

Student Commencement Speech

Joseph R. Delaney

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Good morning friends, family and the Colby-Sawyer College Class of 2012! Before I go anywhere, I have to say, when I was first nominated to speak for graduation, I was nervous. At first I had no idea what to say. So I started listing off the things that stood out the most. It's cold here, it snows a lot, and the cafeteria closes at 7 o'clock.... But there's also mountain day, our amazing athletes, the talented CSC Players, the many clubs and organizations on campus, CAB, a library made out of barns, a climbing wall, a maple syrup program and a whole bunch more! Needless to say, I started to realize something about our college very quickly. Colby-Sawyer College is one of a kind.

But a one-of-a-kind college is meaningless without one-of-a-kind students.

This month, thousands upon thousands of college students find themselves in the very same situation as our own. Poised at the edge of a four-year journey, staring over varying cliffs of debt, day jobs, and for some, graduate programs.

Many of these students view their college experience as something like an investment- an academic means to a monetary end, but I believe our combined experiences at Colby-Sawyer mean something much, much more.

This last semester, I spent a great deal of time working with and around some amazing CSC alumni, and one thing that I always noticed was a sense of unity through their experiences at this college; something that connected them to me regardless of the years that separated our studies here.

Every Colby-Sawyer student is bound by those frigid walks to K-lot, those late-night quests to find open restaurants, and at least for this class, watching the utter chaos of those Humans vs. Zombies players.

But on top of all that, we share the long hard nights prepping for tests, the papers, and art projects and that pride we felt when that hard work paid off. And for many of us, that pride comes the success we earn for ourselves in the fields, on the stage, or any other venues.

The freedoms this school offers gave me the opportunity to pursue my passions in video production, photography, and entertainment. With this freedom, I understood the importance of pursuing my own goals and accomplishing them regardless of what others say. By taking every chance to use these freedoms, I know I've grown, and so have you all.

Today, I find myself surrounded by a drastically matured class of peers and colleagues that, needless to say, I would have never expected to see come from the nervous strangers I met back in the fall of '08.

The faces I look upon today are no longer strangers. The faces I see out there are the faces of my brothers and sisters. These are the faces of the people that have grown from high school students into full-fledged adults. These are the faces of human beings that have accomplished amazing things, and have grown wiser from chilling defeats.

Our class is one made of pioneers. Our class is a group of students that stood up to major changes and fought tooth and nail to see their goals accomplished. When some school programs disappeared, it was the members of the Class of 2012 that stood up and built their own organizations to continue them.

We were the class that helped open numerous doors of artistic expression, performance and athletic competition; Open Mic nights, new varsity sports and the CSC Players come to mind. But those doors would never have budged had we not worked this hard and pushed this far.

My greatest pride in life has been sharing the last four years with all of you. And although many of us will follow different paths and pursue unique dreams, there is one thing we all share: the memories of our second home in New London, New Hampshire.

So, when you walk on this stage with me, and shake your President's hand, you aren't just getting a receipt confirming your college investment. You are earning the right say something that nobody else in the world can say. Nobody else has had the same experience we all shared. Nobody else has a home away from home like ours... And nobody else can say they've graduated from Colby-Sawyer College.

Thank you for everything, and thank you for being a part of my family.

This address was delivered at the Colby-Sawyer College Commencement 2012 by Joseph R. Delaney '12, recipient of the Student Commencement Speaker Medal.