

Graduation speech

Deputy Chancellor, Acting Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, University staff and guests. On behalf of the graduates receiving their awards today I would like to thank University staff, our families and friends ...

From the moment we were naïve first years to this moment now, we express our deepest gratitude and appreciation for your contributions to our journey that has led to all of us being gathered here today. It's been a journey of study, learning, skill building and friendship making and we are always indebted to those of you who taught and supported us over our years of study. You shared your knowledge and passion with us in your classes, always had your doors open and through your guidance we have become more informed, more educated people. You gave your time and effort selflessly and were patient through our challenging times. All to ensure that we not only came out of this alive and somewhat sane, but that we got to this point here today, the temporary end and the definite beginning of whatever the big next stage is. Our thanks extends beyond the support of the lecturers, tutors and our families too, we also thank those who contributed to making the university experience much more holistic – to the extracurricular officers who ensured that we got more than just an academic experience, to the librarians who provided us with endless resources to support our learning and even to the legends at Albert Coates who ensured we never got too deprived of food and caffeine/hot beverages in the cold winters, we thank you for your invaluable contributions to this journey.

Life is full of sad goodbyes – and whilst some may argue that they aren't too worried about leaving the 3am assignment rushes and the dreaded week 12 assessment chaos, there is something bitter sweet about leaving the community that has moulded many of you into the people you will be from here on in. A community that welcomed you, a community of friends and a community that in some way will remain with you always.

As you reminisce on your University experience I would like to summarise some of the thoughts you have today: And to sum up the journey on behalf of some of you here today, I quote:

"years of hard work, fun and lifetime memories"

"joyfully finding people with the same interest and passion as you"

"the best four years of my life"

Now most graduate speeches are often expected to be full of life advice, inspirational quotes and valuable tips to survive going forward from here - and to be honest, I'm not sure if I am even qualified to do this. But, I am going to try. Please take from this what you wish. Here goes.

You are all leaving such a structured world and entering into a world that is much more unpredictable and turbulent. In reflecting on this I have concocted the 7 things that I challenge you to **BE** in that big world: wherever you future career or travels take you:

1. Be a teacher (even if you aren't actually a teacher)– if you have knowledge, ideas, passion and wisdom, share it with others
2. Be a student – don't be afraid to continue to learn, learning is lifelong, so be open to it
3. Be a nurse – care, compassion and empathy are your biggest superpowers as humans, use them
4. Be a magician – your magic is your greatness, so spread that stuff, everywhere you go

5. Be a change maker – probably the biggest challenge I give you, but you are going to come across things that don't sit right with you or in places you don't want to be - so be critical and do something about them, act, and make your world a better place because of it
6. Be a leader – don't underestimate your power to influence others, use your actions, words and your unique influence to make those around you want to be better
7. This is both the most simple and most complicated one, but just be *happy*. Whatever you do, wherever you are and whoever you are with – make sure it is all making you happy.

So go, be you and be great! Because you *can*.

