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Med school seeks to meet needs of the state

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Staff Writer

In the next 12 years, the state of Florida will need 12,000 new primary care physicians to meet the demands of a growing and aging population. In hopes of remedying this growing void, the state legislature of Florida founded the Florida State University College of Medicine.

“The medical school was founded by the legislature of the state of Florida in the year 2000 with the recognition that the country in general, and Florida in particular, was facing a workforce crisis in terms of having doctors be where they need to be, particularly to service some of the rural and underserved areas in Florida,” said John Fogarty, dean of the College of Medicine.

The FSU College of Medicine was founded under the mission of providing primary care physicians to medically underserved populations in the state of Florida. Thus far in its short lifespan, the FSU College of Medicine has earned numerous accolades, which suggest that the college is working hard to meet its goals.

According to an annual report by the American Academy of Family Physicians, 17.9 percent of FSU College of Medicine graduates chose to enter a family practice residency over a three-year span, the fourth-highest rate in the nation. Additionally, the College of Medicine earned a spot in the latest U.S. News & World Report medical school primary care ranking, rated at 56.

With a 330,000-square-foot facility on campus, almost 100 main campus faculty members, 1,500 clinical faculty members on six regional campuses, along with additional rural sites and full accreditation, the current state of the medical school is a far cry from its initial inception in 2000.

“The first three to five years, it was so much work, I can’t even express how many hours of the day I worked — and I wasn’t the only one, it was all of us,” said Professor Myra Hurt, founding faculty member and senior associate dean for research and graduate programs of the College of Medicine.

“We had all these critical tasks that had to be accomplished in a very short period of time, so now we’re at a point where we can look at the outcome for all of that; we are getting ready to graduate our fifth class, our students are doing great on the licensure exams, they’re doing great in terms of matching for residencies and so forth so those are the kinds of objective criteria that you look at.”

The research budget of the medical school started at under \$1 million and has blossomed to \$28 million in recent years. This year, the FSU College of Medicine garnered a partnership with Tallahassee Memorial Health Care for the purpose of bringing together Tallahassee Memorial Hospital’s allied physicians, many of who already serve on the FSU College of Medicine’s clinical faculty, with researchers from the medical school and other colleges at FSU.

This partnership will allow the groups to coordinate laboratory research as well as to directly translate that research to clinical trials at the hospital.

“The College of Medicine provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed at the highest level in both clinical and research settings,” said second-year medical student Kevin Patel. “The school has established a firm commitment to helping the community at-large, which is evident in its initiatives outside the classroom.”
