

FSU med school plays hospital matchmaker with 117 graduates

By [Doug Blackburn](#)
Democrat senior writer

The 117 graduating students at Florida State University's medical school had plenty to celebrate on Friday, but it's unlikely any were as jubilant as Kristina Seeger.

Accompanied at the podium by her boyfriend, Patrick Mickel, Seeger announced that she would be a resident at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville.

Mickel promptly dropped to one knee and removed a ring from his pocket as the screen behind the podium carried his message: "Kristina, will you marry me?"

"You are the love of my life," he told her as applause filled the ballroom at Oglesby Student Union, drowning out her acceptance.

Seeger said she had no idea her boyfriend since her undergraduate days at the University of Florida was going to propose during Match Day, a national event conducted by the Resident Matching Program.

"We were planning to take a vacation after we graduate (in May), and I had a feeling a question might be coming then," Seeger said, "but what happened today totally shocked me."

Mickel, a physicist in Albuquerque, N.M., came to Tallahassee on Friday to propose to Seeger — and find out where he will be moving.

Match Day is the primary system for pairing physicians with available positions at teaching hospitals in the United States. It is a joyous occasion for students who have spent at least eight years earning undergraduate and medical degrees.

FSU, which is more focused on training primary care doctors than most medical schools, had 72 (62 percent) of its 117 fourth-year students go into primary care programs, about 50 percent above the average medical school. (FSU also includes obstetrics/gynecology in its primary care listings; not all schools do.)

Forty-three members of FSU's graduating class will be staying in Florida, which is critical for

increasing the number of physicians in the Sunshine State. Studies have determined that where doctors serve their residency is the No. 1 predictor for where they will continue their medical careers.

"The percentage of our students entering primary care specialties underscores our emphasis on working to produce more of the doctors Florida needs," said Dr. John Fogarty, dean of FSU's College of Medicine. "We're proud of the fact that 71 percent of our alumni now practicing in Florida are providing primary care services, many of them in rural and other medically underserved areas of the state."

Three of FSU's students will be staying in town, joining the Tallahassee Memorial Family Medicine Program. They will be joined by eight other first-year residents, said Dr. Joe Mazziotta, associate director of the program.

"We've been pretty fortunate to be on the receiving end of some pretty good graduates from FSU," he said.

The trio staying in Tallahassee includes David Castillo, who first arrived at FSU 12 years ago as a wide-eyed freshman center for legendary football coach Bobby Bowden.

Castillo, who was carrying his 7-month-old daughter, Anna Grace, in his right arm during Friday's Match Day ceremony, was a co-captain in 2005 of the last Seminole team to win an ACC title.

It has been a long journey for the 30-year-old Castillo, with 18 months between completing his undergraduate degree and beginning medical school working as an ambassador for Seminole Boosters.

He knew almost right away that he wanted to be a family doctor.

"Look at my hands," Castillo said. "My hands got so messed up playing football, there was no way I could be a surgeon."