Khooshali Munir Shah

AIPNO Chiraag Annual Dinner and Research Showcase

Scholarship Application Cover Letter

As a native of Northeast Ohio, I have imbibed my professional, cultural, and personal life to this area. Originally a native of Ahmedabad, India, I immigrated to the United States when I was two years old. My parents and I settled in Youngstown, Ohio as my parents completed their Internal Medicine residency training and continue to serve patients in the Northeast Ohio community. At a young age, I fostered an interest in medicine along with my Indian background by participating in the India Association of Youngstown, American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPI), and now AIPNO, organizations in which I have found life-long mentors. These mentors have been incredible role models for me and have instilled in me the importance of family, culture, education, and most notably - hard work with a well-rounded life.

Since moving to Youngstown in 1996, Northeast Ohio has been home for which I am forever grateful. I went on to complete my kindergarten through twelfth grade schooling in the greater Youngstown area, and for much of this time period, I was the only Indian student in my school blending an Eastern & Western school of thought. This experience taught me many valuable life lessons- the most important of which was to cherish my heritage and cultivate my diverse upbringing. I went on to pursue higher education through a 7-year accelerated BS/MD program through Northeast Ohio Medical University (NEOMED) and the University of Akron.

I earned my Bachelor’s Degree through the University of Akron and graduated with the highest honor of Summa Cum Laude with a GPA of 3.849. My time at the University of Akron was a period of great personal and cultural growth. I was able to grow closer to my Indian heritage as I participated in multiple events such as Diwali, Holi, and fundraising temple events. This allowed me to strengthen my ties with my Indian upbringing as well as grow professionally building devout leadership skills.

This personal growth continued throughout medical school as I held numerous leadership positions in organizations that combined my diverse upbringing with the medical field. For the past years, NEOMED has had its own AAPI chapter and my aspirations to combine my diverse upbringing with service drove me to pursue leadership roles as an M1 and M2 student. As the M1 representative, I was able to network in the community and organize diversity events in conjunction with NEOMED’s office of Diversity. My role grew as an M2 as I was Co-President of the organization stimulating interest on campus through cultural Indian dancing fundraising events, holding events to celebrate national Indian holidays such as Diwali and Holi, volunteering at the local Indian Temple, and donating to a charity organization, Ekal Vinyalaya, in India to help provide education to underserved children. Additionally, as co-president of NEOMED’s AAPI chapter, I had the privilege of helping to recruit students to attend the AIPNO event in past years. I also had the opportunity to present at the AIPNO research showcase two years in a row as an M1 and M2 student and found it to be an incredible educational opportunity. Additionally, as a team, we were also able to attend and present research at the 2016 National AAPI convention in Las Vegas where I was humbled to be awarded third place in the research poster presentation competition. These experiences helped to solidify my interest in combining my Indian background with the medical field.

I also pursued a Master’s in Business Administration (MBA) degree through the University of Akron while concurrently going through medical school. I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn more about business as I plan to integrate this education with my passion for medicine. Balancing various extracurricular and educational endeavors throughout medical school helped to further instill in me a strong work ethic as well as the importance of a good work-life balance.

I am currently in the process of applying to OB-GYN residencies and hope to stay in the Northeast Ohio region as it has provided me with an abundance of incredible educational opportunities. I look forward to continuing to be an advocate for the diverse patient population and serving the patients in this area – I am eager to stay involved in AIPNO as I would like to cultivate culture, leadership, & community. It would be a humbling honor to be considered for this scholarship as I continue to be a cultural ambassador and future clinician in the Northeast Ohio area.