

Fellow students, family members, friends, professors, administrators and honored guests, I would like to welcome you all to Adelphi University's one hundred and twelfth Commencement Ceremony. Today is a very special day not only in the lives of all graduating students, but also in the lives of our family members and friends. Today is the day that we have all strived for since the moment we opened our acceptance letters to Adelphi University four long years ago. Today is the day we pulled all nitters for, wrote endless amounts of papers for and spent more time in the library than we would have cared to do. Today is our Graduation Day!

It's strange to think that the day we have been eagerly anticipating is finally here and that for some of us, tomorrow won't be spent having lunch in the UC cafeteria, running from class to class, relaxing out in the quad or tossing around the football on Levermore Lawn. As we begin the next chapter of our lives with some of us pursuing careers in various fields and others moving on to grad school looking to become educators, lawyers and doctors, we must not forget what we have learned, the life long friends we have made and the good times we have had at Adelphi University; a home away from home for many of us over these past four years.

Maybe it's the history major in me, but before I bid you all a blessing for your future endeavors, I would first like to reminisce on our time here at Adelphi. Even though it was long ago, freshmen year feels as if it was just yesterday I remember it so clearly. I remember orientation and the first day shuffle through the UC with all of our bags and pillows in hand, waiting for an orientation leader to check us in. I remember that long walk across campus with our bags in hand and our orientation leaders being a friendly face to both guide and in some cases help us move in. I remember watching the

orientation leaders come out from behind the curtain so full of energy and alive. I remember thinking how are these people so alive so early in the morning? I remember the ceremony where we lit our group torches survivor style and those ice breaking games that we played on our first day; hi everyone, I'm mischievous Michael.

One of the clearest memories that I have from my time at Adelphi University is the first day of classes. It was a misty Monday morning on August 30th, 2004. About twenty-five people sat waiting in Hagedorn Hall room 209 for Professor Lacombe's 9am class on World Civilians part one. Being that it was the first day of classes, a majority of my classmates had come early and were already seated. As I looked around the room, I remember noticing that everyone had the same exact facial expression. It was one of excitement, joy, timid ness and fear of the unknown. It was very quiet and no one was talking to one another. I noticed people anxiously watching the door anticipating to see a friendly face, one that they had known for years to walk right in and be the person that they could confide in, but rather they remained in a sea of unfamiliar people, with unfamiliar faces, in an unfamiliar place.

I bring up this story because as the days turned to weeks and the weeks turned into months and the end of that first semester at Adelphi came about, that class was never as quiet as it was on that first day. You see those unfamiliar people with those unfamiliar faces that we look at became our classmates, our friends, our roommates, our sorority sisters and our fraternity brothers. We have invited them to our houses for dinner, shared laughs with them and have turned to them for help, guidance and assurance through some of our toughest times. My fellow classmates as we walk into the unknown of tomorrow,

we must do so with confidence and conviction, for if we are to stumble those unfamiliar people with those unfamiliar faces we'll surely be there to stand by our side.

Before I end, I have a few last words that I would like to say. First and foremost, I would like to extend congratulations to my fellow graduating classmates. It's been a long four years but we have all accomplished the unthinkable and for that you should all be proud. I would like to thank all of the parents in attendance at today's commencement ceremony. Parents, thank you for encouraging us to go to college, for helping us choose Adelphi University, for co-signing that loan when we said "hey I think it would be a really great learning experience if I moved onto campus, enough though I live five minutes away" and for always being there for us whenever we needed you. Without your guidance, encouragement and love, we would surely not be sitting here today at graduation.

In my final ado, I will say this: A four-year college education from the prestigious Adelphi University 100,000 dollars, four years worth of books 5,000 dollars, a quick run to Cherry Valley for a late night snack 10 dollars, being able to look back at your college experience and say "Wow, I did all that and earned a degree" priceless. Good day, good luck and Congratulations Class of 2008!