



Ten Reasons Carolina is the Center of the Universe

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A number of years ago, the *New Yorker* magazine had a famous cover depicting their global map of the world. In the foreground loomed Manhattan, in particular the East Side. New Jersey and Westchester County were small neighboring strips, with the vast middle and west of the country relegated to mere ephemeral plots of real estate and China a distance flag. Those of us at UNC view the world in a similar fashion except that Carolina is in the foreground. Here is my list of why that is the case:

1. We are pocket protector wearing techno geeks: Our electronic medical record system is one of the best in the country. I can see a patient in clinic on Thursday in Chapel Hill, then fly to the UNC Project in Malawi, and on Saturday, sitting in our wireless-equipped guest house, open up my patient's medical record. From there, I can review and sign my clinic note, view the chest radiograph and EKG I ordered and read the reports, review the lab results, send an E script for a higher dose of enalapril to the patient's pharmacy, and contact my clinic nurse and ask him to contact the patient to go pick up the script. This allows you, the resident, to focus on patient care and learning medicine rather than scut work.

2. We play nice in the sand box: We cooperate in research and care with colleagues from each of the 6 health science schools at UNC. There is no distinction made between public and private patients, between clinicians and laboratory investigators. We work as a team to advance the mission of the University and our patients.

3. The world is our playground: We have active global programs in Russia, China, Honduras, Nicaragua, Guatemala, South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Madagascar, Sri Lanka and many other countries focusing on training, research and provision of care.

4. We live in Mr. Roger's neighborhood: We are one of a few medical schools within two blocks of 5 other health science schools (Medicine, Dental, Public Health, Nursing, Pharmacy, Social Work) in the middle of a two-hundred-year-old undergraduate campus. This facilitates a robust research and training environment.

5. We work hard and play hard: For most outsiders, Chapel Hill is famous for Dean Smith, Coach Williams and basketball. All true, but this area is a veritable playground for adult athletes, with swim, cycling, and triathlon teams, running and rowing clubs, plus the usual tennis, rugby, hockey and ultimate Frisbee, all in a beautiful and protected setting surrounded by the town.

6. For us, the public option reigns supreme: There is something special about a public hospital where the lobby plaque says, "Built by and for the people of North Carolina." The physicians and citizens of NC know that they can refer patients to our hospital without regard to insurance. We have the wonderful esprit of a public hospital, but unlike many public hospitals, ours is not dysfunctional. We have a great physical plant and ancillary staff to start IV's, draw blood, etc., so you can focus on learning and direct patient care.

7. The state is our oyster: As the only public hospital statewide, UNC Hospitals is a special place. Our catchment area is 9 million people, similar to being the only hospital in New York City. Given this broad area, you will see some of every type of disease without being overwhelmed by any one. You will see patients with HIV, bone marrow transplants, solid organ transplants, and burn center patients. You will see esoteric parasitic diseases such as leishmania, malaria, and Chagas disease since we are living in the midst of a huge international and travelling community. As a public facility, there is no competition for patients with Duke. You will see the local executive with endocarditis or asthma as well as the soldier from Ft. Bragg with vivax malaria from Afghanistan.

8. Our research is edgy: We put the “cutting” in cutting edge research with \$480 million in external funding for the Schools of Medicine, Public Health, Pharmacy and Dentistry. Virtually every faculty member who will teach you is not only a superb clinician but also conducts NIH funded research in epidemiology, clinical trials or laboratory research. Each division within the Department of Medicine has several faculty members with joint appointments in the School of Public Health and Medicine. Thus we provide trainees with a breadth of experience unlike any other program as well as opportunities to pursue their own research interests.

9. We like being Mr. or Ms. Chips: Each of our faculty members is devoted to teaching and to patient care. For example, David Margolis is hot on the trail of finding a cure for AIDS in his laboratory but he also maintains a panel of clinic patients, while attending on both the general medicine service as well as the ID Consult service. UNC is unusual in that we have specialty medical services instead of all general medicine services. Financially, it would be better if we didn't do that, as when a specialist is a ward attending the specialist obviously can't bill as an ID consult as well a general internist. The reason we continue to maintain these services is that about 50% of the service will be general medicine patients. Also, most of our specialists love general internal medicine and don't want to give it up. Specialty services are better for the patients because they get nurses, social workers, and physicians who are most familiar with their chronic disease areas and familiar with them as they return for repeat hospitalizations. It is better for the housestaff as they have faculty who are acknowledged national leaders in clinical care and cutting edge research teaching them about infections, cancer or pulmonary diseases.

10. We do believe in change, yes we can: We are committed to continually improving our community. As an example, five years ago UNC inaugurated a program, featured in the *New York Times*, where any student, whether from North Carolina or from without, whose family income is less than 250% of the federal poverty level, can have a debt-free education including room and board, tuition, books and a computer. Many School of Medicine faculty participate as mentors in this program, from which approximately 3000 benefit. This is just one example of why Carolina is a special place. Our commitment to improving the health of North Carolinians, to providing an education for all, and to diversifying our faculty and students in terms of race, ethnicity and gender is unparalleled.