

Good afternoon. It is my privilege as the Stephen Scharf Dean of Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, to welcome you to our seventh commencement. I'd like to start by thanking DocApella, the OUWB medical student vocal performance group, for the beautiful rendition of the national anthem. Thank you to Dr. Sandra LaBlance for ensuring this performance was made possible with the assistance of the Oakland University School of Music, Theatre and Dance. To Cabar Feidh pipes and drums, we appreciate that you carried on the graduation tradition with us today by signaling the start of this important ceremony. To the class of 2021, welcome to this joyous occasion where we will celebrate your accomplishments and your bright future. Welcome to the family members and loved ones of our graduates. We are grateful for your endless support of our newest doctors. I thank the OUWB community for their tremendous encouragement of our graduates. From the day they arrived until now, the community of administrators, faculty, and staff have guided them on their medical journey. Everyday, I am grateful to be working with this talented team of mentors, leaders, and teachers. Whether these students were learning in person or remotely, this community was dedicated to preparing these graduates to be right here on their commencement day, the day we proudly call them doctor for the first time. At this point, I would like to welcome the special guests who will be participating in this afternoon ceremony. You will hear from Oakland University President Dr. Ora Hirsch Pescovitz, keynote speaker, humanitarian, and interfaith leader Najah Bazzy, the class of 2021 speaker Dr. Mustafa Polat, and OUWB alumni speaker, Dr. Aleah Thompson. Now, it is my privilege to introduce Oakland University President, Dr. Ora Hirsch Pescovitz.

Greetings, and congratulations graduates. Take a moment to cherish this day. Your hard work, sacrifice, and all those early morning rotations led you to this ceremony. You had some wonderful professors, some difficult patients, some challenging days, and perhaps you made a few mistakes. Maybe you had your doubts, and you might have even shed a few tears along the way. But you made it, and not only did you make it, you succeeded in navigating through a global pandemic, and along the way, you were among those front-line workers seeing up-close the formidable bond between a physician and a patient, and maybe you witnessed the fine line between life and death. This day symbolizes your individual achievement but as physicians who have answered a life's calling to heal the suffering, you might have mixed emotions considering the many people who suffered and died this past year because of COVID-19. Know this, the lessons of the past year will stay with you forever, and one of the most fundamental lessons is that change in medicine and change in life is constant. Yet there's another constant that comes from deep inside of you, and that is your constant passion to serve, your compassion for others, and your dedication to the principles and practice of medicine. Your challenge is to find the most effective approach and prescriptions that address the needs of today's patients. It's not just your patients who are counting on you, all of us are counting on you. You face a profound challenge but we know you're up to the task because you've demonstrated the strength, the dedication, the knowledge, and the resilience that are the essential features of what's required for a

physician to be successful. Go forth, be strong, confront problems as challenges, and challenges as opportunities, and know, that in our global village, your leadership and your character are needed now more than ever. We are so very proud of you, and may you remember your days here at Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine so fondly, and forever carry OUWB in your hearts. Congratulations graduates.

Today, it is my privilege and honor to introduce Najah Bazzy, an internationally known diversity specialist leader, a gifted clinical nurse, and an accomplished CEO. In 1996, she founded the non-profit agency from the back of her minivan that is now a 40 thousand square foot warehouse in Metro Detroit. I had the good fortune of spending a day with Najah at her organization, Zaman International. There, I saw people learning and working together for the betterment of others. It was bustling with activity. People were sewing clothes and furniture was being repaired for redistribution. Zaman International is a big support for marginalized women and children. It provides them more than clothing, food and furniture. It offers those women education and skills training so they can get back on their feet. The most enlightening part of my visit occurred when we witnessed a young woman come in off the street and simply ask Najah, "How can I help?" This is the spirit of Najah Bazzy, a CEO, yes, but a truly kind person who cares deeply about making a person's life better than it was the day before. Najah's incredible work has reached far beyond our state of Michigan. Zaman has funded overseas relief projects, bringing safe water and humanitarian relief to impoverished communities. She has educated international audiences about Islamic practices and beliefs through her books, documentaries, and talks, including a TEDx talk. In 2019, the Cable News Network, CNN recognized Najah for her helping to break the cycle of poverty. She is a CNN hero. Graduates, Najah has something in common with you. Not only do you share a commitment to serve as a source of information for local and global communities like you, she is also a recipient of a degree from Oakland University. Last July, she received an honorary doctoral degree from the president and provost of Oakland University. Congratulations again, Najah. Today I am very pleased to present your commencement keynote speaker,. Najah Bazzy.

