

## Donning white coats, big smiles

Traditional ceremony symbolizes importance of compassionate care  
SPECIAL TO THE TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Members of the Florida State University College of Medicine Class of 2021 received white coats Friday night in a traditional ceremony symbolizing the importance of compassionate care for patients and the scientific proficiency expected of physicians.

The first-year students have spent the summer learning the foundations of medicine in the classroom and the anatomy lab. Friday night's featured speaker was Laura Davis, M.D., a 2013 graduate, who grew up in Blountstown and now is practicing family medicine back in her hometown. Part of the college's mission is to produce patientcentered physicians who respond to community needs, especially through serving rural, elder, minority and underserved populations.

During the ceremony, College of Medicine Dean John P. Fogarty told the students: "This ceremony serves as a reminder that you are not just going to school – you are joining a profession. Ceremonies provide opportunities to commit or recommit to the oaths, vows and traditions of our profession."

Fogarty also presented Distinguished Alumni Awards to two physicians – one each from the College of Medicine and the FSU Program in Medical Sciences.

College of Medicine and FSU alumna Christie Alexander, a member of the medical school's inaugural class (2005), also is a graduate of the Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare Family Medicine Residency Program. She's the first College of Medicine alum to become a full-time faculty member at the school. The other honoree was C. David Smith, who completed PIMS in 1976 and practices in the rural Panhandle community of Jay, where he teaches students from the College of Medicine's Pensacola Regional Campus.



**ABOVE:** A student receives his white coat at the Florida State University College of Medicine White Coat Ceremony Friday in Tallahassee.



**RIGHT :**  
**Students watch their classmates receive their white coats.**  
PHOTOS BY COLIN HACKLEY/FSU COLLEGE OF MEDICINE