

Speech 1

AUS: An International Society

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim. In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful: Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, ruler of Sharjah, and president of our university; honorable members of the Board of Trustees; Chancellor Dr Björn Kjerfve; members of faculty and staff; dear parents; distinguished guests; and, last but definitely not least, my fellow graduates.

On behalf of my dear graduates, I would like to welcome you all to the commencement ceremony of the American University of Sharjah's graduating class of Fall 2017!

First, I'd like to tell you all a little something that gives AUS its charm, and what makes it so different from any other academic setting.

There are five thousand seven hundred sixty-eight students at AUS. There are one thousand one hundred and thirteen Emiratis, seven hundred eighty-three Egyptians, five hundred fifty-nine Indians, twenty-six Nigerians, 6 Koreans, and a "couple" of students from Venezuela. These are just some examples of a total of 95 nationalities at the American University of Sharjah.

It is important to note that AUS is not the only place with such a wide range of nationalities; as a matter of fact, we are currently in a country that is known for its diversity and multiculturalism. But this is where AUS stands out from everywhere else: as students coming into our first year, we sought out those who gave off an air of familiarity, those who shared the same language and culture, and those who had similar backgrounds to ours. I, for one, entered my first year overwhelmed by the sudden environment that I wasn't accustomed to and found "shelter" in a social bubble located at AUS's very own Starbucks. This social group was comprised of people from my own nationality, gender, and generally my mentality and belief system.

AUS, however, had a different plan for us. It exposed us to different opportunities, challenges, and situations that forced to us interact with people who we wouldn't ordinarily work with; some of whom proved to be the brightest of students from all around the world.

I'm sure that all of us were, at least once or twice, forced into a group project with people we didn't choose to be with. I am also certain that most of us interacted with the cultural clubs; whether it was as a member, volunteer, or even simply an audience member during Global Day performance. Many of us have engrossed ourselves in student chapters, sports teams or MUN. To be fair, I am sure some of us simply attended their classes and went straight home. However, we all had the privilege of working with others for our senior projects, review week, or the compulsory surveys we had to fill out for our courses. Without truly noticing it, each one of these experiences build on each other until the point of it all finally hits us.

Slowly, we began learning more about the people around us, their backstories, their challenges, and their ways of thinking. We started challenging our minds to absorb and accept the differences in the people that we meet, especially the differences from ourselves. We started embracing the thoughts of these bright young men and women whose religions are different than our own, whose traditions are contradictory to ours, but whose ambitions and dreams are so parallel to ours.

Gradually, we found ourselves integrated within an international society that is AUS. It is not enough to say that we have such a diverse community, but that we make the most out of it and can reach a true state of integration. We need to be so integrated that it becomes irrelevant for us to identify one another by nationality or gender, but instead look at creativity, experience, and innovation. I am grateful to say that AUS has gone a long way to give us that chance at integration.

We wouldn't be the people we are today without the help of AUS. Your Highness, thank you for investing in the youth of the world, for believing in us and for providing us with the opportunity to educate ourselves in more ways than we thought possible. Our dearest parents, your support has always been present throughout our childhood, and it was surely present during our four years at AUS, and there is no doubt it will be present beyond this point in our lives. Our dearest professors, we understood the real meaning of tough love from you. We had less than five hours of sleep most nights because of you, but in reality, you gave us what we needed, and what we deserved. With all the strictness that we got, we also got your devotion to educate us. For that, we are forever grateful. My dearest graduates, take a look to your right and left and thank those that are sitting next to you. We did it, together. Graduates: you came from all around the world and brought with you your stories, your cultures, and your unique experiences. For that, thank you. Thank you for giving AUS its charm.

And finally, to every person that played a role in making us grow as individuals; in making us evolve from students fresh out of high school eager for that A, to the ambitious, future-oriented, individuals we are today, we'd like to say to you, shukran, spasibo, shukriya, xie xie; our gratitude is endless. Thank you.

(920 words)

Speech 2

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim...In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful. As-salamu alaykum, and a very good morning to Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of our university; honourable members of the Board of Trustees; Chancellor Dr. Bjorn Kjerfve; faculty and staff; our proud families; distinguished guests; and, of course, my dear fellow graduates. It is my honour to welcome you all to the graduation of the American University of Sharjah's Class of 2017.

"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together". The sense of togetherness in this African proverb is no clearer than here and now. In this magnificent hall, we see students, professors, families and His Highness all together. I take this opportunity to pay due appreciation. To our parents, thank you for trusting our abilities and providing us with your unconditional love. Your staunch determination through thick and thin will continue to motivate us in tumultuous times, and your lessons about the importance of kindness and humility will guide us to be compassionate human beings. To our professors, thank you for going beyond the curriculum to mentor us, and for making the practice of critical thinking and self-evaluation a way of life. Your advice that we must take pride in what we do every day is a reminder that the treasure chest of success and happiness can only be unlocked with the key of passion. Most importantly, to Your Highness, we thank you for empowering us with a world-class education, which has ensured that we graduate from AUS as globally conscious leaders.

AUS has given us more than just quality education. We have all shared fond memories of our time spent here. Remember, how we would save up on our budgets during student clubs election week, with all the fantastic feasts going around; or how we bonded like siblings living together in dorms (I became my roommate's best man, and he's yet to find 'the one' to marry!); how we worked in four different groups on four different projects in four different courses simultaneously every semester; and how we over populated the library during finals week because if we were going down, we would go down together. But perhaps, the one overarching experience, is what AUS has done for every single one of us. It has helped us discover who we are.

Our region's economic growth is on the rise. The population in this region is young, and the opportunities to lead its growth are endless. We are very fortunate to be here today, empowered and given a platform. My friends, we have been acquiring knowledge, doing our research, discovering our passions, and testing our leadership styles at AUS for the past four years. While the responsibility of taking charge of our lives now falls on us entirely, the choice of shaping the future of this region is ours as well. Will we choose to be bystanders, or will we choose to shape that future?

My fellow graduates, an education from AUS means that we won't settle for ordinary careers. Today, I address the leader within all of us. I want to highlight the importance of fulfilling our potential. There are three things we must strive to do. First, to build a vision bigger than ourselves; second, to act on that vision, and third, to conquer all the fears that stand in the way of realizing that vision.

