

UAB SCHOOL OF MEDICINE



Points of Pride

April 1, 2011

Our annual Scholarship Dinner in March showcased some of our brightest and most talented students and gave them the opportunity to meet and thank the generous donors who provide support. Nearly a quarter of our students receive scholarship funds totaling \$2.5 million, much of which comes from philanthropic gifts.



(Left to right) Eddie Hyatt, senior vice president and dean Ray Watts, Jennifer Eldredge, and Brittany Richardson

At the dinner, three students—first-year student Brittany Richardson and seniors Jennifer Eldredge and Eddie Hyatt—told the audience why they were drawn to medicine and how medical school has encouraged and challenged them.

Medical students Susan May Wiltrakis (right) and Anand Iyer (below) perform during the Scholarship Dinner.

Freshman Susan May Wiltrakis, who has been performing professionally as a jazz singer since the age of nine, ended the evening with a beautiful rendition of “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” She could not have

known that it just happens to be my favorite song.



Senior Anand Iyer, who has matched at UAB for an internal medicine residency, is a gifted pianist who entertained the crowd during dinner.



Brittany developed her love of medicine and science as a student at the Alabama School of Fine Arts in Birmingham. Jennifer wants to explore the intersection of science and technology in the field of anesthesiology, and she will pursue that with a residency here at UAB. Coming from what he described as a difficult home life, Eddie nearly failed high school, but a teacher encouraged him to become an X-ray technician. He worked nights while attending UAB for his undergraduate degree, and then he realized he could do even more for his patients as a physician. As he completes medical school, Eddie also is fulfilling his commitment to the United States Marine Corps. He is near the top of the 2011 class and just matched at Vanderbilt, where he will pursue a radiology residency.

These three are representative of the 742 young people in our motivated, multitalented, and diverse medical undergraduate student body. Every student is different, and every student comes to us via a different path. Each has the demonstrated potential to be an excellent physician as well as a fine, well-rounded individual who will make a difference in our world. I am inspired by their stories and excited to see them fulfill their goals and ambitions.

A Successful Match

Senior Chara Green (right) signs the Match Day map.

This year's Match Day offered proof that our graduates are in demand. The 168 members of the class of 2011 surpassed the national average for matching to one of their top choices for residency training. They will conduct their residencies at 69 hospitals in 29 states, with 41 percent remaining in Alabama. This is good news considering that 43 percent of the students overall will pursue training in primary care fields. One of our school's missions is to increase the number of primary care physicians in the state, and we are pleased that our students are responding to the call and want to help meet the growing need for these crucial care providers.



We have posted a video of our Match Day event, and I encourage you to watch it and share the excitement of our students and their families. I am proud of all of them and am eager to see what they achieve throughout their careers.

Top National Rankings

Your School of Medicine has made an impressive showing in U.S. News & World Report's newest list of America's best graduate schools, which was released last month. Our primary care program rose 13 spots to rank #10 nationally, and our rural medicine program came in at #15. Among specialties, our AIDS program ranks #6, geriatrics holds the #12 spot, and internal medicine is at #20. Our overall research program earned the #30 ranking nationwide.

I want to thank and congratulate the faculty and staff who helped us achieve these prestigious rankings. Their hard work has helped us rise to the top, draw national attention to our programs, and put us in a position to shape the future of medicine.

We are doing very well, but we can do even better. The U.S. News results help set the stage for our new strategic plans, which will pinpoint areas where we can be the best in the country and identify steps that will enable us to reach that goal. These plans, geared toward education, research, primary care, and clinical service, are coming together, and I look forward to sharing the details with you in the next few months.

Partnerships for the Future

(Left to right) Jim Alford, Melanie Halvorson, Dean Watts, and Noble Anderson at the recent alumni reception in Montgomery.



We have much to be proud of at the School of Medicine, and I appreciate that so many of you are showing your pride by supporting student scholarships, contributing to our programs, offering your expertise, giving feedback on our plans and goals, and attending events in cities outside Birmingham. These partnerships benefit everyone, from patients to students to scientists, and they lead your school to even greater success. With your help, we will share many more proud moments in the future.

Ray L. Watts