



FEBRUARY 2024

Note from DoSAA Executive Board:

Dear DoSAA family,

I wanted to thank everyone involved in our community! I've served on the DoSAA Executive Committee since 2017 and have been so proud of how our Division has grown. I came into the EC hearing about how DoSAA would struggle to fill EC positions and now I'm marveling at how we have had record number of nominations for our EC positions.

I'm also especially proud of DoSAA not shying away from having some tough internal conversations about social justice, equity, casteism, Islamophobia, anti-Blackness, model minority myths, and colorism (for example). As an organization, we are focusing more on inclusion in all aspects of the term but also striving to stay humble, to learn, to grow and to regrow.

Lastly, thank you to everyone who has served on EC with me. I'm grateful to have found communities within DoSAA and within communities serving folks of South Asian descent. I'm excited to see what the future holds for DoSAA!

-Best, Dr. Nida Mirza,  
Former DoSAA Chair

## Progressing Onward

January can be a long month. A month with an attractive blank slate, but enormous pressure to keep those resolutions that we promised ourselves we would keep. Though as we take down the holiday lights and watch the days get darker sooner, by the end of the month, the excitement and anticipation of the new year has long worn off. And it's back to the same old by the month of February.

Many of us make resolutions aimed at self-improvement. However, it's important to approach these goals with a focus on mental health. If a resolution starts causing undue stress or harming your well-being, give yourself permission to reassess and modify as needed. Going easy on yourself is vital.

While aspirations can motivate growth, nothing is more vital than peace of mind. We hope the coming year brings happiness to you and yours, whatever shape your resolutions may take. Prioritize self-care - the rest will follow!

### 🔥 Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals for Success 🔥

As we continue through the new year, many find their once rock-solid resolutions beginning to falter. This is why considering the psychology behind setting strong goals is so important for maintaining momentum.

Research shows that creating S.M.A.R.T. goals (ones that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) sets us up for greater success versus vague aspirations. These qualities give our brains guideposts for targeted effort. Tracking concrete progress against metrics also promotes accountability and motivation.

Additionally, sharing resolutions or goals with a supportive community makes us more likely to follow through. Feel free to use this newsletter space for that purpose! Outlining actionable next steps and celebratable milestones can further propel us forwards month by month.

The beginning of a year presents a fresh start, but seeing resolutions through requires factoring our psychology into the equation. Reflect again on what tangible goals might serve your growth and mental wellbeing in this season ahead. We are here to encourage you each step of the way.

## SELF-CARE FEATURE ~ MINDFULNESS ~

In the rush of day-to-day life, it's easy to operate on auto-pilot without checking in with our moment-to-moment needs. Practicing mindfulness - purposefully bringing nonjudgmental awareness to our thoughts, emotions and sensations - is an act of self-care that anchors us in the present. Research shows that developing a regular mindfulness practice reduces stress, improves focus, promotes emotional regulation and even enhances empathy. Make time to simply be instead of always doing. Prioritizing a few restorative moments can nourish creativity, connection and joy.



# DOSAA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2024



**Chair: Dr. Rose Dhaliwal, PsyD**

Dr. Rose Dhaliwal (she/her) recently completed her Doctorate in Clinical Psychology (PsyD) from the University of La Verne, located in the greater Los Angeles area. She is completing her postdoctoral hours at the Department of State Hospitals – Metropolitan, where her work focuses on providing treatment for patients who are involved in the justice system and have been adjudicated incompetent to stand trial. Dr. Dhaliwal's background working in the public sector has also allowed her a greater understanding of how systemic structures influence the daily lives of the communities we serve. As the DoSAA chair, she is responsible for the implementation of DoSAA's mission and vision and to lead cross-collaboration among peer divisions within and outside of AAPA.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To foster more inclusivity and intentional conversations among DoSAA members.

Sonia Kaur Bajwa (she/they) has been a licensed clinical social worker since 2013 and is completing her doctoral dissertation. Interested in connecting with other desi mental health providers around the country, Sonia began volunteering with DoSAA in 2021 in support of the Community Issues Speaker Series and Summer Fellowship Program and continues to co-facilitate an advanced clinical consultation group. Her current role is to support and encourage DoSAA members' involvement and wants for and from DoSAA while actively collaborating with executive committee members to support these aims.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To support and encourage DoSAA members' engagement while actively collaborating with executive committee members to support these aims.



