



## Princeton to Boca? Why Students Chose FAU's New Med School

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Sarah Gennette went to Notre Dame, Taylor Nickerson came here from UMass at Amherst, and Richie Huynh went to Princeton.

Out of 64 students in the first class of Florida Atlantic University's new medical school, 41 are predictably from state schools, mostly the universities of Miami and Florida.

But what made students who graduated from prestigious schools including Colgate, Cornell, Vanderbilt, Duke, Wellesley and yes, Princeton, pick the new Charles E. Schmidt College of Medicine?

Students questioned after last week's White Coat Ceremony uniformly said the small class size and access to patients early in their medical school career made them pick FAU over more established medical schools where they were accepted. FAU's Integrated Patient Focused Curriculum is described as allowing "early and frequent patient interactions in local physicians' offices, the Palm Beach County Department of Health and nine regional hospitals."

"The patient-centered focus," said Gennette, who said she applied to 20 medical schools. "Traditional medical education starts with the basic sciences."

That's what sold Huynh, too. "That's very unique, to work with patients from day one," he said.

"Students will do rounds with our doctors," Jerry Fedele, president and CEO of Boca Raton Regional Hospital said after the Aug. 5 event where students received a white lab coat and

stethoscope. Boca Regional will serve as the primary site of residencies in internal medicine and surgery, among other specialties, Fedele added.

West Boca Medical Center is among the other teaching hospitals, including Bethesda Memorial and Delray, JFK and St. Mary's medical centers. In Broward County they include Cleveland Clinic, Memorial Regional Hospital and Joe DiMaggio's Children's Hospital.

"This sounded like a new tradition, plus the smaller class size," said Nickerson, from the University of Massachusetts. "That's the whole reason I want to practice medicine."

"We thought this was the best fit for him," said his mother Donna Nickerson, who said she's in medical education and asked doctors she knew about the program. "Other schools have a great reputation but a charter class is very exciting."

At the ceremony on FAU's Boca Raton campus, the students heard speeches and were welcomed by FAU president Mary Jane Saunders and the school's deans and vice deans, including Dr. Michael L. Friedland, Dr. Stuart L. Markowitz, Dr. Lindsey C. Henson, Dr. Julie C. Servoss and Dr. Ira J. Gelb.

Markowitz told the audience more than 100 medical schools have white coat ceremonies. The students filed on stage one at a time like a graduation, as each one was helped into what was described as the symbol of their new life as prospective physicians.

At the end, they were asked to check in their pocket and the stethoscope box to see the name of the benefactor who paid for them.

Bonnie and Jon Kaye, owners of Kaye Communications Inc., sponsored a "White Coats 4 Care" reception with the Bridge Hotel on Aug. 1 to raise donors for the coats, stethoscopes, welcome packages and scholarships.

"The white coats sold out," Bonnie Kaye, the firm's president said afterward.

More than 170 people attended the event to dress and equip the inaugural class. Contributions also underwrote a diagnostic ultrasound machine, 12 scholarships and seven dedicated auditorium seats for the reception, according to the Kayes.

<http://www.sun-sentinel.com/news/palm-beach/boca-raton/fl-brf-whitecoat-0810-20110810,0,5683017.story>