

Class of 2020 Graduation celebration

24th February 2022

Graduate Speaker Dr Jihee Youn

Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, family, friends and fellow graduates.

I am so happy to see you all, and very honoured to stand here today to speak and to congratulate you on completing your degrees - under the strangest of circumstances.

It is never too late to have the opportunity to celebrate a graduation together in this way, and I hope today will allow us to rekindle special memories. In the audience, I have many esteemed colleagues from Medicine, many of whom I have formed a lifetime worth of memories with.

I learned that sometimes you can't appreciate the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory. And I have fond memories of my time at Liverpool School of Medicine. These fond memories are because we were able to bond with colleagues and come together as a team. And I realised during my first year as a doctor that teamwork really does make the dream work.

I would like to thank everyone at the School of Medicine, and the clinical teams across Trusts who helped prepare us for what we were about to face in the best way possible – even if that was to stretch us in ways we could never have imagined.

Back in 2020, when I was putting together a few words for our graduation, I actually prepared this sentence - "My dear terrified graduates, you are about to enter the most uncertain however most thrilling period of your lives." Looking back, I couldn't have predicted it any better!

Most new graduates are nervous on the first day of work, not knowing who their colleagues will be or how the system works. And of course we had the added challenge of doing all of this in the face of a pandemic of unknown proportions and unforeseen circumstances.

I am so proud that not only did we find our way through those first nervous days as junior doctors, rocking up in our new scrubs. But that we were also on the frontline of the pandemic as student doctors, before a vaccine was developed, volunteering during the first lockdown.

Being on the frontline helping patients and wider communities has brought great satisfaction and has made us the people we are today. We were thrown in at the deep end but are all the better for it. I am certainly a more resilient, empathetic and confident doctor.

And I realised why I wanted to go into medicine is to help people.



Whether you are celebrating becoming a doctor today, or a Physician associate, or earning your Masters or PhD, I feel these past two years have epitomized why we have chosen a career in medicine.

Whilst I was preparing for this speech, I came across this lovely quote by the late actor Chadwick Boseman who said, “Whatever you choose for a career path, remember the struggles along the way are only meant to shape you for your purpose.”

One final thing – be bold, be courageous, be your best. Jihee signing out!