

## Alumni Physicians Connect With Students for Informal Career Talks Over Dinner

By [Anna Williams](#) on Oct 11, 2016



Paul Bonucci, '96 MD, and Javier Guevara, Jr., '12 MD, discussed their careers and fielded questions from students during an Alumni Physicians of Feinberg event.

Paul Bonucci, '96 MD, is the medical director for the emergency department of the Illinois Valley Community Hospital in Peru, Illinois, serving a small rural area 100 miles west of the Chicago city limits. Javier Guevara, Jr., '12 MD, on the other hand, practices family medicine at a busy community health center in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood, providing care to the area's underserved, often Spanish-speaking, population.

Despite the contrast in their specialties, clinical environments, and even their generations, Bonucci and Guevara found plenty of common ground when they teamed up to host an Alumni Physicians of Feinberg (APF) gathering, organized by the medical student societies.

The program, now in its third year, brings in Feinberg alumni from a range of backgrounds and concentrations to discuss their careers, share personal stories and answer questions from current medical students. The informal dinners provide attendees with real-world perspective on life in various specialties and give students an intimate look at the diverse career paths open to them after graduation.

At the latest APF installment last week, Bonucci and Guevara fielded questions from 15 students as they covered topics ranging from finding ways to carve out time for research to working at a healthcare organization with shared values.

Throughout the evening, the two alumni shared several examples of where their specialties diverged. But they also often highlighted what they held in common, especially their appreciation for the close relationships they cultivate with the patients they serve. Because Bonucci practices in a rural environment, he said he will frequently see the same patients in his emergency department, or run into them at the local grocery store.

Guevara said his specialty inherently lends itself to forging relationships. “I’m caring for entire families — the true definition of family medicine — and I love that,” he said. “I’m from Mexico, and to be able to speak the language of the patients in my community and connect with people on that level is really important to me. I feel so rewarded, and there’s not one day that’s boring.”

Both physicians also devoted a significant portion of the event to stressing the importance of work-life balance alongside active clinical schedules.



Alumni Physicians of Feinberg dinners provide an opportunity for students to engage with alumni and hear what life in their specialties really looks like.

“You are going to have lots of demands, lots of opportunities to use your knowledge and training. So you do need to decide what’s important to you and draw some boundaries,” Bonucci said. “We as physicians have great opportunities to be lifetime learners. But we have to make sure that as we grow professionally, we also have those other parts of our lives, like family and hobbies, that keep us balanced.”

Emily Li, a second-year medical student, said she found such advice invaluable. “It’s really helpful to hear about the world outside of academic medicine,” she said. “To have the physicians discuss their lifestyles — that isn’t something we often talk about in school.”

Sean Posada, another second-year medical student and the student chair of the Ricketts Society, a network of students from all four years of medical school, along with faculty and alumni mentors, which hosted the event, agreed. “For a lot of students, this is really critical information as we plan our futures, clerkships and look forward to applying for residency,” he said.

With nine sessions planned for the fall, Alumni Physicians of Feinberg will feature speakers as varied as Sudip Bose, '96, '99 MD, an emergency medicine physician and former major in the U.S. Army who treated Saddam Hussein after his capture, to [Emily Martin Jones, '08 MD, '11 GME](#), a specialist in sports medicine and now an assistant professor of [Medicine](#) and [Orthopaedic Surgery](#).

Before the evening ended, Bonucci and Guevara encouraged students to make the most of their time at Feinberg and take advantage of its unique resources. Guevara, in particular, spoke of his appreciation for the mentorship of [Sandra Sanguino, '93 MD](#), associate dean for Student Affairs, especially when he was struggling to decide on a specialty. “Find someone you admire and connect with to help with your decision,” he said. “You are at a phenomenal institution. Make every day count and push yourself to learn more.”

*For more information about the Alumni Physicians of Feinberg program, please contact Dan Schwarzlose at 312-503-4519 or [daniel.schwarzlose@northwestern.edu](mailto:daniel.schwarzlose@northwestern.edu).*

<http://news.feinberg.northwestern.edu/2016/10/alumni-physicians-connect-with-students-for-informal-career-talks-over-dinner/>