

FM REVIEW 2009-2012 11

COMMENTS TO EDITOR: I'd like to give the author a chance to revise this effort and make it more of a narrative essay. Personally, I lean toward the reviewer who favored rejection because in his estimation the piece lacks adequate reflection. However, it is possible the essay can be rewritten so that it demonstrates more interesting insights. Reviewer 2's suggestions for clearer "lessons learned" might be particularly useful in this regard.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR: I agree with reviewer 1 who felt this essay needed deeper reflection to qualify it as a good narrative essay. You recognized a great opportunity to understand something about the core of professionalism through the unique set of ending/beginning circumstances you were privileged to participate in. However, you need to do more to first identify and then grapple with the particular issues that arose as a result - for example, the sense of loss that must have permeated your residency (at least initially); and the sense of anxiety/fear of not measuring up that might have been present at the start of a new program.

Much of what you discuss seems to describe good family medicine in general, but nothing particular to how to cope with the challenges of closing/opening programs. This concern also applies to the values of integrity first and service before self that you cite - show how these general values helped you and others cope with the particular challenges you faced (and it might help to clarify what these challenges were - was the main problem in both cases not enough residents?). What were your insights specific to endings and beginnings?

It seems to me that the key lesson from the ending program was the importance of treating residents as colleagues, and that this attitude led to lots of positive experiences. Was this somewhat different than how the faculty behaved in previous years? Was this a lesson that informed your own attitude toward residents as a newly minted faculty member at the beginning program? It might help to have a clear concluding "lessons learned" paragraph summarizing what you took away from both experiences and how these lessons are applicable to residencies in general, not only those closing and opening.

I also agree with the comment that you could put less emphasis on the fact that you are describing Air Force residencies, as this does not seem particularly relevant to your main points.

This essay has considerable potential, but it would benefit from a clearer articulation of the challenges faced by residents and faculty in these two situations; how faculty leadership successfully addressed these challenges; and what are the implications for other residencies.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR II: The author has done an excellent and conscientious job of considering and addressing all reviewer concerns. This effort has led to a much improved essay, which is now more personal, more revealing of the author's own emotions, and more reflective. It also provides more details that show specifically how the problems of closing and opening a residency were successfully addressed.

My one concern is that in places the essay might sound too much like an opinion piece, advocating for certain changes in ALL residency programs. I try to distinguish between opinion and narrative essay by keeping the focus of the latter on personal experience. Therefore, I edited the piece to remove references to "all residencies." In this reading, the next to final paragraph, although exhortatory, I interpret as a summary of what the author learned for himself that will be valuable to him in his future career. Please consider this point when you look over the essay and see if you concur that it now falls on the right side of this line.

I also made minor stylistic edits throughout the ms.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR II: Thank you for so carefully and thoughtfully addressing each of the reviewers' concerns and suggestions. You did a meticulous rewrite and the result is a much-improved essay, one that is more insightful and more self-aware, while also offering the reader more details through which to interpret your experience.

I am suggesting only minor rewrites, the majority of which is stylistic changes. Since narrative essays are intended to focus on personal experience, I also removed overt references suggesting that "all residencies" should do this or that. You've done an excellent job of describing this experience, and making clear the larger lessons of responsibility, inclusiveness, respect, and teamwork that emerged from these programmatic births and deaths. Readers can draw their own conclusions regarding specific applications.

COMMENTS TO EDITOR III: I recommend publication. The author has made the requested changes.

COMMENTS TO AUTHOR III: Thank you for agreeing to the minor recommended changes. The essay reads very well and tells a valuable story that avoids the pitfalls of being an opinion piece.