

**FLEEING FROM
FLOODING**

Soaked student
shares gripping tale.

**IMMERSIVE
TECHNOLOGY**

Innovative
instructional tools
enhance curriculum.

**EVENT
HIGHLIGHTS**

View Match Day and
graduation photos.

LINK
KPCOM

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



As the flooding escalated, water began seeping into the medical office.

STUDENT SHARES STORY OF WATER-SOAKED ESCAPE

Does anyone ever leave home in the morning and expect not to come back that evening? I certainly didn't see it coming when it happened to me on April 12, 2023—a date I will never forget.

The day started like many others in my third year of medical school. I drove to the clinic where I was working that month, said good morning to the staff, and pulled the first patient's chart as the medical assistant checked the patient in. The morning was a bit rainy, but I was not bothered, because this was Fort Lauderdale in late spring.

After lunch, I peeked out the window and noticed the parking lot was flooded. I snapped a photo of my car to send to my mom, who said, "Thank goodness the water's not as high as your car!" Little did either of us know that the water level would soon be well above my car's bumper.

As South Floridians are well aware, when it comes to tropical storms or hurricanes, we are always warned several days in advance

COVER IMAGE

A scary screenshot from a video Ashley Story shot minutes before she escaped from the rising floodwaters.

before we are potentially impacted. On April 12, however, if any news station advised us not to go to work due to the incoming severe weather, I must have missed it.

As the afternoon wore on, and the rain and flooding became progressively worse, patients were no longer showing up for their appointments. At that point, I knew I wouldn't be able to leave the office and return to Miami safely.

Like any "hurricane party" with friends or coworkers, it started out to be a fun experience, but that novelty quickly disappeared. The office staff members who lived nearby decided to leave while they still could. Those who remained—myself, a patient and her mother, the doctor, and the doctor's wife—braced ourselves for the potentially long night ahead.

The office was on the first floor of a particularly low-lying area in downtown Fort Lauderdale. While the doors kept the water out during the first hours of the storm, eventually nature broke through our defenses. Around 8:00 p.m., the floodwaters seeped under the doors and steadily filled the office.

At this point, I began to see the gravity of our situation. The office wasn't prepared for something like this, and every ill-organized wire was touching the floor. I unplugged everything in sight, but I feared it wasn't enough. In my anxious mind, the worst outcome was that the power would surge and cause all the standing water to be electrified—and all those trapped within it to suffer electrical injuries.

The patient and her mother, who became my surrogate family for the night, decided they needed a way out. They called a friend who had an SUV, and she graciously came to our rescue. Unfortunately, her vehicle wasn't equipped to handle the water's height, and it stalled several blocks from our office.

Next, they called their landlord, who had a truck, to come to our rescue. As we prepared to escape into the floodwaters, we learned that Seth the landlord wasn't able to get all the way to the office due to the water level, so he parked under a nearby covering. I bade goodbye to the doctor, who was staying behind, while I ran (or rather swam) for it. Together, we four women waded into the dark, wet night.

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HIGHLIGHTS



KPCOM LEADS THE WAY IN IMMERSIVE TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION

More than a decade ago, Elizabeth Oviawe, Ph.D., Ed.S., M.S.B.I., M.M.I.S., M.Sc., director of the Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine's (KPCOM) Division of Institutional Technology (DiTECH), helped create and incorporate the virtual world into the KPCOM's D.O. curriculum with the establishment of the NSU Virtual Clinic and Art Observation Center.

In the ensuing decade, the college expanded to a second site at the Tampa Bay Regional Campus and has continued to be at the forefront of implementing innovative instructional tools that enhance the curriculum. Working closely with KPCOM leadership, Oviawe helped lay the groundwork as a pioneer of immersive-learning technology at NSU, which encompasses augmented reality, virtual reality, mixed reality, holograms, and 3D modeling.

"We have fully integrated immersive-learning technology into several of our lectures and labs," Oviawe said. "Our incoming first-year students will be required to purchase virtual reality headsets as a necessary technological tool for their medical training. We are breaking ground in this innovative endeavor, including our effort in medical technology innovation research and development (MedTECH Innovate R&D).

