

Student society

After you are accepted into your PA program, you might be asked to join your student society, so **what is a PA student society?**

Student societies are groups of PA students who assemble on a regular basis to discuss issues of common interest that often deal with health care, the PA profession, or other social issues. Each student society can have its own unique mission and goals, but all of them are also working to promote the physician assistant profession and PA students within the profession.

Any PA program can start a student society; however, to become a student society that is officially recognized by SAAAPA, the student society must meet the following criteria:

- At least five PA student members of the society must also be student members of AAPA.
- The PA program must be accredited or provisionally accredited.
- The student society must be registered with AAPA and the Student Academy.

Only one student society will be recognized by SAAAPA from each accredited or provisionally accredited PA program. PA programs with multiple campuses are allowed one officially recognized student society from each campus.

Why would you want to have a student society? There are many advantages to being involved with a student society, such as

- It opens the door to new opportunities for yourself, your peers, your program, and your community.
- It provides unique opportunities to network with fellow students, promote the PA profession, and provide input to AAPA as it makes important decisions impacting future students and the profession.
- It acts as a support group for PA students during their studies.

Why should you register your student society with AAPA and the Student Academy?

- This enables your program to send a representative to SAAAPA's Assembly of Representatives (AOR) at AAPA's annual conference each year. The AOR is the legislative and policy-making body for the Student Academy and their decisions affect PA students currently and in the future. Participation allows your student society to have a voice in the direction of the Student Academy.
- It allows your student society to send a representative to AAPA's House of Delegates (HOD). This is the legislative and policy-making body of AAPA, which creates policy for the profession, which will impact you when you graduate.
- It is an eligibility requirement to have a team for SAAAPA's National Medical Challenge Bowl.
- It provides your society with an opportunity to enter into the competition for the Student Academy Outstanding Student Society Award, where the top two student societies receive \$500. Entries are scrapbooks or PowerPoint presentations detailing what your

student society has done throughout the year, which must be received by January 15. More details can be found in the awards section of this handbook.

How can the student society register with AAPA and the Student Academy?

Complete the application on-line at <http://saaapa.aapa.org/studsoc/> starting September 1. Student society on-line applications will require the following information:

- Name of student society
- PA program name
- Student society bylaws (electronic version)
- Student society mailing address
- Student society Web site URL
- PA program faculty advisor name, e-mail, and AAPA membership number
- Student society officers (need name, address, city, state, zip, daytime phone, e-mail address, and AAPA membership number for each person) for the following positions:
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Secretary
 - Treasurer
 - Constituent Chapter Student Representative (CCSR)
 - External Affairs Chair (EAC)
 - Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative
 - Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Alternate
 - House of Delegates (HOD) Representative
 - Student Diversity Committee Representative (SDCR)

You will want to register your society as soon as you can after September 1 so that your society officers can start communicating with the national officers of SAAAPA. The SDCR, AOR, and HOD representatives are asked to participate with other representatives from around the country in discussion; the sooner they are listed, the easier it will be for them to get involved.

Take advantage of this important opportunity to affect your future. It is not difficult to establish a student society or to register your society with the Student Academy. The benefits of being part of an organization that represents you are numerous.

Once you have established your student society, you will realize the impact student societies have on the Student Academy and vice versa.

Leadership positions

Student societies afford many students opportunities to hone their leadership skills at the local level. A few of the students will even participate on a national level, whether they participate in the Assembly of Representatives (AOR) or communicate with other representatives in their same position.

SAAAPA suggests the following positions for your student society:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Constituent Chapter Student Representative (CCSR)
- External Affairs Chair (EAC)
- Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative
- Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Alternate
- House of Delegates (HOD) Representative
- Student Diversity Committee Representative (SDCR)

Your student society is not obligated to have each position filled; however, it does allow more students in your program a chance to practice and improve their leadership skills. Also, each position has specific duties to carry out, which will help improve your student society's awareness of the community, other PA programs, and your state chapter's activities.

Constituent Chapter Student Representative (CCSR): Serves as representative for the student society to the state chapter. The duties of this person vary from state to state, depending on how many PA schools are in that state and according to the bylaws of the constituent chapter. However, the CCSR is responsible for attending all constituent chapter board of directors meetings and reporting back to the student society. Also, the CCSR should increase interaction between the student society, constituent chapter, SAAAPA, and AAPA.

Student Diversity Committee Representative (SDCR): Disseminates information to students regarding diversity issues that may affect the delivery of health care to people of various backgrounds, coordinates local activities and community outreach projects, serves as a liaison between his or her student society and the SAAAPA director of diversity (DOD), and communicates with the DOD and other SDCRs around the country about diversity issues.

External Affairs Chair (EAC): Coordinates activities and public relations efforts between the student society and external groups, which can include but are not limited to: other medical professionals (M.D., D.O., PT, OT, nurses, speech, etc.), city/county organizations, state organizations, national organizations, and other community-related organizations.

House of Delegate (HOD) Student Representative: Responsible for the distribution of all HOD information to his or her student society; attends AAPA's annual conference and is seated as either a SAAAPA delegate or alternate in the formal meeting of AAPA's House of Delegates.

Each student HOD representative will be designated as alternate or delegate, depending on a lottery that occurs each November. To participate in the lottery, your student society must be registered before November 1. The student delegation to the AAPA House of Delegates consists of 11 student delegates plus the SAAAPA chief delegate. Please note that student delegates and alternates will have the same duties at the HOD meeting and all are required to read the HOD resolutions prior to the meeting.

Assembly of Representatives (AOR) Representative: Responsible for distributing all Student Academy information to his or her program; monitors the SAAAPA Web site (<http://saaapa.aapa.org>) weekly for announcements, leadership opportunities, and available resources which would be of interest to fellow students; and serves as the contact for SAAAPA Board of Directors, appointees, and committees. Attends the annual AOR meeting at AAPA's annual conference to elect new officers of the Student Academy, to establish and amend policy of SAAAPA, and to conduct business as necessary.

Please note that the AOR and the HOD representatives cannot be the same person, as the two people will be required to attend meetings running concurrently. Also even if you are unsure about attending AAPA's annual conference, the Student Academy asks that you provide contact information so that your program will be kept up-to-date on national activities.

Also note that to participate in SAAAPA's National Medical Challenge Bowl, you must have a registered student society, an AOR representative, and an HOD representative who attend AAPA's annual conference.

Each of these positions, including the CCSR, SDCR, EAC, HOD rep, and AOR rep, carries at least a one-year term. In addition, it is helpful if the outgoing officer orients and mentors the incoming officer.

eCommunities

eCommunities is an electronic forum used by AAPA and the Student Academy for committee work and communications. The Student Academy currently has the following eCommunities:

- Diversity committee – used by SDCRs and the director of diversity
- AOR committee – reserved for AOR representatives and the vice president of SAAAPA
- HOD committee – HOD representatives and the SAAAPA chief delegate interact in this community

All of the eCommunities are by invitation only for the specific representative, and that person is responsible for reporting the information back to the student society. Additional eCommunities will be added as needed for other student society leaders.

Using eCommunities

If you are the SDCR, AOR, and HOD rep you will receive an e-mail inviting you to join the community with directions to the home page. To log on to AAPA eCommunities

1. Go to the AAPA Web site (www.aapa.org)
2. Click on Members Only
3. Click on eCommunities (the last item on the drop down menu)
4. Click on Log On
5. After logging on, you may use the menu (blue background) on the left side of the page or the hot link in the center of the page (red) to sign on to eCommunities.