Hawgood, Other UC Leaders Encourage Students in Central Valley

Doctors Academy Student Aurelio Rubio addresses a panel of UC leaders, including UC President Janet Napolitano and UCSF Chancellor Sam Hawgood, at a UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program session. 

Photo by Francis Fung

By Laura Kurtzman on September 09, 2014

UC San Francisco Chancellor Sam Hawgood traveled to Fresno on Sept. 5, along with University of California President Janet Napolitano, UC Merced Chancellor Dorothy Leland and other top UC educators, to hear from high school and medical students about their experiences pursuing careers in health.

California’s Central Valley is one of the most medically underserved areas in the nation, but since 1975, the UCSF Fresno Medical Education program has been working to change that.
Each year, the program trains about 300 residents and fellows, about 30 to 40 percent of whom chose to stay and practice in the Fresno area. It also offers training to UCSF and other medical students and to high school students who are interested in careers in health. With 230 faculty members, the program cares for the majority of the region’s underserved people.

Residents and fellows train in eight specialties and 17 subspecialties at the 600-bed Community Regional Hospital, which has the busiest Level 1 trauma center in the state. Other training sites include Children’s Hospital Central California and VA Central California Health Systems.
One young student participating in the Doctors Academy, which grooms high school students for careers in health and medicine, asked the assembled leaders what students like him brought to the UC campus.

“Passion,” answered Napolitano. “We love having them. We would love having you.”

Hawgood said that students from the Central Valley bring their commitment to help their communities back home and their desire to serve buoys their teachers’ spirits. “We thrive on what we get from our students.”

Two recent UCSF School of Medicine graduates – Andres Anaya, ’14, and Erica Gastelum, ’13 – are now residents at UCSF Fresno and urged the students to imagine themselves one day being doctors in training themselves. When a high school student asked how the group how they had conquered their self doubts, they spoke of the love they now had for their patients and of the deep well of commitment to helping others that sustained them in tough times.

“You have to have a reason why you’re doing it,” said Anaya, who grew up as the son of parents who were both deaf and who thought for many years that even a college degree, much less a medical one, was beyond his reach. “And, for me, my reason was I wanted to come back here and practice medicine.”
Students who attended the UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program workshop pose for a photograph with UC leaders. Photo by Francis Fung

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