

# VESS NEWS



## Vascular Annual Meeting

Thursday June 16, 2022

Several friends and colleagues came up to me afterward, wanting to know "what was going on in the Sheraton Lobby on Thursday morning?"

What started as an idea and an invitation for an informal gathering, grew into an enthusiastic gathering of over 25 medical students eager to share their ideas, and a group of VESS representatives eager to hear them (Dan Han, MD: Chair of Social Media / Website Subcommittee, Bernadette Aulivola, MD: VESS Representative to ACS Advisory Council for Surgical Specialties, SVS Strategic Board of Directors and VSB, Mihai Rosca, MD: Newsletter Subcommittee, and Max Wohlauser, MD: Chair of Student Education Committee).

Second year medical students, **Elizabeth Lavanga**, **Leana Dogbe**, and **Alexandra Vaughan-Masamitsu**, expressed their enthusiasm at the meeting: "We are excited and honored to share in the upcoming efforts of VESS VVSIG to engage medical students of all years on a national scale in the innovations of the field of vascular surgery."

**Jai Shahani**, MS3, shared that "Vascular Surgery is on the forefront of innovation in medicine, evolving at a breakneck speed and utilizing cutting-edge technology to alleviate illness and improve the human condition. While attending VAM, I sat down with my mentor Dr. Zachary AbuRahma who shared how his practice is adopting new endovascular techniques to improve patient outcomes and reduce post-operative complications. As a third-year medical student interested in the intersection of entrepreneurship, technology, and

medicine, I was fascinated to learn how the "endovascular revolution" transformed how vascular surgeons approached traditionally complicated interventions. Novel technology such as drug-eluting stent grafts and catheter-based delivery systems provide an incredible opportunity for the next generation of vascular surgeons to innovate new therapies for their patients."

**Bianca Mulaney**, MS4, emphasized the importance of early mentorship. "Reaching out to medical students early is critical to cultivating interest in vascular surgery and developing the next generation of vascular surgeons. Like many medical students, I did not know about the field of vascular surgery before medical school. I discovered the field after being paired randomly to a vascular surgeon (Venita Chandra, MD, Resident Education Committee and Co-Chair Fellows Program) through our school's Women and Medicine mentorship program. She has been an amazing mentor to me over the past year, and thanks to her I will be applying into vascular surgery integrated programs this fall. No matter what specialty medical students choose, knowing about vascular disease is important given its huge global burden and outreach can only benefit future physicians and patients!"

**Tabea Hoffstaetter**, MS4, added that "Being surrounded by so many enthusiastic like-minded peers who are passionate about Vascular Surgery is incredible! However, too many of us have one thing in common - we learned about this incredible specialty by serendipitous chance. I personally had very little exposure to Vascular Surgery during my first two years of medical school and only learned

about the field my third year during a two week selective clerkship. For this reason I am very excited about the potential for a national VESS Vascular Surgery Interest Group to increase medical student's early exposure to the specialty, and serve as an open resource for those who want to learn more."

**Tara Zielke**, MS4, commented that "The VESS Vascular Surgery Interest Group (VSIG) is an incredible opportunity to expand the impact of VSIGs around the country. It also provides the VSIG experience to students who do not have a VSIG at their home institution. VSIG had a huge impact on my life by providing early vascular surgery education, shadowing, research opportunities, leadership experience, and mentorship. I am excited to see the collaboration among students from around the country to spread the word about how exciting and dynamic of a specialty vascular surgery is."

## History and Timeline

The idea was launched by Secretary and Communications Committee Chair Misty Humphries, MD, and Social Media/Website Subcommittee Chair Dan Han, MD. Doctor Han emphasized,

“We all recognize that the future of our specialty depends on the pipeline of talented medical students that join our ranks. As such, our societies encourage interested students to start VSIGs at their institutions. However, lack of accessible mentors at certain institutions and variability in interested students from one year to the next make maintaining an active VSIG very challenging. In today's virtual era, we are excited to provide a platform for the students to crowdsource this problem and become advocates of our specialty on the national stage. After all, students know best how to spark the interest of other students.”



Misty Humphries, MD, remarked

“Why does every institution have to reinvent the wheel? There are so many exceptional students and mentors nationwide and allowing them to connect to each other early on is exactly how we are going to bring the best and most diverse students to vascular surgery. We want all students to see that vascular surgery is for them through the VESS VSIG.”



Councilor Karan Garg, MD, brought the Student Education and Communications Committees together to build the project:

“As a society dedicated to the next generation of vascular surgeons and innovators, having a student led initiative just makes perfect sense. It offers a tremendous opportunity to start innovation early through a program dedicated to the medical students.”



The project was endorsed by VESS President Ravi Veeraswamy, MD, and approved at the VESS Executive Council meeting.

“ This is a wonderful initiative that will broaden the exposure of our specialty to more schools and students. The continued growth of our field depends on developing a talented pool of applicants who will contribute to the future of vascular surgery. VESS has a long legacy of supporting trainees and young surgeons and programs like this are a great example of why we have been so successful.” ”



Newsletter Subcommittee member Mihai Rosca, MD, remarked,

“ VESS is in the process of developing a young vascular surgeon’s initiative as a national Vascular Surgery Interest Group project. The vision is to create a medical student advisory board which will liaison with VESS leadership to address create and access academic and development tools that a medical student can use in their medical school career to develop and advance an interest in vascular surgery as a career. ”



Bernadette Aulivola, MD, Chair of the SVS Resident and Student Outreach committee who also serves as the VESS Representative to the ACS Advisory Council for Surgical Specialties, SVS Strategic Board of Directors and Vascular Surgery Board of the ABS, was in attendance.

