

**NDASS Council 2018**



# President

Tori Hall

When I first came to medical school, I never considered a life in surgery because I believed you had to be someone who was born with perfect tactile skills. However, my view immediately changed after participating in the first NDASS suturing night of 2016. Despite the many mistakes I made, the organisers were patient when it came to teaching me how to suture and they inspired me to join the surgical field. That night was a cornerstone for me as I was encouraged to investigate the field of surgery and I am now determined to follow this career path. I want to lead an organization like NDASS that helps people like young green Tori discover and be inspired by the world of surgery.



## Experience

Ever since I can remember, I have always liked being in a team. Even when I play badminton, I prefer playing doubles. Due to my sociable personality, I was involved in many organizations and teams. These roles included being President of the Community Services Committee, Duty Manager at Domino's Pizza, Treasurer at my student hall of residence, Academic Mentor and Summer Manager for all the student welfare staff during summer school. Moreover, I was a MED300 Representative on the 2016 NDASS subcommittee where I was able to carry out and be part of the execution of our successful events.

All these roles have taught me important skills, which I feel are applicable to being President for NDASS. Firstly, as a leader, I learnt you are only as good as your team. Whether it was at work or on a committee, knowing all of my team members personally enabled me to work out everyone's strengths. As a result, I could delegate the right positions and jobs to my members or staff. I also learnt strong communication skills, conflict resolution skills and methods of encouragement to not only uplift my committee but to uplift the community at my hall of residence. I also learnt from my experiences effective time management and organisational skills. I feel these components are vital for the role of President for NDASS because in order to be the best university surgical society, there must be a strong, tight and enthusiastic committee carrying out those tasks.

Secondly, I have developed skills in stakeholder engagement. In order to maintain the success of NDASS, one needs to be aware of our important stake holders including the School of Medicine, sponsors, surgeons and last but not least, students. Furthermore, it is pertinent to be fully aware of the expectations each holder has in mind. By being on the NDASS Committee this year, I obtained feedback from most parties. The NDASS events are an excellent opportunity for students to build professional relationships with surgeons. I am particularly passionate about ensuring this opportunity is available to others students because I have benefited personally from the relationships I have with my surgical mentors. I have made many connections in the surgical field bringing in 15 new surgical consultant and registrars which has allowed students to have more opportunities to have one on one interactions with surgeons. Therefore, I not only want to maintain a smaller student to surgeon ratio, but I want to increase the number of surgeons affiliated and helping out with NDASS events to give all the members the best practical learning experience as well as have a better opportunity for networking. Additionally, I understand the importance of NDASS sponsors. I want to maintain these great relationships in order to not only help with our events, but also to be able to purchase a simulated laparoscopic trainer for the NDASS society which will allow us to provide greater training opportunities to our members.

## Commitments to promoting diversity in the surgical profession

This year at the Australian Students Surgical Conference, a male orthopaedic surgeon spoke to all 300 students and bravely spoke out about the elephant in the room. He told us that the old stereotype for a surgeon was an Anglo-Saxon male. He then outlined that mind-set is wrong. We are now hitting an era where a great physician or surgeon is not a one shoe fits all deal. It is awesome that these initiatives are being put in place! However, these colleges have to address, many issues and there is only so much that can be handled at this point in time. At the surgical conference, I attended a women in surgery lecture and I was enlightened that the reason why only 27% of surgeons in Australia and New Zealand are female is not due to issues of having a work life balance. It is due to none acceptance, bullying and/or harassment towards women. Hearing that talk gave me a heavy heart because despite my passion for surgery, I have personally experienced gender discrimination. Even though experiencing those situations was difficult, the hardest thing I felt was feeling I was alone and not having other female colleagues to look up to as we go through this surgical endeavour.

