

THEY MET THEIR MATCH



LAURA WEISMAN • STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Medical student Ioanna Athanasiadis is shocked – and pleased – to find out where she has been accepted for residency training on National Match Day at Rosalind Franklin University in North Chicago.

Shahed Ghanimati and Gabriel Gomez, both 28, who have been dating since their second month of medical school, can make plans to set up housekeeping close to family and friends in their home state of California.

As students around her screamed and hugged and sipped champagne, Ghanimati cried tears of happiness upon learning that she is headed for the University of Southern California, and her boyfriend will be 20 minutes away at Kaiser Los Angeles Medical Center.

Two doctors make a good match, Ghanimati said.

"You both know how demanding residencies are," she said.

"We're on the same wavelength," Gomez said. "Our expectations are similar. She knows how tired I'll be. It's all about understanding who the other person is."

Dr. Arthur Ross III, vice president of medical affairs and dean of the Chicago Medical School -- who completed his own residency in pediatric surgery at Duke University 30 years ago -- said he still gets goose bumps on Match Day.

"It's thrilling," he said. "It's the high-water mark for every medical school."

Match Day assignments keep Franklin medical school sweethearts together

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NORTH CHICAGO -- Love and marriage go together, but what about love and medical school?

"A lot of students are apprehensive about getting into a relationship because they worry it will get in the way of their studies," said Ryan Scruggs, a future ophthalmologist who in two months will marry Dawn-Dianne Lee, a future ER doc. "When we met each other, we just decided we'd make it work."

Scruggs and Lee, who study together and "bring out the best in each other," and two other Chicago Medical School couples, all determined to take their relationships to the next level, shouted with joy Thursday upon learning that love -- and medicine -- will keep them together.

Across the nation on National Match Day, more than 15,000 U.S. medical school seniors -- 185 of them at Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science in North Chicago -- found out which teaching hospitals they will spend their years of residency training, with 94 percent paired

with a program of their choice.

Scruggs learned in January that he had been accepted at the University of Virginia Health System.

Lee, who gambled that she could also win a spot at UV, learned Thursday that she will have a husband to come home to.

"They call it the 'suicide match' because you're only ranking one school," Scruggs said. "You either match or take a year off."

Students who want to stay close during their residencies can participate in the National Residency Matching Program as a couple. The NRMP, which uses a computer algorithm to produce matches, was established in 1952 at the request of medical students to provide a fair and impartial transition from medical school to residency.

Richard Comstock and Ioanna Athanasiadis, both 27, gave each other a long kiss after learning they will both start residencies in Washington, D.C. -- he in otolaryngology at Georgetown, she in obstetrics-gynecology at George Washington.

"We're just happy to be together," Comstock said. "It will be fun to be there this election season."



Chicago Medical School students Richard Comstock and girlfriend Ioanna Athanasiadis share a kiss after learning they will both start residencies in Washington, D.C. -- he in otolaryngology at Georgetown, she in obstetrics-gynecology at George Washington.