According to Oviawe, MedTECH Innovate R&D, a component of the college's DiTECH, is an incubator for cutting-edge exploration to advance medical technology

and innovative health care education and delivery. "Our mission is promoting curricular transformation through innovation and technology for advanced student academic success and faculty/staff professional development," she explained.

"I lead multiple cutting-edge immersive-technology research and development grants, with continuous focus to transform curriculum through the application of innovative, immersive-learning technology," Oviawe continued.

“These efforts have set us apart and placed us in a position to be able to extend our knowledge and experiences throughout NSU.”
—Elizabeth Oviawe

In February 2023, Oviawe conducted an inaugural workshop series titled "Hone Your Skill in Immersive Learning Experiences: An Introduction" in an effort to extend to other NSU educators the knowledge of what is occurring at the college regarding cutting-edge, immersive-learning technology and best practices.

The second workshop series, "Transforming Your Curriculum: Immersive-Learning Technology," is currently underway. "The immersive-learning technology modality is the way of the future in teaching and learning, and it is rapidly evolving," Oviawe said. "I am excited to extend this innovative skill to other NSU programs as we forge ahead in the adoption and integration of this novel immersive technology into the curriculum." ■

SPOTLIGHTS



LOHITHA GUNTUPALLI WINS STUEY AWARD

Lohitha Guntupalli (right) shares a celebratory moment with Christi M. Navarro, Ph.D., a STUEY nominee in the Professor of the Year category.

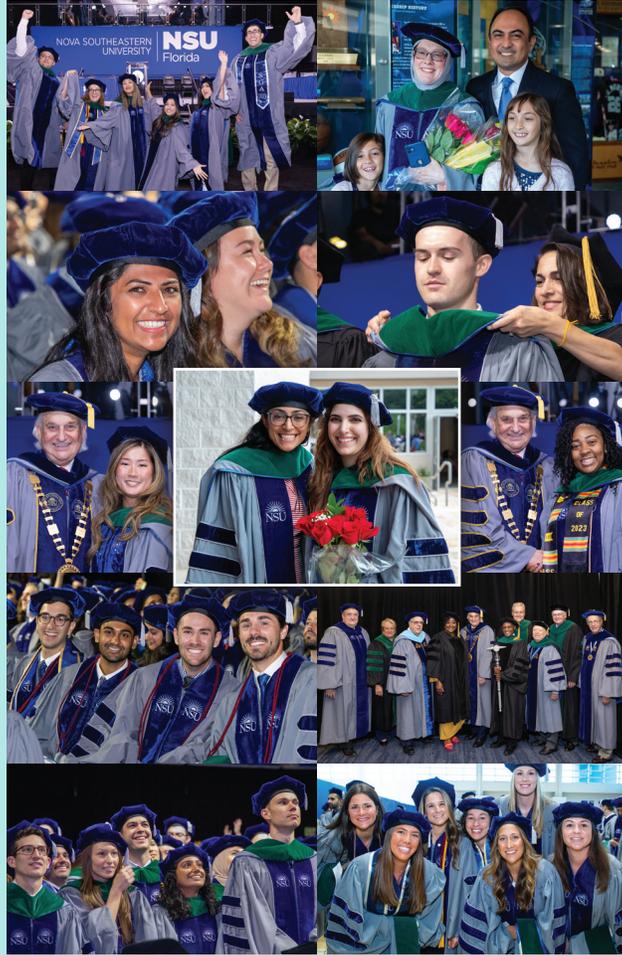
On April 11, third-year KPCOM student Lohitha Guntupalli received NSU's Student Life Achievement Award (STUEY) in the Regional Campus Student of the Year category. Since becoming a Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine student, Guntupalli has served in multiple leadership positions, including as founder of the Student Run Free Clinic Initiative, president of Student Ambassadors, and a student representative of the Pinellas County Osteopathic Medical Society. She is also a member of several national societies, such as Sigma Sigma Phi and Omega Beta Iota, where she demonstrates a commitment to academic excellence, a consistent passion for patient-centered care, and engagement with political advocacy. ■

STUDENTS CELEBRATE AT MATCH DAY EVENTS

On March 17, the college coordinated Match Day events at both the Fort Lauderdale/Davie and Tampa Bay Regional campuses. The students waited anxiously until the time came for them to open their envelopes and see if they earned their dream match.

