

FINAL PROJECTS ART OF DOCTORING 2015-2016

Dear --, --, and --, thanks so much for your take on the past four years. You highlighted many of the same moments as other presentations – the white coat ceremony and anatomy lab in first year; the fire hose of facts in second year; the urge to help yet having an ill-defined role in third year (plus what feels like terminal exhaustion); and the exciting journey that lies ahead – while bringing a unique set of insights to each point. --, you spoke honestly about just how hard a path medicine can be; --, you reminded us to reflect on the “wonder and privilege” of the profession; and --, you hoped that at this point, you and your classmates are “stronger and more humble; listening more and talking less.” You each in your own way showed a critical facet of clinical medicine: it is a hard, demanding pursuit that is also a wonder and a privilege and that requires courage, humility, and the capacity for stillness as well as action. Thank you for providing such a hopeful note to end on. Best, Dr. Shapiro

Dear --, --, --, and --, Wow, you really went for it! Congratulations on a terrific presentation. Fantastically creative and funny. --, the accordion accompaniment was wonderful, and the musical themes you chose were great, so appropriate to supporting the narrated text! --, “4 score and 7 years ago” perfectly mirrored the solemnity of the momentous point on which you are all poised and also skewered it hilariously. --, you made good-humored fun of the sexism that still exists in the medical profession, while not letting us forget it. 00, your portentous, elevated talk of rebirth and transformation was at once incredibly amusing and surprisingly poignant. The final rap leading you all into the future – and especially the teacher par excellence Dr. X – was also a joy to behold.

The chorus of the song you all performed I found particularly meaningful – “just want to get by.” Although I suppose it could be interpreted as “settling” on survival, to me it represented a mature relinquishing of that early-conditioned need to always be number one, to pursue perfection. That mentality will destroy you in residency, whereas learning to be comfortable with sometimes being “good enough” is an important residency (and life) skill.

I thoroughly enjoyed the creativity and fundamental joie de vivre of your presentation. Carry that spirit forward! Best, Dr. Shapiro

Hey Crafts Ladies, loved the way you worked with the short white coat! Very thought-provoking and creative. The white coat is such a powerful symbol, and I know that by the end of four years of medical school, although you all initially treated it with reverence, many students can’t wait to cast it aside for the longer version. So your choice of the “frame” for your collage was inspired. By drawing on it, pasting words and images on it, adding fringes you took back possession of the coat. Instead of it defining you, you defined it, and I really, really liked that. Your project showed that symbols are not fixed but mutable. They carry meaning of their own, both good and bad, but you can also invest them

with meaning, and turn them to your own purposes. I was struck by the way you used “front” and “back” of the coat and the more fluid “fringes” to represent what you wanted to keep, leave behind, and move forward. Here again the visual was very effective, much more so than an analytical verbal presentation.

Finally, your project taught a lot of valuable lessons about teamwork. As I mentioned in class, I so appreciated the image -- shared about the “team” gathered on the roof, brainstorming ideas and just enjoying each other’s company. This was almost a throw-away comment, yet to me it embodied such a worthwhile awareness – that *how* we work with each other (and how we treat each other) is as important as that we accomplish our assigned task successfully. This is an insight that will be essential to your flourishing in residency. As well, I was happy to hear --’s point that the group disagreed at times on what to include and how to include it. This provided great insight into how teams should ideally work – not always completely in sync but always respectful and even relishing other points of view.

Including the whoopee cushion had nothing to do with teamwork but was nevertheless a great touch – it reminded us we should always be able to laugh at ourselves 😊.

All in all, this was really a clever project that also made everyone think. I enjoyed every aspect of it!
Dr. Shapiro

Dear --, --, --, --, and --, thanks so much for kicking off the student presentations yesterday. I loved both the visual of the poster (--, you do have cool handwriting) as well as its interactive aspect – true, the five of you shared personal perspectives on the past 4 years, but those years would not be complete without the participation of everyone in the room (and in your class). So engaging your classmates to “fill the anteater” with a word or comment was a really meaningful approach.

--, I appreciated the point you made about shifting perspectives. Although we may feel passionately about issues in the moment (and indeed it is good to do so), it is wise counsel to remember other points of view, and even recognize that we ourselves may see things differently in the future. --, thanks for making some “classic” points about just how hard second year is, yet how it taught you how to study and how to balance school and life. --, your frame of third years as a series of firsts (and in some cases, “lasts”) I thought was a good insight. I also liked your comment that although you saw your classmates less, when you did connect you appreciated them more. --, that was an amazing story about Dr. X and your grandpa. Although there are over 900,000 practicing physicians in the U.S., it reminded me that as a physician you belong to relatively small and exclusive community; and that the bonds you develop through training and practice never fade. Esther, I felt a certain poignancy in your summing up – you are all together again, but on the other side of an incredible and unique experience, and you are all changed (hopefully for the better!).

As we discussed, in the end, listening to your stories, it is always about the relationships we forge, whether with classmates, colleagues, patients, friends, and family. I know you will nurture and treasure all those you have gathered and all the ones that await you in the future. Best, Dr. Shapiro