I am certain that we all have a passion, whether it is the arts, the sciences, technology, business, design, language or even sport. My friends, build a vision around your passion. I say passion, because it makes hard work easy. And make that vision bigger than yourself. If

you are looking for an example, then we've got one in our midst today. His Highness built a vision around his passion for education. Today, we are the result of that vision.

Given our place in history at the moment, the time is ripe to take action. Last summer, I stood by the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, right on the very tile where Martin Luther King Jr. stood and delivered his famous speech. Untarnished by time, his words, "I have a dream", were etched on that tile. I stood there thinking, just as I stand here today thinking the same, we are passionate, and we too dream of making a difference in the world, then with the exception of time, what is it that separates us? It is action my friends, Martin Luther King Jr. is not only remembered for his grand vision, but also for how he acted upon it, and the rest is history.

Lastly, to fully realize our goal, we must purge the fear of failure from ourselves. Fear of failure breeds pessimism, and keeps one from analysing mistakes to move forward. And to inundate our efforts entirely, it makes us compromise on our vision and principles in times of great difficulty. AUS breeds a culture of excellence. Part of that culture is the element of obstinacy we have towards not giving up. And with such persistence in our stance, we will either win, or simply learn from the experience.

J.K Rowling's words still echo in my mind when she said, "It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities." Now that we have the skills and the passion, are we going to be bystanders, or are we going to have the courage to make a good impact on the world around us? While the answer to this question will dictate our future, for now, you and I have earned the right to be called graduates. So let us be proud of our achievements and walk out with confidence henceforth. We are passionate, and we are bold, ready to pit ourselves against the challenges life will throw at us. Congratulations Class of 2017!

(1002 words)

Speech 3

Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, member of the supreme council of the UAE, ruler of Sharjah, Chairman of the board of Trustees and president of AUS, honorable members of the board of trustees, chancellor Bjorn Kjerfve, AUS faculty and staff, proud parents, distinguished guests, and last but not least, my dear fellow graduates: welcome to the American University of Sharjah's Commencement of Fall 2016

Warriors of Knowledge

Throughout my journey in high school and in the process of having to make a decision about my future university choice, I remember watching AUS graduation ceremonies which then seemed like a far-reaching dream. This dream has become a reality for many of us present here. Our hard work and determination have paid off. Today, you and I my dear graduates have become the graduating class of Fall 2016. We, the warriors of knowledge, have spent sleepless nights to become the people we are today. It has not been easy, but every step of the

way was worth it. We armed ourselves with the knowledge and guidance that we have been offered by AUS along with the skills that we gained to overcome all the challenges we were faced with.

The United Arab Emirates was created through the hard work of its people and its founders, one of whom is our beloved Sheikh Zayed, may he rest in peace. Nothing that this country enjoys today came easy. It was the hard work of its people who followed the ethics of its leaders, summed up in the following words of the late Sheikh Zayed. "It is my duty as the

leader of the young people of this country to encourage them to work and to exert themselves

in order to raise their own standards and to be of service to the country. The individual who is

healthy and of a sound mind and body, but who does not work, commits a crime against himself and society."

Just like the Emirati people, we the graduates have worked hard to get through our first years

at AUS, which generally consisted of pushing doors instead of pulling them, entering wrong classes, and in some cases failing quizzes and tests because we did not know what kind of exam questions we would get. All of that never stopped us from becoming the achievers we are today. Throughout the years, we became more confident in our abilities, we molded the best versions of ourselves in a tolerant, loving and supportive community, the community of AUS.

We bridged the differences and came together as a diligent student body sharing the one goal

of succeeding in university life. As we experience the last of our moments at AUS, we will have the best memories to look back to.

The world needs us today more than ever. We will leave this hall armed with the knowledge and skills we gained, with which we are indebted to better the world we live in.

Together, let us bring more good than bad to this world. Let's be more accepting and

understanding of others ideas. Let us apply the ethics that this university has instilled in us to win our future battles. We have been trained well through our curriculums and extracurricular activities to become the future warrior of knowledge we are. I know that each one of us can make a difference because I have seen the will power and determination in the eyes of almost every graduate. And I cannot wait to look back in 10 years and be proud of where life has taken every one of us.

Your highness, Sheikh Sultan, thank you for creating an institution that became home to us. Your vision for AUS reflects the genuine belief in us as global citizens and future leaders. We promise to never let you down.

Our parents and sponsors, thank you for financially and emotionally supporting us. Thank you for trusting our abilities and pushing us to be the best versions of ourselves. We promise to make you proud from this moment on.

I cannot conclude without recognizing the excellent role of our professors who were very tough at times, but that was because they wanted the best for us. They wanted us to work harder, read more, and find ourselves in what we learn. They taught us to apply what we learn in every single aspect of our lives, and for that we will be forever grateful.

We are warriors of Knowledge, the knowledge we attained from AUS.

We will remember this day and feel the tingling mixed emotions of finally having our work pay off and the fact that we made our dreams come true PROUDLY!!!

Congratulations to the class of Fall 2016

(789 words)

Speech 4

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim. In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful. All glory is ascribed to God, for His mercy endures forever. As-salamu alaykum, Your Highness

Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab

Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of this reputable university; honorable members of the

Board of Trustees; Chancellor Dr. Björn Kjerfve; members of faculty and staff; beloved parents and

relatives; distinguished guests; and finally, my fellow graduates. Welcome to the graduation of the

American University of Sharjah class of fall 2015.

This is a day of a new beginning; a day of joy for the graduating class, and all celebrating with us. Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan, we are really grateful to God that your vision gave birth to

a university such as ours. Your vision has allowed us to benefit from the remarkable transformation

that the educational experience at AUS offered. Nearly all of us graduating today understand the

feeling of being a naïve first-year student. As freshmen, we had little or no experience on how to

study at university; socially, some of us were just too timid about life. Today, years of self-discovery,

experimenting, and learning, have allowed us to develop a greater level of self-confidence and

awareness. We have benefitted enormously from the academic and non-academic learning experiences at AUS, and have gained very valuable skills. In addition, we have been blessed with

great friendships which started at AUS. To all members of the AUS community, and our beloved

families, we thank you for the various roles you have played in this transformation.