According to the class of 2023 match numbers, 375 students were scheduled to complete the D.O. program and begin their graduate medical education training. Of that group, 177 graduating students are staying in Florida to begin their postgraduate training; 95 matched into internal medicine; 73 matched into family medicine; 34 matched into pediatrics; 34 matched into emergency medicine; 17 matched into psychiatry; and 15 matched into anesthesiology. ■





KPCOM CONFERS RECORD NUMBER OF DEGREES

During the past academic year, a record number of Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine degrees were bestowed in a range of programmatic areas, which speaks to the continued growth and esteem of the college. ■

- 377** DOCTOR OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE
- 59** BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PUBLIC HEALTH
- 43** MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH
- 42** MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COUPLE AND FAMILY THERAPY
- 33** MASTER OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION
- 17** BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NUTRITION
- 12** DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN COUPLE AND FAMILY THERAPY
- 10** MASTER OF SCIENCE IN MEDICAL EDUCATION
- 7** MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH INFORMATICS
- 5** DOCTOR OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY THERAPY
- 3** MASTER OF SCIENCE IN DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
- 1** BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN HEALTH AND WELLNESS COACHING

KPCOM EARNS U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT RECOGNITION

The Dr. Kiran C. Patel College of Osteopathic Medicine (KPCOM) appeared in numerous categories in the *U.S. News & World Report* 2023-2024 Best Medical Schools rankings list. Schools are ranked according to their performance across a set of widely accepted indicators of excellence. Following are the KPCOM's medical school program rankings in six categories. ■



- #25** MOST GRADUATES PRACTICING IN MEDICALLY UNDERSERVED AREAS
- #32** MOST GRADUATES PRACTICING IN PRIMARY CARE FIELDS
- #33** MOST DIVERSE MEDICAL SCHOOLS
- #56** MOST GRADUATES PRACTICING IN RURAL AREAS
- #112-123** PRIMARY CARE
- #118-130** RESEARCH

ALUMNI

Kayvan Amini, D.O., FACC ('01), received the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's Physician of the Year Award at the organization's live convention held March 3-5 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The award recognized his "leadership, commitment, and dedication to the osteopathic profession and our students" and his "unwavering standards of patient care and for ensuring quality health care is provided to the citizens of Florida." Additionally, he was appointed to the Agency for Health Care Administration's Health Information Exchange Coordinating Committee.



Greta Dowling Flaherty, D.O. ('10), joined AdventHealth Medical Group Family Medicine at Chatsworth in Georgia. "I love practicing medicine because it integrates intellect, emotion, and hands-on care for all kinds of people," she said.



Jeffrey Grove, D.O., FACOFP *dist.* ('90), received the Distinguished Service Award at the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) 60th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars held March 29-April 2 in Orlando, Florida. The Distinguished Service Award honors individuals who have demonstrated outstanding service to the ACOFP through committee involvement or other activities that help achieve ACOFP objectives.



Rachael Candela, D.O. ('21), was named chief resident for the Atrium Health Floyd Medical Center Family Medicine Residency Program in Rome, Georgia, and began her one-year term on July 1. Chief residents, who are selected and voted on by their peers and approved by faculty and staff members, serve in leadership roles, mentor underclassmen, and act as liaisons between residents and faculty members.



Robert Howe, D.O. ('95), was named chief medical officer for all hospice, palliative care, and home health affiliates across the Care Synergy network in Denver, Colorado. Howe will lead a newly formed medical group that includes providers across all Care Synergy organizations.



