

Steven L. Berk, M.D.

What changes did these students see this past year due to COVID-19?

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They started out on the wards during COVID-19. And they went through all of the uncertainty that physicians did, worrying about their own safety. They learned how to put on personal protective equipment. They learned how to keep themselves safe, always worried about keeping their family safe. But they did stay on the wards they took care of patients during this time. They did stay safe, there were a few that were COVID-19 positive, but nobody that got really sick or was hospitalized. So they saw their whole world change as far as how to learn clinical medicine. But I think they did so very successfully.

How will the match day be different from past years?

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The biggest difference is that all the interviews were done virtually, students didn't go to the campuses, to the residency programs that they were hoping to get into to interview. The interviews were extensive virtually, but it wasn't really the same. So they didn't probably get enough of a chance to really show who they are to the to the medical schools and residency programs that they want to go to. They also didn't have a chance to travel to other campuses and spend a month doing clinical rotations. So to some extent, they were at a disadvantage. But they all had a lot of interviews, and we're really confident that they're going to do well this year as well.

As the dean, what is still exciting about Match Day after all these years?

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The great thing for me is that I've been Dean for 15 years, and I've been able to follow 11 classes from white coat ceremony to graduation. Some Dean's only last three years, they never get to see a graduating class. So I saw this class I met with this class at the white coat ceremony, at the scrub party. I watched them struggle through anatomy helped them allay their fears of becoming a physician and now to see them really competent and ready to be excellent physicians. That's the great thing for me being the dean, I've gotten to know not all of them, but almost all of them, and great confidence in them not only in their knowledge base, but their character work ethic, and level of empathy and compassion.

What is exciting about this year's class as far as accomplishments?

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I think the great thing about this year's class accomplishments is the volunteer work that they did in response to COVID-19. Some of them answered the telephones on our nurse on demand program to actually talk to patients about whatever questions or concerns they had about COVID. Some help decontaminate N95 masks. Some of them helped to find PPE by going to various dentists and other resources in the community and gathered up a large amount of PPE for us. Some of them are helping with vaccines. Some of them have been concerned about vaccine equity and working with the community to make sure everybody in all communities of Lubbock are able to get the vaccine. So what I'm most proud of they've, they've accomplished a lot of things. They've probably done more in research than any other graduating class. They've done really excellent on their national board exams. But I'm most proud of the volunteer work that they did against COVID-19.

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Anything else you would like to add?

04:03

When we measure the success of the match, we like to see a good percentage of the class go into primary care. We're ranked high in the country and the percentage of our students that go into family medicine. So we'll be interested in that percentage. We like to keep some of our students here in our own residency programs. Often we keep 20 25% of our students right here in the Texas Tech residency programs. But we'll also take pride in the fact that they've applied to some of the most prestigious medical centers in the country and I'm sure many of them will get into those programs as well.