Salaam, peace and blessings to each of you. It is amongst the greatest honors of my life to be speaking to you today, to receive an honorary degree in the humanities from Oakland University. I extend a grateful heart to President Pescovitz, Dean Mezwa, Provost Rios-Ellis and the committee for this tremendous honor. What makes this extra special for me is that it's happening with all of you. I understand a bit about what your loved ones and support systems are feeling today, just last week, we had the honor of watching our son Youssuf graduate medical school. We understand what it means to be that support system that is necessary to get you here today. Your success today it's not an isolated incident. It took much to birth you, raise and educate you, care for you through the many stages of life from a fetus to a physician. There's no way to describe in words what your families are feeling today, it's more than joy, more than a proud moment it's a feeling of fulfillment, gratitude, and hope

for your future. July 1st, it's around the corner and I hope that the nurses will be great mentors. By the way, it's not called residency for no good reason. It's called residency because it becomes your new home, your new bed, your new kitchen table, but it also becomes your new family. The family is now extended beyond your own to become the family of those who need you the most, those who rely upon your good judgment. Your very fine character, your communication skills, your ability to help move them from illness to wellness. For some of you in the ER, it's going to be trauma and drama, enter fix, leave, on to the next patient. For some of you, it's going to be labor and delivery, birth and new life. For others, it's the OR numbing the senses, opening our bodies to fix a bone, get blood to flow to a heart, or to remove a cancer. There are those of you who will practice medicine and see generations of families. There will be thousands of hellos and goodbyes, too many for you to ever count. There will be moments of code blues that will leave you dizzy, distraught, and heroic. These are the moments that make you a doctor. When you walk in to see your patient, remember, they're not called patients for no reason, they are also called patients because it truly requires patience to deal with illness and loss and grief. It requires patience to wait on lab results, CT scans, diagnosis, and treatment. Remember what you are and what you mean to those who need you. Remember who you are every time you knock on that door, remember to always knock with humility and enter with confidence. Remember to look into the eyes of your patients and see the person beyond the gown. Remember that each of us stands on the shoulders of those before us generations deep and that you will also be strong shoulders for those who will follow you. I've had the honor to lecture and teach physicians, make grand rounds, present medical ethics, discuss life and death, health and healing from the bad side to the CEO. Make no mistake, the way you communicate reflects your care and your knowledge. Never forget to ask a very simple question, one that will confuse your patient, but also give them hope and trust in you. Ask them to teach you something about them. They will look at you in your white coat stethoscope around your neck or perhaps in your pocket and they will see a position of power and wonder what in God's name could they teach you? Remember that they can teach you what's on the inside as you begin to examine the outside. Medicine is inside out, not outside in. Go be great contributors to our humanity and remain idealistic because it's healthier to be optimistic than to be jaded by the numerous factors that will affect the field of medicine. Remember where you started, think about where you stand today. Look forward to where you will be in for 4 , 5, 6 years of residency and fellowships. We look forward to your contribution to our common humanity. You are special because you help us live and millions of seconds of hope are tied to our humanity and are tied to you. Congratulations on your graduation, your future, and ours. I thank you so very much.

Good afternoon. My name is Mustafa. Addressing you today is one of the greatest honors I will have in my life. This will ultimately be the second most important speech that I have ever given. I really rocked that gymnasium full of fifth-graders back in '05. They didn't see it coming. In all seriousness, to be the class speaker for a group of incredible and brilliant

