Matt Tsai
Candidate for New England SGIM Associate Member

PERSONAL STATEMENT

My experience with SGIM has been one of the most fulfilling in my budding medical career. As I cultivate my interests in internal medicine through each stage of my medical education, I have found SGIM to be a powerful catalyst to my professional growth. I have benefited immensely from the research collaboration, mentorship and shared commitment to learning that is integrated into SGIM’s infrastructure. Most valuable of all has been my friendships with SGIM members, whose encouragement and welcome have given me a voice in this community and confidence in my training. As I apply for consideration to be the next associate member for New England SGIM, I aspire to build that community further and to advance the traits which I believe make SGIM a great organization and internal medicine an incredible field.

I became involved in internal medicine leadership early on in my medical school training. During my first year, I led my school’s Internal Medicine Student Interest Group and coordinated multiple programs including weekly shadowing opportunities, monthly case reviews with chief residents and original clinical vignette questions. In my second year, I transitioned to a new role as a medical student state representative for the Vermont Chapter of the American College of Physicians (ACP). In this capacity, I sit as an active member on the chapter’s leadership council, manage the chapter’s successful engagement with social media and coordinate medical student participation in chapter activities such as a student abstract competition at the annual chapter meeting. Through these commitments, one of my priority goals has been to promote connections between internists in Vermont. This is perhaps best demonstrated by my fondest project: a new and original internal medicine podcast series called “Green Mountain Medicine,” where I interview Vermont internists and apply their expertise to generate discussion.

These discussions in turn parallel my own research interests which have led to abstracts accepted by SGIM at both the national and regional level. This includes a poster entitled “Predictors and Follow-up Using the Current Opioid Misuse Measure in Primary Care” at the 2019 SGIM National Meeting under the mentorship of SGIM member Dr. Charles Maclean and a second poster entitled “Needs Assessment of Food Shelf Clientele: One Approach to Identifying Social Health Determinants” at the 2019 SGIM New England Regional Meeting. Attending and sharing my research at
SGIM meetings has been a fantastic and enjoyable learning experience for me, challenging me to broaden my knowledge base, refine my interests and collaborate with others in the practice of our science. It has also become an opportunity to encourage SGIM involvement among my fellow Vermont medical students, who are often underrepresented in the SGIM community. Most recently, I convinced two classmates to attend the last SGIM New England Regional meeting and to present our scholarly work together.

At the core, my interest in the associate member position for New England SGIM reflects my desire to become more involved in the organization and to contribute to its work and the growth of our community. I believe my experiences have prepared me to carry out the duties of that position seriously and effectively. Specifically, I want to apply my skills in program development, administrative leadership and social media to improve student and resident membership and engagement, especially from underrepresented regions in our ranks. I hope my current leadership roles and growing network of ACP and SGIM members will allow me to expand SGIM's role within New England region and to strengthen a collaborative relationship between these two organizations. I am humbled to be considered for such a vital position in the leadership of this society, and if selected I promise to take my duties with the very sincerity, curiosity and excitement which I believe make SGIM so incredible.

BIOSKETCH

Matt Tsai is a third-year medical student in the class of 2021 at the Larner College of Medicine (LCOM) at the University of Vermont. He completed his undergraduate training at the University of California, Irvine, graduating summa cum laude in 2017 with a bachelor’s degree in Biological Sciences. He is an active member of both the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) and the American College of Physicians (ACP).

He began exploring his interest in internal medicine early in his medical training, leading his medical school’s Internal Medicine Student Interest Group during his first year before transitioning to his current position as a medical student state representative for the ACP Vermont Chapter. In this role, he is entrusted with voting privileges on the chapter’s leadership committee, oversight of the chapter’s social media presence and recruitment of medical student members. He also co-founded and co-hosts an original podcast for the chapter, fondly entitled “Green Mountain Medicine,” during which he interviews guests on a variety of internal medicine topics. To date, the podcast has published 5 episodes and reports over 300
downloads across multiple platforms (Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Podbean). His growing interest in internal medicine has also drawn him to SGIM and ACP meetings, during which he has presented research on several topics including opioid misuse and social determinants of health in food shelf clientele. Outside of SGIM and ACP involvements, Matt serves on the LCOM Department of Medicine Education Council and on the college’s Community Medical School Advisory Committee, which hosts public lectures on medical topics for the purpose of community medical education.

Entering his final two years of medical school training, Matt hopes to keep exploring opportunities in internal medicine and to use his involvements to develop community through fostering interest in the field. He expects he will continue to build upon the skills he has attained thus far, as he prepares his transition from medical student to resident to internist.