

**IMMERSIVE
EDUCATION**
Progressive
technology enhances
student learning.

**ENDLESS
OPPORTUNITIES**
Student group
assists individuals
with possibilities.

**PASSION FOR
PEDIATRICS**
1998 alumna
advocates for
children's health.

LINK

KPCOM

Nova Southeastern University Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine





Elizabeth Oviawe (right) answers a student's question.



First-year student Sarika Chauhan displays the new technology.

INCOMING STUDENTS INTRODUCED TO LEADING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

On July 26, the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) distributed Meta Quest Oculus headsets to its incoming students. The distribution marked a significant milestone in the college's commitment to incorporate immersive educational technology into its curriculum. By leveraging virtual reality, the students can explore medical scenarios, gain practical skills, and enhance their learning experiences.

In the following Q&A with Elizabeth Oviawe, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S.B.I., M.M.I.S., M.Sc., director of the college's Division of Institutional Technology (DiTECH), she shares her thoughts about this educational opportunity for KPCOM students.

How many osteopathic medicine students received the Meta Quest 2 headsets this semester as part of their educational experience? More than 400 first-year students at both our Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Tampa Bay Regional campuses received Meta Quest 2 virtual reality headsets.

Will the students be using them throughout their full educational journey? Our students will be using their headsets during their first and second years in their preclinical courses and labs and in their third and fourth years for

their immersive virtual rotation experiences. They will use this immersive technology throughout their KPCOM educational journey.

What are some of the ways this technology will be essential in the students' educational process?

Using this innovative, immersive technology will transform the way our students learn and help reinforce and enhance their understanding and application of complex clinical concepts and procedures in a risk-free environment. It will engage all their sensory organs in a fully immersive way to build their competency in pertinent skills and help them achieve mastery in preparation for real-life experiences.

How does such technology situate NSU in terms of health care innovations? Immersive learning technology is the way of the future in teaching and learning, notably, in health care education and delivery. Leveraging augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), mixed reality (MR), and artificial intelligence (AI), including 3D visualization, holograms, and 3D printing models, has placed the KPCOM ahead of the curve. Part of our effort is also dedicated to medical technology innovation research and development (MedTECH Innovate R&D)—an arm of KPCOM-DiTECH that serves as an incubator in the exploration of advanced medical technology application and development.

To strengthen our efforts in this innovative adventure, we have partnered with Meta in the area of research and development. Meta is the manufacturer of the VR headsets our students are using. We are breaking ground at the KPCOM in innovative curriculum transformation and extending the know-how of these immersive learning technologies skills to other NSU educators and programs. ■

COVER IMAGE

First-year KPCOM students familiarize themselves with their Meta Quest 2 virtual reality headsets.



Due to their altruistic nature, MSIP members volunteer for nonprofit organizations, such as On My Own. The nonprofit, which was established by Kristi Messer, teaches independent living skills and job training programs that help pave the way for individuals with disabilities to create a life of independence, freedom, and employment.

STUDENT INTEREST GROUP ASSISTS INDIVIDUALS WITH POSSIBILITIES

Whenever there's a need to be addressed, you can be assured that Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) students will fill the void by creating an essential student interest group. Such was the case when third-year student Shreya Bhatt joined forces with Kristi Messer, D.H.Sc., M.P.H., M.S.W., LCSW, assistant dean of bachelor's programs and co-founder of the nonprofit organization On My Own, to establish Medical Students for Individuals with Possibilities (MSIP).

MSIP, which was created to educate KPCOM students about individuals with disabilities, strives to help people with disabilities achieve healthier lifestyles through education, volunteering, and advocating for inclusion. "As future physicians, we will have patients with disabilities who possess unique needs, and as physicians, we will have to learn how to advocate for those needs, such as helping patients access assistive technology, occupational therapy, behavioral therapy, and connecting with community resources," said second-year student Kathryn Provoast, MSIP vice president.