doctors is an indescribable feeling. To open the soul of the class of 2021 and reflect on this journey with all of you is a privilege I will never forget. This speech is for you, Baba. I'm just a vessel that connects your love to the world. Today is one of those unique days where you reminisce and reflect but also look forward to tomorrow. This speech is for the class of 2021, but I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the essential people who make OUWB function for us, the students. There is no OUWB without Katie Stotts, Toni LeGrande, Gabe Dumbrille, Fred Hayden, Fred Glendenning, and Dawn Gorris, to name just a few. May your hard work and contributions never go unnoticed. I send a heartfelt shout out on behalf of the class to the administration and the staff who welcomed us to OUWB with open arms and helped us to arrive at this day. Our class is forever in debt to you, literally, it's a lot of cash. All kidding aside, adjusting to this pandemic seemed like an impossible task, but here we are today celebrating commencement. Thank you. To the class of 2024, I hope our series of welcome videos made it easier to transition to med school. You are here for a reason and never forget that. Find your people, hold onto them and carry each other through to the next day. I always say I'm definitely not alone in this. First year was the most difficult, it gets better. To the class of 2023, you're in the midst of the most grueling study period of med school. Take a moment to reflect on your hard work and know that this period is just another obstacle on the road to becoming a physician. It gets better. To the class of 2022, I hope you feel our class support and guidance. I hope your big sib has helped you along the way. Our bond doesn't end here. Don't hesitate to reach out to us. Just don't get too overwhelmed when you realize you have to follow OUWB's greatest class yet. Class of 2021, PMH warriors, MHCB gladiators, PRISM superstars, it's been a wild ride. We've shared this collective struggle we call med school together forever. From the draining AFCP and BFCP exam marathon dates to the dedicated with an A for step 1 to step 2, CK and CS. Just kidding, and shelf exams, and through ERAS and interviews and match, we made it. We didn't just become doctors today, we became doctors during those late nights or early mornings in Hannah Hall when the formaldehyde would pierce through our olfactory bulbs. I think I can still smell it. Smells like barely passing. We became doctors during those countless days at Kresge, At O'Dowd at Starbucks, at Panera, in your bedroom falling asleep to the sweet sound of that angel, Dr. Sitar. We've become doctors in the wards of Beaumont bombing our first presentation and working ourselves up to be extremely average by our sub-internship. In the delivery room, catching that first baby, but struggling through our first lap repair. To OR getting that first and fiftieth retraction in, I'm looking at you, Marcel, my retraction king. These are the moments that brought us here today. We had some good times together. Sunday night before orientation week at billiards when we were all trying way too hard to be cool and make a first impression. [LAUGHTER] Oh, was that just me? I was ready to meet some pretty amazing people and I sure did. You all exceeded my expectations. From the legendary OUWB invasions on the dance floors at billiards, I'm looking at you Lexie. For the karaoke nights at Duffy's to the courts and fields of rec sports, to singing around a campfire, to shaving our heads for childhood cancer, and peer pressure. To unforgettable memories from med ball, the roast, and all the birthdays. Second look, white coat blackout, and post-exam

celebrations along the way. Think about the times we've served our community volunteering at Gary Bernstein, Hope, Score for Success, Hispanic Outreach, Street Medicine, and a health fair at Chandler Park. All the little and all the big things that we did to help make our tiny bubble a better place for all. Be proud of your journey, even your struggle. Be proud of every experience that's brought you to this day. Even the bad ones, you survived it. Don't forget what and who made you who you are today. Don't forget the reason you decided to go on this demanding path and the reason you haven't given up. Let that drive you through residency, let that drive you through your long career as a healer, a servant, and a scholar. To get to where we are, we had to stand on the shoulders of giants. These are the people who made today possible for us. Think about those people. Tell them how much you love and appreciate them, and think about how you will carry their legacy and make them proud as you move on to the next stage of life. My late father, my angel mother, Gusida, my two big brothers, Abbas and Hassanabi, and my sisters Rhonda and Nirdan. They definitely didn't skip shoulder day. Thank you. In the last 14 months, we've seen how this world can be cruel and unjust. We've all been impacted by this pandemic in some way. One of my late father's greatest qualities was to search for the light within all of the darkness. Even in his worst days, he still found moments of humor and lightheartedness. He is still the beam of light I didn't know I needed. It's up to us to find that light within the darkness and keep pushing. In these dark times we've seen some of the best this world has to offer from the health care workers on the front lines who served without adequate protection. To the scientists developing diagnostic tests, therapies, and prevention. To members of communities who rose up and support their neighbors. I have a few last words for the class of 2021. We shared laughter, tears, tragedy, and now we share triumph. We added new members to our families and suffered loss and unforgettable pain. Despite this, we became doctors together. No one can ever take this experience away from us. That's the beauty of this day. In these final moments of graduation, we are together in person or virtually, we are one. We will go our separate ways, each carving out a unique path. As we set forth on this new journey, I want to share one last memory of my late father. As I would leave his house and head back to my apartment, he would make me wait before driving off. He'd grab a glass or bowl of water and throw the water high into the air behind me as I drove off. Picture water falling gracefully from the sky with the sun glistening through. It's an old ritual to wish someone good luck and smooth travels along their journey. He did it every single time. Every weekend that I visited there in all four years of medical school. As I left his burial site in Iraq, I realized that as now my turn to carry on his tradition. From the bottom of my heart, I wish you all the best. May all of our journeys flow as smoothly as that water falling in the air from classmates to now family. Thank you for this opportunity and congratulations doctors.