And now to my fellow graduating class, please join me in this brief recollection. After a few years of studying at AUS, today we sit before a host of people dear to us, who are truly proud of our

earned achievements. Whether our joining AUS was borne out of a random decision, or a product of

carefully reasoned intentions, or by the hand of destiny, what is certain is that such decision has

ultimately led us towards the beginning of success. Our experiences have differed a lot, depending

on our different fields of study, the professors we took classes with, the friends we hung out with,

and our involvements in extracurricular activities. Today, we are unique because of the choices we

made yesterday. And presently, the degrees that AUS confers on us today recognize our years of perseverance. However, there is a bigger picture that I am always reminded of at a time like this.

The poet, Robert Frost, says it best, and I quote him, "Two roads diverge in a wood, and I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference."

What is interesting about the road that makes the positive difference, is that it is usually the road less traveled by. My fellow friends, today while we celebrate a great day as this, let us also

know that every day we will have to stand between two roads that lead to different outcomes. It

could be as simple choosing to smile or to frown at a stranger, or choosing to maintain your integrity in complicated situations. It could be between choosing to spend time or money lavishly,

or to invest in our loved ones and our future. It could mean a choice between staying ignorant or

seeking knowledge. A very clear consequence of bad decisions is the recent increase in global

unrests we see in our times. But, perhaps, there is so much insight revealed in the saying that, "the

only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing". I would like to humbly make three requests to you my fellow graduating class.

Firstly, I urge you to be proactive problem solvers. The world is filled with a torrent of problems waiting to be solved. Notwithstanding, a key benefit of the world class education at AUS is

that we have been equipped with great tools for problem solving. Therefore, let the pride we and

our families experience today drive us to use these tools to resolve the challenges that confront the

world, for the good of all. Designers, scientists and engineers, writers, business women and men, I

implore you to use your creativity and analytical thinking to fight evil and uphold what is good

through the beauty of what you create. Be brave hearts, and let us stand for what is just and right.

Secondly, when peace thrives, the generations coming after us will be able to benefit from humanity's developments. In the absence of peace however, we run the risk of destroying the very

fabric that unites humanity. So, fellow graduates, the AUS community has provided a multicultural

environment that should have taught us to be tolerant with one another while staying true to our

beliefs. Use the enlightenment gotten from this community to spread peace. Be actively committed

to peacemaking. Do not sit behind and criticize, while evil triumphs over good; use your knowledge

wisely. Light your lamp of peace, and set it on a lampstand for all to see. Because, the absence of peacemakers is all that is necessary for evil to triumph.

Last but not least, let us think big and exceed the limit that is set before us. I urge you to take your skills and knowledge to greater levels. Learning is done every day outside the classroom.

Do not settle for mediocrity, but seek continuous refinement in knowledge and character.

There

will be difficult times, but have not these years at AUS imparted us life with lessons and virtues such

as self-discipline, patience, and perseverance?

So, fellow graduating class, while we rejoice in the joy of being able to wear this cap, gown, and tassel, and watch our loved ones rejoice as we step to a higher level, let us remember that the

knowledge we have acquired comes with responsibilities. Therefore, with the knowledge and

experiences we have gained from AUS, and the unlimited capabilities and grace bestowed on us by

God, the decision to succeed is really up to how we use the resources and opportunities.

Our destiny

is really linked to the choices we make, and we are not too far from greatness if we all decide today

to choose right and keep on believing.

To our beloved parents and guardians celebrating our achievement today, we assure you that there will be many more with God's grace. You have always been a source of motivation that

has fueled our achievements, directly and indirectly; and we are ever thankful.

Dear friends, this event happens once in a life-time, rejoice as you celebrate being a graduate of fall 2015, and go on to fulfil the promises of a better tomorrow.

Thank you!

Speech 5

Reflections

Bism Allah Al Rahman Al Rahim. In the name of Allah the most gracious and merciful. Al-salamu alaykum, Your highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi; chairman of the Board and President of AUS, Members of the board of Trustees, Chancellor Kjerfve, AUS faculty and staff, dear parents, relatives and distinguished guests. I am very honored to stand before you all and speak on behalf of the Class of Spring 2015.

Once upon a time back in 1997, the ruler of Sharjah his highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, had a vision of establishing a leading educational institution, which integrated American education with the Middle Eastern culture. Thanks to his Highness, 18 years later his vision became a reality as AUS stands to be the most prominent university in the Gulf. One of the many reasons behind this title is the immense dedication contributed by our beloved faculty and staff, and of course the top notch graduates that leave and owe their success to their education. Even though the university was built 18 years ago, but with every graduating student an invisible brick is added, mounting to the credibility of this university. What I am trying to say is that you have all already begun to pave their legacy and should not just stop there.

Once upon a time, and this is a true story, a freshman thought midterms didn't matter, projects were just for fun and attendance wasn't obligatory. After skipping a midterm, attending only 50% of classes, but acing her finals she was obviously on probation. It was a wakeup call, from that semester she passed all her courses until graduation with flying colors, her CGPA was average but her capabilities and determination are superior. Whether you are graduating today with a GPA of 2.5 or cum laude you should all be proud of your achievements because what we have learned from AUS is beyond any grade ranking.

You were right; three words every child dreads to admit to their parents. But today we stand with hearts full of gratitude telling them, "you were right" when you forced us to wake up to go to school, "you were right" for all those times you made us stay home and study, "you were right" when you told us we would do better next time. "You were right". On behalf of everyone I would like to thank every parent for your utmost support, care and love, we would not be here today if it weren't for you.

Once upon a time, a bunch of confused new students walked into the student center, engineers thinking they are the smartest, CAAD students thinking they are the most creative, business students betting that they will make the most money and CAS students thanking God that they do not belong to any of the others. But today during this bittersweet occasion we realize how all majors are equally important and

interdependent. We realize how much we will miss trying to sneak coffee in the library to stay awake for the next day's final, or the global days where some would only attend for the food and of course the 5 hours gaps we had between every class first freshman semester.

Did you know that the internet weighs as much as a strawberry? If you don't believe me, in 30 seconds you can find out whether what I just said is true or not, and we all

have google to thank for that. I am sure most of us at some point contemplated about sending appreciation letters thanking google for our degrees, but the truth is if there is anyone we should thank it should be our professors for explaining the same concept over and over again until we have mastered it. Not all the advice they have given us was to avoid plagiarism and derive equations, but they have provided many of us with guidance and life direction that Google's most advanced search engines would be incapable of "finding results".