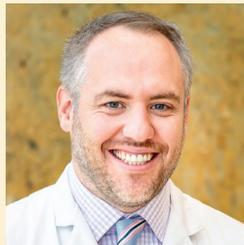
Linda Delo, D.O., FACOFP ('86), received the Excellence in Advocacy Award at the American College of Osteopathic Family Physicians (ACOFP) 60th Annual Convention and Scientific Seminars held March 29-April 2 in Orlando, Florida. The award recognizes physicians who have significantly contributed their time and talents to national health care policy issues at the local, state, and/or federal levels on behalf of their profession and patients.



Gregory James, D.O., M.P.H., FACOFP *dist.* ('90), received the Florida Osteopathic Medical Association's Lifetime Achievement Award at the organization's live convention held March 3-5 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The award recognized his "30+ years of lifelong leadership, dedication, compassion, and commitment to the osteopathic profession, and for ensuring quality health care is provided to the citizens of Florida."



Kevin Donohue, D.O. ('15), is serving a two-year term as president-elect of the medical staff at CHI Saint Joseph Health East in Lexington, Kentucky. He was also named interim medical director for the Sound Physicians hospital medicine practice at CHI Saint Joseph London in southern Kentucky.



ACHIEVEMENTS

Bryan E. Lee, D.O. ('11), who is board certified in medical oncology and internal medicine, recently joined the Baystate Regional Cancer Program oncology medical staff in Greenfield, Massachusetts, where he provides specialized care in breast cancer, cancers of the digestive system, and benign hematology blood conditions that impact bleeding and clotting.



Travis Osterman, D.O., M.S., FAMIA, FASCO ('09), a medical oncologist and informatician at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), was recently promoted to associate professor of biomedical informatics and medicine. He also assumed a new role as associate vice president for research informatics at VUMC. Nationally, he serves as chair of the minimal Common Oncology Data Elements (mCODETM)—an HL7 cancer data standard. He also chairs the Beacon Community Operations Group—a consortium of academic cancer centers using the Epic electronic health record. Additionally, he was recognized as a fellow of the American Society of Clinical Oncology.



Muneeb Shah, D.O. ('17), was featured in *The D.O.* magazine, which is published by the American Osteopathic Association. The article was titled "TikTok Doc: How Muneeb Shah, D.O., aka 'DermDoctor,' Became a Top Health Influencer on Social Media."



William Stager, D.O., M.S., M.P.H., FAAFP, FAAMA, FAAO, FACOFP *dist.* ('89), is the new president-elect of the American Academy of Osteopathy (AAO). In this capacity, he will also represent the AAO at the American Osteopathic Association's House of Delegates annual meeting for the next two years.



STUDENT SHARES STORY OF WATER-SOAKED ESCAPE

(continued from page 1)

After searching for about 20 minutes, our vision obscured by the constant downpour, we finally found Seth in his truck. We breathed a collective sigh of relief and hauled our wet-clothed bodies into the cab of the truck. Though we thought we'd survived the worst of it, we were wrong.

Seth had to expertly navigate the flooded streets of Fort Lauderdale. He sought alternate routes, weaved around the thousands of stalled cars, and was willing to risk the functionality of his vehicle in order to get us all home safely. Thirty minutes later, we pulled into the patient's apartment building in Plantation, which was—by the grace of God—not flooded at all.

I slept that night—or tried to—at a patient's home. I showered in her shower, ate the food she offered me, and wore the spare clothes she lent me. The kindness of her and her mother, and their willingness to take me along for our crazy escape, saved me that fateful day in April.

Local meteorologists later referred to the Fort Lauderdale flood as a "1 in 10,000 years" weather event. I lost my car in the flood, but I gained something truly worthwhile—perspective on what it truly means to trust others, how to treat your patients like family, and how to take risks that might feel a bit absurd.

The insanity of that day, and the weeks that followed, will forever make me thankful for our mundane workdays—the long morning and evening commutes, the regular patient checkups, and eating the same lunch with the same people. You never appreciate the beauty of the little things until Mother Nature decides to take them from you. ■

Ashley Story is a fourth-year KPCOM student.

Nova Southeastern University admits students of any race, color, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, military service, veteran status, and national or ethnic origin. • 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

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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, 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 / C: (954) 529-6776

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