Furthermore, at this conference, inspirational female surgeons spoke out about the struggles they face being a woman in the field and how they wished they had female mentors to look up to. Many female conference participants shared that they admire these female surgeons however, did not feel they had any representation at the student level. They also did not feel they had a chance in representing their university's surgical society based on the discrimination they experienced from their colleagues. These women should not have to feel like this. Hearing this enlightened me that actions speak louder than words. Therefore, I want to lead by example and run for President not only for representing women but all elements of diversity, whether it be religion, race, gender or sexuality. Moreover, I do not just want to represent diversity, I want to embrace it! I believe a surgeon needs to have certain qualities, however, I do not believe those qualities come from a particular phenotype.

This battle of equality is tough, however I believe medical students can play a pertinent role. I cannot promise that I can make those difficult situations not happen anymore. However, I can promise that we will build a community that actively shows that this behaviour is wrong. Furthermore, we will embrace this diversity. We will aid with the Royal College of Surgeons initiative for equality. I want NDASS to set a prime example to all our other colleagues across universities in Australia and New Zealand.

## Vision

I am a passionate person. I will go out of my way to transfer my enthusiasm not only to the NDASS committee, but to the whole society. I want to show by example that anyone can be involved with surgery and empower anyone who feels they are a minority. I want NDASS to set the example of acknowledging discrimination is wrong and that it is not ok. I want NDASS members to get the best practical skills and teachings from our surgical affiliates and either develop or further strengthen their passion for surgery. Even for people not surgically inclined I want those members to get those essential skills of basic suturing and other tactile skills that will help with their journey to the career they would like. I hope I get the honour to carry out this task.

# **Vice President**

Samuel Sharp

## **Why I want to be involved in NDASS:**

My passion and enthusiasm for surgery, specifically reconstructive surgery, has been the driving force behind my decision to study medicine. To be taught a set of skills that allows you to physically repair another human; there is no greater gift. NDASS provides a platform to highlight the incredible opportunities that the surgical specialities have to offer. Being able to connect and learn from current surgeons and surgical trainees will not only equip us with relevant skills for the future but allow us to network and gather a deeper understanding to what each speciality entails. Working with NDASS would allow me the opportunity to expand upon my own endeavours, as well as share this experience with other students - future surgeons who may be working together in the operating theatre in several years to come.



## **Relevant Prior Experience:**

Prior to starting medicine, I completed a Bachelor of Biomedicine (Honours). For my honours research project I worked alongside the orthopaedics team at St. Vincent's hospital in Melbourne. The work focused on looking at the integrative properties of nanostructured titanium for prostheses. This opportunity allowed me to gain an insight into biological research and the amount of time and effort that goes into making progress in medical research. During my second year of medicine (2015) I was able to assist with the ASSC as well as be a member of the social sub-committee for the Global Health Conference (GHC). I am passionate about peer education and working as part of the team for the GHC gave me experience in organising large scale events and liaising with external organisations, professionals and committee members to ensure the smooth procession of events. I hope to bring these skills to NDASS to create some truly remarkable events.

This year I have had the fortunate opportunity to represent third year as part of the subcommittee on NDASS. I have been able to assist heavily in the events that have been put on this year, particularly the organization and running of a vascular station. The skills I have acquired from the team and my experience should put me in great stead for taking a more leadership role on the executive committee, as Vice President.

## **Commitment to Diversity in Surgery:**

As a member of the LGBTI community I understand and appreciate the importance of ensuring every member of society is represented and has equal opportunity. This is most evident in the rising number of women in surgery. Ensuring that women are treated with the utmost respect and encouraged to pursue a career in surgery. At Notre Dame there is a significantly higher number of women and we need to support them in their pursuit of a career in surgery.

# **Treasurer**

Cassandra Carbone

## Why do you want to be involved in NDASS?

It is well known that NDASS workshops and seminars are arguably the most well organised, well executed, exciting and inspirational events of the Notre Dame Med calendar, and I have LOVED being a part of their productions for the past 2 years!

Whenever anyone asks me about medicine and that age-old question “what do you want to be when you grow up....I mean specialise?” I always say that I want to work with my hands, and nothing has beaten that cathartic feeling of knitting a wound back together, hand tying 10 quick knots under Lama’s watchful eye, or excising a water balloon from a pigs trotter thus far. I am pretty sure it’s safe to say that I love surgical skills!



