

## **Thomas Pak - Candidate for ALO**

*Begin recording.*

**Rijul Asri (Vice Speaker):** On behalf of your Governing Council, your Speakers would like to present Thomas Pak] as a candidate for the position of At Large Officer] for consideration to the MSS. We would like to thank the candidate for their time.

**Jay Llaniguez (Speaker) :** We would now like to invite [Candidate Name] to deliver up to a three-minute speech addressing the MSS assembly, herein represented by members of your Governing Council. Your time will begin when you begin speaking. We will provide a visual cue when 30 seconds are remaining, and then a verbal-visual cue when ten seconds are remaining. You may begin whenever you are ready.

**Thomas Pak:** Hello hello! My name is Thomas Pak. I'm a MD/PhD student at Iowa running to become your next At-Large Officer. With over 50,000 student members, the Region leaders are critical for reaching out and representing these students. The role of the At-Large Officer is to aid the Region Leaders with their region activities and region conferences. This role is incredibly important for engaging the medical students within AMA.

People ask me: Why are you here? Why are you working so hard? A calling? A personal story? My journey to AMA started when I burned out in medical school. Despite seeking help, I still felt alone in my struggles. It was not until a peer confided in me about harming themselves, that I realized the problem of student wellness was more pervasive than I thought. With more research I found that there are institutional practices and policies that are detrimental to student wellness. But how could I change it?

Change occurs by working together. I started a wellness committee at my school, and we improved upon our wellness curriculum. I co-wrote an AMA resolution that addressed student wellness, and we were able to push for pre-clinical grades to be pass-fail. We also advocated for increased residency spots to state and federal legislators. I found Power in numbers. Power in connections.

My candidacy for ALO is built on these experiences, and you can remember my platform from my name. P-A-K. Progress, Accessibility, Knowledge. I want to help PROGRESS AMA-MSS by improving collaboration and idea exchanges with all 7 regions to improve bylaws and Region conferences. That leads to ACCESSIBILITY. It takes time to learn and communicate the different region practices to all the region officers. I will facilitate this by attending a portion of all the region leader meetings. Accessibility also means that we have a public website with more accessible information of the region leaders and activities. Finally, my knowledge fueled from my experiences in (1) AMA resolutions, (2) leading grassroots advocacy efforts at Iowa and U.S Congress and (3) being the first Asian American to be vice-president of the graduate student government at the University of Iowa. These experiences and knowledge allow me to better advocate for my constituents.

**Rijul Asri (Vice Speaker):** Thank you, Thomas. As per our IOPs and A-20 Speakers' Ruling, we will now ask you two questions, and you will have one minute to respond to each of them. Your time will begin when you begin speaking, or ten seconds after the question is read. We will provide a visual cue when 20 seconds are remaining, and then a verbal-visual cue when ten seconds are remaining.

**Jay Llaniguez (Speaker) :** Your first question is:

The incoming Class of 2024 will perhaps experience a new onboarding process into medical school with less facetime with senior students during orientation. Do you have any ideas on how to help our Regions engage with these new students and get them excited about becoming involved with organized medicine?

**Thomas Pak:** Yes. We are at a very unique, monumental time right now here at the AMA and in medical school with COVID-19. However, this is also a very meaningful time because physicians are at the forefront, advocacy is at the forefront. This is a time to really get the medical students engaged into AMA and I see this in three ways. 1) To better advertise to the students what AMA is doing. There is so much work that's being done with our GC, with AMA in really fighting for advocacy and whether that's the marginalized groups that are affected or really helping the workers at the forefront getting PPE. These are things that we can advertise out. 2) is to really empower the states and the regions to reach out to these students and to really keep this contact with students especially with the online services. That could be better done. And I think that's time, yeah.

**Jay Llaniguez (Speaker):** Thank you, Thomas. Your second question is:

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified the difficulty of conducting AMA and MSS business on the national scale. How can we better leverage our MSS Regions to conduct more MSS business in more local settings, either virtually or in appropriate in-person venues, like our Physicians of the Future Summits?

**Thomas Pak:** So, what COVID-19 has done is really highlighted the power of Zoom, really highlight the power of video conferencing and I was actually at a medical student, um, AMA, AMSA conference and they really did this virtual online set-up. They really did talk about resolutions and what was also really cool was that they set up meetings with legislators and legislative staff. This is something that could better be done or actually be fully utilized at a region level, at a national level. Really advantage of the online conference because for some students, it's really difficult to travel all the way out to D.C. or really travel out to Chicago and this actually gives an opportunity for students to have more accessibility about what is going on. In order to have this happen, we really need to have a better online presence - a really strong website that has the accessible information for region leaders and state leaders. Thank you.

**Rijul Asri (Vice Speaker):** Thank you, Thomas. With this, we would like to conclude this candidate interview for the position of At Large Officer. We would like to thank the candidate for

their time and dedication, and wish them the best of luck with the remainder of the campaign process.

*Stop Recording.*