Dear students, parents, and faculty,

Welcome to the white coat ceremony for the medicine class of 2013. The white coat ceremony has become a yearly tradition at AUB Faculty of Medicine for the past few years. It is the time when students who are about to begin their third year of medical training and the first of two years of clinical training gather to celebrate with their families and their teachers this important transition that they are making. And indeed a transition it will be. Instead of a classroom, you will be in conference rooms, patient rooms, and on call rooms. Instead of a desk, you will be standing in front of a patient’s bed. Instead of a pen and paper, you will be holding a stethoscope. And instead of a book, you will be learning from the patient, a living, breathing educational tool from which you will learn a great deal. And instead of pure factual knowledge, you will learn skills, how to interview a patient, how to examine a patient, and how to analyze information and decide on a plan of management. But more importantly, you will learn how to be the patient’s advocate, which is the most noble task you will ever be given. Because the patient is not only an educational tool, the patient is a person in need that you should help, he is a person in a state of weakness that you should support, he is a person in pain that you should comfort, and he is a person in fear that you should reassure. The journey you are about to embark on is not easy, nor is it short. But it is indeed the most rewarding adventure you will ever experience. I don’t mean to intimidate you by pointing out the drastic changes you will soon witness. We will be there for you every step of the way, to support you and guide you through the uncertainties and the difficulties, faculty, housestaff, senior students, and all hospital staff will be walking with you down this road, holding your hand until your feet are on solid ground.

Today you will take the Hippocratic Oath, a symbolic oath that represents the responsibilities that you are about to be handed and for which I am sure you are ready. Today you enter this hall as students, and you will emerge as young physicians in training and young colleagues of ours. Congratulations and good luck.