"From my own experience as an undergrad, many people are nervous to interact with individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, because they are afraid of saying the wrong thing or not knowing how to communicate with someone with a different communication style," she explained. "However, by volunteering and becoming friends with individuals with intellectual disabilities, people learn that everyone, with or without a disability, is more similar than different."

During the past year, MSIP members have volunteered with On My Own—which provides training to adults with disabilities by teaching them independent living and employment skills—to assist with cooking classes, salsa nights, and park explorations. "Additionally, we work with Seagull Alternative High School to host a 10-week course of health and hygiene classes for the school's adult special education program," Provoast said. "Through the health and hygiene classes, KPCOM students taught high school students about nutrition, exercise, sun protection, oral health, and daily hygiene."

According to Provoast, her favorite MSIP experience involved volunteering at On My Own cooking classes. "Once a week for six weeks, On My Own hosts a cooking class at a local church, and everyone learns how to cook a three-course meal we all share. Everyone breaks into groups to make the appetizer, main course, or dessert," she explained.

"One night, in particular, I was working with Sebastian to help make chicken dumplings. To make the dumplings, I helped Sebastian learn how to cut chicken using a knife and a no-cut safety glove, which was something he had never done before. By the end of the night, however, he was an expert. We also taught participants about kitchen safety and nutrition, as well as how to pick the right portion of vegetables, protein, and carbs."

Now in its second year, Provoast hopes to continue to grow MSIP and spread inclusion, on campus and within the community, by volunteering and hosting educational seminars. ■



Ashley Mejia shares a special moment with her grandparents.

WITHOUT WARNING

It was the best day of my life—the first day of medical school. It was a goal I had worked toward for 10 years.

I could barely sleep the night before, as my body hummed with nerves and excitement. No emotion could have prepared me for the surreal moment of walking into the Morris Auditorium and gazing over the sea of white coats.

At a moment's notice, however, the best day of my life quickly became the worst. My grandfather called, sounding worried. He said the "rescue" took my grandmother to the emergency room (ER) after he returned from the supermarket and found her lying face down on the floor, dragging herself to her cell phone.

As my mom and I raced to Memorial Regional Hospital's ER, we assumed it was a regular fall. When I walked into her exam room, my heart sank, as I immediately noticed that my grandma only had half of her visual field and was paralyzed on the left side of her body. I held back tears as I heard her ask me how my first day of school went.

I had no clue that would be the last thing she would say for the next four days. Every moment after I left her was a blur. During classes, I could not focus. Every 10-minute break, I would call my family members to see if they had any updates. Between histology lectures, the doctors told my mother my grandmother had a stroke.

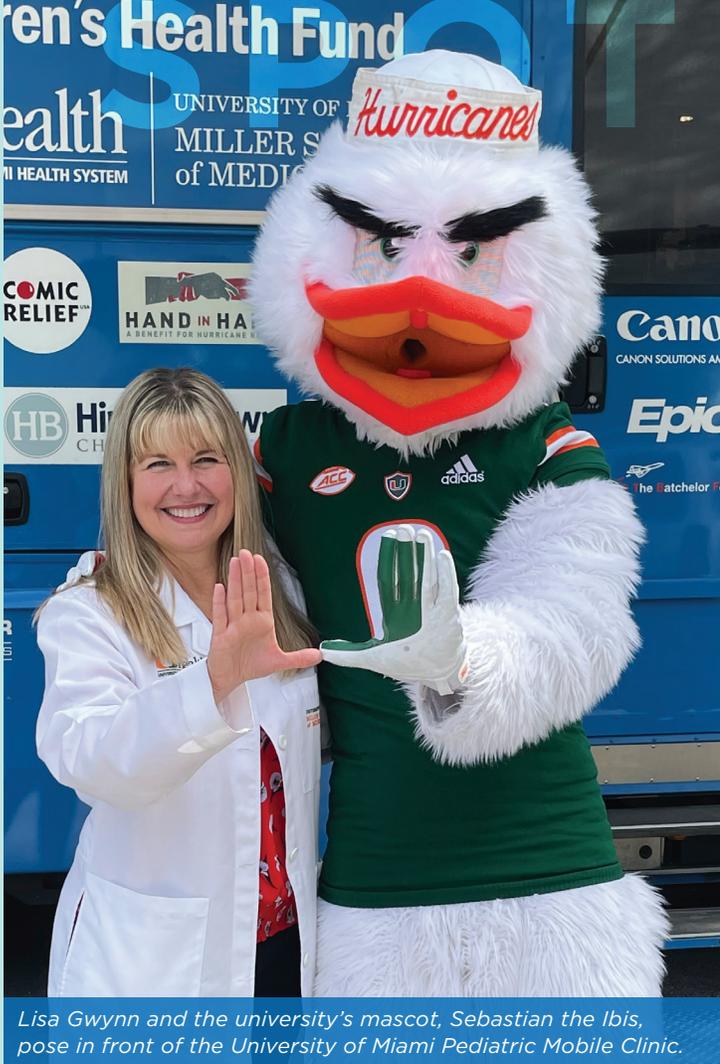
In less than 24 hours, the left side of her body was completely paralyzed, and she could not speak, move, or eat. Her eyes were unresponsive, and she could only move for seconds at a time before shutting down. Over the next three days, I went to the hospital after lectures, and each day, she deteriorated.

