

# dear residents

The Four Freedoms

March 10, 2024

**Dear Residents,**

**Match Day** is drawing near. On March 15, all will be revealed. We aim for a diverse group of incoming residents each year. I am confident that we will match well but there are always a few unpredictable elements – variability in the proportion of women and changeability in the final number of UT Southwestern students, international medical graduates, and physician scientists who join our ranks each year. This year we also hope to match two residents to a new track – Internal Medicine/Geriatrics.

This time of the year takes me back to my early experience with matching, moving to the US and commencing training. All of it felt like one lucky break – that I matched (only about half of IMGs do), that I got a visa in time, and that I didn't flame out. There were many challenges and I expect each of you have encountered some too. **I was so grateful for this opportunity, that I never thought to ever complain or view anything with any degree of negativity.** Life was initially quite tough – living away from home, learning a new way of just being and adjusting to a very different way of delivering care. I couldn't believe how many tests were run and how many images were acquired and how many people seemed involved in the care of a single patient. I was overwhelmed but always grateful. I took everything that came my way as a given – this is just how it is, and I had better learn, adjust, and remain thankful. It's only now that I realize that I was truly afraid to be "found out" as not belonging or as undeserving. A voice within urged me to remain upbeat, uncomplaining, and ever ready to take on whatever came my way. When my elective became an ICU rotation, I accepted it with gratitude. When my sister was to be married, I never even thought of asking for a switch in my schedule. It was much later in my intern year, when I first spoke up – I was on a neurology consult rotation and somehow the neurology resident maneuvered for me to take all calls overnight for neurology consults so that he could sleep. I wasn't supposed to be first call overnight for 30 days, but that's what happened. I accepted this for the first week, then I began to question it and asked others. Then I finally mustered up the courage to speak to the neurology chief resident who intervened. I was prepared for retaliation – but it never came – whew! I was on my way to feeling free to be, free to become, free to step back and free to fail. These are the four freedoms that are the cornerstone of moving away from feeling like an outsider to living and working in a more integrated way. This is only possible when conditions are created that permit all people to flourish regardless of who they are and where they come from.

## **The Freedom to Be**

We are all from somewhere and have distinctive life experiences that have shaped us in ways that create our authentic selves. While we must exercise this sovereignty within constraints, there ought to be sufficient wiggle room to permit us to be ourselves. Workplaces like ours, where we already have substantial diversity, allyship and inclusion, give us the latitude to flourish and to be accepted for who we are. It was not always this way, but we are now an organization which has self-sustaining diversity. I don't ever see that changing.

### **The Freedom to Become**

I've always held that we are not a program that competes with anyone else. We compete only with what is possible. I strive to create an environment where you can become the best version of yourselves. Through a diversity of people and clinical experiences, through a balance between autonomy and supervision, through excellence in teaching and constructive feedback and through a commitment to mentorship, we strive to get you to your next level of performance. And this is for everyone without regard to who you are and who you desire to become.

### **The Freedom to Fade**

We do get tired; we lose energy and drive. There are tough days and there are times when personal circumstances can lower our octane rating. We step up, we draw on reserves – we do that often. Yet, people flourish best when they can catch a break. It is perfectly fine to let others step in and help – there is no dishonor in this. We cannot sustain a culture of hustle and perfectionism. This was the most important lesson I learned by the end of my training. I wish I had incorporated this sooner. The space to be human is vital to living and performing well.

### **The Freedom to Fail**

Wrong Rocks – the opportunity to be right goes through the ability to be wrong. There is risk in all that we do – in patient care decisions, in scientific experiments, in board exams, in fellowship and job pursuits. If there is space to recover from failure without judgment or penalty, then you will recover and you will learn, prosper, and get even better than you were before. This is why I prize the concept of psychological safety and I thank [Amy Edmonson](#) for her work in this area. Failure is no longer the opposite of success – it is the key to success.



Photo by [Aditya Saxena](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Dear residents, I am so grateful that we have an environment that embraces these concepts. You have contributed immensely to who we are and why we thrive. I look forward to welcoming new members to our family next week. I know that they will be thrilled to join you.

Be Free,  
Dino Kazi