

Rising Star: Dr. Alan Zhou

Dr. Alan Zhou is a PGY5 Adult Rheumatology trainee and current Chief Rheumatology Resident at the University of Toronto. As a medical student, Dr. Zhou was eager to become a member of the CRA before becoming a rheumatology trainee. At the time, the CRA offered trainee memberships to medical doctors enrolled in a graduate or postgraduate program in rheumatology but did not have a category for students prior to becoming trainees.

Thanks to Dr. Zhou's interest, the CRA created the Associate Membership, a new category to give medical students the opportunity to join the CRA. The Associate category is available to students who have graduated from university and are enrolled in a recognized medical school in Canada, or internal medicine residents enrolled in an internal medicine residency training program accredited by The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada or *le Collège des Médecins du Québec*.

Dr. Zhou is an active member of the CRA, volunteering on the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force. We're happy to share more fun and interesting facts about Dr. Zhou below!

What made you want to become involved with the CRA as early as you did?

I first became involved with the CRA as a summer student after the rheumatology lectures in medical school piqued my interest in the specialty. Later, as an Internal Medicine resident, I sought out additional opportunities to become involved with the CRA as I wanted to connect with the broader rheumatology community, but unfortunately, there were limited opportunities at the time for non-rheumatology trainees. I'm happy to hear that there is now a new Associate Member category through which interested medical students and Internal Medicine residents can become engaged with the CRA!



If you could think of one rheumatologist or professor that influenced you to get into your field of work, whom would it be?

Dr. Lori Albert taught the rheumatology block in my second year of medical school, and it was through her lectures that I first developed an interest in rheumatology. Her passion for the specialty was infectious and made a lasting impression on me — I still very clearly remember her use of the grape analogy for swollen joints. Fast forward six years, and she is now my longitudinal clinic preceptor! She is a master clinician, and I am so grateful for the opportunity to learn from her.

What is your favourite activity outside of work?

I used to run recreationally but stopped in clerkship when life got busy. I got back into running

when I started my rheumatology residency and joined a running club where I met a lot of fellow runners. I now go on weekly runs with a buddy of mine to catch up and vent about life. One lesson I've learned over the last year — a good pair of sneakers is key!

What's the last great TV show or movie you watched?

"La Chica de Nieve" (Snow Girl) — it's a mystery thriller on Netflix based on a bestselling novel in Spain. I picked up Spanish classes this year and my teacher recommended watching the show as a way to practice the language. I quickly became hooked after the first episode!

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