

# NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

How do we, as AMSA, develop effective action? We empower medical students with the tools to be future leaders in medicine. Our success depends on the hard work and ideas of new members each year. Your job is to **EXCITE** students about the amazing opportunities that await them in AMSA, and **SHOW** them the impact they can have on health care. But with the demands of school, how do you **REACH OUT** to your classmates? Read on!

This section will help you with the details of New Member Engagement. From figuring out contacts and ordering materials from the national office to coordinating your early Engagement drive, we will give you all the tips and guidance you need.

Please read this section in its entirety, and share this with your fellow chapter officers. How your chapter can best meet the needs of your school will determine which approach works the best.

AMSA is the most substantial way for students to impact health care. The benefits of membership are unsurpassed, and we must communicate that to potential new members.

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# ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

## ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

### WHY ENGAGEMENT IS CRITICAL TO AMSA'S SUCCESS AS AN ORGANIZATION

- **The size of our membership determines the size of our voice in representing medical students.**
- **AMSA's motto: It takes more than medical school to make a physician.** AMSA provides students with the opportunity to learn about issues not covered in medical school. A large membership allows us to reach out and educate more students.
- **MEMBERSHIP=DUES=PROGRAMMING MONEY.** Membership dues are one of the sources of income that allows AMSA National to provide additional membership benefits and training, such as the Chapter Officers Conference and the support for your local project grants.
  - **For chartered medical chapters:** Your local chapter receives \$2 back for every new member you recruit. If you recruit more than 50 percent of your incoming class, you'll receive a \$5 rebate per new member. For more than 70 percent, you'll receive \$6 per new member.
  - **For chartered premedical chapters:** After you recruit 10 new members, you will receive \$2 per new member recruited.
  - **For chartered international chapters:** Your chapter will receive \$1 per new member recruited.
- **More members lead to better associate partners.** Increased number of members allow us to negotiate for better benefits from associate partners, such as the Bank of America credit card; insurance for health, life, auto and homeowners; and discounts on hotel, car rentals, books and more.
- **The size of your membership increases your credibility at your school.** High engagement will increase support from your school administration (financially as well as logistically) and will make your efforts more productive throughout the year.

**As you see, there are many reasons, both nationally and locally, to keep AMSA's numbers strong!**

### KEYS TO A POWERFUL ENGAGEMENT

- **Be energetic and excited about AMSA.** When you speak of the organization, be sure to tell people why you are a member and why it is important to join.
- **Be knowledgeable about AMSA nationally and locally.** AMSA will sell itself; the best thing to do is find out how you can plug students into AMSA. Find out what interests them and discuss the many programming aspects of AMSA and how they can be involved.
- **All chapter officers must be actively involved in engagement.** Engagement is hard work. Be strategic with which officers do which jobs and make sure that those who are engaging members directly are knowledgeable and excited about AMSA.
- **Create leadership opportunities for first-year students.** Putting new, active members to work is the key to keeping them involved. Recognize their abilities, and they will feel that AMSA is a good investment of their time.

# PLANNING NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

## 10 Steps to Successful New Member Engagement

### Step 1: SUMMER WELCOME LETTER

During the summer, the chapter president can write a concise “summer welcome letter” to the incoming class. *SAMPLE LETTER IS INCLUDED AT THE END OF THIS TAB.*

- **U.S. MEDICAL SCHOOL CHAPTERS ONLY**—If your chapter participates in the free Netter/USMLE First Aid Step I promotion, your members must apply for the Bank of America (BAC) credit card and join AMSA in order to be eligible for the free gift. The BAC online application can be found at [www.amsacreditcard.com](http://www.amsacreditcard.com). Encourage your members to fill out the credit card application, print out the confirmation sheet, then bring the BAC confirmation sheet to your orientation table, along with their AMSA application (or confirmation sheet if they signed up online at [www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join)).

A letter from AMSA’s national president (available from Membership Services at 1-800-767-2266) is designed to accompany your local letter and describes the reasons to join AMSA.

- Include your welcome letter in your orientation mailing.
- Send a mailing from AMSA National: If your school will give you new students’ addresses, create mailing labels and send them with one copy of your local letter to AMSA’s Membership Services. The other option is to bring in copies of the letter to your admissions department to see if they will send them out for you or let you write out the addresses in the office so they can see you are just using it for this mailing.

### STEP 2: GET AMSA ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS—ALL CHAPTERS

Order your engagement supplies free of charge on the Web ([www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm)) or call AMSA Membership Services at 1-800-767-2266.

### STEP 3: SELECT AN ENERGETIC LEADER FOR ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR

Register your coordinator at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/chappres.cfm) so he/she can be contacted with updates, materials and information from your regional director for ideas and support.

### STEP 4: DEVELOP A PLAN FOR ORIENTATION WEEK/FIRST MEETING

The path to success is planning, planning, planning. Meet with your fellow chapter leaders to develop an agenda for orientation and beyond. Planning materials are online at [www.amsa.org/chapoff/co\\_survival.pdf](http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/co_survival.pdf). Refer to the “Leading Your Chapter” tab for more information.

