

Alpha T. Anders, MD

Physiatrist-in-Training Council

Tell members a little bit about yourself.

Your Practice and Your Life Outside of Work

I am 4th year PM&R resident at LSU and went to UCSD for medical school. I am excited to return to UCSD in the summer for a pain medicine fellowship. I am particularly excited by neuromodulation and regenerative medicine, the benefits these technologies provide patients today, and the boundless potential of these technologies as they grow into the future. I am thrilled to be a physiatrist during this technological revolution and I can't wait to launch my practice. Prior to medical school, I joined Teach for America and taught middle school and high school science for 5 years in South Los Angeles. Before that, I went to Pomona College where I played football. My teaching and football experiences were assets in my preparation for medical school and residency. My passion for strength training from my time playing Football also played a role in my gravitation towards physiatry and made musculoskeletal medicine particularly fun to learn. Outside of work, I continue to enjoy picking things up and putting them down and I am probably too proud of my pandemic garage gym that I built during residency. I am married to the best social worker in the game, Paige Retter, and I am beyond lucky to get to come home to her and our two pups every day. We enjoy trying new food as much as we like eating at our favorite comfort spots, catching live music (New Orleans is an incredible city for this), and staying in and watching very bad reality TV. We absolutely love going on beach vacations. While I admire the backpacking explorers, we are resort people.

What accomplishments/honors are you particularly proud of that you would like to share with members?

Prior to medical school, I was designated a Master Teacher in my school district and was appointed the Science Department Chair of Skirball Middle School. In medical school, I helped lead UCSD's SNMA chapter to Chapter of the Year as the chapter president and was nominated by my peers to be inducted in the Gold Humanism Honor Society for my work in diversity, equity, and inclusion. In residency, I was LSU's House Staff Association president and helped foster an inclusive training environment for house staff. Clinically, I was designated the PM&R trainee of the year at the New Orleans VA. My residency experience was enhanced by my involvement in AAPM&R and I am honored and proud to have been on the Medical Education Committee, to have been the PHiT Council Vice President, and to be the current PHiT Council President.

What have you advanced in your local community outside of or in conjunction with your medical practice?

While teaching middle and high school, I shared my passion for football with my students and coached our team to two league championships. While in medical school, I designed a workshop "What Happened and is it Racist" to educate my peers on the challenges black and brown students experience navigating medical school. For my residency program, I created a peer teaching bootcamp where 4th years teach 2nd years EMG/NCS and 3rd years teach interns physical exam skills. The bootcamp has been institutionalized by our program and will be a feature of our didactics at the start of each year. As the LSU HAS president, I led an initiative to give students the option to include their personal gender pronouns on their ID badges to foster inclusivity at our institution.

What special skills or unique attributes do you bring to the Board of Governors?

As former college football player who spent 5 years leading a middle school classroom, I bring a hardworking, team playing, educator's mindset to the Board of Governors. I also know how to get back up after getting knocked down. Teaching middle school taught me this skill better than playing football ever could.

What is a current or future challenge to the Academy or the specialty that you look forward to addressing as a Board Member?

Medical student and resident engagement and retention. I want to help medical students and residents experience the value of AAPM&R.

What have we not asked you that you think members should know about you?

I was the Kern County Chess Champion... for 6th-8th grade.