

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed faculty, proud parents, and of course, my fellow graduates,

If you'd told me a few years ago that I would be standing here giving a speech, I would have laughed and assumed you meant I'd be testifying for drinking too much coffee in the library instead of today's grand ceremony.

As I look around, I see so many smiling faces--and not just because our professors can finally sleep without grading our papers! Today marks the end of an era. Yes, friends, the lifelong mystery around the use of "Pythagorean theorem" in real life remains unsolved.

Our time here has been a journey, not unlike a TV show we've all binged. Remember freshman year? When finding the correct classroom was like starring in our personal episode of "Lost." Or sophomore year, a time when we were sure taking 8 a.m. classes was a great idea--spoiler alert: it wasn't.

We've had our share of challenges, too. Midnight marathons--not the running kind, of course--unless you count sprinting to submit assignments online at 11:59 p.m. And, let's not forget the dreaded group projects, which made us grateful for solitary confinement, I mean, online research. Through it all, we persevered. We supported each other. Whether we were pulling all-nighters or pulling each other off couches after particularly rough study sessions, we built memories--and arguably, some sleep debt. As we leave today, degrees in hand, ready to swap our tassels for ties or whatever office attire doesn't include sweatpants, let's remember: we survived "mandatory participation." We conquered essays longer than our most riveting Netflix documentary. We're now officially adulting, with a side of fries and a large order of questioning our life choices.

Thank you, everyone, for the unforgettable years and for listening. Let's take the lessons learned and the friendships forged, and go shake up the world--or at least, shake up our LinkedIn profiles. Congratulations Class of 2023! We did it!