

Sydney Campus Graduation 2021  
Farewell Address  
June 9 2021: 5:00 PM Ceremony  
2020 graduates from the School of Business  
2021 graduates from the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Business, and Law

Alexander Du Maurier (Bachelor of Laws (Honours) / Bachelor of  
Commerce)

Good evening Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, distinguished guests, University staff, fellow graduates and last, but certainly not least, family and friends.

Before I formally start my address this evening, I'd first like to thank one group in attendance and congratulate another. The first group are the silent observers. The ones who were with you when you first enrolled at this University. The ones who counselled you through those late nights cramming before an exam or stressing over assignment deadlines. They're the ones who are here with you tonight either in person, virtually or spiritually. They're your family and friends. Graduates, I think we should give them a round of applause.

The second group is, of course, the graduates. Tonight is undeniably about celebrating your achievements; eating the fruits of the seed that you planted many years ago by enrolling at this University. You should all be immensely proud of your achievements and the sacrifices you've made to be here tonight.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Alec du Maurier, and I have graduated with a Bachelor of Laws and Commerce. I am well aware that on a day of such elation and relief, and given that the State of Origin starts in approximately an hour, what you require of me is brevity. I must confess that, having graduated with a law degree, it was not easy for me to be economic with my words. There's a reason why lawyers charge in units of 6 minutes. But I promise I'll do my best to keep my address succinct.

I'm going to adopt a slightly unorthodox approach to my farewell address this evening. Don't worry, I'm not going to talk about how unprecedented the last 18 months have been. Instead, I want to reflect on what I, and I presume all of the other graduates, are taking away from this University.

I'm going to ask that you find your ticket for tonight's ceremony. If you're watching at home or don't have your ticket on you, don't worry, you'll still be able to follow along. I'm now going to ask that you find the University crest which is situated at the top of your ticket or if you're at home, on the University's website.

Upon locating the crest, you'll see it has, as its central symbol, a book; the Bible. And within the Bible there are four words written in Latin.

Now, my Latin is a little bit rusty so I'll save myself the embarrassment of attempting to pronounce the words. However, I can say that they translate to: "In the beginning was the Word"; or, put differently, Logos. Those words are the opening words to the Gospel of John, to which various meanings have been attributed.

These words were chosen by the University because they remind us that everything that exists begins as an idea, and that ideas find expression in symbols. The words also identify the reason and thinking of divine authority.

In my time at the University, I never appreciated that the University's crest had buried within it such a profound concept. Not only that, but that the crest and its meaning was so intertwined with the University's core focus for all of its graduates; that is, to develop natural critical thinkers.

I now want you to look down at your ticket for a second time, or again, on the University's website, and you'll find the University's objects, one of which is to provide an excellent standard of training for the professions. In its endeavour to achieve this object, the University places great emphasis, as I've now just mentioned, upon "critical thinking".

Now, the term "critical thinking" is more than just a catchy marketing slogan. The University claims that its students need critical thinking skills to separate real news from fake news, truth from lies and to distinguish information from knowledge. But I think there's more to the concept of critical thinking than distinguishing what Donald Trump has infamously coined as "fake news" from the truth.

By "critical thinking", what is meant, in my view, is that one is taught how to think, not what to think. It is analogous to the adage, "If you give someone a fish, you feed them for a day. If you teach someone to fish, you feed them for a lifetime".

Graduates, this University has fed us all with the skills that are necessary for life; the skills necessary to challenge thought and provoke new ideas; the skills necessary to meaningfully engage and impact the professions that we are going into, or have already entered. For this, I am extremely grateful to all the academic staff. I will not personally name the staff who have meaningfully touched my life, but you know who you are.

Graduates, the world we are inheriting is beset with incredible challenges, yet it offers so many opportunities. We now belong to a small group of people who have been well equipped to tackle those challenges and capitalise upon those opportunities. In doing so, I think we'd all be remiss to lose sight of this chapter of our educative journey. When you enter your professions, take with you the experiences of this University. Most importantly, think critically.

In closing, and on a more joyous note, I want to again congratulate all of tonight's graduates. You've all earned immense praise and deserve to celebrate. I wish each and every one of you the absolute best.

I'm so honoured to be here representing my fellow graduates, and so thankful that we are finally able to share this experience in-person.