### STEP 5: DISTRIBUTE FLYERS WITH INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHAPTER

The flyers usually contain information on upcoming engagement events as well as events that you have planned for the future, plus a brief description of AMSA’s mission and benefits. Distribute them on the first day of orientation with copies of *The New Physician* and a membership application. See attached sample flyers.

### STEP 6: DON’T OVERLOAD WITH INFORMATION

Make a **brief**, to-the-point pitch about AMSA. Have other AMSA members with you; make your group as diverse and interesting as possible.

### STEP 7: FIRST ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Schedule this meeting for the first week of class when there are no other activities. This is your opportunity to really express what being a part of AMSA National means to you. Use your chapter’s personally created AMSA Power Point.

Use this meeting to identify students who were involved with premed AMSA; they may be ready and willing to be AMSA leaders.

#### **STEP 8: SEND COMPLETED MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS TO NATIONAL OFFICE**

**Do this promptly!** In order to earn trust with new members, you must handle their membership information responsibly. If you lose applications, you will lose credibility. Don't sit on the applications until you get a critical mass. If you are doing the Bank of America application confirmations **MUST BE SENT IN PROMPTLY. IT IS THE LAW THAT BANK OF AMERICA RECEIVE THEM WITHIN 30 DAYS.**

#### **STEP 9: REMEMBER THAT ENGAGEMENT IS A YEARLONG PROCESS**

Bring membership applications to all of your AMSA events and meetings. Some people want to “test the car before they buy,” so give them the opportunity and then continue to push AMSA, especially if you notice people who keep coming to events without joining. Emphasize that without them joining you can't continue to have these great AMSA events. Also, there will be a winter engagement that will occur to recruit students who still haven't signed up.

#### **STEP 10: FOLLOW UP**

Once you have members, create meaningful opportunities for them to be involved. If you passed around sign-up lists, contact these people within a WEEK asking to meet or help with a project.

**NATIONAL LEADERSHIP:** Your trustees and national leaders are dedicated to helping you plan your year. If any committee leaders, regional programming coordinators or regional directors are at your chapter, include them in recruiting. Contact your regional director to invite a national leader to come participate in your school's recruitment efforts or assist with programming.

#### **HOW DO STUDENTS JOIN? LET ME COUNT THE WAYS... INFORM POTENTIAL MEMBERS TO:**

- Sign up online or download a paper application/brochure at [www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join).
- Call the Membership & Convention Services department at the national office at 1-800-767-2266, and join over the phone with a Visa or MasterCard.
- Join during your school's local orientation drive through your local chapter officer.
- If your **U.S. medical school** is participating in the **AMSA/Bank of America (BAC) credit card Netter/First Aid promotion**, you can receive a free *Netter Atlas of Human Anatomy/ USMLE First Aid Step I* by completing an AMSA application (hard copy or online at [www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join)—don't forget to print out your confirmation sheet) along with an online BAC credit card application at [www.amsacreditcard.com](http://www.amsacreditcard.com) (this will generate a confirmation sheet you need to also print—you will need this in order to be eligible for the promotion). Remember to save both confirmation sheets if you want to receive the free *Netter Atlas of Human Anatomy/First Aid*, depending on which offer your chapter is participating in (offer expires and must be redeemed by Oct. 31, 2009).

# ORIENTATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY IDEAS

How can you recruit members during the critical first two weeks of medical school? The following activities have proven successful at many schools and might work at yours as well. Assess what might work best for your school and select appropriate activities, speak with your dean (or whomever is in charge of orientation) about listing your events in the school's official calendar or allowing AMSA to participate in the official orientation activities.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

Everyone loves to get together and have fun. An organization that knows how to “cut loose” now and then is usually successful in keeping membership up. The key to having a social event is coordinating it so the first-year students can attend. Having a space or house big enough and close to where students live is key. An informal social gathering like a picnic, softball game, ice cream party or bar night<sup>1</sup>, is a great way to facilitate social interaction in the class while promoting AMSA. The focus needs to be on meeting fellow classmates and having fun, not on the sales pitch. However, make sure to have some time set aside to make a pitch. It would be advisable to have applications and engagement materials available at these activities.

## PRESENTATION

Nearly every school includes time during orientation for student association members to introduce themselves to the incoming class. This may be the only time you get to address the class in its entirety—don't miss it! If you have time present your chapter's Power Point. You can emphasize the many real benefits of AMSA membership: on **social responsibility, peer collaboration** and **career choices**. There will be plenty of time for consciousness-raising and education during your organizational meeting.

## ENGAGEMENT BOOTHS

An engagement booth works best when set up in a convenient, high-traffic location immediately after your presentation and during orientation.

