CEREMONY SPEECH

FOR

RICHARD SAAD

 Hello everyone. Thank you all for being here. I would like to recognize and extend special thanks to our invited guests from the government who took time from their schedules to show their support, to our Dean of Students, Dr. George Marcoullis, without whom **none** of us would be here, and to our professors, among them Dr. Ioannis Patrikios, Professor of Biochemistry, Dr. Anastasis Stephanou, Associate Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology, and all of our other professors, we are grateful for the time, wisdom and patience you’ve all shared with us… so far and going forward. On behalf of my fellow students and future doctors, I want to acknowledge all of you as you witness this auspicious and meaningful passage. To all of our colleagues, family, friends and distinguished member of the faculty, staff, and medical profession, the exercises in which we partake today lay the foundation for us as we enter the pantheon of the noblest of professions. As we listen to the words of the Hippocratic oath and accept the white coat, we begin to realize the depth and breadth of this ceremony. We stand on the shoulders of those, who for thousands of years, accepted this oath and pledged their dedication to the well being of mankind.

We are studying to enter a profession that hears and protects the most profound secrets and works to understand and support the functioning of the human body-an experience that most people will never be privileged to learn. We will be privy to impossible challenges, unimaginable joy, and indecipherable grief. We will be asked to access our intelligence, compassion, and inner strength, and more often than not, we will have to tap into all of those resources simultaneously, all in the name of humanity. We will find ourselves in situations that others may deem intolerable, but Hippocrates will guide us and our white coats will remind us that we do what we do in the service of others.

I know that I speak for all of my fellow students when I say that each one of us is proud and humbled to have the opportunity to attend the European University of Cyprus School of Medicine. As we go forth with our studies here, and although we have already had a taste of the demanding curriculum necessary in order to prepare us for our medical careers, each one of us is grateful for an environment that fosters energy, commitment, and encouragement from faculty, staff, and of course each other. Naturally we are aware of the prestige associated with becoming a doctor. We’ve been encouraged by our friends, families and communities, and for many of us we’ve been considered the “cream of the crop.” As we all entered this arena, perhaps for the first time in our lives being in such a rarified group of our peers, the demands of the curriculum might have conspired to breed self-doubt. Possibly for the first time some of us are beginning to wonder, “Am I good enough? Am I up to the challenge?” Rest assured that we **ARE** good enough, and in those moments of self-doubt we must all remember why we are here. We took an oath. We pledged to treat the sick and heal the infirmed. We are here for a purpose greater than ourselves. We are here to learn how to really **WEAR** that white coat and to remember the privilege of what that means. It is a passport to knowledge, a mantle of responsibility, and a signal to the world that we are here to discover, to serve, to guide, to assist others.

We are about to embark on the most fascinating adventure of our lives. We will become intimately involved with strangers after one or two sentences. On our first day in the ER, we may find ourselves as guides, confessors, miracle workers. Anything is possible and these coats symbolize our willingness to do what it takes to handle whatever comes our way.

With education comes gratitude, preparation and then practical application, and **ALWAYS** greatresponsibility. You may be privy to learn of someone’s history of drug addiction or disclosure of HIV. You may not yet have had experience with triage, or childbirth, or emergency surgery, or explaining to a diabetic with dangerous blood sugar levels what dire consequences they may face, but this white coat means you are willing to do what it takes to care for the patient-**ANY** patient. With each interaction we must never forget the humanity involved with our profession. You … and I will be find ourselves at bedsides when patients are at their most vulnerable. Your kind words and compassion, your gentle touch, your observations, your willingness to listen, your thoughtful questions, and your growing knowledge **will** make a difference to the patient, even while you’re a student. This access is a privilege with which you are now entrusted. Learn all you can. **Deserve** this trust. You can do it. **We** can do it. Thank you all!