s core values in leadership, examining

advocacy case studies in healthcare, how to hold difficult conversations and more. A poster session gave students the opportunity to network with peers from around the country, exchange ideas and share activities and resources that support flourishing in medicine.



Medical students shared highlights from the weekend that included:



***"Engaging with other students from different medical school backgrounds; doing activities rather than solely listening to a presenter instilled reflection that created a change in the way that I think."***

***"I enjoyed the presentation styles—the way that we held space for growth and created a safe space for people that don't usually reflect to reflect and think deeper. I appreciated the honesty, the vulnerability, the [genuineness.]"***

Over 80 students in attendance were new to the KNN and expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about the [KNN Framework](#) through a framework workshop. Members of the planning group and the student chapter posters further provided concrete insight and application in the subsequent sessions.

One of the final sessions of the weekend catalyzed flourishing for the year ahead. Students used learnings from the previous sessions and put them into action while planning the upcoming 2025-2026 academic year as a KNN student chapter. Learners reflected on what kind of culture they hope to cultivate at their institution, how to enact steps towards those changes and what knowledge will be necessary to strengthen chapter impact.



A post-conference survey posed the question, "What is something you want to commit to for yourself, this community and your medical school after attending the Student Conference?" Among others, learner responses included:



***"Encouraging empathy and introspection within medical training."***

***"Leading with bravery."***

***"Learning ways my medical school can flourish that I may not have noticed before."***

***"Continuing work with the KNN organization as it is the best thing to happen in medical school."***

We commend the Student Conference Planning Group who organized a conference of this magnitude.

**Get Involved in the KNN Learner Network**



# UPDATES, EVENTS & RESOURCES

## Updates

### Welcome to the KNN Team!

**Ryan Hollis**, Administrative Associate, will maintain the schedule of KNN National Director of Strategy and Partnerships Kimara Ellefson, MBA, and support the organization's operational goals and activities.



**Desirae Bartos, MPH**, Program Coordinator for Organizational Engagement, will coordinate program outreach activities, serve as a liaison with partner organizations, and provide support and guidance to the team to facilitate the achievement of strategic priorities.



**Anna Hassell**, Administrative Assistant Sr., will perform administrative duties while coordinating and leading projects as support for the KNN program office.



### Sign Up for KNN Learning Consortium Launch Updates

Coming in 2025, the KNN will launch the **KNN FOREST**—a learning ecosystem, home to relational learning through virtual and in-person experiences. Offering webinars, workshops, courses and more, the learning consortium will focus on deeply grounding participants in the [KNN Framework](#) and creating a strong foundation for embracing, embodying, and embedding its elements. [Sign up to receive launch updates](#).

Have an update to share? Please [email us](#).

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## Upcoming Events

**April 23-25, Phoenix, AZ | AAMC GBA/GIP Joint Spring Meeting**  
KNN's Kimara Ellefson, MBA, Joëlle Worm, MPA, and Nina Johnston, MMed, will lead a professional development workshop Wednesday, April 23, on "Recasting Change Management, Culture and Wellness."  
[LEARN MORE >](#)



**April 24-25, Winston-Salem, NC | Cultivating Character & Connection in Medical Education**  
KNN colleague Christine K. Cassel, MD, will serve as the opening keynote speaker and Kimara Ellefson, MBA, will provide the closing keynote. Alverno Devine, DDiv, and Marissa Kalkman, MS, are set to present a workshop with the Wake Forest School of Medicine bridging team.  
[LEARN MORE >](#)

**April 28-30, Miami, FL | Joint SGEA/SGSA/SOSR Regional Conference**  
Join the panel discussion "Flourishing in Medicine: Do We Need More Personal Days or Perspectives?" Additionally, a workshop will take place on KNN student chapters at the University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine, Dell Medical School at The University of Austin at Texas, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Wake Forest School Of Medicine, University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine and Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (NSU MD).  
[LEARN MORE >](#)

**May 8-10, Seattle, WA | Association for Surgical Education Annual Meeting**  
The KNN will be exhibiting at this event. Find and connect with Program Manager Nina Johnston, MMed, to learn more about our mission to advance flourishing.

## Resources

- [Hobbies for Doctors: Why You Should Nurture Your Passions \(Article\)](#) | Check out this article by KNN-engaged resident Ajibike Lapite, MD, on the importance of investing in hobbies as doctors.
- [Humanizing Geisel: Path to Family Medicine Residency \(Audio\)](#) | KNN student Tamar Mosulishvili hosts *Humanizing Geisel: The Podcast*. Listen to this episode with 4th year medical students Micah Trautwein and Mary Harris of Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth as they discuss their journey to family medicine, the application process and more.



## 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](mailto:knn@mcw.edu) | [website](#)



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