

## Boonshoft School of Medicine ranked fourth in the nation for its social mission

**A new study published recently in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* ranks the Boonshoft School of Medicine fourth in the nation for its social mission.** The study, entitled “The Social Mission of Medical Education: Ranking the Schools,” measured the percentage of graduates who practice primary care, work in health professional shortage areas, and are underrepresented minorities, and combined the data into a composite social mission score. It is the first to score all U.S. medical schools on their ability to meet a social mission.

To determine the true outcomes of medical education rather than the intermediate preferences of medical students and residents, the study tracked physicians in practice after the completion of all training and national service obligations. The researchers examined data from medical school graduates from 1999 to 2001. This approach differs from previous studies, which relied on the initial residency selection or reported specialty preference of students. This study pinpoints where graduates are and what type of medicine they actually practice.

“The study provides a balance to other rankings, such as the *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, that emphasize research funding, performance on MCAT, full-time faculty-to-student ratios, and subjective reputation,” said Howard Part, M.D., dean of the medical school. “Since many medical school graduates who enter primary care residencies, such as internal medicine, ultimately practice in sub-specialty areas such as cardiology or gastroenterology, studies that only track initial residency selection can be misleading. The methodology used in this study gives a much clearer picture of how many graduates actually practice primary care.”

“Where doctors choose to work, and what specialty they select, are heavily influenced by medical school,” said lead author Fitzhugh Mullan, M.D., a professor of health policy at George Washington University. “By recruiting minority students and prioritizing the training of primary care physicians and promoting practice in underserved areas, medical schools will help deliver the health care that Americans desperately need.”

“As a community-based medical school, we are closely intertwined with the community we serve, and many of our students have come here for that reason,” Part said. “I’m always impressed by how focused our students are on serving their fellow human beings.” **VS**

