

We're here, we've finally made it. This is the moment we've all been waiting for, working towards, and at times dreading (especially when that countdown went up in the union). We're graduating. For many of us, myself included, this path to graduation didn't unfurl exactly as we had planned it would when we first stepped onto campus. There were twists, turns, bumps, bruises and surprises along the way that changed our trajectories, but that's okay. Those moments helped define our time here on campus, and often times came with a lesson to be learned. And those moments and lessons, those are the things which looking back, I know will make my Geneseo experience mine, and yours, yours. It's really amazing when you think about it. We all came to school with some goal in mind, some way we wanted to grow and something we wanted to learn or accomplish. Personally, before I came to college, when envisioning what my experience would be like, I was always so focused on what I would be learning inside of the classroom, I never took the time to consider all of the things I would learn outside of it.

Take a moment and think of your typical day on this campus. You go to class, you get lunch with some friends, hit Starbucks up for some caffeine, do some work and maybe have some time to relax along the way. Seems pretty straight forward right? Well frame this just a little differently; obviously in class you're learning an incredible amount about a wide array of subjects and disciplines. You get lunch with your friends, and while there hear about their experiences,

perspectives, and stories. Hit up Starbucks, you're surrounded by the always bustling college union and everything that happens there. You're doing work? Yes you're learning the material, but aren't you also putting into practice all those time management, organization and study skills that were drilled into us back in middle school?

Suddenly, when you look at an average day on this campus, you see that you're surrounded by information, perspectives and opportunities to learn wherever you go. Learning really doesn't stop as you walk out of the classroom. In fact, I think you can make an argument it just starts there. And that's the beauty of a college campus. Speakers, clubs, tabling events, meetings, that 1 AM broomball game, all of these "things" that we all experienced nearly every day we were on this campus, they were all opportunities to learn.

So now, those of you that are still listening, are probably wondering where I'm going with this? Yes, college was a great time, we learned a lot, we cheered at the hockey games, got lost in Brodie and stood in that stir fry line for *some* reason, but what does this have to do with the future? We already did this, learned from it and now we're here, and decked out in robes to show it.

Well, just as learning doesn't end at the classroom door, it doesn't end when you cross this stage. Whether you're going on to more schooling, entering the

workforce, or have no idea what you're doing, it's important that you keep in mind that every moment is an opportunity to learn, and you need seize them while you can. Take chances, get yourself out there, and put forth the effort. Sometimes you'll succeed, I mean we've made it this far after all, and sometimes you won't. In the grand scheme, both outcomes are okay, as long as you can find a way to frame it, learn from it, adapt and grow.

Just as important as learning from these opportunities, is remembering to appreciate them and cherish the memories that come along with them. As we all go off on our next adventure, let's make sure not to forget the people that have helped us get through this one. Look around you. You have spent the last few years in a community with the people sitting here with you today. You may not know all of them, but you all have a common bond, you are all members of the class of 2014, which I think is pretty cool, and each of you has had some impact on this campus, and someone else in this room. Now look to these first few rows. Faculty, staff, friends, mentors, by whatever title you know them, none of us would be here without their guidance, support and wisdom. I think I can safely speak for my fellow classmates when I say thank you so much for everything you've done for us these past few years. You have truly made an impact, inside the classroom, and again, outside of it as well. And finally, thank you friends, family and loved ones, both in the crowd today and those who could not be here. You have been our

rocks, listening ears, care package senders, and motivation to keep going. Your unwavering love and support has helped to keep us in the mindset we needed to succeed and get to this point. Fellow members of the Class of 2014, faculty, staff, family and loved ones, without all of you, none of us would be sitting here today. Again thank you.

And so fellow members of the Class of 2014, I'm almost done, I promise. But first I'd like to share a quote I found on Humans of New York the other day, "failure isn't diving on your face, or hitting rock bottom. That's just being human. You only fail when you decide not to try again. So it's entirely in your own control. Once you understand failure, it is impossible to fail." And with that Class of 2014, I urge you to continue trying and continue learning, take life one step at a time and don't be afraid to reach out and challenge yourself. While this adventure is coming to an end, a new one is unfurling before us as we speak. Good luck in your next step, never stop learning and I'll see you around. Thank you.