

Graduate Commencement speech: Randa Akel

Your Excellencies, Esteemed guests, faculty, family, and friends. Dear graduating class of 2012,

Together we accomplished what we set out to do years ago... this collective dream has only been growing stronger since our first day of medical school.

On that day we were assigned to read our first of many many many medical books to come. The book was Grant's Clinical Anatomy. On page one of that book we all remember there is a quotation that I would like to highlight tonight.....it said:

"To our students you will remember some of what you hear, much of what you read, more of what you see and almost all of what you experience."

We could have chosen to hear, read, see in any classroom anywhere in the world at any given time, but we looked for the experience. We chose the experience.

We chose Beirut. the American university of Beirut, this campus, this medical center, this faculty, and this class of 79 colleagues and friends. Our years at AUB not only brought us knowledge, skill, compassion, and friendship, they more importantly paved the way for our self discovery and personal growth.

Medical school has an "interesting " way of constantly pushing you to limits outside your comfort zone and thus forcing you to question, adapt, and grow. When we woke up early for classes and stayed late in labs we learned commitment. When we missed watching our favorite football team play or when we spent our Saturday nights studying late we learned sacrifice. When our parents called to ask about our day or made sure we were up on time for rounds or exams we learned the importance of support. When we held that retractor in the operating room for hours we learned patience. When we became part of the team planning our AUB-MC 2020 we learned the significance of teamwork and progress. When we got advice from our professors and attendings we learned the meaning of guidance. And when we stayed after rounds with patients comforting them about their condition we learned sympathy and devotion.

This experience has allowed us to question what kind of individuals we are in our very core.

Many people live their entire lives never experiencing a challenge that pushes them to their limits and if you are not pushed to your limits you cannot expand those limits forward and grow.

So I for one am thankful for this experience, for the impact it has had and for the future it has started molding.

This future and what it holds for each of us is a mind tantalizing mystery today.

All we know is that starting tomorrow we will wake up every morning and plan our day as Doctors of medicine and no longer as students. E.B. White said "I wake each morning torn between the desire to improve the world and the desire to enjoy it. It makes it hard to plan the day." Well, I hope we enjoy every day to the fullest, for that is a right we earned. And I hope we plan to make our world, our country, our community, a slightly better place by the end of every day, for that is a responsibility bestowed upon us as graduates of this institution.

But right now, let's leave the planning and the future for tomorrow. Tonight we don't have to plan.

Dear graduates, tonight, on our campus, we are here to celebrate. To show our gratitude and appreciation to our families and faculty who supported us along the way. To be humbled by the honor we shall receive. To be proud of what we have accomplished. And to honor the end of this experience for it is but a breathtaking beginning...

Graduating class of 2012 congratulations!