



Being a WWAMI grad

Expectations are high for doctors who trained in program

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There are numerous benefits to being a graduate of the WWAMI program, and I have found that I cannot ever take for granted that I am one. Being a WWAMI grad has required me to practice medicine with the utmost humility as well as aspire to live up to WWAMI's halo-like reputation. Personally, this includes striving to be helpful in leadership opportunities, whether I am financially remunerated or not. Moreover, WWAMI has given me the great fortune to seek out personal and organizational opportunities for improvement, whether in my hospital's department, medical staff leadership, or other community stewardship opportunities.

I believe the foundation and pinnacle of our WWAMI training is the inception and inculcation of much-needed, real-world resilience skills. I didn't recognize it at the time, but all those difficult exams, clinical clerkships, and otherwise hard-core tenets of the WWAMI program taught me a few things about how to manage my own feelings of temporary discomfort and delayed gratification. Amazingly, WWAMI helped me refine my sense of self-discipline. That was an incredibly valuable lesson for me to learn early on before I actually started working in today's challenging environments, such as all of us have during the COVID-19 pandemic. My WWAMI training has reminded me that in order to attain the worthy goals to improve population health for a very important patient population, a necessary and sufficient price needs to be paid in terms of our attitude, training, and personal development.

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That price to pay is different for all WWAMI grads. For some, it is going into a much-needed specialty such as family medicine. For others, it is living and working close enough to home, but not too far away. We call that the Goldilocks zone! For others yet, it may be choosing to relocate and practice outside of WWAMI-land altogether. Whatever the price any WWAMI grad continues to pay, I believe it is and will be worth

it. Life is simply too short to practice medicine without the belief that we are able to make a huge difference in the lives of our patients.

Being a WWAMI grad has allowed me to open doors that would otherwise have been shut forever; it has allowed me to strengthen my resolve to live up to the WWAMI brand just like a good cowboy endeavors daily to live up to the Code of the West. Being a WWAMI grad simply does not allow you to be anonymous and recede comfortably to the background of your hospital or clinic department. You will be expected to contribute your knowledge and your experience, despite how naïve and inexperienced you might think you are.

I could not believe how much responsibility and opportunity was thrust upon me when I first came to Cheyenne. Being a WWAMI grad was like an all-access pass to ever increasing opportunity and advancement. Within just a few years, life seemed to ascend and spiral ever upwards. Not only did I volunteer to participate on the boards of numerous civic organizations, but my wife and I began systematically investing our time, energy, and financial resources in various aspects of our local community, including housing infrastructure.

As a modern disciple of Abraham Maslow, the revolutionary thinker who came up with the Hierarchy (Pyramid) of Needs, I firmly believe that without our basic creature comforts being met—such as food, shelter, and security—it is impossible to achieve greater fulfillment of purpose and well-being. Maslow would have theorized that all of us, whether or not we are WWAMI grads, are able to self-actualize and live up to having peak experiences and becoming peak performers. As a WWAMI grad, I encourage myself and my compadres to remain simultaneously humble and cognizant that others will constantly seek our leadership and guidance. I encourage you to offer it unabashedly and unreservedly!

As amazing as it is to be a WWAMI grad, it is invariably a humbling experience for me to meet other WWAMI grads. Within WWAMI-land and especially in Wyoming, I have rarely met so many talented and purpose-driven individuals that would make Maslow proud. Maslow named such people "peakers" because they were well on their way to summiting the peak of the pyramid. Peakers experience flow states in their daily practices, be it the wholehearted practice of medicine or anything worthwhile. When I encounter another WWAMI grad, I say what Zig Ziglar would say, "See you at the top!" 