As I was preparing this speech I thought about the best possible advice I could pass on. I won't quote some successful entrepreneur that thinks they have mastered all the secrets in this world. But instead someone most of us admired at a very young age but later grew up to trivialize such characters and dreams, when in fact they were the dreams that mattered. One of my favorite Peter Pan quotes says "The moment you doubt whether you can fly, you cease forever to be able to do it." For those of you who wanted to be astronauts as kids but later on thought the world was only made up of engineers, business people and artists, Neil Armstrong proved that narrow minded world wrong. Where he never doubted his ability to soar above the skies. The future that awaits us resembles a kaleidoscope; the pictures are very vague because, of course, none of us know what the future holds, but the colors are very bright and promising.

Some of us got accepted into prestigious schools to continue their education, some will travel the world, some will start their career and others do not know what they will do 5 seconds after they walk out of this door but that is okay. We all started as bewildered freshman, but today all of us are throwing our caps in the air, getting ready to go different ways. Although 20 years from now the university's computer systems would only recognize us as g/b00044175, which personally makes me feel like some double agent, but anyway we will always remember every corner of our campus with all its memories. We are now ready to begin a new and somewhat exhilarating chapter of our lives.

Congratulation class of Spring 2015, your bright future awaits.

Speech 6

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim...In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

As-salamu alaykum, Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of our university; honorable members of the Board of Trustees; AUS Acting Chancellor Dr. Thomas Hochstettler ; members of faculty and staff; proud parents and relatives; distinguished guests; and, of course, my dear fellow graduates. I would like to speak on behalf of the Fall 2013 Graduates in welcoming you all to the graduation of the American University of Sharjah's class of 2013.

So many emotions and thoughts are present today in this beautiful hall, and I believe nothing can truly describe how we all feel. I'm overwhelmed with joy, yet I can never articulate how proud, happy, and thankful I am to be here. My fellow graduates, I believe you all feel the same, knowing that after all the effort you have put into your education, and after all the times you've imagined yourselves present here today, you finally made it. Dear parents, brothers and sisters, thank you all for your support without which we would have only dreamt of this day. Finally, our beloved professors and faculty members, thank you all for helping us to find ourselves, develop our intellectual acuity, discover our gifts and talents, and nurture our potential not only to become leaders in our fields of endeavor, but to find a place of usefulness and honor in the world.

Albert Einstein once said: "Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand." With that said, I invite you all to join me in imagining a beautiful painting decorated with my words; a masterpiece that is AUS. I acknowledge that AUS has a unique significance to every individual in this room. However, I would like to convey to you all the shared elements in our myriad of perspectives in the form of a beautiful painting that derives its radiance from every day, every experience, and every encounter my fellow graduates and I have had during our AUS journey. A beautiful painting which attempts to capture the sheer diversity of my fellow graduates' views in a unified and symbolic manner. A beautiful painting that constitutes of a variety of people with multiple differences including nationality, gender, and religion, 3 blue birds of peace floating above a boundless lake, 4 books of infinite wisdom and knowledge, and a path of gorgeous green.

When I first joined AUS, I remember being astonished by the number of people that were chasing their dreams around our spectacular campus. I was surrounded by thousands who had different notions of what was possible; yet they all seemed to share a common value; the intent to build a brighter future. In a way, we are all one. In another way, we were all unique. However, our progressive common value kept us all together and made AUS feel like home. Our differences dissolved, and our mutual goals grouped us. We made plenty of friends in classrooms, dormitories,

sports, and in extra-curricular activities. Some of us were even lucky enough to develop close relationships with our professors; all of which have our dearest regards and deepest respect. Along the years, I realized that everybody that belonged to AUS was special in one way or another. I looked up to some, yet I realized that we all completed each other in a seamless manner. We all contributed to each other's development and we all lived in a simple matchless harmony. Now that I am here today, I'm ready to take on the next chapter of my life, yet I'm definitely going to miss this unique culture and unforgettable experience. If I had one wish, it would be that world with all of its troubles and unresolved conflicts could learn something from this great institution; that we can all coexist in simple harmony and build a brighter future together. Hence, the people with all their differences in my beautiful painting are all really the same; they're all unified; they're all of us.

The American University of Sharjah is well recognized for its superior education in the region. While that sounds charming to all of us, it's actually very demanding from its students. Therefore, we often felt exhausted, pressured, and overcome by obstacles. However, as I'm sure this applies to many of you, whenever I felt down I turned to family and friends because I needed an extra push; I needed someone to lift me up so I could go another mile. Whether I needed some motivation, or even some leisure; family and friends were always there to help me regain my balance and push through every obstacle in my path to success. Therefore, all of our families and friends represent the 3 blue birds of peace. – With you I was nourished. With you I was strong. And with you I was complete. It is because of your efforts to support us in what at times seemed to be a goal just out of reach, that we drew our strength to carry on, and we shall be forever grateful.

My fellow graduates, as I reflect today over my time here in AUS, I believe it's going to be tough to determine what I'm going to miss the most. However, it's mostly the little and simple things in life that truly do matter. Therefore, I believe it's the little memories encompassed in our pursuit of success that we will miss the most. These little memories include waking up and grabbing a bite from the student center right before our classes, working late nights in the library, visiting the sports complex, or even taking a walk around campus to refresh in the winter time breeze. Nevertheless, AUS derived its prestige by offering its students more of these memories in order to cooperate together and create synergies. As students, we were given the chance to participate in various extra-curricular activities and events which offered us a chance to share our cultures and to develop intellectually. Career fairs, club fairs, global days, and various other events and competitions brought us all together, and will continue to bring students together in the years to come. This pool of memories collectively shared by us represents a boundless lake that has nurtured us, and will continue to nurture the future generations of students.