I would like to think that I have contributed to some of the organisations success over the last few years, and have been considered a valuable member of the team who brings a strong work ethic, outside-the-box thinking and a few laughs! Continuing the standard of events we have maintained since our establishment in 2016, is something I would really like to be able to do, and I have a few ideas about how we make 2018 even better and more accessible for more students.

## What is your relevant prior experience?

Over the past 2 years I have been a member of the NDASS committee as a year rep in 2016 and this year as the Diversity in Surgery Officer. I have learnt a lot from the organisation of events, interacting with sponsors, helpers and speakers, as well as from the feedback I have received from guests, staff and fellow students. Being the primary coordinator of our final event this year and working closely with our current treasurer, has also improved my knowledge of the financial operations of NDASS, and I would hence like to apply for the position of NDASS treasurer in 2018.

In addition to my work with NDASS, I also have a considerable fundraising background working with organisations such as novita children's charity and the minimisation of suicide harm foundation for several years. Oh I also dissected a whole bunch of mice as an honours student before medicine and have attended a few surgical skills workshops over the past year, so I'd like to think I am not too uncoordinated with a scalpel!

## My Commitment to Diversity in the Surgical Profession?

This year as the Diversity in Surgery Officer, I was given the opportunity to ensure that equal opportunity was inherent to our events, and made sure that we had a diverse range of speakers representing several minority groups. I am incredibly passionate about the promotion of Women in Surgery, and have attended several seminars at the Global Health Conference (GHC) and Australasian Students Surgical Conference (ASSC) in order to learn how this can be achieved more effectively, and this knowledge I would like to put into practice. I think it is important that all future doctors and doctors in training, are given the opportunity to be part of this field regardless of gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion and any other demographic one could possibly be discriminated against. I would like to build on last year's Diversity in Surgery Event, and showcase how apparent diversity is within the surgical profession and amongst its current surgeons even more

so. But most of all, I would like to continue to advocate for my fellow female medical students, and empower them to pursue their interests, without fear, no matter what they may be, how ever I can.

# Secretary

Natasha Wende

## Why NDASS?

I have almost completed my first year at ND during which time I have been the first year representative for NDASS. To continue my work with NDASS I am applying for the position of secretary in 2018.

I am applying for the role of secretary as I would like to continue to be a part of great association that not only educates and exposes students to the surgical world of medicine, but also strongly promotes equality and diversity in the surgical profession. I feel that being a member of this association is very fitting for me, as I am both interested in a career in surgery and want to contribute to the ND community.



Acting in the role of secretary will allow me to draw on my previous role of working as a secretary whilst further developing my organisation, management and leadership skills and contribute to my own professional development. Additionally, this role will help me improve my skills as a communicator and a collaborator, which can be used for further benefitting the medical community.

Having witnessed firsthand the engaging and educational events that NDASS has provided to ND students in 2017, I would like to be a part of ensuring that this calibre is again met in 2018. NDASS has proven to be a beneficial adjunct to the education ND provides and this should be maintained in order to ensure student exposure to clinical content in pre-clinical years. I feel that early exposure to surgery focused practical work will help to improve student confidence for their clinical placements in third and fourth year.

Being a part of NDASS has helped me form strong relationships with members of other year groups and I look forward to further fostering strong relationships with members of the greater surgical community.

I value that NDASS not only provides skills workshops and networking events, but it also highlights volunteering opportunities for students and inspires them to pursue a surgical career.

As a female with interests in a surgical career, I feel that it is of great importance that the need for diversity is recognised and that constant progression is made towards equality. I really value the work that NDASS has done in 2017, particularly in having women such as Dr Jessica Yin and Dr Kate Stannage attend events as keynote speakers. Both of these women are incredible role models who have demonstrated strength when faced with adversity during their surgical training. Hopefully, as a part of NDASS in 2018, the association will continue to give students the opportunities to hear and learn from such valuable role models and continue to promote equality and diversity.

