2 May 2017

Dear Classes of Medicine & Dentistry 2021

On behalf of all of my colleagues in the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, let me be amongst the first to welcome you to this great school and all that it has to offer!

It is one of the great pleasures as a Dean to welcome all of you to Schulich as you begin a truly exhilarating experience in one of the great professions. You are about to begin an experience rich with new friends, new ideals and new experiences. Most importantly, when you leave here, you will be physicians and dentists. Each of you will be members of one of the most noble and rewarding of all careers.

You are entering this stage of your professional career at a time of great change in not only how we deliver care to our society, but how we train you to do so. We are being challenged to think of our patients in a holistic sense that encompases their health, the communities in which they reside and the larger picture of what we as Canadians value about our nation. As a School of Medicine & Dentistry, we believe strongly that as we graduate the next generation of health care professionals we must continue to expand the boundaries of treating the individual as a whole. And so it is as we evolve our School. Our task over the next 4 years is to instill in you the values and responsibilities of being a physician and a dentist, and to ensure that you understand the tremendous value that each of you brings to bear on the care of Canadians. Implicit in this is the belief that you will also be societal leaders in whose time we must meaningfully deal with the health inequities that plague not only our country, but many, many areas of the world.

As you discovered during your interview process, being a medical or dental student at Schulich is about far more than simply academic excellence. For while this is the core of everything that we do, beyond this you will find that your educational experience will enrich you as a person simply through the many activities that you will take on as students. You will find yourself supported by a faculty that not only marvels at the tremendous sense of social responsibility that our students embody, but who are also highly supportive of you in all aspects of your development. You will engage in a curriculum that will bring to you the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes necessary to be a capable and caring physician or dentist in a constantly evolving health care environment. You will be the generation who will be affected most directly by our aging population and the constraints of our health care resources. Learning to balance the objectives of compassion and health care delivery with social responsibility will be a difficult, but richly rewarding challenge – one which we will help you with during this phase of your career.

You are joining our School at a time of intense renewal including the development of sustainable relationships with academic partners across the globe. We are developing a rich assortment of educational experiences at the graduate level, many of which will be available to you either now, or in the
not too distant future. Many of you will be aware that we deliver medical education across two campuses as a single program. What you may not know however is that we also view all of Southwestern Ontario as the basis for our distributed educational programs. For those of you entering Dentistry, you will find yourselves in the midst of tremendous renewal of our Dental education program and our dental educators are on track to becoming one of the leading Dental Schools in North America. This lofty goal will ensure that you will be provided with a rich and diverse educational experience.

You will find medical and dental school to be challenging. Remember always that there are resources available to you at all times, either directly through the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry office, located on campus, or at our participating hospitals.

Your academic journey to becoming a physician or dentist begins with our orientation program. On the first day, we promise an informative and exciting day as you meet your classmates and find out what is in store for you over the course of the next four years. The highlight of this day, and indeed of your time with us, will be the White Coat Ceremony. We invite your parents, partners, and friends to celebrate this unique tradition with us, a tradition in which we formally welcome you to the beginning of your journey to becoming a physician or dentist. The White Coat Ceremony will be followed by a light luncheon. I look forward to meeting you and your loved ones on this special day.

On a personal note, there are few positions within academia that are as exciting as being a Dean of a Medical and Dental School. And I think none more exciting than being here at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. I find myself constantly in awe of the accomplishments of our students and of the deep sense of community that they engender. Our faculty has grown tremendously in the last several years, bringing incredibly bright young professors and some more seasoned individuals to join what is already one of Canada’s leading Schools. I know that you too will soon feel this great sense of pride.

Yours sincerely,

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