

Derik Hertel

Dean Compton welcomes students to the profession of medicine at the annual White Coat ceremony in Spaulding Auditorium.



GEISEL WELCOMES CLASS OF '21

THE 92 MEMBERS OF THE GEISEL SCHOOL OF MEDICINE CLASS OF '21 ended their first full week of classes on a high note and took an important and symbolic first step in their medical careers. On August 26, 2017, the first-year medical students gathered with faculty, family, and friends for the school's annual White Coat ceremony and donned the symbol of their new profession.

"At Orientation a couple weeks ago, I welcomed you to the medical profession," said Geisel Dean Duane Compton, PhD. "Today, we formalize that step as we bestow on you one of the most profound symbols of the profession—the white coat.

"The power of the white coat lies equally in how you act and behave while you wear it as it does in how others view you as you wear it," he continued. "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."

One of the traditions at Geisel's White Coat ceremony is for the second-year medical students to send a representative to welcome and share advice with the newest class. This year, Trenika Williams '20 told the new medical students to make the most of the experiences and lessons available to them outside of the class room. She also asked them to reflect on

why they chose a career in medicine and use the answer to fuel their journey to becoming a physician. "So, as you don this white coat, remember that it is an outward symbol of not just the role you'll be playing in the profession but of the flame steadily growing within you. Your goal now is to nurture and stoke that

flame with the kindling and fuel of experiences that will turn it into a raging fire."

In addition to words of welcome and wisdom from Geisel faculty and fellow students, as they received their white coats, students also found notes from Geisel alumni welcoming them to the profession of medicine tucked into the coat pockets.

The alumni speaker was Kathryn B. Kirkland MED '86, a professor of medicine at Geisel and the Dorothy and John J. Byrne, Jr., Distinguished Chair in Palliative Medicine. Citing beauty in the cycles of shoreline erosion and regrowth as a metaphor for one's changing emotions and resilience, Kirkland encouraged the Class of '21 to embrace and trust the emotional changes they will experience in their medical careers, and to be aware of and intentional with managing their own emotional responses in order to give full attention to the emotional needs of their patients.

The Class of 2021 is Geisel's 221st 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 more than 6,700 who applied to Geisel via the American Medical College Application Service.

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