- **Hours:** Keep your booth open during lunchtime and class breaks. Most important, **don't close your booth after just a couple of days**. Many students are too shy, rushed or preoccupied to think about joining organizations as soon as they arrive in a new environment. After a couple of weeks, they will relax and be willing to talk to you about AMSA.
- **Materials:** Display AMSA publications—*The New Physician*, pamphlets on committees, interest groups and advertisements for fellowships.
- You can also make flyers that explain what AMSA is and list upcoming local and national events. A flyer that lists the strategic priorities is also a good idea. See the sample flyers at the end of this tab.
- **Temptation:** A little food goes a long way. Just a bowl of candy will bring more students your way.
- **Manpower:** Make sure you have enough people to attend the table, so that the first-years don't need to wait in line to ask questions or join. The more the merrier!
- **What the heck do I say?** Remember, you need to discover the motivating interests of your potential new members. Listen, *and then* tell them about what AMSA has to offer *them* based on their interests.
- **Have a raffle:** Give raffle tickets for AMSA T-shirts, a stethoscope or medical textbooks to attract students to visit the booth. Talk to your regional director about ways to get donations for this.
- **Follow Up:** Supply a flyer with date and location of the first organizational meeting along with chapter officer names and phone numbers, as well as the AMSA Web site, [www.amsa.org](http://www.amsa.org), where students can learn more about AMSA.

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<sup>1</sup> Note that AMSA, under its policy on alcohol, cannot provide alcoholic beverages for its members because of liability issues. However, you may be able to arrange a deal with a local bar, whereby AMSA members or medical students in general get in free or get discounts on drinks. Make sure that the bar's liability insurance will cover any potential problems.

## **SURVIVAL SEMINAR**

Incoming students rarely know what to expect from their classmates, professors or administration. Help them by organizing a “survival seminar,” in which a panel of diverse upper-class students can share their advice. (Note: This is a great way to get second-years interested again, too.) Is it possible for a married student to get through school and preserve a marriage? Why do students sometimes fail courses, and how can this be prevented? What’s the best way to study for various courses? Which books are really worth buying? What problems can minority students expect to experience? By answering questions like these, you can provide a real service to incoming students and advertise AMSA simultaneously. Consider a focus on a course that is difficult for first-years, such as anatomy, to provide them advice on how to succeed.

## **CITY-WIDE SCAVENGER HUNT**

This event is an opportunity to show students the city, its cultural history, local transportation and restaurants, and have tons of FUN. You will need to contact students in the summer and have them clear that day for the hunt. This is a great event the weekend before classes start. Prizes for the winning groups are easily donated from locations on the scavenger hunt list. You can post members, school administrators or clues at the locations and make it interactive (take pictures with people/places/things). Make the final stop a restaurant or on-campus bar and negotiate a private party for the class. Ask your school’s dean of students for funding, as you are creating a meaningful experience for incoming students. Your student council may want to go in on this as well.

## **INFORMATIONAL SERVICES**

If only you knew then what you know now! Think about the things you would have appreciated knowing when you started medical school; chances are that the incoming class feels similarly. A few ideas:

- **Guided tours** of the campus, its surrounding neighborhood or downtown.
- **Information booth** to answer questions about class schedules, upcoming events and housing.
- **Booklet introducing newcomers to the city**, with descriptions of popular restaurants, clubs, bars, theaters and weekend excursions. Solicit advertising from local merchants.
- **Welcome weekend** activity prior to orientation, where incoming students can learn more about housing opportunities, find the financial aid office, meet other students, etc. Offer housing for the weekend with current students.
- **Big brother/big sister network**. Assign two or three first-years to a second-year, either randomly or based on similar interests. Ask the “sibs” to meet during the first week of classes so that first-years can get their worrisome questions answered.
- **Financial panel discussion**. Many students immediately face tough financial decisions. AMSA can help such students by sponsoring a panel discussion with federal scholarship and loan recipients, publishing a straightforward informational booklet with the cooperation of the financial aid office or offering individual advice. Have informative good-credit discussions.

## **USED-BOOK SALES— See Fundraising Tab**

## **SALES, SALES, SALES**

If incoming students see the benefits of joining immediately, they’ll be more likely to fill out application forms. You can order many items in bulk and sell them to first-year students:

### **T-shirts, lab coats, short white coats, dissection kits, medical instruments, scrubs**

- **Instrument sale with Kevin Pancratz**: See the “Fundraising Tab”
- **Lab coats and clinical supplies**: Local purveyors will usually give you a 10-15 percent discount on bulk orders of lab coats or short white coats. That discount can be passed on to your membership. Always take orders for clothing before you buy, or you may get stuck with unsold items. Many retailers will be willing to visit your school and set up a mini-store where students can try on lab coats—leaves less work for you and more satisfied members.

- **Dissection tools:** Order dissection tools in bulk from major national suppliers, and then assemble kits for the incoming class. Or, if you do an instrument sale, contact your sales representative about doing a dissection kit, glove and lab-coat sale during orientation week in addition to the later instrument sale.
- **Fleece sweatshirts or T-shirts:** Many school bookstores are becoming corporate-owned, and many students would rather support a student organization than Amazon.com.

### **STUDENT DIRECTORY**

Many AMSA chapters prepare and distribute student directories, which include addresses, telephone numbers, birthdays and snapshots of all incoming students. You can either wait until orientation and photograph students yourselves, or ask all new students to submit a 2"x2" (passport size) photo by mail in August. Don't forget to include a page or two describing AMSA and outlining why people join. Consider soliciting sponsors to help you cover the cost of printing.

