I am honored to serve as the National Chair of the Group on Student Affairs (GSA) and to promote the mission of the GSA, “to advance medical education and, specifically, to represent the interests of medical schools and medical students in the areas of admissions, student affairs, financial aid, diversity affairs, and student records”. GSA is one of the largest affinity groups within the Association of American Medical Colleges. As colleagues, we touch the lives of students along a significant continuum that begins with outreach and pipeline programs offered to “our future physicians” and that continues through graduation from medical school and beyond. We in student affairs are privileged to watch students grow and develop into medical professionals.

My goal for my tenure is to promote transparency in communications across the various aspects of the GSA and to create more opportunities for the involvement of the GSA membership in programming and planning. The GSA is the professional development group for our colleagues. The GSA leadership must work closely with the AAMC Constituent Engagement Team, Student Affairs and Programs Team, and thought leaders in other areas of the AAMC. There are new national initiatives that require a strong voice and involvement from the greater GSA community. We must continue to strengthen our linkages with the OSR, the Council of Deans, and other AAMC Groups.

The GSA crosses the continuum of medical education with constituents who provide pipeline programs, programs for premedical students, community outreach programs, post-baccalaureate programs, recruitment, retention and support for medical students, career education and development, preparation of students for residency placement, health and wellness for students, support for students from diverse backgrounds, support for the learning environment, professional and personal development of students, financial and debt management education, and enrollment services. The GSA must be in the discussion of the broad issues that impact medical education as we collectively prepare our graduates to be the health workforce for our nation. I look forward to involvement with the ongoing GME Project, Core EPAs, and GSA Professional Development efforts. I hope to bring a perspective that fully engages the broad spectrum of GSA leaders and members.
The Group on Student Affairs has a broad team of leaders who work collaboratively in the interest of our students. It is an honor to have the opportunity to work with such a talented and dedicated group of leaders who represent the five focus areas and the four geographic regions. It is through the collective efforts of the entire leadership team that progress is made. I invite the members of the GSA Community to become involved in your regions, connect with the national committees, and to share your ideas and perspectives with the national steering committee.

As student affairs professionals, we sit on the cutting edge of change. Those of you who work in admissions are responding to the changes in reporting from AMCAS. Led by our Committee on Admissions, we endeavor to improve our process and strengthen our policies and procedures at the institutional level. The holistic admissions process has been embraced by most medical schools across the country. Holistic review continues to fuel efforts to select students that address the various missions of our respective medical schools. Thank you to our admissions colleagues who dedicate your professional energies to this work.

The GSA Committee on Student Financial Assistance leads the charge as we endeavor to reduce medical student debt, develop policies that serve our students from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, and serve as a collective voice at the federal level regarding financial aid policies. The services provided by our colleagues in this area make it possible for our students to remain enrolled and focused on their medical education. Thank you for your expertise and collaboration.

The GSA Committee on Student Records represents our colleagues who are key in ensuring that the academic records of our students are accurate and confidential. Working within their respective institutions, our records officers provide an infrastructure for student registration and enrollment, academic outcomes, student standing, and external processes such as VSAS. Thank you for your efforts to standardize and improve efficiency to benefit our students.

The GSA Committee on Student Diversity Affairs represents our colleagues who work to increase our student diversity through pipeline programs, community outreach, and recruitment. In addition, they focus efforts on the retention and professional development of our students who bring diverse experiences and backgrounds to medical education. Their focus is along the entire continuum. Thank you for expanding our views and introducing the concept of the Holistic Student Affairs Model.

The GSA Committee on Student Affairs anchors our work as student affairs professionals. There is much being done to improve our overall services to students and to expand our connections to the NRMP, program directors, the NBME, and the many services provided by the AAMC for students. There is significant focus on improving well-being and wellness for our medical students, improving our career advising, and addressing complex issues that our medical students face. Thank you for keeping the success and well-being of our students at the forefront.
The GSA Regions are organized to offer meaningful professional development activities and strategies that follow the initiatives established at a national level. The Regional Chairs provide a pivotal link to the GSA National Steering Committee. Thank you for your dedication and commitment.

The GSA Leadership Team will undertake several initiatives in the 2018-19 year including the Holistic Student Affairs Model, the MSPE Writing Project with the GEA, expanding communications with the NRMP, developing student wellness programs, expanding communications within the GSA, and building stronger relationships with other GSA affinity groups. In addition, the GSA Leadership Team will continue to work closely with the AAMC Student Affairs Programs in the promotion of the Professional Development Initiative.

Welcome to the Group on Student Affairs. We encourage our constituents from across the areas of expertise to connect, communicate, and participate. The GSA is here to help you each develop. Together we make a difference in the lives of our students. I am privileged to serve as your GSA National Chair.

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