

To the Editor

Valley News

By applying assorted esoteric criteria to their measure of primary care excellence, US News&World Report has advanced the Geisel School of Medicine from 31st to 18th in the country within their latest annual ranking of “Best Medical Schools” for primary care medicine. For the deans of the medical school, this is the institutional equivalent of waking up on third base and thinking you hit a triple. The medical school continues to perpetuate the “Dean’s Lie” by misrepresenting the number of graduates entering primary care residencies at well over 40% of the class. Of the 103 graduates of Geisel last year, only 5 entered Family Medicine, with the balance of the primary care grads entering Internal Medicine or Pediatrics residencies. Up to 85% of those going into Internal Medicine, and 65% of those entering Pediatrics will subspecialize and will be unavailable to help close the estimated national deficit of 52,000 primary care physicians by 2025.

The Geisel School of Medicine is a fine institution brimming with passionate students and brilliant researchers, but it is decidedly not a leader in primary care. In fact, a “hidden curriculum” at Geisel actually discourages students from pursuing primary care, as some faculty continue to inform students that “they are too smart” to go into Family Medicine as they negotiate their clinical clerkships. Fortunately for us all, there are some very strong willed students who have paired with physician mentors in primary care to counter this nonsense. They will become excellent practicing generalists in spite of, rather than because of, Geisel’s approach to primary care.

US News needs to revise its measure of primary care excellence and output by reporting percentages of medical school graduates who are actually practicing primary care medicine 5 years post graduation. Leadership at Geisel should be lobbying for additional residency slots in general Internal Medicine, general Pediatrics, and Family Medicine, and should embrace a modicum of honesty in their reporting.

Robert S. Kiefner,MD

Concord,NH

22 March 2014

rskiefner@gmail.com