### **WEEKEND RETREAT**

What better opportunity to describe AMSA's philosophy while demonstrating our concern for humanistic values in medical education? Your dean of student affairs or student council might be willing to co-sponsor a retreat.

### **EDUCATE**

In your rush to provide fun and useful services, don't forget that AMSA's mission is to raise medical students' awareness and involve them in their communities. If students view your chapter as an organization that simply perpetuates itself by recruiting new members, it's time to change your approach. After engagement, have programs ready that promote the work you and the new members want to accomplish for the year. It is our work to help transform the passion of students into action and work toward patient advocacy.

# A SAMPLE NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

## A SAMPLE NEW MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PLAN

<i>Completed by</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Delegated to</i>
March 30	Elect new chapter officers and engagement coordinator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send names to the national office and your regional director</li> <li>• Inform Membership Services: call 1-800-767-2266 or fill out the chapter officer information form at <a href="http://www.amsa.org/chppoff/chappres.cfm">www.amsa.org/chppoff/chappres.cfm</a></li> </ul>	
April 15	Assemble an engagement committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm for activities</li> <li>• Use the COC handbook for ideas</li> <li>• Work with trustees to develop and participate in a regional COC</li> </ul>	
May 1	Reserve time for orientation with your school <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact admissions, student affairs</li> </ul>	
May 1	Prepare your summer engagement letter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write the letter</li> <li>• Determine method of distribution</li> <li>• Obtain mailing list of incoming students from Student Affairs (medical chapter officers only) and send to national office for mailing</li> </ul>	
June 1	Mail engagement letters	
June 3	Order new member engagement supplies <a href="http://www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm">www.amsa.org/chapoff/recruit.cfm</a> / 1-800-767-2266	
June 15	Finalize orientation activities Activity #1 _____ Activity #2 _____ Activity #3 _____	
July-Aug	Implement summer activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow up if students contact you</li> <li>• Other:</li> </ul>	
Orientation	Orientation week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AMSA presentation/slide show</li> <li>• Engagement booth</li> <li>• Distribution of engagement materials</li> <li>• Other activities</li> </ul>	
Aug-Sept	Follow-up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate your engagement strategy</li> <li>• Make recommendations for next year's officers</li> <li>• Plan for a general meeting</li> <li>• Elect/appoint first-year leaders</li> <li>• Start local projects/activities/newsletters</li> </ul>	

# AMSA ENGAGEMENT BENEFITS/SOUND BITES

## AMSA ENGAGEMENT BENEFITS/SOUND BITES

Engagement is all about high-yield soundbites (brief, memorable/quatable phrases). Find what interests someone and use the sound bite that fits best for them to describe AMSA.

### ***It takes more than medical school to make a physician.***

- Attend conferences to learn about health policy, cultural competency, the business of medicine and many other essential issues.
- Learn leadership skills needed to run a practice.
- Hear from leaders in medicine about the things you need to know to be the best physician you can for your patients.
- Participate in community service events throughout the nation.
- Learn how to talk with your legislators about critical issues affecting future physicians.
- *"AMSA is an organization that takes medical students and empowers them to become future physician-leaders through work on issues crucial to their patients and their profession, skills not commonly taught in medical school. AMSA provided me with a nurturing and empowering venue to develop into an effective leader, especially on issues that both AMSA and I care strongly about, such as equality and social justice."* ~Jewel Kling, University of Arizona College of Medicine

### ***Join a large and supportive community.***

- Be part of the largest medical student organization with M.D. and D.O. students, made up of around 62,000 at almost every single medical school in the nation.
- AMSA is medical students advocating for the needs of medical students, both nationally and at the local level.
- Be a part of AMSA's mentorship programs, getting advice and assistance from former AMSA members who are now residents and physicians.
- Use the resources available to make sure issues that are important to you are addressed at your school through programming or advocacy.

### ***Get assistance getting through medical school.***

- Receive a discount on test prep software such as USMLERx and COMBANK.
- Receive a discount on essential tools such as Barnes and Noble, *The New England Journal of Medicine*, Visual Dx and PDA software.
- Attend a webinar with First Aid creator Dr. Tao Le to learn strategies on how to succeed on your boards.
- Attend conferences where you'll learn how to do well in medical school and tools that will be essential on the wards.
- View residency reviews by other students to determine out which programs works best for you.
- Gain leadership experience while in AMSA to enhance your competitive residency application.
- *"AMSA has molded my interests into the field I am best suited for. With a variety of outlets to pursue one's passion, one can begin to cultivate a path to which one can commit. I am now aware of my strengths academically, especially as an osteopathic physician. My realizations were guided by attending conferences and talking to residency programs. The discounts on USMLERx and especially COMBANK, have helped me immensely with preparing for the two boards. With this realization, I see a more distinct and clear path into my journey to become a physician. In other words, I know what I want to be when I grow up."* ~Priti Shah, Chair, Action

Committee on Humanistic Medicine, 2009-2010.

