New students boast top scores and service, too

They spent their childhoods in lands near and far—from the backwoods of Maine to the coast of the Black Sea, from the West African nation of Nigeria to the Central American nation of Honduras. In college, they studied subjects as diverse as biochemistry, engineering, history, music, and studio art. But in August, they all came together as students at Dartmouth Medical School.

The 183 new DMS students include 82 in the M.D. program (including 6 M.D.-Ph.D.’s); 31 Ph.D.’s in the basic sciences; 46 M.P.H.’s; and 19 M.S.’s and 5 Ph.D.’s in the evaluative clinical sciences. The matriculants were drawn to Dartmouth for diverse reasons, including the “closeness and camaraderie” many said they felt among the faculty and students. DMS’s rural location was also a major draw.

“When I visited Hanover,” M.D. student Joo Choo wrote to introduce herself to her classmates and the faculty, “one of the very first things I noticed was its geographical similarity to South Korea, where I was born and raised until 11. The mountains and the trees were strikingly similar. Reminiscing on my fond memories of roaming the hills and rivers as a kid, I soon grew comfortable at Dartmouth. I am very happy to be a DMS student and raised until 11. The mountains and the trees were strikingly similar. Reminiscing on my fond memories of roaming the hills and rivers as a kid, I soon grew comfortable at Dartmouth. I am very happy to be a DMS student.”

They also evidence a strong commitment to service. They have volunteered to renovate a school for the deaf in Mexico, organize a book drive for children in Western Samoa, recruit staff for a clinic in Kenya, teach in South Central Los Angeles, and raise funds for an orphanage in Bulgaria. A few have also served in the U.S. military.

The class has no shortage of extracurricular talent either. Among its members are painters, sculptors, dancers, musicians, and several athletes who played intercollegiate varsity sports.

Programs: Admissions to the basic science graduate programs and the Center for the Evaluative Clinical Sciences (CECS) continue to be very competitive as well, due to the prestige of both programs. For example, DMS ranks 12th out of 126 U.S. medical schools in funding per basic science faculty member, according to the Association of American Medical Colleges. And CECS is home to several of the country’s most prominent researchers in health-care policy and variations in health utilization, quality, and spending.

“The next years will be exciting ones for you, challenging intellectually, emotionally, and physically,” Dr. Stephen Spielberg, DMS’s dean, told the incoming M.D. students in August. In fact, his remarks apply to all the new members of the DMS community. “DMS was founded by one visionary physician, Nathan Smith,” he continued, and “its success now is dependent on many scientists and physicians working together, challenging each other, and striving to make health care better for all. Individual excellence in a setting of community.”

Jennifer Durgin