My fellow graduates, almost four to five years ago we were all high-school graduates that did not have the slightest idea about what life really is. Today, I look around and I see a group of professionals ready to leave their unique prints indelibly stamped in the world. Promising Architects, scientists, artists, mathematicians, journalists, mass communication professionals, engineers,

entrepreneurs, historians, politicians, business professionals, among others... I see the leaders of a new day who will take their rightful place of leadership in the modern world. AUS offered us the chance to learn and develop the skills needed in order to become what we simply aspired to be not so long ago. Not only that, we also learned more about other areas of interest; such as film, music, arts, dance, sciences, and various other subjects that intrigued us and helped us to become more well-rounded, which is the essence of the American liberal arts educational objective. Furthermore, we have developed the skills to complete a ton of tasks and still have room to do more. This seemed almost impossible when we first joined AUS; today we have accomplished it all. Consequently, the four different colleges at the American University of Sharjah symbolize the four books of infinite wisdom and knowledge in my beautiful painting.

Finally and most importantly, I come to the center of my beautiful painting that is a path of gorgeous green. I can't determine precisely, nor can many of you, where our individual paths will lead. We know not what tomorrow brings, but I can tell you that all of us are ready to face the best and the worst of days. We have made it this far, and we will reach the furthest extent of our dreams. My fellow graduates, some of us will face success and some of us will experience intermittent failures and setbacks. However, I only ask for your patience and resilience because god has a greater plan for all of us. Every obstacle in our paths has been put there for a greater purpose that we will not realize right away. When you face your best days, make the most of them; when you face your worst days, believe that it's nothing more but a test for your patience and strength which will eventually pass. Your acceptance is key when you desire progress, and your failures will then ultimately become part of your success. My fellow graduates, I ask you all to imagine your success, imagine your dreams, and imagine the most and the best of all that you can achieve. If you do, I promise you that your imagination will someday come to life; I promise you that success will be right around the corner; and I promise you that you will all fulfill everything you ever sought to achieve. Your paths in my beautiful painting are nothing but your own creations; you can decide where it will lead. I only ask that you put your heart into everything and believe in yourselves; everything else will flow with ease.

I would like to conclude my speech with a saying by Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him: "Conduct yourself in this world, as if you are here to stay forever; prepare for eternity as if you have to die tomorrow".

Thank you all once again. Thank you AUS. Thank you for being the source of our transformation. Thank you for creating men and women of great value aimed towards success. Thank you for being that ever evolving masterpiece that will forever remain cherished in our hearts and minds.

My fellow graduates, I would like to congratulate you for all that you have earned today, and wish you well in all that you will achieve in the future. Congratulations to the Fall 2013 graduates!

Speech 7

Giving Meaning to Little Things

Bism Allah Al Rahman Al Rahim..in the name of Allah the most gracious and merciful. As-salamu alaykum, Your highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammad Al Qassimi; chairman of the Board and President of AUS, Members of the board of Trustees, Chancellor Hochstetler, AUS faculty and staff, dear parents and relatives and distinguished guests. It is with honor that I stand here today, speaking on behalf of my fellow graduates, Class of 2014.

Allow me to begin by taking you back, back to the times when we were asked what we wanted to be when we grew up. Our answers were superheroes, movie stars, cowboys or wanting to be just like mummy and daddy. When we grew a little older our answers changed, maybe to something like doctors, astronauts, teachers, presidents or in my case a rock star. However, now that we've grown up everyone expects a more serious answer.

Today, my fellow graduates, I believe we all have the necessary expertise and confidence to answer them. We can tell them that the world we live in is unpredictable and that the most valuable skill AUS has taught us is to be flexible and willing to take risks and accept changes. We can show them how we were educated to stand out, be punctual, push ourselves to the limit and drive to accomplish and succeed. Moreover, we can assure them that through these past four years we were allowed to make mistakes and then make more mistakes trying to correct them. That way we would not have to guess... we would know.

Knowledge is more than the sum of its parts, and AUS taught us how to use each and every part along with passion and persistence, to build our goals and do whatever it takes to achieve them. When I first entered this university my goal was simple: to graduate from the school of Architecture and Design, and Goodness me I didn't know what I was getting myself into. "The building that never sleeps", as we students like to call it. Well some also liked to call it the cave, but we "design students" don't like that one so much. Nevertheless, the all-nighters, the endless hours studying in the library and the group projects, which we all hated so much, are what truly developed our personalities and social skills. We came to realize that AUS is our second home and we are all part of a vast multicultural family.

All of us graduating today are privileged. Not only did we acquire a profound educational experience but also the opportunity to explore and understand over 80 different cultures and learn from one another. Look around you: how many different nationalities and backgrounds do you see on this very stage?

Being part of this multicultural family broadens our understanding of a globalized world with all its diversities and challenges. AUS prepared us to adapt and learn to

coexist, while agreeing to disagree. By doing this, we can implement change and build stronger societies. After all, we make the choice of either

having a passive voice in our lives, or being active heroes with our own happy endings.

I learned in design school that any intended outcome or change requires a strong innovative foundation followed by a systematic process. I think these key factors, along with the ability to manage time, can help us get through any challenges we may face. While studying at AUS I understood the true value of time. Whether it was before a final submission, exam or deadline I have learnt that one minute can truly make a difference. Today, my fellow graduates, we have become more capable of managing time, which is an asset in this fast moving age.

So now we wonder once more, what do we really want to be in the future? I may not know that but I do know who I am today; a strong and dedicated AUS graduate. Being part of the AUS community has taught me to give importance to the value of things around me, and as our dear late Professor Shoaib used to say, "Give meaning to the little things because they can affect the way you interpret reality".

This is a day of joy, yet I stand here with a bit of a heartache knowing that this beautiful experience has come to its natural end; and that we are to move on to another major phase in life. AUS has truly become part of us. Simply not driving through its gates every morning is something that in itself will be missed. It has without a doubt become our second home, as over the past few years we have spent more time in it than in any other place I can recall. Nevertheless, while we should treasure our past we have to now move on to the next phase. Congratulations my fellow graduates, as today is the day we are proudly announced as graduates of the American University of Sharjah.

Speech 8

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim...In the name of Allah, most gracious, most merciful. As-salamu alaykum, Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of our university; honorable members of the Board of Trustees; Acting Chancellor Dr. Thomas Hochstettler; members of faculty and staff; proud parents and relatives; distinguished guests; and, of course, my dear fellow graduates. Welcome to the graduation of the American University of Sharjah's class of fall 2014.

