



# The Arizona Podiatric Medicine Program Graduates its First Class in 2008



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**Date: February, 2008**

*Correspondence:* The Arizona Podiatric Medicine Program began accepting applicants for Podiatric education in 2004. This year will mark the first graduating class. The Podiatry school is located in Glendale, Arizona and is in association with the Medical school at Midwestern University.

**We contacted Dr. Paul J. Kim, who is Assistant Professor at the Podiatric Medicine Program at Midwestern University.**

**Q:** When and how did the podiatry program at Midwestern begin and who were the people most influential in getting the program started?

**A:** Midwestern University has two campuses; its main campus is in Chicago while the other campus is in Glendale, Arizona. Midwestern University wanted to expand its health sciences by adding the Podiatric Medicine Program. Jeff Page, DPM (former Dean at the California College of Podiatric Medicine), who was that time the Residency Director at Carl T. Hayden VA in Phoenix, Arizona, was hired as the program director. The Arizona Podiatric Medicine Program enrolled its first class in 2004.

**Q:** Dr. Kim, this is the first graduating class from the Arizona School of Podiatric Medicine. How many graduates will be in this year's class?

**A:** We will have 14 graduates in 2008.

**Q:** Are all the graduates securing a residency this year?

**A:** We are confident that all students will secure a residency slot. The match has not occurred yet so I cannot comment on where the students will complete their residencies. However, we have received very positive feedback from clerkship and residency directors on the caliber of our students.

**Q: How many students applied to the school this year and do you expect a bigger class next year?**

A: For the past couple of years, we have had several hundred students apply to our program. We interview approximately one-quarter of these applicants and make our final selection to fill a class size of approximately 35 students. We would like to maintain a relatively small class size to ensure more one-on-one mentoring and individualized attention. We will never be the largest school. Our mission is to maintain high standards and be the best podiatry program that we can be.

**Q: Have the entry requirements of this years class changed from years past?**

A: Our goal is to graduate quality students. This begins with a fairly rigorous selection process. Due to our small class size, we can be selective. This extends beyond G.P.A. and MCAT scores. We attempt to find students who have an interest in the podiatric profession and will be valued colleagues in the future.

**Q: What has the school learned about this years class that will help benefit next years enrollment?**

A: Our program is still in its early stages of development. There is a unique opportunity to influence the direction of podiatric medicine and surgery. Today, the students' reliance on technology has changed how graduate education is delivered and our curriculum reflects this trend. Furthermore, each class seems to have their own characteristics. We have attempted to be flexible and make changes when needed. Again, being a smaller program allows us to be dynamic and respond quickly to the needs of our student body.

**Q: Has being associated with the DO school benefited the podiatry school and in what way?**

A: I get asked about this quite often. This question really centers on our profession's debate regarding a dual degree (DO/DPM). I won't address this issue, but I will speak to what is currently occurring at Midwestern University. Our first and second year students share the same basic science curriculum as their DO colleagues. They take the same classes and same exams. Our students do as well as the DO medical students. Our top students consistently receive the highest grades in many of these courses. There is a high level of integration at our university which allows for exposure in both directions. Furthermore, there is a large pharmacy school, PA, OT, nurse anesthesia, cardiovascular perfusion, and dentistry program. I think the interdisciplinary campus prepares our students to effectively communicate better with others in the healthcare field.

I invite anyone who is interested in visiting the Arizona Podiatric Medicine Program at Midwestern University in Glendale, Arizona for a tour to see where the future of our profession is being educated!

Thank you, Dr. Kim, for your time.