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Rachel Bixler and Joshua James celebrate their assignments to Wake Forest as FSU medical school students learned Thursday where they will be going for their residencies. (Glenn Beil/Democrat)



College of Medicine Dean John P. Fogarty holds out the pot of numbers that determined the order in which the campuses would be announced on Match Day. (Glenn Beil/Democrat)

## FSU med school's Match Day brings excitement

By **Doug Blackburn** • DEMOCRAT SENIOR WRITER  
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Marlisha Jackson had plenty to celebrate Thursday.

The fourth-year medical student at Florida State University, engaged to be married later this month to Kier Edwards, an officer with the FSU Police Department, learned that she won't have to leave town after she graduates in May. Jackson was paired with the Family Practice Residency Program at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare.

"This is awesome. Tallahassee had everything I was looking for — a really solid program that will give me lots of opportunities to do outpatient procedures," the Jacksonville native said.

In addition to being St. Patrick's Day, Thursday was national Match Day at medical schools across the country, the festive event when fourth-year students learn where they will spend the first three — or four — years of their lives as physicians.

It's also a day that sets the stage for many doctors' careers. Studies have shown that a majority of medical residents will start their practice in that same state.

FSU's young College of Medicine — celebrating its 10th anniversary this year — is preparing to graduate its seventh class, and its first at full capacity. The Class of 2011 is sending 114 soon-to-be doctors to residency programs at dozens of medical centers across the country.

Sixty-one of the graduating students — or 54 percent — are entering residency in primary-care specialties, which is central to the school's mission when it was founded in 2000. Thirty-four of FSU's students (32 percent) will be staying in Florida, including nine at Orlando Health.

John Fogarty, dean of the College of Medicine, said Thursday's match results point to the need for more

residency programs in Florida, a state that isn't able to accommodate most of its medical school graduates.

FSU and TMH are planning to start a residency in internal medicine beginning next year. "The partnership we have with TMH should really help," Fogarty said.

There was a St. Patrick's Day theme to this year's Match Day activities, held for the first time at Ruby Diamond Concert Hall.

Each of the six regional deans — FSU's students spend their second two years at one of six campuses around the state — donned Irish costumes, as did Fogarty. And for one day, it was "County Sarasota," not the Sarasota campus.

Each student informed the audience where he or she was headed, and in what specialty. Kelli Murphy produced the best reaction when she announced "neurosurgery at Harvard," before the video screen revealed that she was headed to an internal medicine program at the Naval Academy.

Live Oak native Amanda Sautter enjoyed a possible career-defining experience in her third year when she joined FSU's rural program in Marianna. She matched with the surgery residency at St. Agnes Hospital in Baltimore, and is determined to return to a rural hospital in Florida where surgeons are in short supply.

"I loved my third year in Marianna — that did it for me," Sautter said. "I had a chance to see that a rural doctor can really make a difference."