

Valedictory Address
Erika Bock, B.Sc. (4-year)
June 5, 2005 10:30 a.m.
79th University of Winnipeg Convocation

Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, ladies and gentlemen. I am honoured to be representing the Class of 2005 at convocation this morning.

Remembering the first couple of days at the University of Winnipeg in first year, I recall feeling excited, nervous, terrified, and ready to face new challenges, all at the same time! Some of us came to university aspiring to become researchers, doctors, pharmacists, and teachers. Others of us came with uncertainties, and were not quite sure where this path towards a university education would lead us. Whatever our goals and intentions were when we first set out, we trusted that our potential to achieve our goals would be developed and realized through a university education.

So, what has our university education given us? We have developed academic skills which will allow us to move on to further studies, and we have received a high-quality education which has prepared us to enter into an evolving working world. The other day, as I was flipping through old notes from university courses, I was overwhelmed at the amount of information I absorbed over the past four years. I was a bit surprised to realize that I am already beginning to forget some of the details... But I realized that the learning we have done here is a reward in itself. We have developed the ability to think critically, independently, and creatively. We have learned how to ask questions, and how to evaluate the answers we receive. But most importantly, we have learned how to **learn**.

Not only have we acquired *academic* knowledge during our time here, but knowledge of ourselves and of each other. I know I have enjoyed countless opportunities to get to know my classmates and professors on a more personal level than I had ever expected at the beginning of my university education. We have become used to seeing friendly faces in the Buffeteria, and waving "Hello!" in passing on the escalators. We have enjoyed incredible personal attention from our dedicated professors, many of whom regularly went far above the "call of duty" to further our understanding of biochemistry, psychology, physics, and the art of teaching.

Without a doubt, we all take away an outstanding education from the University of Winnipeg. But each of us has also contributed to this University in our own way. A university becomes a community of learners, of thinkers, even, through its committed professors and administrators, but also through its student body. Whatever the degree of your involvement on campus, whether through student groups, the UWSA, the Uniter, or simply by being here, each of us has contributed to developing a stimulating and exciting environment at our University.

After spending the past couple of years in these hallways, labs and classrooms, we all take many memories away with us today. Our camaraderie has transformed our learning

experience into a dynamic, vibrant, and personal one. We have, in part, taught *each other* during our time here. As TAs, lab demonstrators, and through thought-provoking discussions, we have expanded our minds, challenged our perceptions, and broadened our horizons. We have grown together, and as individuals. We have indeed earned our degrees, and I am honoured to be a part of this bright group of people.

We have much yet to learn, whatever our future plans, but our time at the University of Winnipeg has prepared us to take on all types of new challenges with confidence as we continue to work towards new goals. Whatever your future plans may hold, let's take today to celebrate our accomplishments!

I'd like to end with some wise words from the great Dr. Suess, who wrote

Congratulations!

Today is your day!

You're off to Great Places!

You're off and away!

You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.

You're on your own.

And you know what you know.

And YOU are the guy who'll decide where to go.

Congratulations, Class of 2005!