

ALEX

And I am proud to stand amongst all of you not for joining the system, but for overcoming it. For making something of the hope, promise, and potential that each of you embodies in the eyes of your families, loved ones and professors. Let us take a moment to remember all those who believed in us along the way; may they always know even if they can't be here to celebrate with us today that we hold a special place for them in our hearts.

Pause

Today we come together not only to celebrate graduation, but to celebrate the strength of character and determination possessed by each of you that successfully lead you through the gauntlet of PA school. Your drive to succeed and persevere in the face of daunting volumes of material and limited time, all while juggling responsibilities at home represents a kind of academic courage not always acknowledged or truly understood outside of our PA family. It is one of life's paradoxes, but the toughest times are the best bonding times; a rough time today may be remembered as the best of times ten years from now, especially if weathered in good company. May the memories made these two years persist and our friendships last even longer.

Class of 2011, you are now well versed in the intimate details of one of most complex biological systems in existence. United by this common knowledge and humbled by the privileges and responsibilities conferred upon us in this longstanding medical tradition, I am honored to join you in

casting off the bonds of our short coats and donning the long coat. May we practice together for years to come.