

A New Beginning – Delivered by Senior Commencement Speaker Nicholas Ciarlante '14 at Colby-Sawyer College Commencement on May 10, 2014

Chairman Csaturi and members of the Board of Trustees, President Galligan and senior staff, faculty, staff, distinguished guests, families, friends and members of the Class of 2014—today, we gather to celebrate the success and achievements of our class—the Colby-Sawyer College Class of 2014!

Four years ago, we gathered under this tent as the bells atop Colgate Hall rang, and we celebrated the beginning of our academic careers at Colby-Sawyer through Convocation. We gathered as strangers as President Galligan and Student Government Association President Kyla Pillsbury welcomed us to Colby-Sawyer College. Overcome with emotions that day—nervousness about what the rest of the day and Orientation would bring, not to mention the coming weeks; fatigue from moving in, and anxiety about what I would do for my birthday later that week away from home, I remember little of what was said that day. I do, however, remember President Galligan telling a story about attending a Red Sox game and being stuck in traffic on the way home.

He said:

The faculty and staff at Colby-Sawyer will be your guides on your educational journey. Up to now family, friends and teachers have guided you; today, you may add us to the list... It is our jobs as your guides to contribute to what you know, to add to your body of knowledge ... to try to get you to intellectual places that you have never visited before...

Looking back over the past four years, President Galligan, you were indeed right. The faculty and staff not only guided us on our educational journeys, but they pushed us to learn new things, expand our horizons and grow as individuals. To give you a few examples from our class:

- **Briana Alexander, Pradipti Bhatta, Shannan Hartmann, Amanda Kimball and Ashley Miller**, guided by Julie Crisafi Lynch and the Community Service Club, dedicated their spring breaks to community service in Miami. The students held fundraisers, worked to raise awareness

for a cause, and participated in a weeklong service project renovating a home. And with a vast array of plans for the future, community service will always be a key part of their lives.

- **Keenan Bartlett**, captain of the men's swimming and diving team, was guided and inspired by his coach and teammates and set school records for the 200 meter backstroke, the 200 meter individual medley swim, and the 100 and 200 meter freestyle relays. And in the fall, he will be employed in a finance career.
- **Kara Loiselle**, a friendly face in the mailroom, is a future veterinarian. She was awarded a grant by Colby-Sawyer's Wesson Honors Idea Fund that helped her spend a summer researching veterinarians and their many paths to their current practices. Through this experience, Kara received career advice and opportunities that will assist her in the future, and she shared her findings with her student colleagues in her role as vice president of the Health Profession Association. The best to you, Kara, as you begin veterinary school at Tufts University in the fall.
- **Hang Nguyen**, a Business Administration major, took advantage of student employment opportunities at the college to compile an impressive resume that helped her secure multiple internships with the prestigious accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers. She will pursue a master's degree in accounting in the fall at The University of Nevada at Las Vegas.

I could continue, as every member of our class has gone outside his or her comfort zone and added to their individual body of knowledge. Every day, students at Colby-Sawyer College are pushed to do things they never thought possible.

College life evolves. Each semester and academic year has been a new beginning for us. As first-year students, the entire college experience was new. We struggled to find the bookstore, our classrooms and our professors' offices. We struggled, and kept struggling, to open our mailboxes, excited to see a pink package slip

inside. During those first few months, however, we also made new friends, experienced an independent lifestyle and, eventually, got into our mailboxes.

We arrived in time to see the beautiful new Windy Hill School dedicated, and we watched Ware Campus Center transform into the Ware Student Center. We were here when the Abbey and Burpee basements were renovated, and when 517 solar panels were installed across campus. During our time here, we have seen the largest entering classes in the history of the college. We have seen new majors added, and we have benefitted from the growth in campus diversity.

This year, we were welcomed back to campus by Colby-Sawyer's first wind turbine, the sustainable classroom that has been built over the course of the year, and a state-of-the-art track and turf field.

This day, May 10, 2014, seemed an impossibly long way away when we sat here for convocation, but here we are, four years later, as the bells atop Colgate Hall toll one last time for our class. Soon President Galligan and Deans Taylor and Kirkwood will confer upon us the degree we earned with our hard work and commitment to our studies at Colby-Sawyer College.

After the last bag is packed and the last car drives away from campus this afternoon, remember this question that I pose to you now. It's one we've all been thinking about, I know: "What's next?"

Just as we did four years ago, we are about to begin a new chapter of our lives. We were guided, supported and pushed to excel, and now I challenge you to do the same. Push yourself and try to inspire others.

And whether you plan to pursue an advanced degree or enter employment, I turn to the song of our *alma mater*, "Colby Forever," to help answer this question. In particular, I look at two lines. They read, "Colby forever we will never part" and "as you leave us, it's aloha and not good-bye."

While we prepare to leave campus today, remember that Colby-Sawyer will always be your home; and whether you go on to be a biologist, an accountant,

teacher, nurse or even a legislator, be proud of the education that you received at Colby-Sawyer College.

My dear friends, I cannot imagine a finer group of people with which to have spent my last four years. I would like to leave you with one final thought. Four years ago, as we were welcomed to Colby-Sawyer, we sat under this tent as strangers. Today, we are here under the tent as a family of friends.

So remember, it's "aloha and not good-bye"!

Congratulations to the Colby-Sawyer College Class of 2014!