The first thing I'd like to say is "thank you". Thank you to the people that supported us to be at this awe-inspiring venue today. First, I'd like to thank his Highness for providing us with numerous opportunities in this university, and his never-ending effort to enhance the quality and the experience of education at AUS. And a personal thank you from me your Highness because if it weren't for your scholarship, I would not be here today. Thank you! I must also thank our professors who were not only educators, but also role models. I'm leaving this university not only with the knowledge and skills I gained in my program, but also with the advice and encouragement from my dear professors. I thank them all. God bless you.

-Belief-

Today I'm delivering what is likely to be one of the most important speeches of my life. Throughout my academic journey from my formative years at high school, to my more recent experiences at this university, I have always had that one dream that I wanted to accomplish. I have wanted to become a public speaker. I wanted to be at this place, at this time giving my graduation speech. I believe that a key factor that helped me fulfill this dream was believing in myself.

Forty two years ago, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the late president of the United Arab Emirates (may god have mercy upon him), believed that he and his fellow Sheikhs could found a country that would be peaceful and generous towards its citizens. He believed in what he could do, and he succeeded.

Fellow students, when we believe in ourselves, we are already one step closer to reaching our goals. A few years ago, when you and I filled up the AUS application form, we believed that we could get the acceptance letter and we could make it through graduation, and here we are today as graduates. But to get here, we had to make complicated decisions about courses every semester, wait in queues at the cashier to pay tuition fees, deal with quizzes, midterms, finals, projects, not to forget, stress and peer pressure. We went through it all with a belief that we were on our way to success. We are still learning, we are almost there.

In life, it is normal to experience hardships and failure. The American philosopher Amos Alcott once said, "Success is sweet and sweeter if long delayed and gotten through many struggles and defeats". Sometimes we need to fail in order to succeed. J.K. Rowling, the author of Harry Potter series, was rejected by 12 publishers, it was the 13th who accepted to publish her first book, saying, however,

that writing for children didn't often lead to success. Rowling believed in herself and the enormous effort she had put into her work, and as we all know she succeeded. Oprah Winfrey received negative criticism, after she had ended her famous show and set up her own network. The criticism upset her for a while, however, she just worked harder because she believed in herself and what she could do. Steve Jobs at some point in his life was fired from the company he himself created, but this did not stop him from pursuing his passion in electronics because he believed in himself and his goals. These knock-backs did not stop Rowling, Winfrey and Jobs from believing in themselves.

After this ceremony, we will all have the anxiety of leaving the familiarity of university. Questions like, "What should I do with my life? Am I going to land a job? Do I want to pursue a graduate degree?" will be running through our heads. This experience can be exhilarating, or sometimes scary. Yet, never stop thinking, working, and most importantly believing in yourselves. We don't live in an idealistic world where we won't experience discouragement. But we can refuse to be discouraged. If we believe in ourselves, no matter what, we will and can strive to overcome any problem after graduation, even in times of economic crisis, or political instability.

We have made it this far, YES we can believe in ourselves.

-Responsibility-

We have also learned the importance of responsibility. The education we received in this university and the capacity for hard work we have developed, gives us a status and a responsibility in society.

Maya Angelou said "When you learn, teach, when you get, give". Today shouldn't be the finishing line, but the beginning of more accomplishments not only for you dear graduates but also for the people around you.

We need to nourish our ambition to serve a purpose in society. We need to contribute in some way, to aim high. This contribution can be through volunteering, raising awareness, working for charities, debating ideas, fighting for equality, inventing a machine, writing a book, making a film. All of this will enrich our lives, and hopefully the lives of others.

With these contributions, some want to make their families proud, some want to make their country proud, and some want millions of people to appreciate their work forever. We, with the knowledge we have and the tools this university has provided us with, are responsible to try and touch other people's lives, and, as clichéd as it sounds, make a difference. It is our time to make a change.

Once again I'd like to thank the network of support all of us were surrounded by, our families and friends. I'm happy that I made friendships I know will last beyond this day here at AUS. Finally, I'm so glad my parents were convinced enough to allow me to study at this university, and had the patience to bear with me, especially my father. "Dad, I did well".

We did it! Class of 2014, proceed to the next step of your journey with belief and responsibility. Good luck and Congratulations!

Speech 9

يوم التخرج بالعلياء يفتخر ... فيه المآثر والآمال تزدهر
يوم تبسم عنه الدهر وانطلقت ... فيه التباشير والأحلام والفكر
وأشرقت في رياه الشمس والقمر ... يوم تفتح فيه الزهر مبتهجا
نهدي التهاني من الأعماق خالصة ... لمن سعوا ونالوا بعزم منها مقتدر

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Rahim.. In the name of Allah, the most Gracious, the most Merciful

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh,

Your Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and President of our university; honorable members of the Board of Trustees; Acting Chancellor Dr Thomas Hochstettler; members of faculty and staff; dear parents; distinguished guests; and, not to forget the future ambassadors, my dear friends and graduates.

It's indeed a great honour and privilege to have such a special opportunity to speak on the behalf of all my friends and graduates at this prestigious ceremony. I would like to welcome you all to the graduation ceremony of the American University of Sharjah's class of Fall-2013.

We have arrived at this time of the year, when graduating students don their caps and gowns and arm themselves with a big smile as they march across the stage to receive their degrees. Whether students are finishing up undergraduate or graduate degrees, graduation is an important milestone in every one's learning journey.

16 years ago, a very wise leader said, "Perhaps the first thing we shall start with as we are entering the 21st century is preparing today's youth for tomorrow's challenges. And this can't be achieved unless we arm them with science and knowledge, increase their cultural awareness and enrich their life experiences. By doing so, we are going to have a competent generation that will be able to continue its contributions to build a more developed society and brighter future and to move forward in the way to advance human civilization while extending its friendship ties to the rest of the world." Today, we are not only here to celebrate another graduation of (number) students. We are also here today to salute the new leaders of the future, to praise those who passionately educated them, and to thank the parents and families who supported their aspirations. We stand here today to show the world that we, AUS Graduates, after 15 years of the great leader's vision, have made it a reality as we are holding the torch of knowledge to light our paths

forward to a prosperous future. We are all here today to gratefully celebrate his fulfilled dreams.

That great leader who has always inspired us by his insightful visions is His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi.

