

Thank you.

I'm honored and humbled that my colleagues have asked me to speak today.

Truth be told, I think they mistook this for a beard contest, and now they're stuck hearing me speak!

I'd like to take a moment to thank a group of people who I feel simply haven't been thanked enough.

To our families: You didn't see us much during our time in this program, yet you provided us with endless support, and managed to understand that being embedded and connected in global business sometimes required us to ski inside of a shopping mall.

In seriousness, thank you. We love you, and we couldn't have done any of this without you.

The months of this program were nothing less than a life experience. It's difficult in a few short moments to explain the true measure of our accomplishment, but I'll try to share a few of the essential insights we gained into global leadership.

Number 1: the consequences of London's financial dealings during the economic crisis were nothing compared to the consequences of missing a single minute of accounting class.

Number 2: the service culture in Dubai is such an ingrained part of the society, that a waiter will stop a 60 person lecture to bring coffee to the students in the front row.

Number 3: in India, it is much easier to try to speed up the old world bureaucratic system than it is to slow down a new world *digestive* system.

Number 4: even with advanced degrees and global work experience, it can still be enormously challenging to get a Shanghai cab to take you back to the hotel.

Number 5: the price of the transition from communism to capitalism in Russia can be precisely measured: it's a \$25 bottle of Voss water.

And number 6, right here in Durham, we learned that few things are better than a National Championship.

Although we'll have many stories like these, most of what we will recall about our months together will actually seem quite random and disconnected.

A hotel lobby, a foreign street, an unusual meal, a joke, a moment. These will be our most lasting memories for a very good reason, because in them we will see the people we were with.

I know this might sound cliché, but in a number of ways we are a genuinely unique group.

We're unique because we were the guinea pigs, the first class of this great global initiative. And, as such, we experienced by far the most intense, sleepless, frightening, stressful, caffeine-filled program this University will probably ever conduct.

We're unique because our group of 120 is likely the smallest this program will ever have. The author Malcolm Gladwell would argue that it was this small size that gave us such great camaraderie. To prove this, we have nothing more scientific than the separation anxiety we felt at the end of each residency.

Most importantly, though, we're unique because **we** are the group of leaders arriving at this critical moment in business history.

More than any time in a generation the world of business is an uncertain place. We enter industries where trust in leadership is broken and where the foundations of ethical management are questioned.

The old practices of business are not an option for us.

Yet with a generational challenge comes a generational opportunity. For us, that opportunity is to rebuild the world of business on principles of long-term efficiency, sustainability and responsibility.

It's an opportunity to redefine success from a focus on the bottom line to a focus on realizing human potential.

Mostly though, it's an opportunity to prove that our limitless ambition can coexist with our better angels.

Succeeding in this will be very hard.

But I believe we can succeed because these are not just business principles to follow. They are values we already share as part of the Fuqua community.

And while strategies and markets always change... values shouldn't.

Business is ready to be reinvented, but we must have the fortitude to do it.

Our experience abroad showed us places filled with nuance and complexity. We met free-market communists and state-sponsored capitalists. We've seen places of great potential dealing with the burden of human poverty.

Everywhere we went, the villains and the heroes were not as clear as we initially thought. They almost never will be.

Yet if our study of global business has taught us anything, its that we are connected with others by necessity. In such a world, a rejection of pluralism and an embrace of fear and xenophobia is a path to becoming obsolete in business..... as well as in life.

Let's not forget that the people and places we've seen were too great for simple answers.

In 1977 the Voyager spacecraft was launched to study the outer reaches of our solar system. When it's mission was complete, it was asked to do one final task: turn around... and take a picture.

It was 3.7 billion miles away from Earth at the time.

The image it sent back shows almost nothing but the vastness of space. But if you look carefully, you see a tiny bright speck.

Our home.

All of human history, all our hopes and dreams, occurred on that pale blue dot.

Reflecting on this photograph, the astronomer Carl Sagan wrote: "We who cannot even put our planetary home in order, riven with rivalries and hatreds - are we to venture out into space, to move worlds, to re-engineer planets?... For all our failings, despite our limitations and fallibilities, we humans are capable of greatness."

This was his reminder to a new generation of leaders, and it befits my fellow graduates.

We are capable of greatness.

Now let's go out there and crush it.

Thank you.