

Bako Medical Education Foundation Scholarships Promote Podiatric Specialty Interest Opportunities



Within every healthcare profession, various specialty disciplines serve to address specific dimensions of patient care. As students embark on their pursuit of a future healthcare career, they often have the opportunity to pursue these specialty emphases within their courses of study thanks to the support of scholarship monies funded explicitly for that purpose. At Midwestern University's Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine (AZCPM), a scholarship program in collaboration with the Bako Medical Education Foundation (BMEF) offers podiatry students who qualify a chance to gain a better understanding of evidence-based medicine and dermatology in the podiatric field.

The Bako Medical Education Foundation scholarship program at AZCPM was established in 2022 to support and enhance medical opportunities in the field of podiatric medicine and dermatology. The grant agreement between BMEF and Midwestern University established an endowment of up to \$100,000 (\$25,000 per year over four years, subject to certain conditions) that funds scholarships for outstanding AZCPM students. In 2023, Midwestern announced that Rajat Lahiri, Kyle Parker, and Payaam Tavakoli from the AZCPM 2023 graduating class were the scholarship program's first recipients.

The Bako Medical Education Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing podiatric medicine and dermatology through education and innovation.

Bako Medical Education Foundation scholarships help support podiatry students who have an interest in evidence-based medicine and podiatric dermatology.

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— Sue MacCormack, *Chair of the Board of Directors, Bako Medical Education Foundation*

Established with a steadfast commitment to supporting and enhancing medical opportunities in these fields, BMEF has been a driving force in shaping the future of podiatric healthcare through strategic initiatives and partnerships. Bako’s scholarship program with Midwestern University continues a strong relationship between Midwestern, the BMEF, and its sponsor BakoDx, whose podiatric experts routinely visit the University to teach biopsies and other procedures, as well as demonstrate lab procedures for students.

Sue MacCormack, Chair of the Board of Directors for the BMEF, underscores the Foundation’s commitment to innovation in the field of podiatric medical education. “We understand that the strength of the podiatric medical community depends on the caliber of students it attracts and the quality of education they receive,” she says. “As a partner in advancing the podiatric profession, the BMEF is devoted to serving dedicated students as they enter our field, ensuring a robust future for podiatry.”

The BMEF’s mission is to assist podiatric medical institutions such as AZCPM in helping break down accessibility barriers and providing students with a deeper understanding of the tools available to improve the quality of podiatric healthcare. “Our scholarship programs with colleges like AZCPM are an illustration of our commitment to education, empowerment, and inspiration,” continues Ms. MacCormack. “Our Foundation has granted approximately \$1 million in scholarship programs and fellowships to enable institutions to train the next generation of podiatric professionals in the latest innovations and best practices in medical diagnostics.”

The BMEF selected the Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine because their educational beliefs and imperatives are closely aligned concerning patient-centered care and a mission to support practice-ready graduates in the field. “An evidence-based approach to dermatology plays an important role in any podiatric practice,” Ms. MacCormack concludes. “Our goal is to inspire future podiatric professionals to fully embrace all facets of podiatric medicine, enhance their medical decision-making skills, adopt optimal patient care practices, and identify current diagnostic options.”

Jeffrey Jensen, D.P.M., FACFAS, Dean of the Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine, believes that scholarship programs like this one help increase student interest in specialty areas and cutting-edge tools, both of which benefit the profession as much as the students as they move into the workforce. “Scholarship support for our students is so important to assist in funding their professional education,” he says. “Bako Medical Foundation appreciates this and is a leader in providing student scholarships in podiatric medicine. Scholarships like these that focus on specialty areas help our students stay on the cutting edge of education and diagnostics and enable them to better serve their patients.”

As an educator, Dr. Jensen knows full well the value that scholarship programs such as the BMEF endowment provide to the students he trains. “As the Dean, I enjoy fostering relationships that help pay it forward,” he remarks. “These student scholarships help shape the future of podiatric medicine. All of us at AZCPM want to thank the BMEF and their continuing support of podiatric medical education. Their generosity and the scholarship opportunities made available to our students will provide an important contribution to the training of tomorrow’s podiatric healthcare team.”