

dear residents

What Do You Care About?

April 7, 2024

Dear Residents,

April is turning out to be a month buzzing with activity. The Seldin Symposium preparations are in full swing and QGenda is up and running. You are also swimming in various survey and learning module requests. The ACGME survey closes on April 7 – so this Sunday is the last chance to complete the survey and have your voice heard by the ACGME.

Your salaries will be adjusted again beginning July 1, 2024 – benchmarked to the AAMC 75th percentile, last published in 2023 <https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/students-residents/report/aamc-survey-resident/fellow-stipends-and-benefits>. By aiming for the 75th percentile, we stay ahead of what is essentially a year-old benchmark. We will continue to explore other ways of supporting you and are working through plans to increase your discretionary funds (travel, conferences etc.)

Last week I was in Philadelphia for the ABIM council and ABIM board meeting. The council is composed of subspecialty board chairs and is a very diverse body as is the ABIM board. The current ABIM board chair is a former UTSW resident/fellow – Dr. Rajeev Jain – now in private practice at Texas Health Dallas – Presbyterian. At these meetings I meet new academic and community leaders. There was a time when people often inquired where I was from – now it's often an inquiry about what is it that I do. This has been an interesting and subtle shift. The **where are you from** question often made me feel responsible for the perceptions of the community I was being identified with – the geography, the culture, the training pathway. I am much happier with the **what you do** question. What makes me the happiest is when others fondly recall their colleagues who trained at UT Southwestern. The national impact of UT Southwestern continues to be significant. And **what I do** at UT Southwestern feels exceptionally valuable to me.

In a few months, a third of you will graduate – you will be **from UT Southwestern** – an identity and group membership that is highly regarded. More importantly, you should think about **what you do** and **what you plan to do** and how you might explain this to others. I recognize that this will evolve and while the **what you do** is better than the **where are you from** question – there is still the worry that what you do may not feel important or significant to others. There is the ever-present trepidation that the question **what you do** is really asking **are you worth knowing**.

What you do here and how well you do it should be a source of satisfaction and accomplishment for you. As you look back at your training – I am confident that you can manage most clinical situations skillfully and safely – you are the sort of resident that fellowship directors and employers covet. You are from a program that prepares you exceptionally well for the next step in your career. You will be worth knowing.

The modern world can seem a strange place – we shifted from leaning on the accolades of the community we were identified with to an emphasis on our own self-worth. This shift from ancestral identity to individualistic

meritocracy is double edged because while we revel in our individual achievements, we simultaneously hold those who have failed accountable for their own failure – the winner/loser paradigm. I know that you are fully aware that not everyone has had the same opportunities and that many have travelled a much greater distance on a path full of obstacles and inequity. I hope that while you will be rightfully proud of your hard-earned achievements, that you will always reach out to and lift others up. The best question may not be *where you are from* or *what you do* – it might be ***what you care about***.

The next time you meet someone new, consider going right to inquiring *what do they care about* – it might just start an interesting conversation.

Best wishes,

Dino Kazi