

## Enhancing diversity or upping uncertainty?

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**U**rology program directors and their residency selection committees regard a candidate's performance during an onsite elective as the #1 most important factor in their Canadian Residency Matching Service (CaRMS) ranking decisions. Only 23% of candidates ranked by urology programs in 2019 had not done an elective with the ranking program, and all 28 of those who matched to urology undertook an elective at the program where they ultimately matched.

Does this mean that if you do not arrange an elective at a certain site, you will not match there? Currently, the answer is most likely yes. Will the new Association of Faculties of Medicine Canada (AFMC) electives diversification policy change that? Hard to say. Is eight weeks of elective time in urology enough for candidates and programs to assess one another? I think so. Candidates will have to be strategic and selective about where they spend their elective time. As the authors have alluded to, pile on summer student research programs and electives in allied specialties (med onc, rad onc, nephrology), along with selective experiences in one's home institution and candidates will have ample time to make their choice of career and program.

The stated aim of the AFMC's Student Elective Diversification Policy (SEDP) is to increase career diversity

and reduce the rate of unmatched candidates. I doubt that either of these goals will be achieved. Motivated candidates will continue to maximize their focus on their specialty of choice; they just won't be able to do a rotation at all programs. Unofficial site visits will become more commonplace ("The roadshow").

Parallel planning in small competitive specialties, such as urology, plastics, and ENT, is very difficult to achieve. It is usually an all or none affair. Even then, after successfully matching to a urology program, some candidates decide to switch out. Attrition is hard to predict, even in the best candidates. Urology residency is hard, and not as "fun" as it appears to an elective student on the periphery of the team. Some students just don't realize what they have signed up for until they are in the thick of residency. Others change their priorities. More elective time will not alter that.

The SEDP will increase candidate and program uncertainty at the time of the match for sure. However, urology programs and candidates will all be in the same boat. Strong candidates and solid programs will continue to find each other.

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