

CLASS OF 2017

FAREWELL ADDRESS

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“Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

As Albert Einstein notes, the future is not merely a reflection of what we have learned, it is the realization of who we have become. Today, we celebrate our futures. We are embarking on our journeys in many different ways, some of us are pursuing graduate degrees, some of us are beginning our first career, and many of us are moving back in with our parents. Regardless of what step we choose to take next, we are all continuing our education, because our growth does not stop at graduation tomorrow. UConn has taught us that education is the foundation of our success, and we will continue to learn in everything we do.

Regardless of where we end up in 20 years, we probably won't remember our class schedule, the exams we took, or even what grades we earned. We will have thrown out our notebooks and sold most of our textbooks. If we have forgotten the specifics of what we learned in the classroom, that wasn't our

education. Our education is the lessons we will remember long after graduation. When we reflect on our time at UConn, what will we remember?

First, we will remember stepping out of our comfort zone for the first time. 20 years from now, we probably won't remember the first person we ever talked to on campus, or the first club we signed up for at the involvement fair, but we will remember the excitement we felt while trying new things. Stepping outside of our comfort zone led to some of our most memorable experiences at UConn. We couldn't have grown if we stayed in our comfort zones, and to continue growing in the future we have to continue to push our boundaries. **Our education was learning to step out of our comfort zones.**

Next we will remember the schoolwork, specifically the group projects and while they were usually met with a groan, we will remember that success required teamwork. 20 years from now, we may not remember the topic of each project, or even which class each project was for but we will remember the groups that were supportive, the ones we had fun working with because we actually took the time to get to know each other. We will remember that to work best with others, we first had to connect with others. When we approach group work in our futures we will be more prepared because of these experiences. **Our education was learning the importance of teamwork.**

Then, we will remember the friendships we formed. 20 years from now, we may not remember the details of every late night conversation or how many times we ordered Wings Over at 2am, but we will remember the

happiness and love we felt and all the fun we had. We will remember the importance of making our first connections at UConn and learning how to navigate these relationships on our own. While the first friends we made may not be the friends we leave UConn with, we will remember how each of these people impacted our lives. We may be saying goodbye to UConn, but we are not saying goodbye to our friends. The friendships we made over the past four years are the friendships we get to carry with us as we continue on to our next adventure. **Our education was creating lifelong friendships.**

We will remember the moments that made us feel proud to be a Husky, like when we ran down Fairfield Way our freshmen year with thousands of our peers when UConn won the National Championship... twice. For many of us, that was the first time UConn felt like home, because we finally understood what it meant to be a Husky, we felt proud to be a part of the UConn community. As we integrated into the community, we realized the importance of giving back and found ourselves back on Fairfield Way to support fundraisers, to volunteer, and to attend community events. As we move on from UConn and join new communities, we hold them to the UConn standard. We learned what it feels like to be proud of our community and we will continue to look for new communities where we can feel this same sense of pride. **Our education was learning the importance of community.**

Finally, we will remember the people who helped us along the way. We will remember that our parents never failed to pick up the phone when we were stressed and needed to be told that everything would be okay. We will remember the professors and TA's who went the extra mile to make class engaging and

interesting, who shared their passion and ignited passion in us. We will remember our family and friends taking the time to ask about our classes, our goals, and our dreams, and supporting us and believing in us no matter how many times that dream changed. **There are so many factors that contribute to our education, but your support, your confidence, and your belief in our ability to succeed is the foundation of all we have accomplished at UConn.**

Thank you to the parents, professors, TA's, mentors, family and friends who believed in us every step of the way. We could not have made it without you. We will always remember that you believed in our success and our ability to learn. Thank you for your encouragement and your endless support. We appreciate all you have done for us.

We have spent four years learning. We have learned how to step out of our comfort zones. We have learned the importance of teamwork, friendship, and community. We have learned because of the family and friends who supported us.

We now know how to learn. We now know what truly impacts our education and our growth as individuals. Graduation is not the end. Our education is only beginning. Congratulations to the Class of 2017. **And if you don't know it yet, go learn it.**