

Luke Ong – OMS-III

A.T. Still University School of Osteopathic Medicine in Arizona

The osteopathic profession experienced two strange moments in the spotlight in 2020. Firstly, osteopaths received attention because the Physician to the 45th President is an osteopath; this sparked confusion among the public, many suggesting that the POTUS switch his care from a “bone doctor” to an infectious disease expert. Secondly, the scrubs brand FIGS released a confusing commercial which seemingly portrayed women and osteopaths as “dumber” than their male and allopathic counterparts.

While these two incidents certainly weren’t the worst things to come out of 2020, they do emphasize the public’s general misunderstanding of our profession, and a lack of advocacy from osteopaths. I have been advocating for the osteopathic profession since I joined medical school with the goal of increasing public awareness of the osteopathic profession and promoting self-care among osteopaths.

I am a member of MiMentor, a program that pairs an interested pre-med high school student from an underserved population with medical students. In addition, I am a member of the Strategic and Intentional Mentorship program, a similar program that works with minority college pre-meds. Through both programs, I give advice as to how to navigate the medical school application process, MCAT studying tips, and education as to the difference between allopathic and osteopathic schools. It is my goal to promote awareness of the osteopathic profession and to encourage others to join our noble cause. I actively participate in the Arizona Osteopathic Medical Association, and most recently participated in the AOMA 40th Annual Fall Seminar as a Student Moderator and I have plans to do so again in the spring.

I also advocate for our current osteopathic students. I am a member of the Mental Health and Wellness Committee, a committee that was formed after the suicide of one of our fellow students. There, I work with other peers to develop ways to promote mental health and wellness among our classmates. Now, we are performing research that measures the effectiveness of peer lead talks on students’ mental health. I am also trained in the “ask.listen.refer” suicide prevention, and “safe zone for all” training. My personal goal is to be welcoming and accepting of my osteopathic peers, regardless of their background. Lastly, I am a Peer Assisted Learning Tutor. In this capacity I tutor the younger years in the basic sciences to ensure that no one falls behind in their studies.

In the future, I plan to give back to the osteopathic community by working as a preceptor or a professor at a medical school. In this facility I can help pre-meds apply to osteopathic medical school, allow interested pre-meds to shadow me and learn more about the osteopathic profession. I will continue to be involved in osteopathic organizations such as the AOMA. Lastly, I will continue to support my osteopathic peers in any way I can, and always be accepting and welcoming of people of all backgrounds.