

## NYU School of Medicine Student Handbook

### Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Society

Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) is the only national medical honor society. Its *raison d'être* can be expressed in a phrase: to recognize and perpetuate excellence in the medical profession. As stated in the society's constitution, "Alpha Omega Alpha is organized for educational purposes exclusively and not for profit, and its aims shall be the promotion of scholarship and research in medical schools, the encouragement of a high standard of character and conduct among medical students and graduates, and the recognition of high attainment in medical science, practice, and related fields."

To fulfill the role it has set for itself, AOA elects outstanding medical students, graduates, alumni, faculty, and honorary members to its ranks. It sponsors several different programs, which are the AOA Visiting Professorships - designed to enrich the educational environment of the medical schools to which they are awarded; The Leaders in American Medicine videotape series, which present biographical interviews with distinguished men and women in American medicine; and the society's journal, *The Pharos*, which is published quarterly and includes non-technical papers and regular features that address a wide variety of topics of historical, philosophic, and current interest to physicians. In addition, the society sponsors annual competitions for medical students: The Student Essay Awards and the Carolyn L. Kuckein Student Research Fellowships. In collaboration with the Association of American Medical Colleges, awards are also presented annually to outstanding teachers under the program known as the Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teacher Awards.

Election to AOA is a distinction that accompanies a physician throughout his or her career. Especially for the younger physician, the society provides a forum for the exchange of ideas as well as a source of valuable contacts. For more information about AOA, visit <http://www.alphaomegaalpha.org>.

#### ***AOA Selection Process***

The bylaws of Alpha Omega Alpha allow our medical school to elect one-sixth of our graduating class to the NYU School of Medicine chapter of AOA. In order to elect the requisite number of students, our AOA selection committee takes a holistic approach, selecting over one-third of the class for in-depth review by the committee.

Selection of students for review by the committee is based, in part, on academic performance during the preclerkship modules and required clinical clerkships. It should be emphasized that the preclerkship curriculum at the NYU School of Medicine is graded, and recorded by the Office of Registration and Student Records (ORSR), on a pass/fail basis. In order to inform the AOA selection process, the ORSR additionally asks each module director for an **alphabetical** list (i.e. unranked) of students who performed in the top quarter of the class for that particular module. This information is used along with the student's performance during the required clinical clerkships to select one third of the class for review by the AOA selection committee. Regardless of their performance during the preclerkship modules, top performing students in the

clinical clerkships, as well as students with exceptional extracurricular contributions in the areas of research and/or service, are also considered for AOA and reviewed by the selection committee.

Each student considered for AOA is discussed in depth by the AOA selection committee. Strong emphasis is placed upon professionalism, scholarship, leadership, character, and community service. Final election to AOA is determined by consensus of the committee.