We all had dreams and we all worked very hard to get to this stage today; and now it is the time for us to enjoy the achievements of our hard work and dedication while armed with the belief that we are ready and capable of standing out, of changing, and of leading generations forward. All of this can be achieved because, as the late great leader Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." It is today that we can make every sleepless night, every hour spent in the library, every hungry day, and every overwhelming research paper count.

Graduation is not only a celebration; it is actually a milestone in a lifelong pursuit of learning and giving back. One can never over-learn and one can never over-know. As many of us came to AUS from across the globe to seek a better education, we should not stop here as if it is the final station. This is just the beginning of a lifetime journey filled with all the joy, risks, failures, and successes. However, I will not bestow upon us more advices about life, careers, and finding success. This is because life and success can be defined in myriad ways that we will find through this journey.

Fellow Future Ambassadors, from whatever discipline you are in, whether engineering, architecture, business, international studies, or something else, remember that what makes every single one of us unique is the set of experiences we have been through in life. We choose what we want to experience in life and that's how we define ourselves. We all had our special experiences in this outstanding university, beautiful campus and Capital of Islamic Culture, yet we all shared a common experience; the AUS experience. AUS didn't just teach us academic subjects but also taught us determination, hard work, patience, kindness and most importantly the spirit of being involved with the world around us. As part of the AUS experience, this campus has also brought us all under one roof as a multicultural society where we have met new people, made lifetime friendships, and shared our experiences, such as being addicted to Red-Bull and Starbucks.

The opportunities that AUS offers us on and off campus are enriching such as in the Spring- of 2013, I was among six other students who represented the AUS delegation to the National Model United Nations (NMUN) in New York. In this life-changing event, we were awarded an honourable mention though we were the smallest delegation there. Looking back at that experience, I would like to say THANK YOU AUS for enriching our college life with exceptional experiences which have improved our leadership and multicultural skills and have brought out the best in us.

Our life experiences are masterpieces of art. Each one of us draws and colours his/her own masterpiece with all their artistic spirits. Every unique story we have

ever connected with, every inspiring figure we have ever admired, and every puny little thing that we have ever accomplished is what is going to shape our artful lives and destinies. This reminds me of what my sister once said, "People enter and leave our lives but the memories they create are what remain, and they are what we celebrate and embrace." Having said so, graduation does not end here today. It is a process that will go on until the last day of our lives as we will continue to be part of new stories, meet new people, and simply, inspire and be inspired.

At this point, I would like to quote our beloved father and great leader the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan when he said "The education of our people is a great wealth. We are proud of our educated nation because through knowledge and science we will open the horizons of a glorious future." Therefore, we graduates of Fall-2013, are here today to promise that we will carry on his vision and continue our educational journey so that we will be the change that will make our world more prosperous, developed, and peaceful. This graduation is our first step on this thrilling journey. And YES! The FUTURE belongs to US as we have got many more beautiful aspirations to add to our masterpieces.

Lastly, I am sure that you are expecting me to say goodbye to all of you, but, unfortunately, I won't as I really believe that I am going to see you all someday, somewhere, as leading and inspiring figures in our world. I hope your dreams take you to the corners of your smiles, to the highest of your hopes, to the windows of your opportunities, and to the most special places your hearts have ever desired. Do not forget to dream big... And to DO bigger!

"ألف مبروك" = Alf Mabrook"..... "a million congratulations" to the graduating class of Fall-2013 .. you deserve it !

Speech 10

Good morning,

On behalf of my colleagues, I welcome His Highness, Sheikh Doctor Sultan Bin Mohammad Al Qassimi, member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, Founder and President of the American University of Sharjah. I also welcome the Acting Chancellor, Doctor Thomas Hochstettler, honored members of the Board of Trustees, deans of the colleges, our professors, the administration of this university, and last but not least, parents, students and distinguished guests.

Today, we finally reach the beginning. A beginning we have been preparing for, for many, many years. Few words can describe the grandeur of what is to come. To some, this hour is intimidating, to others, it is an exciting challenge.

I stand before you not as a valedictorian, but as a friend of your daughters, sons and their friends. To represent them, and our time at the American University of Sharjah.

I consider myself to have been extremely fortunate. Always surrounded by the curious and the passionate. We were immersed in an environment that always demanded the best, at times frustrating, but mostly, liberating.

Liberating because we kept finding new frontiers for ourselves. We pushed, doing things we never thought we could do, contemplating thoughts we had never considered before, understanding ideals we never thought we could even fathom.

Almost halfway through my journey at AUS, I realized that this is how one should carry on. Not staying intellectually comfortable in one place for too long, because I promise, comfort is painfully overrated.

Borrowing the timeless words of Gibran Khalil Gibran, "Verily the lust for comfort murders the passion of the soul, and then walks grinning in the funeral". We are not built to stay put in one place. If we do, we add to the misfortune of the human condition. We are built to adapt, our ultimate survival tool. Staying comfortable for too long will numb the quality on which human development depends.

During our time in AUS, our education went hand in hand with our development. First drafts were destroyed and rewritten, models were rebuilt, deadlines were missed and sleep was ignored. At times, we almost walked away because we thought we couldn't go on, but we surprised those around us and more importantly, we surprised ourselves. We overcame our darkest hours with the thought of standing in this hall one day. Wearing these long black robes, trying to balance these awkward caps.

We must continue to push ourselves, consider thoughts and options we would normally have never welcomed. Doing things we knew, or thought, were beyond our capabilities, only to find out that we could go further. And better. We are how we see ourselves. See yourself in a light that values your mind and, more importantly, your will.

This, is our commencement. The idea of graduation should not take center stage in our subconscious, but the fact that it is a new beginning. This ceremony today in no way signals the end, it is *only* the beginning. One never stops learning, one never stops growing. Our education was not shaped by the standardized test. Our

education was shaped by the mass of opportunities that were presented to us by this university. We have been *wonderfully* fortunate. *Our*, prestigious university has attracted scholars from all corners of the world keen to share their knowledge with us. So please remember those conversations, these people, *their* stories.