My family had to prepare for circumstances we never thought would occur. The following Thursday, however, I heard my grandmother finally speak over the phone. Joy rushed through me, as it was the first moment I had faith in a natural recovery. Soon after, she was discharged and began recovering rapidly, with the help of my mother and grandfather, who learned every technique under the sun for stroke recovery. Although I wanted to be beside her every second of the day, she forced me to go home and study, to sleep well, and not worry about her.

It was challenging to try and learn histology and anatomy when the only thing I could think about was my grandmother's health. Each day, I feared something happening to her; medical school was no longer the priority I imagined it would be.

I would visit her every day and see her slow but miraculous recovery. She would push me to study and focus on classes, and I am sure that without her support, I would not have succeeded as I did that first semester. ■

Ashley Mejia is a second-year KPCOM student.



Lisa Gwynn and the university's mascot, Sebastian the Ibis, pose in front of the University of Miami Pediatric Mobile Clinic.

LISA GWYNN: PASSION FOR PEDIATRICS

As a teenager growing up in Miami, Florida, Lisa Gwynn, D.O., M.B.A., M.S.P.H., FAAP, had her interest in medicine piqued when she became involved in an organization called Future Medics in high school. “I volunteered at hospitals, so I decided early on that medicine was the career for me,” said Gwynn, a 1998 NSU Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) graduate.

Fortunately, when it came time to select a medical school, Gwynn was excited to learn about the existence of NSU-KPCOM. “When I applied to NSU, there weren’t nearly as many options as there are today,” she explained. “I was fortunate there was an osteopathic medical school nearby, so I didn’t have to go far.”

After graduating in 1998 and completing her internship and pediatric residency training at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System, Gwynn worked in private practice in southern Broward County for almost a decade. She then became a faculty member at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

Gwynn, who serves as associate professor of clinical pediatrics and public health sciences and medical director of the Pediatric Mobile Clinic and school health at the Miller School of Medicine, is an ardent supporter of pediatric initiatives. In fact, she served as president of the Florida Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics in 2020–2022.

“I love taking care of kids of all ages,” said Gwynn, who is the proud mother of 25-year-old daughter Katie and four dogs. “From infancy through adolescence and into young adulthood, pediatrics offers such diversity and variety in practice,” she said. “I also enjoy working with parents in helping their children grow into healthy adults. There is no greater joy.”

Not surprisingly, she takes great pride in the work she’s doing in her various roles at the Miller School of Medicine. “I enjoy providing access to care for children and families who otherwise wouldn’t be able to receive it,” explained Gwynn, who received the 2023 Inspiring Women of Healthcare Award from the Health Foundation of South Florida. “I also love teaching residents and medical students about caring for underserved populations and enforcing health equity.”

