

Commencement Exercises and Honorary Doctorates Ceremony 2014

Graduate student speech by Christina Bergqvist

Good afternoon,

Fellow graduates, honorable faculty and loved family members, congratulations!

We're finally here. We've had a unique journey of firsts: the first lecture, the first anatomy lab, the first med1 exam, the first patient, the first round, the first diagnosis, the first suture, the first order, the first page, the first night duty, and the first post call morning.

Throughout these firsts we passed through extremely important learning experiences like pretending we know what's going on, self diagnosing ourselves with dangerous conditions, discovering each other's personality disorders, avoiding intimidating questions of physicians, getting used to the symphony of pagers in the on call room, and most importantly how to fall asleep almost anywhere.

Although this is not our first graduation, it certainly is the most important one; and the most exciting one especially for our parents who have long waited for us, "the hakim/hakimeh" to finally know how to take care of their constant back pain, get rid of their chronic cough and treat their rashes. After 4 years of medical school, rest assured, we still can barely do any of these things.

This ceremony marks the end of four fantastic years and the beginning of something which, although impossible to predict, is promising for another great adventure. The success with which we confront the many challenges which lie ahead of us will reflect upon the skills we have acquired together here at AUB; skills that AUB has instilled in us by entrusting patients to us; by helping us build both knowledge and confidence; and thus inculcating in us the art of medicine. The challenges of these past 4 years gave us a wider scope into this intricate life, a new sense of purpose and have definitely provided us with the maturity we owe to our community as physicians. Despite all these skills however, our most powerful tools remain the kind word or gesture to patients, the extra effort to show a patient that we genuinely care about their problem. I trust that none of us will ever lose sight of this.

To my fellow graduates: I am pleased that the friendships that we have developed will forever reflect the incredible trip we have shared. After 4 years of companionship and complicity it is with hearts filled with sorrow that we find ourselves parting today. However as Gebran Khalil Gebran said "The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain." So let the joy of being all together, as a class for the last time, prevail. Always be strong and effective advocates for your patients. Always remember your achievements with pride. Always measure success by how you honestly live up to your own expectations.

Finally I hope you will all keep our alma matter –AUB- close to your heart the same way I do. And I trust that you will all be sitting one day in the seats of our professors looking upon younger generations of students and wishing that they may have life and have it more abundantly.

And so it is that we leave here today and thanks those who challenged us and believed in us throughout medical school and who made this unforgettable minute unforgettable.