

Commencement 2008 Student Address by Kurt A. Cavalieri



Family and friends; faculty, staff and guests, thank you for being here today. This day marks a major achievement for each of us; earned through the hard work and dedication that has consumed our lives for the past few years. Only now can we fully appreciate that day freshman year when we sat in EAS140 and were asked to look to our left, and then to our right before we were told that only one-third of our class would remain at graduation. I for one am extremely proud to be a member of that remaining third.

So, what have we learned during our college experience? For one, we've learned that there is nothing more permanent than the temporary trailers located next to Furnas Hall. We've also learned that when we left high school we only *thought* we knew everything; then we came to college and quickly realized we were merely fooling ourselves. We are truly not the same people we were just a few short years ago. During these past years, UB has helped equip us with a tool-belt full of engineering knowledge and taught us life lessons that could only be learned through experience.

Many of us took on leadership roles as club officers and quickly figured out the right and wrong way to manage our time. And as we worked through numerous sleepless nights, we often found shelter in places like the Bell and Ketter computer labs, 1019 Furnas, and some faculty research labs, where we redefined the phrase "by any means necessary". I think we all have come to understand that sleep can always be sacrificed to get the job done right.

Our friends wonder why we put ourselves through so much distress. Well, it's simple, really. To most, college represents the best years of one's life. If you, however, have decided to make the most out of your recent years here, I firmly believe the best years of your life lie ahead.

Some of us were so bold as to study abroad during our time at UB. Whichever part of the globe you may have visited; you probably formed some of the strongest relationships of your college career, and likely had some of the most outrageous experiences with one another. Honestly though, where else can you go bungee jumping, leap off of 30 foot waterfalls, and somehow still manage to pick up three credits for World Civ II. Those of us who traveled to France were lucky enough to have Dr. Mook impress upon us how cool it is to know stuff.

There are people we have met and said goodbye to over the past years that will forever change the way we view the world. We have found professors and upperclassmen to idolize and turn to for advice when we were unsure what the next step was, whether it regarded an assignment or our life objectives.

For many of us, this is the end of our academic careers, but for others, it is just the beginning. While most of us will be forced to finally get a real job, some of us will continue on to join the technical families of our professors. And even a few of us will become colleagues with our current, and highly distinguished, professors.

Graduates, whatever your story and background may be and wherever your lifelong journey may take you, we will always share the memories of UB and our experiences here at the School of Engineering. As we leave here today to begin the next chapter of our lives, let's remember to stop talking and start doing.

Congratulations and good luck! Thank you.