

**Spring 2006 Commencement**  
**Student Address**  
**Daniel Gajewski – Tau Beta Pi, NY Nu Chapter President**

Good afternoon President, special guests, Dean, family, friends, faculty, and graduates, thank you for being here with us. Today we've all gathered to mark the end of an important phase of our academic pursuits, and, because this is an engineering graduation, I can actually call them that.

Many of us have been at UB for the past four years. For us undergrads we started out as freshmen, and planned this. We planned to be walking across this stage on this day, and shaking hands with the president and dean as we hear our name called. We planned on our families and friends being here to support us and share in our success. We planned, because that is what engineers do: plan and implement. Engineers have planned, designed, and constructed many of mankind's great accomplishments. Our plan led us to today, which marks what is undoubtedly our greatest personal accomplishment to date. The plan we laid out as freshmen has come to fruition. While there may have been obstacles along the way, we adapted our plan to overcome these. It is worth noting that there were many more who also planned on being here today, but are not. We know that some could not overcome the obstacles that they encountered in engineering, and while we take no pleasure in their absence, it is a testament to what we have accomplished.

We're the ones who remember those late nights trying to finish that thermo assignment, or C++ program, or any number of labs, only to be reminded by the rising sun, and our roommate stumbling home that we'd better get to work on the rest of the assignments due that day. It seems almost a paradox, that what will be remembered as the shortest four years of our life were comprised of some of the longest days imaginable. But we found that the effort we put into an assignment or class was directly proportional to what we got out of it, and the same principle applies to our

program overall. Engineering requires a great deal of effort and determination, but in the end our hard work has gained us a degree to be proud of.

Leonardo da Vinci, one of history's great engineers, once admonished his students, saying, "Therefore O students, study mathematics and do not build without foundations." This is good advice for any engineering project, but I think it applies even more to engineers themselves. Here at UB we've all developed our foundations. We are well versed in our fields, and our expertise will be called on time and again as we move on from here. Our education has prepared us for the next phase. Now that our foundation has been laid, we can begin building on it. Although we may find that from here on out the forms we'll be working with won't be massless, the surfaces may not be frictionless, and not many objects are of infinite length, we will be able to use the principles we've learned to build continuously on the strong foundation we've developed at UB, and our contributions to the world will reflect this.

Engineers hold an important place in the world. Today, much of what you do puts your safety in the hands of an engineer. The chair you're sitting in now, the building we're gathered in, and the car you'll drive home were all designed by engineers. Because our institutions have been so successful at training good engineers for generations, our safety has been secure. It is no understatement, especially in recent years, to say that engineers play a major role in shaping our world. The technological advances developed by engineers have changed the way we live. Just think about your home computer, your cell phone, and your iPod. These things and countless others have affected our world, and developed our society, and engineers have been a driving force behind them, engineers not so different from the ones sitting in this room. Look around you now, the people in this room will be shaping our world for the generations to come, and will be a major force moving our society forward. Today we recognize that we are prepared for this responsibility, and are ready to accept it. Congratulations class of 2006.