

15 October 2019

Dear Dr. Hiranya A. Rajasinghe,

My name is Raluca Gosman, and I recently matriculated at Duke University School of Medicine. I grew up in Oregon, so being on the East Coast and in the south has been a new experience for me so far. Coming from so far away, I truly appreciate all the support Duke has been able to provide for me financially, including the Rajasinghe Vascular Research scholarship provided so generously by you. I am thankful for your support and willingness to invest in future doctors. I can see how special of a place Duke is and am absolutely committed to taking full advantage of being here.

I was born in Romania and moved to the US with my parents when I was a baby. I grew up navigating a cultural duality that is still very much part of my identity. In fact, in April 2020 my great-grandmother in Romania is turning 100 years old, and my whole family has plans to go visit her and celebrate her incredible life. Most recently, I spent the last year in between college and medical school assistant-teaching English in France. Being able to engage with different communities, languages, cultures, and ways of thinking is really important to me—I hope to find a way to incorporate that into my career as a physician.

After moving around a bit as my dad finished up his own medical training about twenty years ago, my family settled in rural southern Oregon, where I grew up. I went on to college at the University of Portland in Oregon, so I have cultivated an immense love and appreciation for the Pacific Northwest. This region is where I am most comfortable and where I hope to return one day. But I am a committed and competitive student, and for my training years I want get the best education I can, thus I arrived here at Duke. I miss home terribly sometimes, but every day I am impressed by and grateful for my experience at Duke University SOM.

I am particularly interested in the productive academic medicine being done here at Duke, since that is something I didn't have a lot of exposure to back home. I found a passion for teaching in college, and I can see myself furthering medical education as a physician educator within a medical school. As far as specialties go, I don't know yet what I am interested in, but I like procedures and meticulous tasks, so I am considering a surgical sub-specialty such as plastic surgery, ENT, orthopedics, or even vascular surgery.

It is evident to me that Duke is a special place. My pre-medical education was thorough, so I love the fast-paced and integrated first year curriculum, and I look forward to already being on the wards next year. I am confident that having both lectures and practical experience before taking Step 1 of the Boards will be an invaluable experience. I also love how many opportunities there are to give back to the institution and engage in teaching experiences. For example, I love working with third year students in our Clinical Skills Foundation course and also in our Cultural Determinants of Health Disparities course. I can see myself getting involved in such a capacity in a few years. None of this would be possible without the school's and your generous support and commitment to furthering my educational possibilities. I look forward to working hard and learning as much as I can in the years to come in order to become the best physician I can be.

Below are some pictures of my white coat ceremony experience. My family and I were so proud, and I will cherish those memories for the rest of my life.

An immeasurable thank you,
Raluca Gosman

Duke University School of Medicine MD Candidate, 2023