

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, thank you all so much for coming this morning to share with us in this momentous occasion.

Getting to the point of obtaining an Associates degree has certainly been a challenge. Like most journeys, this one has had its fair share of academic obstacles. However, each obstacle has proven to be a kind of strength training for the challenges to come.

As we move forward, we should remember that we have only just begun our academic journey. We must maintain our original vision, until our goals are realized, and we must embrace the challenges we face in between, because there will no doubt be a few. We have to continue to be “**Greater**.” Our will and energy to emerge beyond the margins of institutional, and societal barriers, must be **Greater**. We must approach the next stage of this journey, not matching, but increasing our level of ambition. Despite what others may say, our visions are never too great.

This next chapter for us is an opportunity to create: to create among many things, a basis for legitimizing everything **Great**, that we believe to be within ourselves.

When I was around 10 years old, I played for a summer youth basketball league. In the fourth quarter of one game, we were way ahead of the other team, so much so that we began to slack off, when our coach took us aside and said to us, “I see what you’re doing, but never mind the score. Even if we are 10 points ahead, play as if you are 20 points behind. NEVER let up.”

Today, we’re receiving our degrees, so we have reached an important milestone in our academic journey. And we might think now it’s summer, it’s time to let up, slack off. On the contrary, this is the commencement of our next journey. It’s time to meet new challenges with equal if not **Greater** focus and dedication. As well as a solemn vow to persevere, understanding that the vows of perseverance are as binding in times of adversity as they are during times of prosperity. Let’s be greater, graduates!