Because she’s been involved in so many fulfilling projects at the University of Miami, Gwynn is grateful for the opportunities she’s been able to seize. “I care for patients both in outpatient and inpatient settings. Many of these cases are very challenging, so I’ve maintained my clinical acumen through the years. I have been able to build community programs that care for uninsured children both in communities and in schools and have built relationships with key stakeholders who work with us collaboratively,” said Gwynn, who received the 2021 Dean’s Community Engagement Award from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

“I’ve also expanded my research funding portfolio thanks to grants from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, and other agencies, which has advanced my scholarly work,” she added. “I have been able to continue my advocacy work through the American Academy of Pediatrics, work nationally on child health policy, and contribute to shaping our future through teaching the next generation of health care providers.” ■

ALUMNI A

Alon Antebi, D.O., FAOAO, FAAOS, FAOA, FOTA ('99), was named orthopedic trauma surgery director at Providence Holy Cross Medical Center in Mission Hills, California.



Adam Beeble, D.O. ('15), was featured in the August issue of the online magazine *The D.O.* in the article "Double Duty: How 2 Florida Physicians Are Working Together to Give Back in an Underserved Area."



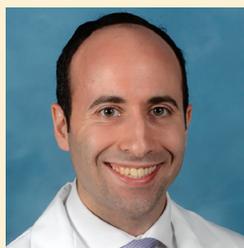
Anna Cabeca, D.O., FACOG ('95), received a patent for her revolutionary product called Julva®—a feminine cosmetic cream that provides relief of vaginal atrophy symptoms commonly caused by menopause. She also opened a new practice in collaboration with Carpathia Collaborative in Dallas, Texas.



Devin W. Collins, D.O. ('17), a hand, upper-extremity, and microvascular orthopedic surgeon, joined the Florida Orthopaedic Institute and is helping to launch a new branch in Lakeland, Florida. He also serves as an assistant clinical professor of hand surgery for the University of South Florida orthopedic and plastic surgery residents.



Ezra Fox, D.O. ('20), a primary care physician, joined Holy Cross Medical Group—a multispecialty, physician-employed group of more than 130 physicians providing services throughout Broward County, Florida.



Sofia A. Funes, D.O., M.P.H. ('16), who is board certified in preventive and neuromusculoskeletal medicine and fellowship-trained in sports medicine, joined the KPCOM adjunct teaching faculty in the Principles of Clinical Medicine courses.



John Hatfield, D.O. ('08), recently became a faculty member at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences in Bethesda, Maryland. He is an assistant professor and director of the Global Health Certificate Program in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Biostatistics. He also completed the Certified Physician Executive program through the American Association for Physician Leadership.



John Jones, D.O. ('20), who graduated from the University of Miami family medicine residency program, where he served as chief resident, recently opened a primary care clinic called Volta Direct Primary Care in Pompano Beach, Florida.



Jeena Kar, D.O. ('20), had her coauthored article "Should Antipsychotics' Risks Be Accepted by Clinicians on Behalf of Patients to Achieve Benefits of Mitigating Older Adults' Behavioral Symptoms in Short-Staffed Units?" published in the October issue of the *AMA Journal of Ethics*.



Randy S. Katz, D.O., FACEP ('99), received the Spirit of Healing Award from Memorial Healthcare System in May for his professional excellence, community service, and commitment to Memorial Healthcare System. Additionally, he was elected secretary/treasurer of the Memorial Regional Hospital Medical Executive Committee and serves as chair of the Fire Chiefs Association of Broward County Medical Issues Committee.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Jay Mohan, D.O., FACC, FSCAI, FASE, RPVI ('13), an interventional cardiologist at the McLaren Cardiovascular Institute in Mount Clemens, Michigan, was named program director of the Michigan State University McLaren Macomb-Oakland Cardiology Fellowship. Additionally, he appeared on Fox News Detroit to speak to the local community about structural heart disease.



Richard Morgan, D.O. ('18), joined Baptist Health Miami Neuroscience Institute in South Miami, Florida, as a specialist in physical medicine and rehabilitation. As a physiatrist, Morgan focuses on providing physical medicine and rehabilitation interventions that help patients regain function and mobility.



