Dear Class of 2023,

On behalf of the entire student body, I congratulate each and every one of you on your acceptance to Rowan University School of Osteopathic Medicine! We all graciously welcome you into the RowanSOM family.

I remember my first day of orientation filled with a great deal of emotions. I was happy, since the day we all had worked so long and hard for had arrived, excited, to meet my fellow peers, nervous to make a good first impression and fearful of what the next four years would bring. Therefore, this week during orientation I urge you to focus on the joyful and happy moments with your peers and take a brief pause to be thankful for where you and your families' sacrifices have led you. Let the fears flow past you and celebrate the success you have achieved with the peers who understand every sacrifice you made to be here, as they have made it themselves as well. Pat yourself on the back and congratulate yourself.

With that said, I won’t deny that the coming years of medical school are daunting and they are not without their challenges. You will be challenged in ways you never thought possible, however, as you face these challenges you will grow and develop not only professionally, but individually into the best version of yourself. I would also like to remind you that you are not facing these challenges alone. You are entering medical school with some amazing classmates, who will one day become some of your best friends. These peers around you will become your support system to help you with the highs and lows of not only medical school, but of many different aspects of your life. On top of that, you have many upperclassmen to rely on and seek mentorship from. They will be a source of information and advice, but also be a place of calm in the storm that medical school can sometimes become.

Not only do you have your classmates and upperclassmen for support and guidance, but you have deans, administration and faculty to help ease your fears. What I would like you to know is not one student at RowanSOM is alone, we all are here to support you, be an open ear for you, lift you up when you are down, celebrate your successes and help you grow into the physician you will one day become. That is the most unique aspect of RowanSOM- you are not only joining a medical school, but a family who is here to support you through your journey.

Now medical school is not all about studying and exams- we’d like you to continue developing your hobbies and cultivating your skills. We have clubs from almost every specialty imaginable and we have national organizations such as SOMA for you to join. The Student Government Association or your elected leaders is another great opportunity for students to get involved. The Student Council serves as a link between the students and Administration and STUCO, a school wide- executive board, that supports students’ endeavors, cultivates leadership skills and better the global community through service. Your class will have the opportunity to elect your own Class Council, comprising of: President, Vice President, Curriculum Representative, Student Affairs Representative, PBL Representative and two Honor Code Representatives.

As a family member of the RowanSOM community, I urge you all to attend our STUCO meetings held the second Monday of every month, specific dates will be emailed at the beginning of the semester or found on our website. A portion of the STUCO meetings are called Open Mic, in which any student of RowanSOM may bring a topic to discuss with STUCO or administration in order for us to help in any way we can. Please reach out to the Class Councils and the Executive Board Members at any time with questions or concerns.

I again extend my warmest congratulations and welcome you to the RowanSOM family. I am very excited to meet you all on August 18th at your White Coat Ceremony. If you have any questions in the meantime please feel free to email me at: patelj69@rowan.edu.

Juhee Patel

President, RowanSOM Student Council