



Education at URMIC – Student Perspectives



Name: Jonathan Smith

Hometown: Valdosta, GA

Undergraduate Degree: B.S. in Biology from Duke University

Graduate Degree: M.D. from the University of Rochester

Areas of Interest: neuroscience, particularly neuroanatomy and neurophysiology; epilepsy, traumatic brain injury, neurotoxicology; teaching the clinical practice of neurology

Background Information

I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and raised in Valdosta, Georgia, a small town in the cotton belt, until my family moved to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, where I lived for five years before attending boarding school at Lakefield College School, Lakefield, Ontario. I currently live in the city of Rochester with my wife & young son. I have one brother, who lives in New Jersey. Throughout high school & college, I sang with large & small vocal ensembles, and continue to sing in a cappella and barbershop groups. I also enjoy camping, ultimate Frisbee, mocking bad movies, and cheering for Duke Blue Devil basketball.

Why did you choose The University of Rochester Medical Center?

I chose the University of Rochester for my residency training because it had an extremely strong, nationally recognized program in Neurology, my field of interest. Two main strengths of the program attracted me, the first being exposure to faculty who are national & international leaders in their areas of interest, as well as faculty who are national leaders in the professional development of neurologists, including two past presidents of the AAN (American Academy of Neurology). The program's other key strength was its residents, who were both strong academically and extremely collegial, and combined

with a keen interest in the teaching of neurology. Other factors that influenced my choice of URM included the local area, which I grew to love during medical school at the University of Rochester. The city's many academic institutions provide cultural opportunities unique for a city this size, and combining this with beautiful parks and easy access to the countryside of western New York make it an ideal place to live.

Tell us about your program

My program is the Adult Neurology Residency, which is run by Dr. Ralph Jozefowicz, a nationally recognized leader in medical student & resident education. His focus on teaching, and developing residents who are able to teach others, pervades the program. We serve three hospitals, primarily Strong Memorial Hospital, where residents run both an inpatient neurology service & multiple consultative services. We also have outpatient experiences in a variety of subspecialty clinics, and maintain our own continuity clinic. We have an extremely well developed formal teaching curriculum that blends well with the demands of clinical service. We are also encouraged to develop research projects via a mentoring program.

What are your career aspirations?

As a Captain in the US Army Reserve, I will begin my career by becoming an officer in the Army Medical Corps. I am pursuing a fellowship in clinical electrophysiology. In the future I may pursue further specialty training in epilepsy or neuromuscular disease. My long-term career aspirations are to combine a lively, primarily outpatient neurology practice with opportunities to teach medical students and residents.

What are some of the things you have learned since you came to Rochester?

I've learned you cannot place too high a value on a program that sees your education as a priority matched only by the patient care. I've learned that your ability to mesh with fellow students/residents and faculty is paramount, as no amount of good clinical exposure or teaching will help you enjoy work as much as enjoying the company of those you work with. I've learned that there is little better than hot coffee on a cold winter morning, and that you appreciate spring and summer much more when you have an actual winter before them.

Any advice for prospective students?

Strongly consider Rochester as a place to combine your academic interests and your lifestyle. Chances are there is opportunity to address both in this city. Visit the city, not just the URM, if you have time, especially during the spring & summer, when Rochester becomes beautiful and vibrant, with weekly outdoor festivals and excellent concert series.