

Class of 2007 Commencement  
School of Engineering and Applied Sciences  
Student Address by Brandon Brown

Thank you Dr VanBenschoten.

Good afternoon, Provost Tripathi, Dean Stenger, UB Engineering faculty, honored guests, family, friends and graduates. Well, we made it. It is hard to believe that just a few years ago we had our first day here at UB. So much has happened since that day. For many of us, we took our first step towards independence as we moved away from home, learned to manage our time, made new friends and redefined the phrase “lots of school work.”

The seniors graduating today are very different than the people who sat in our freshman classes, like EAS 140, so long ago. The graduate students preparing to walk across the stage may not even recall the people they were when they began their research. Now we not only have calculators with the numbers worn off and have heard every pocket protector joke, but we have also matured intellectually and emotionally. When you look at your UB card, you may hardly recognize the person in that picture. Today’s ceremony marks the next step in our lives.

Although this day is to celebrate the graduates, there is a whole supporting cast that will not be crossing the stage who should also be celebrated. Of course this cast includes professors and TAs, and importantly, we should all thank our family and friends who made this day possible through never-ending support and encouragement.

When we first arrived at UB, some of us had to adjust from high school classes of 30 to gen ed classes of 200, some of us had to adjust to new academic expectations and demands that were higher than we’d ever experienced, and some of us had to adjust to an entirely new culture.

As we advanced, our classes grew progressively smaller, leaving a small group of students that we met in class or in the lab every day. This group of friends helped to make staying up all night working on labs or studying for exams bearable. As one of my professors once said, “Never underestimate the power of your friends on academic success.”

Most importantly, these classmates have been there with us for all of the changes and surprises that come with school and independence, and there have

been many changes. Perhaps only in engineering can you find friends who understand what it is like to receive a 45 on a thermo exam and being thankful that you beat the curve.

We are probably most familiar with the changes within our little world on campus, but UB also provided many opportunities and experiences which likely changed our perspective of the world at large, all without leaving campus. Every day at UB, we met and worked with people from all walks of life, each with something to teach us. In the following years we will be applying what we experienced here at UB and that will be the true test of our degree. Ultimately, it will not matter what our GPA was or whether or not we passed that midterm, what will matter is how well we can work with people in any situation.

Some changes are accompanying our departure from UB. Last semester we welcomed a new Dean, Harvey Stenger. We are also expected to say goodbye soon to the “temporary” trailers between Ketter and Furnas and hello to a new engineering building. As alumni, we will have the opportunity to view the development of UB, making us proud to have been part of such a dynamic school.

Although many of us will be leaving school to join the workforce, our education is just beginning. We have been taught all about the engineering and science principles in our courses but we are just beginning to learn what we are capable of. Engineering and applied sciences truly affect everyone. From designing new chemicals to new computer programs to state-of-the-art bridges, we can do almost anything. Who knows which of us will follow in the footsteps of other UB Engineering graduates and accomplish great tasks such as developing the cardiac pacemaker or leading NASA as its chief engineer. Anything is possible and our professional life will be filled with many opportunities and surprises.

Remember the “small” snow storm that hit last October? Interrupted mid-lecture by the booming thunder, my professor looked outside and said, “I don’t think it will stick.” Two cancelled school days, an empty beer fridge and lots of shoveling later, classes resumed without missing a beat. Sometimes surprises hit as hard as that storm, but with friends and hard work we will all make it through and probably learn something along the way.

Thank you to everyone for making my time at UB such a great experience. Congratulations and the best of luck to all of the engineers and scientists of the Class of 2007.