**Advance your passions and interests.**

- AMSA programming helps you make change NOW.
- AMSA's action committees and interests groups engage in a wide range of projects each year that help you make a difference.
- You can participate nationally in large scale events or set up local programs at your chapter on issues that interest you and your classmates.
- Participate in national programming such as PharmFree Week and Primary Care Week.
- At AMSA, you have the opportunity to skip the step of being an apprentice, hoping the torch will be passed on to you. Take charge now.
- *"Joining AMSA and becoming involved helped me remember the reasons I came to medical school in the first place. It has helped me hold onto my passions and interests while attempting to survive the stress of the first two years of school. Meeting people with similar goals, ambitions and desires has pushed me to continue to do what I dreamt of doing in the first place. I want to not only be competent and intelligent in my endeavors, but I want to be a well-rounded passionate physician. AMSA helps me remember how to do that."* ~Tamara Jette, MSIII

**Get help developing local programming at your chapter.**

- Use one of AMSA's pre-made "Projects in a Box" to put on a successful program at your school.
- Use AMSA's Web site to find programs that other chapter leaders have put on and how to make them successful.
- Contact your regional directors and action committee representatives to get assistance with program ideas or with getting the tools to make your program a success.

**Join our legislative efforts.**

- AMSA works tirelessly on Capitol Hill to reduce student debt, to advocate for more loan repayment programs, to increase programs such as the National Health Service Corps, and many other critical issues for future health professionals.
- Members provide direction to AMSA's annual legislative agenda.
- AMSA has successfully decreased residency work hours, changed the Match process to favor students, not residency programs, increased access to health care for children and people with AIDS, and many other issues.
- Attend a national lobby day on Capitol Hill with AMSA to advocate to your legislators for the changes you want to see as a future health care professional.
- Attend a state lobby day to advocate for statewide legislation to improve health care access and various other issues important to future health care professionals.
- *"Advocacy has taught me that my voice can have power in forming the policies that shape the world around me. It is only through combined effort that we can impact the issues which matter most to us."* ~Jacob Imber, University of Kansas School of Medicine, Class of 2011.

**Participate in rotations and research in other countries.**

- Do an exchange program with International Federation of Medical Students Association (IFMSA) to do a month long rotation with a medical school in another country at the most affordable price.
- Participate in research programs in other countries with faculty from schools in those countries.
- By being a member of AMSA, you are a part of the IFMSA the largest medical student organization in the world.

### ***Join a campaign.***

- AMSA's PharmFree Campaign aims to reduce the influence of pharmaceutical marketing on the prescribing practices of future physicians.
- Get assistance from the national office to make your school free of conflicts of interest.
- Become involved as we push for increased health care access and improved patient safety
- Work with AMSA to increase diversity in medicine.
- AMSA is a highly effective patient advocate organization.

### ***A FREE subscription to AMSA's flagship magazine, The New Physician (TNP).***

- Receive this award-winning publication for physicians-in-training 9 times per year.
- Timely, relevant and practical information related to navigating a career in medicine: How to prepare for examinations, manage the stress of medical school, select a preceptor. TNP is full of helpful advice and tales from the wards.
- AMSA members are encouraged to submit story ideas and articles for publication consideration.

### ***Leadership opportunities.***

- Become a national or chapter leader and develop skills that will benefit your career.
- Take a leadership role in an interest group or action committee.
- Run for an elected position on AMSA's Board of Trustees, or volunteer to help coordinate a conference or institute.
- AMSA exists to help physicians-in-training identify their leadership strengths and practice them in meaningful ways.
- Learn marketing, team building and leadership skills from an organization that has a long history of excellence in training student leaders.
- Many national organizations target medical students to help them with their cause, but no one specializes in helping medical students make actual change like AMSA does. We have a 60-year history of advocacy, education and activism around many, many issues.
- *"The AMSA community enables you to grow as a leader whether or not you have had much previous leadership experience. People really want to see you succeed here!" ~Katie Carlson, Board of Regional Directors, 2009-2010*

### ***AMSA Academy.***

- Attend an AMSA Institute and learn important skills not often taught in traditional medical school settings.
- Choose from one of nearly 20 institutes that focus on increasing your sensitivity to diversity, understanding how to become a legislative advocate for your future patients, developing your skills as a future teacher, plus much more.
- Sign up for a scholar program that allows you to participate in a yearlong distance learning program focused on a specific topic and in which you will be mentored by experts in the field.
- Do a study tour internationally to learn more about other health care systems through discussions with physicians and patients.
- Learn leadership skills that pertain to your field of interest.
- *"I attended the Institute on Complementary and Alternative Medicine in May of 2008. It was that institute that made me think for the first time that I could actually survive medical school. There were people like me—struggling like me—looking for a deeper education like me—and we were all in one beautiful place, enjoying time with each other and helping each other plan how to make it through the rest of school while holding on to what*

*made us who we are. I got to focus on community organizing, which just makes my toes tingle and certainly doesn't come up anywhere else in medical school."* ~Sonia Lazreg, Chair, Action Committee on Community and Environmental Health, 2009-2010.

