

Good afternoon family, friends, faculty, and seniors.

So this is it. Today is the culmination of four or more years of diligence and perseverance. I'm sure that we all have fond, fond memories of late night study sessions in Capen, working all hours in the lab, and pulling all-nighters to complete projects and papers. I have to admit that sometimes it seemed as if the studying would never end. And yet glancing back, I realize that my time here has passed faster than I had ever imagined it would as a freshman in EAS 140. That was the first engineering class for the majority of us, Engineering Solutions. We were told that engineers were the problem solvers of the world and that we would someday be apart of that legacy.... But that someday was far off in the distant future....

And thus we entered the ranks at the University at Buffalo. This institution has changed us... not only academically, but personally as well. The friendships and bonds forged here have had just as much of an influence on us as the classes we took together, and thus we have grown in knowledge and as people. We, in turn, have changed this campus. We worked our way through the core classes, but also became apart of the University community. We took our places in the many clubs and societies, took jobs both on and off campus, performed community service in the surrounding areas. In our short time here, we have changed this community and made it our own.

This is something to remember... Suddenly that "distant future" they talked about in EAS 140 is here. In the next few weeks and months, this assembly will disperse into many locations as each individual takes his or her place in the "real world." Some of you will continue learning as graduate students in research and teaching positions, while others of you will enter the corporate and industrial work forces. This is the end of our undergraduate life at the University at Buffalo, but not just an ending... This ceremony is called Commencement because it marks the beginning of the next phase of our lives. Wherever you may go for the rest of your life, you CAN be the positive influence that makes a difference in your community, your country, and the world. As a freshman, I could not even imagine the horrors of September 11 or the tragedy of the space shuttle Columbia, nor could I

imagine seeing friends go off to war. These events have changed and affected us all. But the world we live in does not only affect us; we in turn affect the world we live in. Your very presence will make a difference if you let it. The reality of this human situation is best put in the words of Mahatma Ghandi: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." So as you depart from this campus and community, remember to share your talents and ideas, extend your own personality and abilities into the world around you, meet new people and explore new places, just as you have done here at UB. And wherever you go, be the change you wish to see.

And so, Class of 2004, this is that special moment that seemed so far away when you first set foot on the UB campus. When you took that first step, you didn't know exactly what was in store for you; it was the beginning of a journey that concludes today. It's been said that special moments happen in a heartbeat, yet linger in memory for a lifetime. Such special moments are only made so by the journey that precedes them. Soon, our tassels will be turned and we will walk out of this building as official graduates, taking the first steps of a new journey. Always make the journey worthwhile by letting your hopes and dreams set the course so that your memories will be filled with special moments like today.

Thank you to all my fellow engineers for making this four years the experience that it was. It's been an honor to learn and laugh alongside each of you. Congratulations and best of luck to all the engineers of the Class of 2004.