## Relevant experience

I have worked as a medical secretary at Subiaco Colorectal since 2008, during which time I have developed good relationships with surgeons Mr Michael Levitt and Professor Cameron Platell. In this capacity, I have helped manage patient lists, book appointments and surgeries as well as communicating with other doctors, allied health members, staff and patients. In this role my organisational, management and communication skills were both challenged and strengthened.

Furthermore, this role has not only given me great insight into surgery as a specialty but has also given me experience working in a fast-paced environment, multitasking clerical work whilst maintaining a high level of patient care.

I have gained significant leadership experience during the previous five years of part-time work at Grill'd Mt Lawley. Working in a cohesive team and busy environment, it is my role to coordinate the team to ensure shifts run smoothly and all team members work together effectively. This fast-paced and demanding workplace has put my leadership skills to the test and will act as a strong foundation in a position such as year representative.

# **Events Coordinator**

Amelia Place

## **Why I want to be involved with NDASS:**

I thoroughly believe that to get a full university experience you should put your hand up to contribute and give back to the university community. I really want to make my experience at Notre Dame as memorable as possible not only for myself but also for my peers. The nights that have inspired and encouraged me through medicine this year have been from NDASS, so naturally, I want to give back to the committee that has fed my enthusiasm for medicine and particularly surgery. I have intentions to pursue a surgical career and feel that any opportunities I can get to further expose myself to surgery the better.

## **What experience can I bring to NDASS?**

I have always loved organising events, both academic and social, having done so numerous times as a college student. During my time at college I developed the necessary skills to run an events calendar with all the usual restraints such as time and money. I enjoy a challenge and thrive from working in a team environment with a common goal.

## **What is my commitment to diversity in Surgery?**

Prior to starting medicine, I would have said diversity in surgery is solely the male and female divide. However, I have quickly realised that diversity incorporates the different cultures, religions and sexualities which are all so rarely discussed. I would like to be the events co-ordinator because I think that through NDASS we can send a positive message to the medical community, that we are committed to the goal of encouraging everyone to pursue a surgical career. I want to work with the NDASS committee to create an equal learning environment for all students. Finally, I would like to expand the diversity in surgery aspect of NDASS to include a social event that celebrates everyone who wishes to be involved in surgery and feel I can best do so as the events co-ordinator.

# Research Officer

Georgia Bertram

My name is Georgia Bertram. I am currently a MED300 student. I wish to apply for the position of Research Officer in the NDASS 2018 committee. I am hard working, dedicated and committed to pursuing a career in surgery.

I am most interested in improving medical education through supporting the Notre Dame curriculum with additional events and resources but also in creating a more supportive environment for all students. As the only remaining postgraduate medicine course in WA, NDASS has a unique position to be able to:

- Advocate on behalf of all students
- Provide additional educational lectures and workshops for all students
- Assist students in creating connections with surgical teams and consultants through networking and research

## Why you want to be involved in NDASS

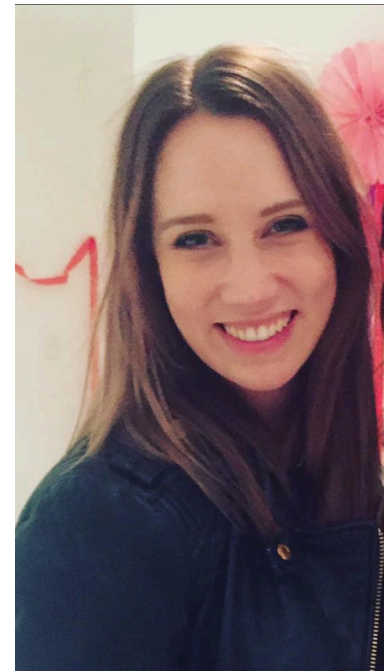
I want to be involved in NDASS for many reasons. These include:

