

# **Class of 2017 White Coat Ceremony**

## **OHSU School of Medicine**

**Remarks by George C. Mejicano, M.D., M.S.**

**August 16, 2013**

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the School of Medicine, I would like to formally welcome you – our 132 new medical students – to the OHSU family. I have deep appreciation for the very difficult decisions that our Admissions Committee had to make in order to select the remarkable individuals that make up the Class of 2017. Indeed, your collective experience, passion, credentials and accomplishments are most impressive. We congratulate each and every one of you on your past achievements, and we look forward to interacting with you as you embark upon the educational journey that will transform you into the next outstanding generation of physicians and surgeons.

There is an old saying – reportedly an ancient Chinese curse – that goes something like this: “May you live in interesting times.” Ladies and gentlemen, as it pertains to medicine and health care, we are most definitely living in “interesting times.” However, I don’t look at this as a curse. Far from it! Rather, I look at our interesting times as the dawn of a new era in medicine and health care – one that will give rise to many golden opportunities. Allow me to take a few minutes to explain...

First, I believe that this is an incredibly exciting time to enter the profession of medicine. Here are some reasons why I am so excited about where we are today – on the brink of a great era in medicine.

- Informatics and big data → the opportunity to harness information technology to improve the care and quality of life, not just of individuals but of entire communities.
- Quality science and improvement → the opportunity to use sophisticated tools and methods to analyze how systems and processes can be improved, and then make the necessary changes so that each of you may continue to enhance your individual clinical competence as well as make the places you work more effective and more efficient.
- Interprofessional collaborative practice → the opportunity to shift from a paradigm that emphasizes the importance of a heroic individual to one that leverages the power of people interacting within high functioning teams and working together to provide compassionate, patient centered care of the highest quality.
- Human genomics and personalized medicine → the opportunity to utilize a deep understanding of genetics and epigenetics to individualize patient care based upon the unique and highly specific molecular biology of each individual patient.
- Health care reform → the opportunity to lead the transformation of our health care delivery system away from a productivity model that rewards people and organizations based upon how often something gets done and towards a value-based model that emphasizes appropriateness, stewardship, and the quality of the care that is delivered to our patients.

Secondly, I believe that you are now students at an unbelievably exciting place to study and learn your future craft. Here are a few highlights of what's in store for you over the next few years:

- Learning Communities that we call "The Colleges" → the opportunity to gain insight and a deep understanding of your interests, strengths and abilities so that you can achieve your potential and develop into the best possible doctor you can be. In essence, career advising that will help you go from being good to being great, and then from being great to being exceptional MDs!
- Talented faculty and staff → the opportunity to interact and learn side-by-side with world class faculty members, highly skilled and dedicated staff members, and hardworking residents who have come to the Northwest because this environment is one that fosters excellence across all of our missions.
- Outstanding facilities and learning environments → the opportunity to work in state-of-the-art clinical buildings as well as be the first ones to use the clinical skills and simulation centers that will be housed within the Collaborative Life Sciences Building that is scheduled to open in 2014.
- Innovative educational methods → the tremendous opportunity to learn – and be assessed – using novel instructional methods and formats that will touch each of you as we roll out many components of our transformed curriculum. These changes will put you at the cutting edge of medical education – as evidenced by the fact that the OHSU School of Medicine was selected as one of only 11 schools – out of 119 that applied – to receive a one million dollar grant from the

American Medical Association for our plans to change how medical students are taught so that you can better meet the needs of 21st century society.

And so I hope that I have gotten the proverbial juices flowing and that I have provided you a window so that each of you can share my great enthusiasm for our wonderful profession of medicine. In closing, I'd also like to thank all of the people who have helped you – the remarkable Class of 2017 – arrive at this moment. So I'll add my thanks to all of the parents, siblings, spouses, partners, children, family members and friends who are here today. You are a major reason that our new students have made it here today.

“Thank You!”