**EDUCATIONAL SPEECH**

**FOR**

**RICHARD SAAD**

Friends and family, colleagues and mentors, faculty, doctors, and distinguished guests.... here we are... again... My fellow classmates and I are poised to take our knowledge, enthusiasm, and compassion with us to the next level in our professional careers. For the past six years, we have worked, studied, and maybe even complained.... **just a little**... or maybe **A LOT**.... about the challenges we faced as fresh, new, eager students here at the Medical School of the European University Cyprus. I was honored back then to be given the opportunity to speak to all of you at the onset of our collective journey, our White Coat Ceremony, and here we find ourselves again... six years older, and hopefully more practiced, informed, and wiser.... and especially more adaptable. I am, once again, honored, as Class Valedictorian, to share a message on behalf of my fellow graduates. These past few months have taught us all, a great deal... to expect the unexpected... to really learn to think on our feet.... to observe and act intelligently and with purpose in the face of unprecedented challenges and circumstances, and most of all, to realize, acknowledge, and support the indisputable truth that we... as a class... as a society... and as a global community, are **PROFOUNDLY** in this together. Ironically, we must practice distancing. In reality, we find ourselves capable of being more extensively connected than ever before.

We, as a class, have many shared experiences and memories. If we took a confidential, **anonymous** poll, I have a feeling most would mention something about ***misery***... and it ***MIGHT*** have to do with Lanarca General Hospital... we were **barely** two years into our studies when it was announced that a new medical building would be constructed... for studying... training... practice... **BRAVO**!!! ... or so we thought... Well! Here we are.... and as most masterpieces teach us... great art... explorations...achievements... are never fully completed... and neither is that building!!!

Yet we go on... we are all works in progress. Although today signifies our graduation from Medical School, our education will hopefully never cease. It is clear that every day presents new challenges and opportunities... especially to scientists and doctors, and significantly now. We will continue the explorations and practices we have been taught so carefully. We will continue to renew our oath to render intelligent, compassionate care for all, and we will continue to build on our base... just as that new medical building forges onward towards completion... as a symbol of possibility, hope, and well being. Maybe... just **MAYBE**... it will be completed in time for us to complete our residencies and we will all rejoin to run our much needed practices (**Please adjust this wording if it is not accurate. Thanks!**)

We may have begun this process as a just small group of thirty close knit future members of the medical community, yet we have seen, in subsequent years, the number per class grow to one hundred and beyond. It is gratifying to know that there will be strength in numbers, that we will all serve important functions in our communities, and that at every step, we pave the way for growth, understanding, service, and healing. I want to congratulate my fellow graduates and say... Thank you all!!