Good afternoon, everyone. Congratulations to all of you graduating doctors. You should all be so incredibly proud of yourselves. In just a few short months, you will start your intern year, notoriously deemed one of the toughest years of training. I want to be the first to reassure you that you are going to do just fine. As my intern year comes to a close, thank

God, I want to give you guys some guidance: First, be prepared to make mistakes. You guys are going to make many. During medical school at OUWB, you're told that it's okay to make mistakes, you're learning. You should know that the same goes for the rest of your career. You will be continuously making mistakes but also learning from them. Even though we say that these mistakes are okay, it doesn't make them hurt your ego any less, it doesn't make you ruminate any less, and it doesn't make you feel better about potentially putting a patient at risk. The first day you make a mistake, whether it's unimportant or critical, I want you to remember that you must learn to forgive yourself. Second, you are human and your reactions are human. Fatigue, tears, hunger, and anger, they're all perfectly normal. Prioritize your needs, try to get as much sleep as you possibly can, know that unless it's a code, nothing is more important than eating your lunch, and remember that you should be going to the bathroom during your 12-hour day. Our blood sugar tanks and our muscles fatigue and our ever-changing sleep schedule heightens those reactions. I want you to remember to listen to your body when it's telling you to take a break and don't be ashamed for doing that. Third, know that being this close to death and dying is truly very humbling and very painful. For anyone that's going to be taking care of children, these deaths are particularly unsettling. Reach out for help from your peers because it's okay to grieve for your patients. Learn how to give a proper talk about code status and end-of-life care because it's a huge service to your patients. Lastly, remember that this year is temporary and the time truly does go quickly. Try your best to have fun both inside and outside work. Soak in the learning, catch babies, do procedures, and bond with your clinic patients. Don't forget about your friends and family, life doesn't stop while you're in residency. Grow your family, whether that's adding dogs, babies, or just houseplants. Don't put life on hold. To finish it off, I just want to reiterate how proud I am of all of you, including the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd-year medical students. Wherever you're heading off to, they are lucky to have you. Congratulations.

I'm extremely proud to be sharing this address with all of you on this very special occasion. When Oakland University, William Beaumont School of Medicine was founded in 2008, it changed medical education with its kindness curriculum. Since 2015, our alumni have placed in some of the most prominent residency programs across the country. They are on accolades and hold leadership positions as chief residents, fellows, and researchers. In recent years, we have welcomed back chartered class members as professors and mentors. Keep that in mind, class of 2021. Now, with your residencies in place, it's your turn to show the world what OUWB physicians are made of. But before you do, let's enjoy our time together on this commencement day. You came to our campus four years ago because we wanted you here. You had the attributes and potential to begin your medical school journey with us. Your goal of becoming highly skilled compassionate physicians was just beginning. Today, you can say goal accomplished. You have achieved something incredible, medical school training at OUWB. When I read your class oath, I knew this was going to be the focus of my address. It's a profound message deserving of the spotlight. Your oath is beautifully written, complex, and sincere. Whether you realize it or not, the lessons you learned in the classroom and in

life during your time with us are captured in 16 thoughtfully worded sentences. I'm going to share some key points that resonated with me. From the beginning, the use of the word we affirms the solidarity with your colleagues and all who recite the oath with you, it unites health care professionals in holding the same high standards and humanistic values. Your oath also assures us that your OUWB values will continue to guide you throughout your career. Unlike any other class, your message reflects the unique experience of learning through a global pandemic. You have woven current events as well as health care disparities and bias into the message to solidify your pledge to these diverse populations, vowing to provide them with compassionate care. You have written a statement about courage. No other class has used this word. I am sure that this line stems from your experience as a front-line provider. It took a whole lot of courage and perseverance, but I truly believe that this year of unprecedented circumstances will serve you well as you enter the next chapter of your life. My last remark about the oath commends your commitment to being responsible stewards of the profession, and I quote, "We will strive to educate, assist, and uplift future generations of health care practitioners regardless of their origins so that we may see diversity flourish and innovation and excellence in abundance." Class of 2021, In a few minutes, I will probably recite this impressive pledge with you. But for now, savor the moment of graduation. Know that the world is ready and waiting for you and your talents; it needs physicians like you who will follow their passion and meet challenges with strength and kindness. Believe in yourself, believe in your OUWB training and I promise you a long and fulfilling career. Congratulations. We can't wait to see how your expertise and your compassion will change the world for the better.

