

From White Coats to White Envelopes

The Future is Revealed for UC San Diego Medical Students

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Beaming from ear to ear with a smile that arrives only after hard-earned accomplishment, Chris Moriates admitted he was nervous. "It was hard for me to open the envelope but amazing to finally see my future in writing!" said the newly assigned UC San Diego School of Medicine senior.

On Thursday morning, March, 19, 2009, Moriates and 107 of his classmates joined thousands of fellow medical students across the nation in a once-in-a-lifetime event: the simultaneous opening of the envelopes that reveal where the students will pursue their residency training program. On Match Day, nationwide, 16,000 senior medical students receive the results of their applications to residency programs, a process that started at the beginning of their final year in medical school.

The 2009 graduating class at UC San Diego School of Medicine consists of 108 men and women drawn largely from California, but representing multiple other states and countries as well. 78 percent of the class will train in California, with 25 percent remaining right here in San Diego. Daniel Fox is one of them. He'll spend the next four years in UC San Diego's anesthesia residency program, his number one choice. "It's a match that feels really right for me," said Fox.

For Carolyn Kelly, MD, Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, it was an emotional morning. "Admissions is a pretty long process," explained Kelly, who has shepherded this class- from screening through recruitment to the School of Medicine to residency placement- since 2005. "I spent many, many hours convincing these very students to come to UC San Diego and now, to see them about to launch their training is incredibly gratifying. What a joy it's been to have them as students here."

This day is the culmination of a dream for many, including Albert Kashanian and his parents, who moved to Los Angeles from Israel when Albert was just 25 days old. "My parents didn't have much of a chance for a formal education and today I got my number one choice- internal medicine at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena. This experience has an amazing energy... exciting and happy," said Kashanian.

And on this happy day, even moving from sunny San Diego to Iowa City, Iowa is good news for Jennifer Kho. "University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics has arguably the top orthopedic program in the nation and I'm going! My husband - who is an architect- has already found a job!" said an elated Kho.

Parents, spouses, significant others, siblings, friends-and in some cases-children gathered round their newly assigned students, popped champagne and toasted bright futures. As Moriates' father Paul explained, "This was amazing... not only to witness my son's moment but all of the students here... that moment when the envelopes opened and futures were revealed was amazing and surreal."

The surreal qualities of Match Day will disappear- along with the champagne bubbles- soon enough. That's when Chris Moriates will begin his residency in internal medicine at UC San Francisco Medical Center, ranked

seventh among the nation's top 10 hospitals, according to a survey conducted by U.S. News & World Report. The magazine calls this an "honor roll" of "the best of the best." Moriates take his place among them in June.

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