On Oct. 1, 2016, the Geisel School of Medicine’s Class of 2020 joined faculty, friends, and family for the school’s annual White Coat ceremony at Dartmouth’s Rollins Chapel, where they received encouragement and advice in addition to their new white coats.

Geisel’s Interim Dean Duane Compton spoke of the important symbolism of the white coat but told the students the power of the white coat lies in how they act and behave while wearing it. “So, as you don this white coat today, and as you wear it each day after today, be aware of your surroundings and be mindful of how your actions will impact on those around you. You have immense power to make a positive impact on the lives of other people. So act carefully, act thoughtfully, act responsibly, and act selflessly. In doing so, you will make an immense impact on those around you.”

Alumni speaker Bonnie Henderson, MD, (DC’89, Med’93), also noted the students were joining an important community. “You do not wear this coat alone,” said Henderson. “You actually share similar challenges with colleagues all over the world. This white coat doesn’t know any religious, ethnic, or cultural boundaries. And by wearing it, you instantly enter into this fraternity bonded by a shared mission of healing humanity.”

The Class of 2020 is Geisel’s 220th MD class since its founding in 1797. The 92 students in the class, including 90 MD and two MD-PhD students, represent a small percentage of the nearly 6,700 who applied to Geisel via the American Medical College Application Service. The new class hails from 24 states and 53 undergraduate institutions, with representatives of every Ivy League school, including 14 Dartmouth alumni.