

REMARKS FROM DEAN MARK RICHARDSON
2010 OHSU School of Medicine Hooding Ceremony
Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
June 1, 2010

Thank you for the kind introduction.

Congratulations! What a wonderful day.

To our guests – family, friends and colleagues – welcome.

All of you have played an important role in helping our graduates arrive at this moment. I know they are grateful for your support and guidance.

Today, we are here to honor the achievements of the School of Medicine Class of 2010.

For us, this tradition dates back to 1887 when what would become the OHSU School of Medicine was first established.

Back then, our school was located in a small former grocery store in NW Portland – a rickety building long since torn down.

Our entering class was 15 students.

And 12 of them were on the medical school's football team.

Our circumstances have changed a lot over the past 123 years.

- For one thing, we are in a new location with a lot more buildings – some of them still rickety, but most of them quite nice.
- We have built a scientific and clinical enterprise recognized throughout the world for excellence.
- We have many more graduates in more disciplines than ever – 330 graduates here today will receive MDs, doctorates, master's degrees, and graduate certificates.
- We no longer have a football team.



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While our circumstances have changed, the reason we are all here remains the same.

We have chosen this profession, or perhaps it has chosen us, because we want to contribute to a better, healthier world.

Today's ceremony honors that dedication to the goal of improving human health.

But without a doubt, you are entering your chosen profession at an exceptional time in which the opportunities – and the challenges – are unlike any faced previously, certainly not in my lifetime.

As we grapple with the consequences of financial and social upheavals around the globe, the vulnerability of how we fund social goods right here in our state and across this country – like health care, education, research, social services – has been exposed in a very harsh light.

We know that fundamental change is inevitable if we want to solve all these problems and to create a better world.

With so many unknowns on the horizon, it may feel a little overwhelming as you embark on your new profession.

But with change comes opportunity – and an ability to make even a greater impact in the coming years.

Leaders at all levels of medicine and science are now working with renewed vigor to find innovative ways to best support clinicians, scientists and patients, by re-imagining the future of health and health care delivery.

Here are a few examples of what I am talking about:

When you entered your degree program, telemedicine was in its infancy – now virtual visits are common in some rural areas and that field is growing rapidly.

Imagine a world in which care can be delivered to the most remote areas of our globe. It's coming and you will be part of it.

When you entered your degree program, Facebook, twitter and other novel social media tools that link us quickly to new information and new people had not yet permeated our world.

Imagine a world in which cutting edge research “goes viral” and allows us to innovate instantly. These vehicles will also be used more and more to form support groups for chronic diseases. You will be part of that.



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During your degree program, a health care reform law was passed. While that was a contentious process, it's a good start.

Imagine a world in which barriers to health are removed. All of you have a part to play in that. More and more, scientists and health care professionals – just like you – have helped us understand that education, environmental toxins, genetics, economics, and lifestyle choices all play inter-related roles in human health.

Imagine a world in which teamwork across these disciplines means that progress in one area results in progress in all.

I speak to you today at an exciting time in history.

The future before you was unimaginable from the perspective of our first students from 1887 – or frankly, even to our students from just a decade or two ago.

But while the circumstances are different, the reasons you have entered this profession remain the same – across time – across the past 123 years and into the future.

You should never lose sight of the commitment, drive and desire to contribute to a better, healthier world that has brought you to this day.

In closing, I paraphrase from Dr. Aldebert Bettman, a long-time faculty member, as he addressed a group of OHSU students and alumni in 1918:

This medical school is large in the lofty purpose of its existence and in the product of its work. And nowhere is it more true than in medicine that we exist not for the benefit of the favored few, but for the benefit for all of humanity.

We will be watching you with pride. Congratulations class of 2010!



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