

UCSD School of Medicine to Graduate 117 New Physicians

Director of the Office of Women's Health at the NIH to Present Commencement Address

June 1, 2006

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On Sunday, June 4, 64 men and 53 women will be awarded M.D. degree, including seven graduates who have completed the medical scientist training program and will jointly receive their M.D. and Ph.D. degrees, at the UCSD School of Medicine commencement ceremony. This year's commencement speaker is Vivian Pinn, M.D., Director of the Office of Women's Health and Associate Director for Research on Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

The graduation ceremony will begin at 11 a.m. on the East Lawn of the UCSD School of Medicine in La Jolla, between the Medical Teaching Facility and the Stein Clinical Research Building.

Pinn, a nationally recognized leader in health care and academic medicine, has been widely honored for her pioneering efforts to improve the health and career opportunities for women and minorities. She is the first full-time Director of the Office of Research on Women's Health (ORWH) at the NIH, an appointment she has held since November 1991.

A member of the Institute of Medicine and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Pinn came to NIH from Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C., where she had been Professor and Chair of the Department of Pathology since 1982, only the third woman in the U.S. to chair a university pathology department. She has received many prestigious awards and honors, served as the 88th president (and the second woman president) of the National Medical Association, and was recently named one of 16 superstars in medicine by "More" magazine.

The range of specialties chosen by graduates is broad, with medicine and pediatrics being the top specialty choices respectively. Ninety-seven of the graduates will do their residencies in California; 23 will remain at UCSD. Almost 35 percent of the first-year residency positions are in internal medicine programs and 12 percent are in pediatrics. Since 2003, interest in obstetrics/gynecology residency positions has been increasing with seven percent of students pursuing OB/GYN residencies this year.

Many graduating medical school students are choosing highly competitive medical specialties, such as surgery, dermatology and anesthesiology. In recent years there has been increased interest in the "lifestyle" specialties (those considered to have more reasonable work hours). Three percent of the graduating medical students will have residency positions in dermatology and eight percent will be in anesthesiology.

Interest in some primary care specialties has decreased in recent years. Continuing the five year decline, only six percent will go into Family Medicine. With UCSD's growing focus on global collaboration, a number of students have already had international experience. Kim Lee recently returned from Taiwan where she completed a psychiatry residency rotation. Lee will enter another psychiatry residency program at UC San Francisco. Christy Morris, will enter internal medicine residency program at Legacy Emanuel/Good Samaritan in Portland, Oregon, after recently completing a family medicine rotation in Costa Rica.

Many students have developed strong ties to San Diego and are planning to remain. "I'll be spending the next year in my native Chicago but then I'll return to the world-famous UCSD Ophthalmology Department," said Patrick Danaher, a former U.S. Air Force major F-16 pilot.

UCSD School of Medicine commencement is very much a family affair. Hundreds of family members, friends and School of Medicine faculty attend the graduation. Carrie Ann Nelson Vasquez, who is expecting her second child, will be training in family medicine. Her husband, Andrew, and son Michael Antony will be in the audience to watch her accept her degree. All medical students are required to complete residency training before beginning a practice.

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