

Good afternoon. I'm here to welcome you to the commencement of the 2004 engineering class of UB. As about 800 students end one chapter of their lives and step out into the so called real world, it is cause for celebration. Some are the first generation of their families to go to college, and others are carrying on a great tradition. Everyone who walks across this stage today has at least one common characteristic – they've all put in a lot of effort. They've put time into doing the work that gave them a firm foundation on the way things work, and now they're ready to take the next step. So, I say to all the graduates, whatever your background and motivation, whether you've found a career that suits you or you are pursuing a graduate degree next year, you've earned today. I just want to take this opportunity to congratulate everyone on the hours spent to make it happen. Since you've gotten here today, you have shown the work ethic necessary to succeed.

However, all the graduates could not have done it alone. I also want to thank every parent that was supportive and provided that driving force when things weren't looking all bright and rosy. I want to thank all the professors for everything they did. These experts in their field took the time to instill incredible knowledge and a method for problem solving into our way of living – they have passed along the drive to make sure we were doing it the right way, and the ability to critically evaluate our work. Perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank the other graduates themselves. We were able to bounce ideas off of one another, or get that extra support and determination to get an answer right at 2AM instead of giving up.

So, thank you to everyone who has helped, and congratulations to everyone about to make the trip across the stage. Everything you have done has put you on the right track for success in the future. Fare well and good luck.