Joel L. Rush, D.O., FAOAO ('85), received the American Osteopathic Academy of Orthopedics (AOAO) Donald Siehl Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2023 AOAO Annual Fall Meeting held October 5-7 in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The award—the highest granted by the academy—is presented annually to an AOAO member who has made major and longtime contributions to the AOAO.



Michael Sand, D.O. ('16), joined the respiratory and sleep medicine teams at UP Health System in Marquette, Michigan. Prior to joining UP Health, he practiced sleep medicine and oversaw sleep clinic operations at Delta Health System in Greenville, Mississippi, and South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel, Mississippi.



Maria Skopis, D.O. ('17), joined the Southwest Florida Rheumatology practice in Riverview, Florida. She did her internal medicine residency training at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami Beach, Florida, before completing a rheumatology fellowship at the University of Miami.



Peach Supupramai, D.O. ('20), a primary care physician, joined Holy Cross Medical Group—a multispecialty, physician-employed group of more than 130 physicians providing services throughout Broward County, Florida.



Sergio Tierrablanca, D.O. ('20), a family medicine physician, recently joined Baptist Health in Miami, Florida. Prior to joining Baptist Health, he completed his family medicine residency at Broward Health Medical Center.



Vi Song Tring, D.O., M.H.A., CPE ('11), is the new chief medical informatics officer at Naval Medical Forces Pacific in San Diego, California. In this role, he serves as a health informatics adviser on issues related to electronic medical record governance and policy development, electronic medical record training and curriculum design, systems development and implementation, and stakeholder engagement.



Ashley M. Yazdani, D.O. ('14), joined the pediatric division at the Camelot and Cape Coral, Florida, locations at Physicians' Primary Care. She previously worked at medical practices in West Amherst and Grand Island, New York.



IN MEMORIAM

Ali Tabrizchi, D.O. ('01), a renowned cardiologist known for his sharp mind and charismatic charm, passed away on July 12 at the age of 50. His friends knew Tabrizchi as a man of many gifts, including humanity, comedic sensibility, dedication, and compassion.

Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sex, age, nondisqualifying disability, religion or creed, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, military service, veteran status, or national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school, and does not discriminate in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs. Any such acts are unacceptable and strictly prohibited by the university • Nova Southeastern University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award associate's, baccalaureate, master's, educational specialist, doctoral, and professional degrees. Nova Southeastern University also may offer credentials such as certificates and diplomas at approved degree levels. Questions about the accreditation of Nova Southeastern University may be directed in writing to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges at 1866 Southern Lane, Decatur, GA 30033-4097, by calling (404) 679-4500, or by using information available on SACSCOC's website (www.sacscoc.org).

WAYS TO SUPPORT

ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP OR PROGRAMMING ENDOWMENT

With a minimum gift of \$25,000, which can be paid over multiple years, individuals or companies can establish an endowed fund to support the general operations, student scholarships, or research projects or outfit a space/area with the latest technology. Endowed funds can be named for the donor, the donor's family or business, or in memory of a loved one.

NAME A ROOM, LAB, OR COMMON AREA IN THE NEW SIMULATION COMPLEX (SimCom)

Individuals can name a specific room, lab, training space, or common area in the SimCom for themselves or a loved one. Companies interested in branding their business or product in a high-traffic area can secure a naming opportunity for up to five years.

LEAVE A LEGACY

Leaving a legacy gift is simple and, in most cases, does not impact your current financial situation. We accept gifts of life insurance, retirement assets, and bequests. Our advancement professionals will work with you (and your legal and financial advisers, when appropriate) to create a philanthropic plan customized for you.

All gifts to NSU are tax-deductible and can be customized. You will be provided with a receipt for your records.

Interested in Partnering?

Contact: Shannon Wayte, CFRE
Shannon.Wayte@nova.edu | (954) 529-6776

KPCOM Alumni Connect

Connect with fellow graduates, **expand** your professional network, employ or offer **mentorship**, and **stay engaged** with your KPCOM community.

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