



From Kindergarten to PhD

Gwinnett County Educates Students from Elementary School to Medical School

Tatiana Rodriguez (DO'18) – a second year medical student at Georgia Campus-Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (GA-PCOM) – is living proof that, as the Gwinnett water tower proclaimed for many years, success still lives here.

“A lot of people came and wanted to transfer out, but I was completely happy feeling like a big fish in a small pond.” Tatiana Rodriguez, student in the GA-PCOM osteopathic medicine program

Lawrenceville’s Rodriguez has lived in Gwinnett County nearly her entire life, completing her education within 10 miles of her home. She attended Cedar Hill Elementary School, Richards Middle School and Central Gwinnett High School, and then earned a B.S. degree in general biology from Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC). While in high school, she participated in the Gwinnett Medical Center Explorer program, which solidified her interest in medicine and led her to enroll at GA-PCOM.

Rodriguez felt like she could find success without leaving her hometown. She explained that she was attracted to the growth at GGC and, most importantly for her, its community:

“A lot of people came and wanted to transfer out, but I was completely happy feeling like a big fish in a small pond.”

Her mother is a nurse at Gwinnett Medical Center, so she was interested in healthcare as a career option from an early age. Choosing to continue her education in medicine, Rodriguez looked for a similar sense of community in medical programs. Upon learning about GA-PCOM, a medical school in Suwanee that would allow her to stay close to her family, she decided to apply to the college’s osteopathic medicine program. Once she interviewed there, the college became her first choice.

“I like the environment and the smaller size of it,” she says, “It makes it easy to get to know people.”

Rodriguez enjoys the camaraderie that GA-PCOM’s atmosphere promotes and adds that members of the class of 2018 work together very well.

As a student ambassador, Rodriguez assists prospective students during GA-PCOM events like the Medical Explorer visit and the college’s interview days. She likes getting to break out of her “study bubble” to answer questions and feel like she is helping out.

“I’m open to the future,” Rodriguez says, explaining that she appreciates that the D.O. program will afford her many opportunities. She says that she absolutely wants to stay in Georgia: “There are a lot of great hospitals in the state!”