No amount of words can express the gratitude we graduates feel. To His Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, we thank you for your vision. We thank you for achieving this vision. To our professors, thank you for not only sharing your knowledge, but your stories. Thank you for showing us where the world needs us, and more importantly, for showing us how to serve it. You have been educators, and we will never forget the enlightening conversations we had inside and outside the classroom. Finally, to our mothers, fathers, siblings, and friends. To some, you were far away. Others were next door. But your voice on the end of a telephone often made things better. To you we ran with our joys and sorrows, thank you for accommodating the fluctuations of our journey.

Discovering new frontiers to our existence has always been the driving force behind our development. My friends, my peers, my colleagues, I ask you, look within, because you will find the passion and the will necessary to do whatever you want. You might fail. But you will rise again. My fellow graduates. Life is waiting for us. We might not be fully ready, but one rarely is. I am not. I am scared. But I am not intimidated. I am armed with the idealism that has been embedded within me at AUS.

Do not leave a single cell of your existence unused. You now have the tools to Create. To Imagine. To Work. To Love. To Thank. And most importantly, To Wonder. We are young. We are passionate; and when we leave this hall, we will claim our future.

Ladies and Gentlemen: the graduating class of Spring, 2014.

Thank you

Speech 11

Bismillah Al Rahman Al Raheem
Assalm Alaykum Wa Rahmat Allah Wa Barakatouh

Your Highness Sheik Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates, Ruler of Sharjah, and the President of the American University of Sharjah; honorable members of the Board of Trustees; Acting Chancellor Dr. Thomas Hochstettler; Provost Dr. Malcolm Richards; the deans; department heads; our esteemed faculty members, our beloved parents; distinguished guests; and my fellow graduates sitting proudly here today. On behalf of the Fall 2013 Graduates I would like to welcome you all to the graduation of the American University of Sharjah class of Fall 2013.

Graduation ceremonies have been going on every year all over the world since the 12th century. That means for the last thousand years, at the end of their studies, students just like us, put on these medieval flowing robes and these hats with tassels and suddenly realized that the diploma they were being handed was more like a torch or a baton, a kind of symbolic passing of duties from one generation to the next. In other words, the challenges of the world were now *theirs* to fix, not just the problems that grown-ups had to worry about, wrestle with, or work at to fix. Someone just like you, in the last thousand years graduating in Europe or wherever, had the same sort of issues to face as we do: we have violence and wars; they had them too: the 100 years and WW1 & 2 for example; we have outbreaks of disease—bird flu and swine flu; they had disease too: in fact, they faced a really big one--the bubonic plague which must have made students feel more like staying home rather than attending a lecture. We have issues with climate change; and they did too. Europe experienced something called the "little ice age." We have technological revolutions and new discoveries; and they had them too. We have the computer; they had the printing press. We landed a spaceship on the Moon; the Spanish discovered and landed in the Caribbean. And for sure, we see financial markets rise and fall and speculation bubbles burst. But they did too. We all may remember learning about the tulip mania in Holland in the late 1630s when one tulip bulb—one tulip bulb—was sold for 4500 AED. Now that's an economic bubble. What I'm driving at is that graduations are the same for everyone: there is excitement mixed with uncertainty; pride and confidence have strengthened the graduate, which is good, but all graduates know that the weight of the work which awaits them will be heavy.

There's an old joke about an economics professor who says that the questions on his exam are always the same, but each semester the *answers are different*. This joke captures my point: the challenges we graduates face are always the same, but each year the answer to how we approach and deal with our challenges will be different.

So one question we might ask tomorrow is how should we deal with a tough

economy and job market; or how should we get ready for *more school* if we plan to continue in graduate school? The author Bob Gass says that the door of opportunity is always marked *PUSH*. This means if we plan to continue our education, we must continue to push the heavy load of school work; if we plan to pursue a career, it means we must use our energies to push the door of opportunity open rather than just sit back. As AUS graduates, we are lucky. We know how to do this pushing because we have been taught by the best. AUS professors have been *pushing us ahead* since orientation. Of course, pushing is just a way of saying they got us to be pro-active, they stimulated us and inspired us, each in their own way.

Our humanities teachers taught us about the push of poetry, how the beauty of language can push away the ugliness of cliches and bad grammar; how magnificent music can push away the repulsiveness of urban sound; and how the light of logic can push away the darkness of bigotry; our science and engineering professors taught us about the push of life, how the push of capillary action can defy the mighty pull of gravity and send water up toward the highest leaf on the tree. Our philosophy professors taught us to think that maybe push and pull are merely the same thing (in the way that the road up the mountain is the same as the road down), and our physics professors confirmed this idea, showing us that *for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction*. This idea connects to our engineering professors who taught us how the pull of gravity affects buildings; to our business professors who taught us about the push and pull of supply and demand, the rise and fall of markets, and how the desires of consumers push them towards products.

On graduation day, we realize we have so many individuals to thank who have helped us develop the mental strength to push forward in our lives and careers. But as we gather today, we thank them as a whole, for indeed the university is one body. So we thank all those professors who made us laugh, or simplified a difficult concept, or made the material so fascinating that we were surprised that class time was up; and we give even greater thanks to those professors who postponed quizzes and midterms when we asked them to.

I just mentioned that the university is a team, and there is one part of that team that deserves enormous thanks: the librarian staff. Our librarians were not only always there to help us but they were inspiring as well. They spend their entire day with books and academic journals and never look drowsy. They are just as excited about JSTOR and periodicals as students are about Twitter accounts and smart phones. But seriously, the great professors and librarians here really show how all the parts of AUS are united to enhance the learning process and make the university the best in the region.

But everything we have accomplished today, all of our preparation, and all of our memories of AUS, are the result of the hard work and vision of his Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan Al Qassimi. Sheikh Sultan deserves our gratitude for opening this university 17 years ago so that AUS students would be able to push open the doors of opportunity. I want to end by emphasizing that AUS has conditioned us to push forward and approach difficult tasks using the strength of our reason and a spirit of

confidence, not anxiety, not apprehension, just raw optimism, technical know-how, and the willingness to push.

So, despite the challenges that we will face, we, the graduating class of 2014, stand at the doors of opportunity, ready to push. We will have gratitude in our hearts for the people who have prepared us, and we will put our trust in Allah while we push open the doors of opportunity; and we will push those doors--not with drooping arms--but with our shoulder outthrust...like a battering ram.

Thank you

Congratulations to the Class of Fall 2013