

TAKEN FOR GRANITE: In November, Dartmouth's Rural Health Scholars Program hosted 17 undergraduates from Granite State colleges at Medical Student for a Day. The program's goal is to support premeds likely to practice in underserved rural areas.



Students seeking M.D.'s are a varied lot

What do a former professional ballet dancer, a college homecoming king, and a top contestant in the World Canneli Eating Championship have in common? They're all pursuing an M.D. as members of DMS's Class of 2012—a select group drawn from almost 5,600 applications to the American Medical College Application Service.

The 75 new M.D. students came to Dartmouth from as far as Slovakia and Tanzania and as near as New York City and a small town in Maine. Their undergraduate majors ranged from philosophy to biomedical engineering to theater, and they had average GPAs in both science and nonscience classes of over 3.7. Their average combined MCAT score of 32.9 was DMS's second-highest ever.

Sports: But these students have not spent all their time with their noses to the grindstone, despite their stellar GPAs and MCAT scores. Many of the '12s played college sports—including tennis, ice hockey, and volleyball—and three were DJs for their college radio station.

The new students have also built houses with Habitat for Humanity, acted in independent films, served in the U.S. Marine Corps and the Korean Marine Corps, and translated Holocaust testimonies.

The students' hobbies include skiing, hiking, painting, scuba diving, fencing, playing the piano, woodworking, and traveling

(one student has visited 20 countries . . . so far).

The future doctors have had a wealth of research experiences, too. Students have investigated limb regeneration in mice, the needs of pediatric cancer survivors, embryonic kidney development, and numerical cognition in children.

Reasons: Six of the '12s have master's degrees in science or health fields and 14 are EMTs. But their reasons for entering medicine vary. After volunteering in an emergency room and shadowing doctors, for example, Fiona He says she "realized that medicine was a career that would allow [her] to fulfill the roles of a teacher, student, scientist, and caretaker."

Reza Kordestani, who lived in Iraq during the first Gulf War, says, "The magnificent explosions and supersonic jets in the night sky led to my budding interest in science, yet it was a realization of the devastating aftermath that attracted me to medicine."

Kordestani and others from around the world join a few '12s with Hanover roots. Born at Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital, Eddie Ruhland went on to grow up in Hawaii, go to college in California, and work in the South Pacific with the Peace Corps. Now, he says, "I find myself back where it all started, in Hanover, pursuing my dream of becoming a physician."

KATHERINE VONDERHAAR

Ph.D. and master's students chart myriad paths to grad school

The science underlying medicine and the policy surrounding its practice are the focus of study for 147 new students in assorted doctoral and master's-degree programs at Dartmouth Medical School.

The newest of DMS's two interdepartmental basic science Ph.D. programs, in experimental and molecular medicine, admitted nine new students. One of them is already very familiar with DMS. Jennifer Davey majored in biology at the University of Vermont, earned a master's degree there, then taught high-school science for five years. She moved to the Upper Valley in 1988 and tried working at a biotech company but found it not her cup of tea, so she took a job as a lab technician at DMS. She became hooked on research and eventually decided to pursue her doctorate. Her route to this point was indirect, but she's excited about what lies ahead.

Twist: The other basic science program, in molecular and cellular biology, admitted 30 new students, including William McNitt. He majored in biology at Reed College and, taking a path as straight as Davey's was circuitous, applied to Ph.D. programs during his senior year. But there may be a twist in his future: After he arrived at Dartmouth, he learned of the M.D.-Ph.D. option. Medical school had never been on his radar before, but he's now applying to the dual-de-

Some stats about the 75 new M.D. students

5%
Percentage increase in applications over last year



2
Number born at Mary Hitchcock Memorial Hospital



22
Number born outside the U.S.

55
Number of undergraduate institutions represented



8
Number who graduated from Dartmouth College

28%
Percentage who were 25 or older at the time they applied



27
Number of states represented

44%
Percentage women

36%
Percentage students of color and/or international students