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FSU med students meet their matches

By **Doug Blackburn** • DEMOCRAT Senior WRITER
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Anthony and Kristen Sochet officially won't be doctors until May 15, when they receive their medical degrees at Florida State University.

But the Sochets, who met almost four years ago at FSU's College of Medicine and married last year, learned Thursday that they will begin primary care residency programs in Tampa this summer.

Anthony, whose goal is to be a neonatologist, was accepted at the University of South Florida College of Medicine's pediatric program, while Kristen is headed to a family practice program at Bayfront Medical Center.

"We wanted to stay in Florida," Anthony said. "We're very happy to end up in Tampa."

Thursday was the annual "Match Day" across the United States, as some 16,000 fourth-year medical school students learned where they will be spending their next three — and in some cases, four — years. It's a day of celebration for the students and their families, the beginning of the next stage toward a career as a physician.

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

At FSU, 37 members (40 percent) of the 94-student fourth-year class were matched with residency

programs in Florida. That's up from 30 percent in 2009.

"We're proud of our school and this class," said John Fogarty, dean of FSU's medical school. "We're continuing to meet our mission."

FSU's fast-growing College of Medicine, started in 2000 with the goal of training primary-care doctors, had only 27 students in its first graduating class in 2005. Forty-three members of the 2010 class (46 percent) are off to primary-care residencies.

There is only one residency program in Tallahassee, in family practice at Tallahassee Memorial Healthcare. FSU placed one student — Cortney Whittington — at TMH.

One of Fogarty's goals is to increase the number of residency programs in Tallahassee and across the state.

FSU's Class of 2010 includes Fernando Porter, the third Florida A&M University graduate to earn a medical degree at FSU. He matched with a family medicine residency program at Chestnut Hill Hospital in Philadelphia.

"I made it in my four years," Porter said. "FAMU did a bunch for me."

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