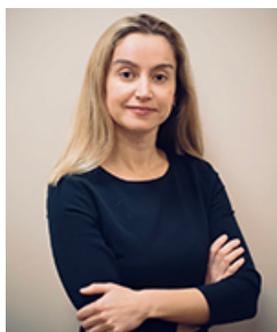




Winning Essay from APMSA 2021 Student of the Year



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On our last pre-COVID day at NYCPM, we were told we would transition to online learning due to the novel Corona Virus. A few of my classmates and I gathered closely in one of the lecture halls to study for the upcoming Pod Surg exam, which was what we usually did. At that time, it did not occur to us to socially distance! Once remote, we continued to study via FaceTime groups to help each other succeed. I continue to love the camaraderie fostered in our profession where healthy competition is allowed to exist and a mutual drive to succeed is encouraged.

Once it became apparent that the COVID restrictions would become long term, and I once I completed the online finals, I made a schedule and a plan. But first I converted my dining room table into a ping pong table (maracas were the net) where my children and I spent many evening hours playing while quarantined. Online schooling was now in store for all three of us. As a student, I was studying for Boards Part I. As a parent, I was helping my children adjust and learn online.

As far as leadership was concerned, there were various roles I held prior to the pandemic, and continue to this day. As a Student Ambassador, I interviewed many potential students via Zoom. In person school tours were no longer available. I did my absolute creative best describing NYCPM, the facilities on each floor, and the general environment. Every school has a "spirit" of its own, as does ours. For example, in addition to having every type of bone available for study, our library offers power chargers for different gadgets (iPads, iPhones, etc.). Mr. Tremblay, the head librarian, also has an encouraging joke to go along with the borrowed library materials.

As a tutor, I continued mentoring students via FaceTime. I tutored many different subjects, including LEAN, Infectious Diseases, and Pathology. I understood that learning foot and ankle anatomy and missing out on an important cadaver lab experience was difficult for the class below mine. As a LEAN Teaching Assistant, I presented during the weekly practical reviews for the "lucky" lower class students that were taking their LEAN lab online.

As an APMSA representative, I met with potential APMSA delegates of the newest class (via Zoom) and was able to discuss the importance of our role, and of course attended the APMSA online meetings. As part of the NYCPM Student Government, I constructed and ran the first remote Student Body Election and was able to carry it into the APMSA Elections for the lower class.

I volunteered at the Foot Clinics of New York in person as soon as it was allowed, where I assisted the Surgery Department. While I assisted the residents and attendings at the clinic, I also learned many important skills such as working up a patient, taking vitals, pulses, understanding the overall condition and disposition of the patient. The skills I learned while volunteering were key to my clinical Junior year experience.

My parents are elderly and live nearby. While they were quarantined I delivered their necessities, such as food, water, gloves, and masks. But soon they decided that venturing outside and being able to buy their own food was better than being sequestered. By Summer of 2020, they declared that they would rather become sick with COVID than be away from their grandchildren. Thus, my helping duties were cut short, and they were watching my children again, while I went to clinic every day.

Pre COVID and now, I work on Saturday mornings for a podiatrist, Dr. Gudeon. I work both chairside and at the front desk. Dr. Gudeon was sequestered by himself during much of the pandemic. I made weekly deliveries of office correspondence to his home. I also delivered sanitizer, masks, and gloves when he needed them. I ran some small errands for him, dropping off his mail or checking on the office from time to time.

Outside of clinic and studying, my favorite hobby is playing tennis, but tennis courts were closed due to the COVID restrictions. I live in Queens, in NYC, and the nearest largest park is Juniper Park with a large playground. With my son's help, we drew two tennis courts in chalk. With frequent touch ups, many people besides us played on the courts. We did not find a replacement for a court net but this was certainly better than not playing. The Park security did not mind, as long as, the players were distanced. I am most proud of this contribution to my community, as it brought a sense of hope and some sort of socialization as we waited our turn to play, and the opportunity to keep moving until the courts reopened a couple of weeks later.