



WHITE COAT ADDRESS, 2013
DEAN DENNIS S. CHARNEY, MD

MEETING CHALLENGES TODAY, LEADING THE WAY TOMORROW

Dennis S. Charney, MD, Anne and Joel Ehrenkranz Dean of Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs of The Mount Sinai Medical Center, delivered the following remarks at the 16th Annual White Coat Ceremony on September 9, 2013, in Stern Auditorium.

The White Coat Ceremony marks the beginning of the academic year and welcomes first-year students into the medical profession. As students are helped into their white coats by faculty, they are reminded of the significance of their profession and their responsibility to balance scientific knowledge with compassion.

Class of 2017, Family and Friends, Faculty, and members of the Mount Sinai Boards of Trustees,

Welcome to our annual White Coat Ceremony!

The presentation of the White Coat to our Medical Students at the onset of their training represents a welcome to our profession, but more important, it is an opportunity to inspire our students toward great accomplishments.

The Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai is at a transformative moment in its history. Despite external economic pressures, we are one of the few medical schools expanding our programs in clinical care, research, and education. Our medical and graduate students are among the most talented in America. Our faculty are dedicated teachers and mentors, outstanding scientists, and world-class physicians.

Mount Sinai is defined by a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. For example, we recently created a Center for Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship whose mission is to ultimately advance the invention and development of new biomedical technologies.

This Center will establish the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai as a leader in innovation education, policy and research in order to shape the economic, legal, scientific, and public policy issues affecting biomedical innovation worldwide.

Mount Sinai Science is discovering improved therapeutics for serious medical diseases and novel diagnostic tests, leading to early diagnosis and preventive approaches to disease.

The Mount Sinai Faculty Practice, which will be organized into Clinical Institutes this year, is a major force for reform in healthcare delivery that place Patients First.

The Mount Sinai approach to Medical and Graduate Education is renowned for its creativity and not being bound by tradition, when tradition impedes progress. Our new curriculum is a living document dictated by medical progress.

This fall, the Mount Sinai Health Care System will double in size through a merger with Continuum Health Partners. Beth Israel Hospital, Roosevelt Hospital, St. Luke's Hospital, the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary, and a large Ambulatory Care Network will be joining the Mount Sinai Healthcare System. Consequently, there will be a substantial increase in Medical School faculty, training opportunities for our medical students, enhancement of clinical and translational research, and innovation in healthcare delivery. We will be one of the largest healthcare systems in the nation associated with a single Medical School.

In this context, let us remind ourselves why we are here today. The quality of any great institution is dependent upon the quality of its students.

The Class of 2017 is one of the Best and Brightest first year medical student class in the nation. More than their high GPA, MCAT scores, and the quality of their undergraduate college, are their accomplishments in athletics, music, literature, service to their community, and commitment to discovery and leadership.

The Class of 2017 has the potential for greatness. However, as Winston Churchill said,

"The Price of Greatness is Responsibility"

Class of 2017, I challenge you to use your abilities not just be a participant, but to become the next generation of leaders in the Revolution that is taking place in Medicine TODAY.

Your medical school is at the forefront of this Revolution. Advances in the sequencing of the Human Genome and the identification of disease-related genes promise to lead to a truly personalized approach to medical care.

Progress in Experimental Therapeutics will lead to a new generation of more effective medicines to Prevent and Treat Human Disease. Digital Medicine will bring many aspects of patient care from the physician's office to the home. Novel methods are being developed to provide preventive care to large patient populations and to promote wellness, especially for the poor and the underserved.

It is a fact that, more than ever, great discoveries are achieved not by a single person, but by Great Groups.

Class of 2017, I want you to challenge us, to inspire us, to push the envelope, not as individuals, but as a Great Group, as a Team. Teach each other. Collaborate with each other. Support each other. No one of you can achieve as much as all of you.

Warren Bennis in his book, *Organizing Genius: The Secrets of Creative Collaboration* wrote,

"Great Groups don't know what's supposed to be impossible. That gives them the ability to do the impossible."

Class of 2017 – Help us achieve the Impossible!

"At the heart of every Great Group is a shared dream. All Great Groups believe that they are on a mission, that they could change the world, make a dent in the universe. They are obsessed with their work. It becomes not a job but a fervent quest."

We all need to take what Steve Jobs said to heart

"Don't be trapped by dogma – which is living with the results of other people's thinking. Don't let the noise of others' opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition."

Finally, let the words of George Bernard Shaw, often paraphrased by Robert Kennedy, ring in your ears.

"There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not."

So, Class of 2017

Be Dreamers, So that the Dreams of your patients and others come true.

Thank you!