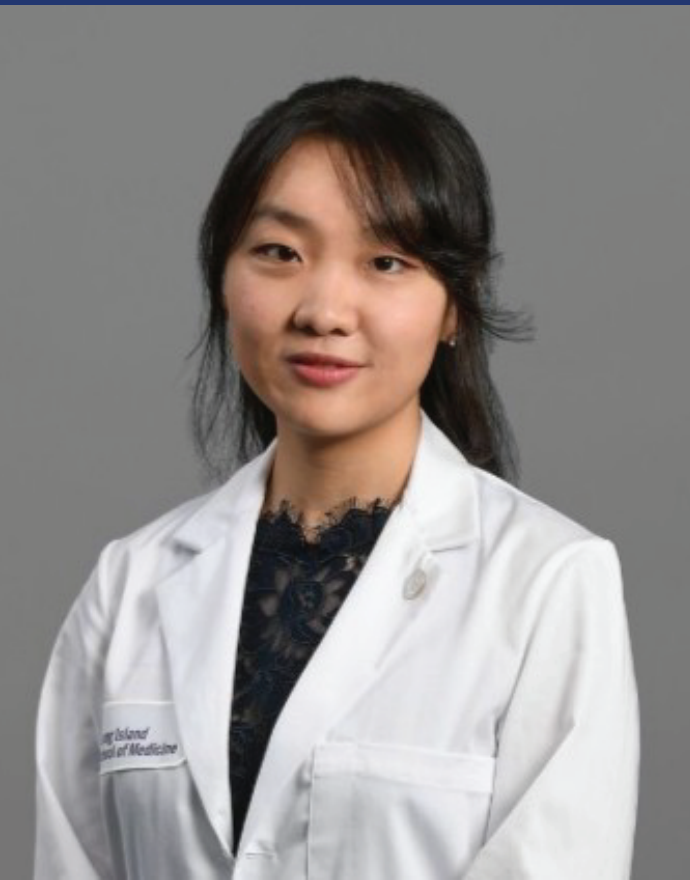




MEET OUR ALUMNI!



Sylvia Lee

BFS Class of 2014

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- MD Candidate Class of 2023, NYU Long Island School of Medicine
- Weill Cornell Medicine, Research Assistant.
- Cornell University, Major in “Human Biology, Health, and Society” (B.S.) and minor in “Gerontology”, 2018

What are you up to now?

I’ve been in Manhattan, NY these past two years and since I graduated from college. I work as a Research Assistant at Weill Cornell Medicine, working on various projects that study chronic pain in older adults and help caregivers of patients with advanced dementia and pain. Medicine has always been a big interest of mine, especially improving clinical care provided to individuals suffering from serious illnesses and those at the end of life. I recently got accepted to a medical school in New York City, and I’m very grateful for this opportunity!

Do you have any passion projects?

Definitely my Christian faith and church. This is such a big part of my life that I cannot call it a passion project - it is my life! I love serving at my church, sharing meals with my church family, and gathering at people’s homes (or now via video-chat due to the lockdowns in NYC) to join Bible studies and prayer meetings.

As a side-project, I started a research team reviewing the scientific literature on the effect of palliative care on family caregivers. It has been a passion of mine to better advocate for families who care for seriously ill patients as they undergo extreme burnout and are often neglected in clinical care. I hope the results can one day be used to improve medicine to be more comprehensive and family-oriented! In terms of hobbies, I love taking walks in Central Park, hanging out with my 5-year-old cat named Melona (yes, like the Korean melon ice cream bar), and recently started learning the ukulele... we’ll see how the last one goes ;)

What was the biggest challenge you faced in College?

I had been a student in BFS since kindergarten up until the point I left for college. So leaving behind my only home and this tight-knit community was extremely difficult. I remember having to take classes with nearly 800 students at Cornell when all I knew was learning in a classroom of 5-10 friends! It was an academically very rigorous and competitive environment where everyone was looking to do better than the person next to them. Most, if not all, of the students were looking to receive awards, be at the top of their classes, to secure summer internships or their first jobs. It was difficult not getting sucked into the competition or being discouraged that there were always people better and smarter than me! It really helped to remind myself that the best I can do is to be true to the values I hold onto and to just try my best, working diligently and honestly, and being grateful for the results no matter how good or bad they are — you learn much through both success and failure!

What advice do you have for BFS students as they go off to university/college?

Embrace the hiccups in life. It’s okay to not know what you’re doing. It’s okay to fail. You’re not alone! Know this and continue to diligently ask yourself and answer honestly — for what purpose do you study and work hard, and for what purpose do you live? College will present you with unimaginable difficulties, and without some soul-searching as to why you’re doing what you’re doing, it will be easy to despise the challenges and give up. On my deathbed, I know that the A’s or the accolades I had received or the praises of others will be all but meaningless to me. For me, my Christian faith has kept me anchored — fixating my eyes on what is eternal gives me renewed hope and joy in living every day diligently for purposes that are beyond me. And I daily learn what that means and how I ought to take my next steps. So it’s okay to not have figured it all out. Take courage, embrace the hiccups, keep trying, keep failing, keep searching your soul. You’ll learn and grow in ways you’ve never imagined!

What memory of BFS comes to mind?

There are too many during my ~12 years at BFS to just pick one! My most meaningful and impactful ones are probably the Habitat for Humanity trips to the Philippines and Vietnam. I was so, so young, but these trips opened my eyes to see the inequality and poverty that lie beyond what I see daily in my hometown, Busan, and planted a heart in me to live for others and to set my goals in life on what is beyond self-serving. I will forever be grateful for having had such experiences at BFS.