Class of 2021, I am humbled to be here with you today to celebrate all that you have become. In my time with you, I have witnessed the tenacity of your class as you held on tightly during this bumpy ride, ending your training to be a physician during an international pandemic that has gripped our world for well over a year. As a society, we have witnessed social unrest that has tested our sense of who we are and we mourn the loss of those we have loved. Yet you are here before us, ready to step out into your careers as young physicians, eager to begin your lives as caring practitioners who will no doubt change the world. We are proud of you and your accomplishments. Remember all you have achieved here with us and take it with you as you move throughout your lives. Do not forget the lessons taught to you by your educators and your patients. We are counting on you to change the world. Class of 2021, you have the spirit, you have the drive to make the difference for others. As you take on the weight of caring for others as delicate beings, remember to find lightness in your days, seek joy and laughter, take time to love and cherish those around you with goodness in your heart. We wish you well in your journey through this world. In addition to the hood that each graduate is about to receive, you will notice some of them are wearing honor cords. The graduates wearing the green and white cords have been honored with induction into the Alpha Omega Alpha on our medical society. The AOA recognizes exemplary leadership, character, community, service, and professionalism demonstrated by individuals who are also

in the top 25 percent of their class academically. The graduates who are wearing gold cords were nominated by their peers for induction into the Gold Humanism Honor Society. It recognizes those who are considered exemplars of compassionate patient care. They are role models, mentors, and leaders in the practice of humanism in medicine. Although we are unable to call our students to the stage for the ceremonial hooding, we ask that all students step outside of their cars with their family, friends, and loved ones to be hooded.

President Pescovitz, on behalf of the faculty of Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, I would like to present to you the candidates for the degree of Doctor of Medicine. President Pescovitz.

Thank you, Dean Mezwa. Upon the nomination of the faculty of Oakland University and by the authority of the State of Michigan, vested in the Board of Trustees and delegated to me, I hereby confer upon you the degree Doctor of Medicine.

Graduates stand proudly and with gratitude in front of those who love you as the medical degree hood is placed over your head and onto your shoulders as you will now carry with you the name of doctor.

[MUSIC]

Graduates, please remain standing as you join Dean Mezwa who will lead your class in the reading of the oath.

I invite the members of the class of 2021 to remain standing outside your vehicle to recite your oath, and I invite every physician to join with our new colleagues in our commitment to medicine. You may exit your vehicles if you like. Today, our lives as physicians begin. On this day, we vow, first and foremost, we promise to do no harm and to maintain the utmost respect for life and death. We pledge ourselves to a life of healing and integrity; we will not forsake humility and service for the pursuit of power and influence. We will respect and provide care to all patients regardless of age, gender identity, disability, religious belief, ethnic origin, race, nationality, political affiliation, sexual orientation, social standing, or any other factor. We promise to evaluate disease processes holistically; addressing physical, psychosocial, environmental, and economic influences in order to better serve our patients. We will protect our patients' confidentiality, maintain their dignity, and respect their autonomy. We will serve as a source of courage and information for our local and global community as we face worldwide emergencies, pandemics, or crises. We will use our station, not only to advocate for our individual patients, but to address health disparities and to affirm healthcare as a human right for all members of society. We will continuously work to identify and challenge our biases so that we may provide compassionate patient care to diverse populations. We will prioritize caring for ourselves so that we may remain well in

our journey to serve others. We commit to being lifelong learners in the endeavor to become masters of our craft. We will conscientiously and judiciously seek medical resources, evidence-based research, and technology to provide the best care to our patients. We will take ownership for our mistakes and recognize our own limitations. We will revere and support our colleagues while holding them accountable to their honorable commitments. We will admire the talents and contributions of all members of the healthcare team. We will strive to educate, assist, and uplift future generations of healthcare practitioners, regardless of their origins so that we may see diversity flourish and innovation and excellence in abundance. We will dignify our patients by listening to and honoring their stories, reserving judgment, and striving to be a source of comfort in difficult times. We make these lifelong promises gratefully of our own freewill and upon our honor. Graduates, you have officially received your degrees as MDs and you have made a public declaration to the practice of medicine. At this time, I invite you, our graduate doctors an opportunity to look around the parking lot to extend appreciation to all of those who supported you during your academic journey. I invite everyone to join in congratulating the OUWB class of 2021 by honking your car horns. I now declare the commencement ceremony for the class of 2021 complete. Please get back inside your vehicles where you will hear instructions from Dr. LaBlance on how to navigate to the stage where you will receive your diploma.

As a reminder, at this time, our class of 2021 commencement ceremony has ended. Cars will be dismissed by rows and graduates will now drive to the stage of the opposite end of the lot to receive their diploma cover, walk across the commencement stage for a professional photo, and then return to their cars to exit the Oakland University campus. Please be safe and aware of our graduates and families as you celebrate on campus. We wish you a hearty congratulations and a fond farewell.