**Co-chair: Sonia Bajwa, LCSW**



**Chair-Elect: Dr. Ankita Nikalje, PhD**

Dr. Ankita Nikalje is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology in the Counseling program at UW-Milwaukee. She earned her Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology from Purdue University (U.S.), her MS in Cross-Cultural Psychology from Brunel University (U.K.), and her BS (Hons.) in Psychology from the University of Melbourne and Bon University (Australia). Her educational experiences drive her passion towards building decolonial psychological knowledge, research, and practice.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To make DoSAA inclusive to all who identify as South Asian and South Asian American.

Dr. Ritika Rastogi, PhD (they/she) is a developmental-cultural psychologist, postdoctoral researcher, and youth educator based in Boston. Their research examines factors to promote the resilience and resistance of racially marginalized adolescents under conditions of structural oppression. Her role as Secretary/Historian is to streamline and archive all DoSAA documents and prior communications and to create a timeline of the organizational history from DoSAA's inception to present-day.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To promote intentional community- and solidarity-building between DoSAA and other AAPA divisions, as well as other EPAs (e.g., ABPsi, AMENA-Psy, NLPA, SIP).



**Secretary/Historian: Dr. Ritika Rastogi, PhD**



**Finance Officer/Treasurer: Shubh Agrawal**

Shubh Agrawal (she/her) has been a licensed K-12 school counselor since 2018 and is a current doctoral student in Clinical Psychology at William James College. Throughout her training, Shubh has focused on developing skills in multicultural counseling while serving clients across the lifespan. Shubh's training has occurred in outpatient, community mental health, rape crisis, and inpatient settings, where she has appreciated opportunities to work collaboratively on interdisciplinary teams. Her commitment to DoSAA involves creating and maintaining systems to manage funds related to DoSAA initiatives, propose budgets, and advise on spending.

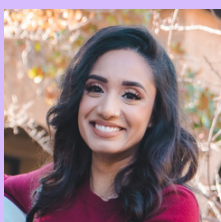
Her DoSAA goal this year: To promote the use of division funds to increase access to AAPA/DoSAA events, conferences, and learning opportunities. And to increase collaboration with partner organizations and facilitate self-reflection to deepen growing as clinicians, researchers, and advocates.

Rohan Arcot (he/him) is a second-year PhD student in Counseling Psychology at Boston University. He holds a M.S. in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from Johns Hopkins University (JHU), a B.A. in psychology from Hamilton College, and is a Nationally Certified Counselor. He works as a research team member in the ARISE lab and for the [Center for Character and Social Responsibility](#). His research interests include Asian American mental health, culturally sensitive therapeutic treatments, positive psychology, anti-racism, and multicultural counseling training.

His DoSAA goal this year: To continue the incredible DoSAA summer fellowship program and celebrate the incredible ideas our community has.



**Membership Chair: Rohan Arcot, M.S.**



**Student Representative: Rebecca Miah, MPH**

Rebecca Miah, MPH (she/her) is a second year Clinical Psychology doctoral student at the California School of Professional Psychology in the SF Bay Area. She is reprising her role as Student Representative on the DoSAA Executive Committee. She is responsible for creating these DoSAA newsbytes with the aim to foster a sense of transparency and community among the broader DoSAA family.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To create a team of editors, content creators, and staff interested in becoming more involved in DoSAA.

Brahmpreet Kaur (she/her) is a researcher, mental health advocate, and a graduate student. Her current research project centers around adapting existing diagnostic tools for South Asian Women. Her role in DoSAA includes maintaining, overseeing and updating all aspects of the DoSAA website and its content including social media forums. In addition, she is the contact person for postings on both the website and the Listserv.

Her DoSAA goal this year: To form stronger bonds with the DoSAA community and continue having engaging conversations during the Chai and Chat sessions!



**Communications Chair: Brahmpreet Kaur**