- I am interested in Obstetrics and Gynaecology particularly gynae-oncology.
- There is a diversity in surgery that I was not fully aware of until this year on placement and I want to be able to encourage other students to find this out earlier in their journey.
- I believe that NDASS is a unique platform in which to assist other medical students to further their medical education through skills nights and workshops.
- That I understand that surgery not a traditional role for a female and that I believe that this society can play a role to nurture and encourage female participation in surgery
- I am currently involved in research that was advertised on the research portal of NDASS and wish to further develop this opportunity for other students
- NDASS has demonstrated over the last two years that it is a supportive and team environment

## Relevant prior experience

I have been fortunate enough to work professionally as a Policy Officer in the Strategic Policy Unit of the Department of Health between my undergraduate degrees and commencing medicine along with working as a paralegal throughout my undergraduate courses. During the summer holidays between first and second year medicine I have been able to work as a Principal Policy Officer for the Funding Strategy Unit in 2015 and as a Principal Policy Officer for Strategic Planning Unit in 2016. These higher roles enabled me to develop my leadership, presentation, time management and negotiation skills, all skills which I would require as a member of the NDASS team. In these roles I assisted in leading a perinatal mortality task force in which I assisted in coordinating senior consultants from across Queensland and developed a 100 page document regarding the findings from this year long analysis. This was just one of the many projects I was involved in which assisted the development of skills which I would require as a member of NDASS.

In 2017 I was also fortunate enough to be one of the Co-Chairs of the Physician Society. This role taught me a lot about consulting with junior and senior clinicians, networking, developing resources and events for students, promoting medical education and management a team of students. These skills would be directly applicable to a role in NDASS 2018. During



this time we developed an online presence through out facebook site and assisted in furthering medical education through factsheets which no group had done to this point. This role particularly helped me foster my leadership and team skills.

As a final year students in 2018 I want to give back to the Notre Dame medical community and I believe that NDASS is the perfect platform to do this.

#### Commitment to diversity in surgery

My experience with surgery has honestly been mixed to this point. I have found that as a female I did feel discouraged by some consultants about my interest in surgery, however, the majority were supportive and encouraging. I want to assist in creating a positive environment for all students who are interested in surgery. NDASS assists in fostering this environment through their diversity workshops and other events. However, I believe that more can be done for example

- a mentor program could be started - the program would involve matching students to alumni and other volunteers who are in the area of surgery which the student is interested in.
- linking students into existing journal clubs and DMT meetings – such as the breast cancer DMT at St John of God Subiaco. This would assist in students networking, education and fostering their interest in specialist areas of surgery
- more events which all years are invited and involved in order to create more support within the university
- more workshops and information nights surrounding surgical issues for minority groups
- creating clear and transparent strategic goals for the next 5 years to create a more diverse and supportive environment within NDASS and surgery as a whole.

# **Diversity in Surgery Officer**

Shaun Hontomin

## **Why I want to be involved with NDASS**

I have been one of the first year reps on NDASS this year, and have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the committee. I joined NDASS because I had an interest in a career in orthopaedics or trauma, and since joining NDASS my interest in surgery has only increased. Seeing how NDASS promotes surgical career pathways, runs practical and educational events, and promotes diversity in surgery, makes me want to continue working with NDASS. I feel that in the role of Diversity in Surgery Officer, I could help to promote inclusivity within the surgical field for minority populations in the school of medicine such as LGBTIQ students and women.



