

David MacKay

Good evening class of 2021! What an amazing past four years it has been. Tonight, I'm here to congratulate you and bid you farewell. To be completely honest, I had no idea how to do that so I looked up how to write a graduation speech, specifically the farewell portion. Obviously, there were an egregious amount of suggestions, however, I found a few that really stood out to me. The first of these was that I should be sincere.

I can sincerely say that I hate cliches. On that note, this is not the end, but the beginning. Don't think of today as the conclusion to your time here at ConVal, rather, embrace it as an introduction to whatever is coming next. Accounting for the fact that today is a culmination of your education thus far, acknowledge that there is much more to look forward to. Those of you going to college get to experience a more difficult and wildly expensive version of the past four years. Those of you getting jobs or joining the military get to begin your careers and start shaping the life you want to live. Whatever you choose to do, there will always be something greater in the future.

The second suggestion I found was to be funny. However, Joe said that I'm not funny and I shouldn't try to be. Who is Joe, you may ask? Who is Joe indeed...

The third suggestion I found was to offer a lesson; a moral to the story. This past year has been difficult for everyone, teachers, students and parents. As a student, I found three specific things that I thought I would share.

Firstly, chewing gum with a mask on will make you cry.

Secondly, eating while unmuted on zoom is the most humbling experience on the planet, especially if your teacher has speaker view on.

Thirdly, we, as students, as a class, and as a community, need each other. I clearly saw this after my first week back in school. From all accounts, the remote period drove people crazy. While we enjoyed an extra hour of sleep and the comfort of home, the isolation and separation from the normal school environment was a challenge for everyone, students and teachers alike. The excitement that I saw as more people began to enter the building was a heartwarming reminder that while everything was changing because of the pandemic, the people around us remained the same.

The final suggestion I found was to offer some consolation to those in the crowd. Most of you are probably stressed for the future or confused about what you're going to do next. I'm here to say that this is completely normal. We're all in the same boat, rowing aimlessly about the sea of ambiguity that adult life is. And that's ok. High school is not the place where you figure out who you are, it's the place where you find out how you will discover that. It is the place where you learn that you can make mistakes and it's the place where you learn how to fix them. It is the place that sets you up for the next step that you'll take, knowing that *you* have to take it. Like I said before, whatever you choose to do, there will always be something greater in your future. All you need to do is reach out and take it.

Thank you.

-David MacKay Vice-President of the class of 2021