“ In an era where there is such a high demand for skilled, inquisitive, compassionate and innovative vascular surgeons to care for our growing patient population, the importance of engaging the interest of students at a very early stage of their education is vitally important. Bringing together the resources of VSIGs around the nation, some that have been in existence for many years, will serve to dramatically enhance the opportunities for students, some who may not have crossed paths with such a rewarding surgical specialty before. At the impromptu VSIG Think Tank meeting at VAM there was no shortage of enthusiasm and ideas. It will be exciting to see this national VSIG take form! ”



## Current Student-Focused Society Activities

Student outreach and recruitment is important for the continued pipeline of future vascular surgeons. As such, several societies have put together resources to help students start Vascular Surgery Interest Groups at their institution and have established mentorship programs that typically function around the annual meetings. Despite the tools that may be provided to start VSIGs, for some students, their medical schools or hospitals lacks the faculty involvement to have an active VSIG throughout the year. Even at an institution with involved faculty, VSIG activity can vary drastically from year to year, based on the number of senior medical students pursuing vascular surgery at the school. Mentorship programs centered on meetings can be powerful but often lack consistency and regularity throughout the year to solidify a medical students’ interest in vascular surgery.

## Vascular Surgery Interest Group

The ideal VSIGs function when vascular committed senior medical students (MS3 and 4) are driving the VSIG activities and reaching out to junior medical students (MS1 and 2) who have not yet decided what specialty to pursue. The VESS has an opportunity to create a Society VSIG for medical students of all levels and from all institutions. Junior students can network and interact with senior medical students from across the country. The senior medical students can meet and network with vascular faculty from several different residencies.

## Goals

The VESS Vascular Surgery Interest Group would have the following goals: Provide a yearlong forum for vascular committed and vascular interested students from across the country to participate in. This will allow students at institutions with no VSIGs or inactive VSIGs to get continued vascular exposure and mentorship. Provide networking opportunities between students and the VESS members. Give opportunities for motivated students to take leadership roles and ownership of the VESS VSIG. Giving students a sense of ownership of the VESS VSIG will translate to increased involvement of students with our society. This can lead to continued involvement as residents and ultimately junior faculty. Provide a forum for existing VSIGs to network with each other. VSIGs can become members of the VESS VSIG (almost like chapters) and participate in all VESS VSIG activities.

## VESS Vascular Surgery Interest Group Format and Schedule

VESS leadership will establish a VESS VSIG Steering Committee consisting of medical students. VESS leadership will serve as mentors for the Steering Committee, who will help develop focused educational content for MS1/MS2 and MS3/4. The webinars will be organized into the following themes: DISCOVER and SPECIALIZE. The virtual series for MS1 and MS2 (DISCOVER) will provide focused educational and promotional content for students who have not yet been exposed to vascular surgery. Examples include: Introduction to vascular surgery, a day in the life of a vascular surgeon, a day in the life of a vascular resident, comparing hospital-employed and physician-employed practices, what do program directors look for in the application process, tips for interviews, matched students. For MS3 and MS4, the virtual series will provide educational content (SPECIALIZE) for students who have decided on vascular as a specialty. This will be predominately case-based, can invite existing VSIGs to present an interesting case they saw or participated in at their institutions. There are other themes and opportunities being explored as well. We are also discussing ways to incorporate VESS VSIG into the Next Generation Scholars Program at the 2023 Winter Annual Meeting.



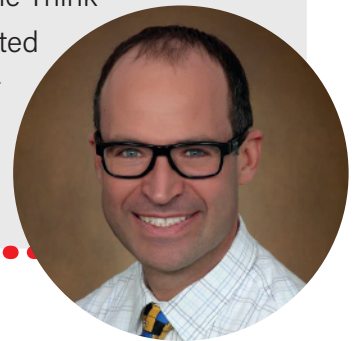
# Goals and Imperatives

This is a project for medical students by medical students. The attendings are here to support, facilitate, advise, and help execute but we want you to own this. One thing that is clear from our Think Tank at VAM is that you have incredible ideas—things that we have never even considered or thought about. Let's bring these to the table and find a way to execute the ideas we discuss. The goal is not to elevate individuals, but to elevate vascular surgery as a specialty. While a project like this is great for networking and for all of you to get intimately involved with vascular surgeons across the country, I think it would work best if we approached this as more than just something we can put on a CV. As future vascular surgeons, you would be starting early to help be cheerleaders and advocates for the specialty that we all love. The VESS VSIG WILL NOT be used as a recruitment tool by individual residency programs. All participating attending surgeons will recognize that this forum is to highlight the society and not one's individual institution. The VESS VSIG WILL NOT be used as a forum for programs to evaluate potential

students. The goal of this program is to generate interest in our specialty. We want these meetings to be a safe place for students to ask questions freely and participate without fear of judgment.

Max Wohlaer, MD, Chair of the Student Education Committee highlighted,

“ That was a fantastic session. Lots of great comments from those in attendance and I've heard some excellent ideas and enthusiasm from medical students who were not at the Think Tank, too. The VESS is excited to see the future of vascular surgery in such strong and capable hands. ”



Project Timeline		
IMMEDIATE PROJECTS	MID-TERM PROJECTS	LONG-TERM PROJECTS
VSIG Steering Committee	Peer-Peer mentorship program opportunities	Database of shadowing
Virtual series for MS1 and MS2 (DISCOVER)	VESS VSIG Webpage	Virtual Student Research Day
Virtual series for MS3 and MS4 (SPECIALIZE)	Representatives to other societies	Database of research opportunities