## **Relevant Prior Experience**

- Notre Dame School of Physiotherapy Staff Student Committee, 2013 & 2014
- Notre Dame Physiotherapy Student Society First Year Rep, 2013
- Notre Dame Physiotherapy Student Society Treasurer, 2015
- Notre Dame Student Association Director of Sport, 2015
- Australian Physiotherapy Association Student Rep, 2013 & 2014
- Australian Physiotherapy Association Student Chair & Student Rep, 2015 & 2016
- Australian Physiotherapy Association Award for Excellence: Contribution by a Student of Recent Graduate, 2016; awarded for contribution to the APA council
- Perth Pythons Hockey Club Treasurer, 2016 – 2017
- Notre Dame Association of Surgical Specialties, 2017
- Perth 2018 Convention Creative Subcommittee, 2017

## **Commitment to Diversity in Surgery**

In 2018, I will be serving as the Equity Representative on the Medical Student Association of Notre Dame. I want to serve on NDASS as the Diversity in Surgery Officer for the same reason: to promote the advancement and careers of minorities within medicine, such as LGBTIQ individuals and women. Being a gay man I understand the limitations, perceived and real, internal and external, within medicine better than most. I think I could excel in the role of Diversity in Surgery Officer because of my own lived experience, my passion for social justice, and above all – equity and diversity.

# **Online Communications Officer**

Sid Narula

## **Why you want to be involved with NDASS.**

NDASS is a progressive student society that has demonstrated excellent management and a finesse for producing professional quality student events. Created and run by students who are passionate about surgery, NDASS manages to provide workshops and events which provide skills (such as the various suturing nights and Your Future in Global Health) which are relevant outside of the surgical domain. The NDASS team is always filled with high calibre individuals and I'm eager to be involved in the team as the online communications officers to facilitate our peers in continuing to run such high calibre events.

## **Your relevant prior experience.**

My experience is based around a variety of leadership roles listed below. I have filled in the online communications officer role on MSAND previously in 2016 after the resignation of the team's IT officer. During that time, I managed the website, content and ticketing.

- Co-Chair Vision Global Health (2016)
- President, Medical Students' Association of Notre Dame (2016)
- Education Officer, Medical Students' Association of Notre Dame (2017)
- Convenor, AMSA National Convention 2018
- Patient Imaging Assistant, SKG Radiology (2015 - present)
- Moderate experience in .css and .html coding, sufficient to manage NDASS' WIX built website and ticketing software.

## **Your commitment to diversity in the surgical profession.**

Within surgery there are three key issues of diversity which have been identified in recent years. These are gender, ethnicity and flexible training.

### **Gender**

Since 1996 women have outnumbered men in medical schools, and yet women presently account for only 1/3 surgical trainees, and a measly 9% of surgical consults. As a university, Notre Dame Fremantle is approximately 60% female. This trend is similar across most Australian universities, with exception to UQ. As such I have no doubt that the gender imbalance in surgery will eventually correct itself, however a meaningful change can only be accomplished once the barriers inhibiting women from entering surgery are broken down. The present literature cites the lack of part time training positions, the absence of support for women with children, and sex-based discrimination as noteworthy examples.

### **Flexible training**

In a 2016 audit of the surgical training positions, it was found that 33% of surgical trainees were interested in pursuing part-time training. However less than 0.4% of surgical trainees (across the nation) had successfully managed to achieve this. This is a sad step forwards from 0 out of 901 Australian surgical trainees in part time training in 2009. Whilst RACS maintain that they support part time training, they have no control under employment contracts, and as such, it is up to the trainee to find an employer who is willing to take them on in a part-time capacity. Subsequent to that the trainee must

then apply to the relevant specialty board for approval and accreditation of the part time training. There have been many studies which demonstrate the benefits of part time training, i.e. reduced doctor fatigue, improved decision making capacity, reduced sleep deprivation. improved well-being and improved work-life balance.

#### Ethnicity

Australia is a multi-cultural nation which on the whole does relatively well in terms of ethnic diversity within the medical and surgical spheres. The key area of deficiency however is to the Aboriginal people of Australia. It was only this year that Australia's the first Indigenous orthopaedic surgeon (Dr Anthony Murray) graduated from surgical training.

As a student, my commitment to diversity in the surgical professions is to facilitate other students becoming involved in NDASS' surgical events. I've been lucky to have a variety of exposures during my years at Notre Dame so far, and I hope that I can bring alternative perspectives / insights / approaches to the NDASS team to maximise participation and interest in surgery.