



UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH-HUMBER
207 Humber College Blvd. | Toronto, ON | M9W 5L7
www.guelphhumber.ca

TOPIC: First Graduating Student Address from Media Studies Student

TO WHOM: Fellow graduating students at first-annual "Last Lecture."

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SPEECH DELIVERED BY

Andrew Kaszowski
Fourth-Year Media Studies: Public Relations

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To the administration, all of the faculty, and most of all to my fellow graduating classmates, words cannot express how thankful I am for the honour of speaking to you tonight.

To start this with a little nostalgia, I think back upon the very first time we all met – four years ago at Orientation Day in the Humber faculty cafeteria where we all looked out the window, across the parking lot, and to the crane that was standing where we're sitting today. In a way, we've come full-circle and it makes it feel that much more special for me to be able to speak to you again as we near the end of our journey together.

[pause]

If we think back for a moment on that very first time we met, and when we stepped into our first class in building B, one of the things that defines us as a group comes into focus: we're all risk takers and that is something that really sets us apart from any other graduating class.

We accepted the offer of admission when our vision of the university building was nothing more than a virtual tour and that big red crane. We took the risk of becoming the very first students of a brand-new institution without any track record or alumni.

All of the faculty took up teaching positions and planned courses for an integrated system of teaching that hadn't been done before. And the administration – you had the vision to create something completely new and had this dream, even before we, the students, came on the map. I still remember David Trick telling me his first office was in the Humber boiler room, under the smokestacks! - - - And we thought building b was bad.

We are all risk takers, and I think this is what has made our experience these last four years so special.

Every one of us believed in this dream – we made this dream, it was ours to build...to mould and make into an amazing reality.

And what a reality it has been. I would be amiss to leave out any of the amazing memories we have built over these four years – these four years of learning, of friendship, and of taking risks. I was wondering: how could I possibly sum up four years of memories in one speech?

The only way I could think of was to come up with another top-ten list. So, I am pleased to present Andrew's Top-Ten Guelph-Humber Memories.

Keep in mind, some of these are Media program-centric.

10) Being asked for the 50th time: you go to school where? Or, how's the weather in Guelph?

9) The thesis. Oh wait...this is supposed to be good memories...well then, onto number 8.

8) Our internships! What a great experience they have been. How many other universities are able to offer both a degree and diploma, and then throw in work experience too!

7) Walking into class every day and knowing every single classmate.

6) The amazing events we have taken part in: everything from the formals, year-end galas, guest speakers, and of course the pub crawls from first-year.

5) Anxiously waiting for the new building to open, the first week when everything ran on extension cords and the endless fire alarms the first month.

4) The Willy Wonka retro movie screening that the PR students put together last year, successfully raising more than \$6,000 for World Vision and getting on the front page of the Toronto Star GTA section.

3) Watching as the journalism students successfully put together issues of the Radix newspaper, Crave magazine, and their broadcast news shows – and hoping to get interviewed for some juicy gossip.

2) The year-end videos and the yearbooks capturing the many more memories I couldn't include in this top-ten list.

1) Finally figuring out that, no, in fact we don't live in Guelph – and exactly what to say to people who ask: “What is Guelph-Humber?”

[put up your hand if you can successfully answer that question...what is Guelph-Humber]

When I applied for the chance to deliver this speech, I had to answer the question: “What does Guelph-Humber mean to you.” I summarized my answer in one word: “opportunity.” This university is a community of support that provides opportunities during the time spent learning here and that opens up opportunities when the time comes to move beyond these walls. The opportunities made available within these walls have afforded us expanded critical thinking and applied skills; a strong network of friends; and life skills such as communication, confidence, and most certainly leadership.

For these opportunities we owe tremendous thanks to our outstanding professors, internship supervisors, and the friends we have all made during our time here.

As we move beyond the walls of the university, we carry with us abilities and experiences that will open doors to tremendous opportunities in careers and in life.

Being the founding students of this university has offered us another unique opportunity – and this is one that I don't think any other students have had, at least not to our extent.

This is something that we should take very seriously, because it is probably our strongest asset:

We have learned to *make* opportunities – to make the most of every situation in life and excel.

It goes back to the concept I mentioned earlier – that we are risk takers. The fact that we have been such a group of passionate go-getters with such a faith in this university is what has built Guelph-Humber's into what it is. What I mean is that we are literally the people building Guelph-Humber's reputation – we have laid the foundation.

And never doubt for a second the foundation we have left – or what an asset having the name “Guelph-Humber” beside our name will mean. We have all been a part of defining a new way for education to happen. And I think we have succeeded beyond our wildest expectations.

Now, as we prepare for graduation and become Guelph-Humber’s first alumni, I want to leave you tonight with a challenge. Does anyone remember the theme I left on orientation day four years ago? [UNITY]

Unity is a particular challenge for a university class as graduation hits – as we all spread out along various paths. However, for us, the first graduating class of the University of Guelph-Humber, there is added importance of maintaining unity into the future. We have a tremendous responsibility as the first graduates...as the first alumni.

Just as we have built the foundation and defined this university during our time here, we are the very first ambassadors to carry the message of what we are out into the world.

I challenge each of you to keep the flame burning – never lose the passion you have for Guelph-Humber, never lose the passion for what you have studied, and never lose your passion to live life to its fullest.

Most of all, never lose the passion you have to keep making the most of every opportunity. I don't believe there has been a more energetic group of risk takers – I know we are all going to go very far indeed.

A very wise professor of mine left me this quote, and I think it is incredibly fitting for the first graduating class of Guelph-Humber: “Success is seizing opportunity: you can’t win if you don’t play.”

We’ve played, and we’ve won. We’re all going to go far thanks to the opportunities we have received here at the University of Guelph-Humber.

Just remember me when you’re all multi-billionaires.