University of New Mexico in Albuquerque

Hi M4's,

I hope everyone's ERAS applications are going well. I wanted to reach out and encourage Michigan Medicine students to consider applying to the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Two of the class of 2020 matched to UNM, and one from the class of 2021; Justin Joseph (2021) and I (2020) matched in Internal Medicine, and Kate Kollars (2020) matched to Family Medicine.

My experience at UNM has been great. I’ve had a lot of opportunities to learn, with very supportive faculty. Overall, the clinical education and exposure is excellent, we have a great culture and work-life balance, and the location is superb. The IM program is a 3+1 block schedule, with the +1 week being standard clinic + subspecialty/allied health experiences of your choice.

The program is clinically focused, but there are good opportunities for research. We have had excellent fellowship match results as well. UNM Hospital is a tertiary referral center and a level 1 trauma center, but it is also the county hospital. There is also a VA associated with the university. You will be given a lot of autonomy, but with plenty of support. The teaching faculty are excellent, and all of them choose to take on that role.

The patient population is very diverse; you will take care of people from all walks of life. The Navajo and Pueblo population will also make up a portion of your patients (The hospital even has a Navajo translator onsite), which is very unique to New Mexico. There is an opportunity to do a rotation in Gallup, NM in the Navajo Nation. If you speak Spanish, it will be very helpful, but it certainly isn't needed.

One of the real strengths of this program (that I think one that pairs very well with your education at Michigan Medicine) is that most of your patients are undifferentiated, so you get the "first crack" at diagnosing and managing many of these patients. The intern starting on the ID service last year got to diagnose bubonic plague his first week of residency, and you will have a pretty good chance of seeing Hantavirus pulmonary syndrome while in the ICU or ECMO service. In the last 2 years I’ve diagnosed a pheochromocytoma, autoimmune encephalitis (twice), alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, an atypical (non-lyme) borreliosis, Lemierre’s Syndrome, Mucormycosis, and neurosyphilis (complete with Argyll-Robertson pupil). You get transfers for all the complex patients in the state (and some neighboring states as well). At the same time, you will have plenty of patients with more normal problems, so you will be very comfortable treating sepsis, heart failure, endocarditis, osteomyelitis, alcohol withdrawal, pneumonia, etc.

In terms of location, it's hard to beat: Albuquerque is a substantial city with a lot to do, but is still simple to live in. It is very close to a lot of great outdoor opportunities. The weather is excellent year round (3400+ Hours of sun a year), so you can be assured that your day off will let you do
whatever activity you wanted. The food is great, and the restaurants have mostly been able to weather COVID. The city is very affordable as well.

Another big plus for the program is that it is a Union program. In med school, I saw how important this was for Michigan Medicine's residents, and I really prioritized programs with union representation. During COVID, the benefits of unionized programs became even more clear to me. This past year, we were able to win the highest raise in the history of UNM (5%), and we are continuing to advocate for better pay and benefits for residents, including with the state legislature and Governor.

Let me know if you have any questions about the program, be it IM or otherwise. You can also reach out to our chiefs, at im-chiefs@salud.unm.edu

https://hsc.unm.edu/medicine/departments/internal-medicine/education/why-unm.html

If you have any questions about the Family Med program, you can reach out to Kate A Kollars KKollars@salud.unm.edu. I am familiar with the EM and Neuro programs as well. If you have questions about other programs, feel free to reach out and I can put you in touch with one of the residents.

Max Witt

University of Michigan Class of 2020