#### **Attend AMSA's Annual Convention.**

- Join fellow civic-minded colleagues at the annual convention.
- Students plan and implement the programming, learn new medical techniques, showcase their research, enjoy social activities, and create lifelong friendships.
- AMSA's Annual Convention will be at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California, March 10-14, 2010.
- Previous keynote speakers have included: Paul Farmer, M.D., Sanjay Gupta, M.D., Rep. John Lewis, and many others.
- *"AMSA conferences were my lifeline. Every time I got discouraged by what I saw around me, every time I felt completely powerless, I came to AMSA conferences only to see that I really did make a difference. And that fighting for these issues was meaningful. And that I wasn't the only one fighting. Enough feathers can sink a boat, right? And we have that influence. Together we do."* ~Sylvia Thompson, M.D., Chair, Action Committee on Health Policy

#### **Attend a regional conference.**

- Get involved with other pre-health professional students in your region to hear from influential speakers and programs relating to many issues not discussed in medical school.
- Check out the residency fair or medical school fair in your region.
- Network with schools in your region to develop co-programs and share ideas of how to strengthen your chapter.
- *"I had a phenomenal experience meeting with AMSA national leaders, federal legislators and an incredibly interesting lineup of speakers in the world's craziest city."* ~David Terwilliger, Health Policy Coordinator, Region X Conference 2008 (Las Vegas)

#### **Join an interactive community.**

- AMSA hosts discussion listserves on topics that are important for future physicians.
- Listserves include Health Policy, Osteopathic Medicine, Global Health, Diversity in Medicine and much more.
- These listserves provide a great opportunity to network and get advice from fellow students across the nation.

#### **Scholarships and award.**

- AMSA members are eligible for assistance to facilitate travel to AMSA's Annual Convention, regional conferences and institutes offered through the AMSA Academy.
- There are grants to help fund your local programming, offered three times a year.
- AMSA Foundation can help your chapter find and write grants to increase funding for your organization.
- *"My local project grant is providing the seed financial and programmatic support, but more importantly, AMSA has given me the confidence to move forward in implementing my service project"* ~Mayra "Alicia" Overstreet-Galeano, University of North Carolina School of Medicine

#### **Enjoy affiliate partner discounts.**

- AMSA members have access to discounted rates for GEICO auto insurance, Barnes & Noble bookstores, Choice Hotels, Enterprise Rental Cars, student health insurance, and a host of other significantly reduced products and services that help make your life easier and less expensive.

## HOW TO RECRUIT FOR AMSA AT A D.O. SCHOOL

### ***Why should I join AMSA? Isn't that an M.D. organization?***

No! AMSA is an organization for ALL medical students. M.D. and D.O. students are both equal members with the same abilities to vote, hold positions (in fact, AMSA's 2006-07 President was a D.O. student), and have chapters at their schools.

### ***What makes AMSA different from the Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA), and shouldn't I just join that since it is advocating for issues for D.O.s?***

AMSA is a completely student-run organization, which gives students the ability to have AMSA focus on the issues they feel are important. SOMA, on the other hand, is connected to the American Osteopathic Association (AOA), so there is some limitation to what they can do as an organization based on the AOA policies and views on issues. AMSA advocates for issues for all medical students, physicians and patients, no matter if they are D.O.s or M.D.s. Just last year, AMSA took a stance against the Visiting Student Application Service, which was designed to leave osteopathic students out. It is the only M.D./D.O. combined voice that came out against it. Also AMSA has a special interest group that focuses on osteopathic issues.

### ***Will I get a chance to let other members in AMSA know a little bit more about what osteopathic medicine is as a member?***

ABSOLUTELY! At many AMSA events, osteopathic manipulation mixers provide D.O. students the opportunity to discuss what manipulation is and explain the philosophy behind osteopathic medicine.

### ***Why is AMSA more expensive than SOMA, UAAO and the other organizations?***

As a student-run organization without connections to other parent organizations, AMSA is unable to get the same kind of funding that other organizations get, such as SOMA, receives support from the AOA. In addition, AMSA does not accept pharmaceutical or military organization money, in order to continue advocating for issues that are best for health care for all. The money that goes into membership comes back in a number of ways. The money goes toward national and chapter programming designed for its members. It also funds the conferences and workshops that members attend. AMSA has a staff dedicated to advocate for the rights of medical students and their future patients.

# RESPONSES TO COMMON REASONS FOR NOT JOINING

As you introduce new students to AMSA, you may find that they hold various erroneous perceptions of AMSA. This section presents many of these misconceptions. If someone decides not to join AMSA despite full knowledge of our organization, there is little you can do. If their reluctance is based on inadequate information, they may be more interested after learning what AMSA is really about.

## ***“But I'm a medical student—I don't have time to join organizations!”***

- That's the great thing about AMSA! You can get as involved as you want. Getting involved in AMSA is a good investment because it will be a resource to you well beyond your first year. How much do you think you want to be involved?
- Being an AMSA member doesn't need to take a lot of time. In fact, many students and physicians join organizations like AMSA so that their interests can be represented without them actually having to spend time lobbying. Personal happiness and growth depend upon how you balance academics with outside activities.

