

Four years ago, almost to the day, on the corner of Commonwealth Ave and Babcock Street, I received my acceptance letter from the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry. That letter changed my life. I'd made the necessary sacrifices to get to this point: I left my starting position on the Williams College football team my senior year to finish my pre-med requirements, I studied hard for the MCAT, and I gained enough experience to convince, not only an admissions committee, but most importantly, myself, that medicine would be my life's work.

Shortly after receiving my admissions letters, I began perusing the UR website to explore the possibilities of a joint MD/MBA program. My liberal arts background and my prior work at a hospital outside of Cincinnati, OH, left me with a curiosity that I knew I wouldn't be able to satiate with a standard medical education. My interest in healthcare began in 2009 as I watched the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare) pass through Congress while I was attending Williams. I decided that I wanted to be involved in healthcare in some capacity but didn't know exactly how at the time. I anticipated that there would be a lot of work that would need to be done to ensure a successful implementation. And boy, was I right.

I thought about law school, public health school, medical school, or business school at that time. My mom told me to slow down, or I'd be 50 years old by the time I finished school, pursuing all those degrees.

Ultimately, I chose medicine because there is no other profession like it. The act of caring for another human being at their most vulnerable moments is a precious privilege that I hope to never take for granted. But before I entered medical school, I spent one year at the Simon Business School gaining the economic tools and the structure to understand the complexity of healthcare. The two most important take-aways from my Simon education are ubiquitous, applying to any profession: 1) I gained a problem solving framework that I continue to use to this day, and 2) I sharpened my skills in effective communication, while simultaneously knowing there is always room for growth.

At the University of Rochester, we encounter the Latin word for the colloquial "room for growth:" *Meliora*. It is often translated as "ever better" or "always better", but I personally prefer the translation of "for the pursuit of the better." My personal pursuit for the better is to make sure that we continue to close the health disparity gap that exists in this country. I believe that healthcare is a basic human right regardless of one's circumstance. The expansion of insurance to underserved populations via the Affordable Care Act was a valiant first step, but we have a lot more to accomplish.

I am thankful that the University of Rochester is enabling me to pursue my purpose driven life. Some of you might be familiar with the financial burdens of medical school. I am fortunate to be a recipient of Dr. Marvin J. Hoffman Medical scholarship. I am proud of the relationship that I have been able to build with Dr. Hoffman and his late wife. He's become a mentor. He is a living legend in Rochester and it is a pleasure getting to know him on a personal level. I am not sure if this donor-recipient relationship is common, but it is certainly a special one for me.

Thank you for supporting students and the future leaders of this country. This world will be "ever better" because of your kindness and generosity.