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# AUB holds 'White Coat' ceremony for med students

BEIRUT: The Faculty of Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB) recently held its first annual "White Coat Ceremony" at the Issam Fares Hall, a statement issued by the university said on Tuesday.

The ceremony is a rite of passage to medical school, held in over 90 percent of American medical schools usually at the start of the first year of medical school. At AUB, it is held at the beginning of the third year, just before students embark on their clinical training. This year, 81 third-year medical students participated in the ceremony, during which they pledged the AUB version of the Hippocratic Oath. For the first time in the history of the White Coat Ceremony at AUB, med students were officially cloaked in their white coats by dean Nadim Cortas and associate dean Fuad Ziyadeh.

The ceremony and oath of dedication to the care of patients is a reminder to students of the commitment needed to

complete their medical education as well as the responsibilities that come with choosing medicine as a profession.

"Students now embark on their clinical years under the supervision of dedicated faculty members," the university statement said, adding: "As such, this cloaking marks the start of a new beginning and a commitment to a profession distinguished by its

selflessness and dedication to the help of the other."

Cortas addressed the audience by congratulating the class of 2010, reminding them that the white coat "is not a sign that you have arrived, but that you have begun the journey that will last the rest of your life." He encouraged the students to embrace the journey and the responsibility that comes with it, as well as to

respect the dignity of their patients. "While at times, the going may seem to be hard, it is well worth it," he said. "There is joy in the journey. I have loved my journey and continue to love it."

In his keynote address "Why Doctors Must Be Careful," Daniel Sulmasy, professor of medicine, philosopher and director of the Bioethics Institute of New York Medical College, talked about the importance of care: "It is life that we serve. As clinicians, we understand this best when we come to understand the way our lives are so deeply connected with the lives of our patients." He closed his speech by reminding the audience that "these days, in the face of all troubles that beset the health-care profession, we need to renew ourselves by concentrating on the essential, on becoming again who we always have known we should be - physicians and surgeons who are full of care, who are humble, sincere, compassionate, and competent.

"May your white coats be a constant warning to be careful never to forget this truth," Sulmasy added.

Following Sulmasy's speech, the students took the AUBMC version of the Hippocratic Oath, and donned their first white coats, symbolizing their admission into the community of physicians, united with doctors all around the world.

Parents and faculty members attended the ceremony which was followed by a reception.

This year's White Coat Ceremony was supported, for the first time, by a grant from the Arnold P. Gold Foundation, a foundation committed to promoting humanism in medicine. The foundation furnished each student with a pin with the inscription "Humanism in Medicine," denoting a common pledge to offering skilled and compassionate patient care. The pin depicts the emblem of the foundation: a stethoscope shaped as a heart. - *The Daily Star*



Cortas with one of his students at the ceremony on Tuesday.

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