## ***“But I've heard that AMSA is a radical/socialist organization.”***

- AMSA is a nonpartisan organization, and its members represent all views. We support increasing access, equality and affordability of healthcare. As a member, you can be involved with issues that you are passionate about and you do not have to participate in those in which you are not interested.
- AMSA has something for everyone! With more than 62,000 members, AMSA is made up of a diverse cross-section of the medical student population. AMSA's policies are established by its House of Delegates, composed of representatives from nearly every medical school in the country, which convenes once each year at AMSA's Annual Convention. Any member can introduce a resolution or speak in support/against a resolution. When resolutions pass, they become a part of AMSA's official policy and are included in AMSA's *Preamble, Purposes and Principles (PPP)*. If prospective members are concerned about AMSA's political leanings, invite them to review and discuss the *PPP*. Because the organization is large, every member does not agree with each of AMSA's principles. How dull life would be if we each thought exactly the same way.

## ***“Do I really have anything to gain by joining AMSA?”***

**Yes!** This is the type of question you can be ready to jump on! See the above sound bites for the many opportunities. The academic world recognizes and acknowledges the leadership, as well as personal and professional development provided by AMSA when these skills are presented on CVs. **NO OTHER STUDENT ORGANIZATION HAS HAD THIS LEVEL OF IMPACT ON HEALTH CARE!**

## ***“I would join, but I don't believe in universal health care.” OR “I'm not really into political activism, protests and rallying.”***

AMSA isn't a political organization, though it is an organization that does political work. There is a lot of interest and work in many of different issues. AMSA works on the most relevant issues related to medical students. One of its many issues is support for affordable, quality health care regardless of how it is achieved. What kinds of things are you looking for in an organization (i.e., activism, advocacy, academics, professional development, socializing/networking)?

## ***“I joined AMSA during the summer, but I haven't received anything.”***

Since the mailing lists for each issue of *The New Physician* must be prepared about six weeks prior to publication, new members may not get their first issue for several weeks. Remember those students who are having specific problems so we can help them out later, especially when collecting checks for membership. **SEND THOSE CHECKS AND APPLICATIONS INTO AMSA NATIONAL ASAP!**

***“A second-year told me that AMSA does nothing but recruit new members each year.”***

- Every year is different. This year we are going to focus on [public health, health policy, and disparities]. We are really looking for new ideas and new leaders. What kinds of things would you like to see us do?
- Describe all of the programs run by the national organization. Emphasize that activity at your local chapter level varies, depending on the enthusiasm and effort of student leaders and members. One of the great aspects of AMSA is that it offers many resources for new projects in the form of ideas and grants (Local Project Grants). Be sure to have your ideas for new projects ready for the involvement of such eager first-year medical students. **Tell them to join AMSA and get involved!**

**“What is the difference between AMSA and the AMA?”**

- AMSA actually began as the student branch of the AMA but split off in the late 1960s when the AMA opposed the creation of Medicare and failed to provide support to the civil rights movement and the community health movement.
- Students have had a much stronger voice in AMSA, and we are the largest, completely student-led medical student organization in the country.
- Our work on residency work hours is a great example of why our independence is so valuable. However, we do work together on a lot of different issues and continue to promote collaboration between many of different organizations.

# TEMPLATE LETTER TO INCOMING STUDENTS

## TEMPLATE LETTER TO INCOMING STUDENTS

The University of \_\_\_\_\_ chapter of the American Medical Student Association

Dear First-Year Medical Student:

**CONGRATULATIONS** on your admission to the University of \_\_\_\_\_. While medical school involves many hours in the classroom and studying, at \_\_\_\_\_ there are plenty of opportunities to get involved in politics, advocacy, community service and leadership. AMSA is one of many student organizations through which you can take advantage of these opportunities.

AMSA is the nation's oldest and largest independent medical student association. AMSA advocates for the interest and well-being of patients, medical students and residents. AMSA's current strategic priorities are: advocating for quality, affordable health care for all; global health equity; enriching medicine through diversity; and professional integrity, diversity and student well being. As a member, you can get involved in many ways, both locally and nationally.

On the national level, there are numerous leadership training institutes taking place all year long. You can also get involved through summer fellowships and internships. In the fall, our regional conference will be held at \_\_\_\_\_, and AMSA's Annual Convention will be held March 10-14, 2010, at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California.

Locally we have many events, including \_\_\_\_\_  
[Fill in chapter projects here]

These are just a few of the many ways that you can get involved.

***On Student Organization's Day (fill in date), join AMSA  
—up to 5 years of membership for only \$75—***

***(For U.S. medical chapters only)***

When you join AMSA and sign up for the AMSA credit card, you can receive a **FREE NETTER** *Human Anatomy Atlas or First Aid for the USMLE Step I*. Either one is a MUST HAVE. All you need to do is apply for a Bank of America credit card at [www.amsacreditcard.com](http://www.amsacreditcard.com) and bring your printed-out confirmation sheet with you when you sign up to join AMSA at our local engagement drive on (insert date).

***(For all chapters)***

When you join AMSA, you will receive a free subscription to *The New Physician* magazine for the life of your student membership and other membership benefits, including discounts on hotel, car rental, books, PDAs; and insurance for health, auto and homeowners. Go to [www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm) to view all of the benefits available.\*\*

Again, WELCOME TO \_\_\_\_\_. For more information, feel free to contact us or visit AMSA's Web site at [www.amsa.org](http://www.amsa.org). Enjoy the rest of your summer; we look forward to seeing you in August.

Sincerely,

Your Name  
Chapter President  
[youraddress@email.edu](mailto:youraddress@email.edu)

Name  
Engagement Coordinator  
[youraddress@email.edu](mailto:youraddress@email.edu)

# SAMPLE FLYER FOR ORIENTATION DAY DISTRIBUTION

Join AMSA  
American Medical Student Association  
University of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter

THIS FRIDAY (date) AT THE STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FAIR

## WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF JOINING?

- As a U.S. medical student, when you join AMSA for \$75 and sign up for a Bank of America credit card at your participating school's recruitment drive, you will receive a free Netter *Atlas of Human Anatomy* or *First Aid for the USMLE Step 1*—a must have. To receive the special promotional gift, go to [www.amsacreditcard.com](http://www.amsacreditcard.com) and fill out the Bank of America application, and bring your confirmation sheet to the engagement fair. If you join AMSA online ([www.amsa.org/join](http://www.amsa.org/join)), be sure to bring along that confirmation page, too.
- AMSA Used-Book Sale, August 12-13. *The first day is reserved for AMSA members only!* Come early. All of the good books go quickly.
- AMSA Instrument Sale. Medical instruments at excellent prices (great for stethoscopes).
- AMSA's Annual Convention in Anaheim, California, at the Disneyland Hotel, March 10-14, 2010.
- LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. We are looking for committee chairs and members.
- Numerous local events, such as Primary Care Week, universal health care talks and candlelight vigils, viewing of the documentary "A Closer Walk" about the global AIDS pandemic, Medical Student Well-Being Week.
- Regional conference this fall at \_\_\_\_\_. Go to [www.amsa.org/region/regconf.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/region/regconf.cfm).
- A free subscription to *The New Physician* magazine.
- Discounts on hotel, car rentals, books; insurance for health, auto and homeowners; and much more. Go to [www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm](http://www.amsa.org/member/benefits.cfm).
- You will get to meet other medical students who care about diversity in medicine, universal health care, eliminating health disparities and transforming the culture of medical education!

# SAMPLE FLYER FOR ENGAGEMENT BOOTH

# SAMPLE FLYER FOR ENGAGEMENT BOOTH

American Medical Student Association—The University of \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter

## **WHAT IS AMSA?**

AMSA, the largest, independent medical student organization in the country, is an entirely student-run organization. We offer more student leadership opportunities, more academic opportunities such as paid fellowships, international electives and internships, more conferences and more student-oriented educational seminars than any other organization. Currently AMSA is focusing its energy on four strategic priorities:

1. Quality, Affordable Health Care For All
2. Global Health Equity
3. Enriching Medicine Through Diversity
4. Professional Integrity, Diversity and Student Well-Being

## **WHAT DOES AMSA DO?**

**Nationally:** AMSA has a long history of political activism and represents students to groups like the National Resident Matching Program and the National Board of Medical Examiners. There are also amazing leadership opportunities, regional conferences and the AMSA's Annual Convention in Anaheim, California, March 10-14, 2010.

**Locally:** National Primary Care Week, used-book sale, instrument sale, universal health care talks, viewing of "A Closer Walk," medical student well-being events.

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMSA AND THE AMA**

AMSA actually began as the student branch of the AMA (SAMA) but split off in the late 1960s when AMA opposed the creation of Medicare and did not adequately reflect the students' interests in civil rights, women's rights and the Vietnam War. Today, the AMA and AMSA have vastly different political agendas and strategies. While the AMA focuses on issues that primarily serve the physician community, such as tort reform and provider reimbursement rates, AMSA has continued its longstanding advocacy for universal health care, eliminating health disparities, diversifying the physician workforce and transforming the culture of medicine. And, instead of reporting to a parent organization, as the Medical Student Section of the AMA does, AMSA is entirely independent and student-run.

*For DO Schools:*

## **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMSA AND SOMA**

*AMSA is a completely student-run organization with no connection to the AMA or any other parent organization. The Student Osteopathic Medical Association (SOMA) is the student branch of the AOA. AMSA has been student-run since the late 1960s when it broke from the AMA because it disagreed with the AMA's opposition to the creation of Medicare and its inability to adequately reflect student interests in civil rights, women's rights and the Vietnam War. Today, SOMA/AOA and AMSA have vastly different political agendas and strategies. While the AOA focuses on issues that primarily serve the osteopathic physician community, such as tort reform, provider reimbursement rates and rights of Osteopathic physicians to practice manipulation, AMSA has continued its longstanding advocacy for universal health care, eliminating health disparities, diversifying the physician workforce and transforming the culture of medicine.*

## **TENTATIVE CALENDAR**

### **August:**

- Used-book sale
- Meeting for new members

### **September:**

- Instrument sale; speaker event; fundraisers

### **October:**

- National Primary Care Week

### **November:**

- Regional conference

### **December:**

- Universal health care talks and candlelight vigil

### **January:**

- Viewing of "A Closer Walk" and Global AIDS awareness events

### **February:**

- Medical student well-being events

### **March:**

- Annual Convention; Health Students Week of Action; Public Health Week

