

Remarks
Jason Farrell Jr., Class of 2023

Good afternoon, everyone!

My name is Jason Farrell, a member of the Class of 2023 and this year's student body president. I am so honored to speak to all of you on such a meaningful occasion. Congratulations, Class of 2023! We've MADE IT! Before I continue, I want every member of our class to think about what they want to take away from today, from the past four or so years. What has this experience felt like? What have you learned? Where have you gone? How have you changed?

It feels like just yesterday we were looking at a campus map, figuring out how to get to class. When I arrived at Trinity for my first year, possibilities felt endless and, therefore, overwhelming. It was my first time living away from home, creating my own path. It was daunting to have so much of my future (more or less) within my control. And although Trinity is quite a small school, it felt like an entire city at 18. I couldn't wait to meet new people or to dip into a pool of seemingly endless knowledge, but I also hoped for purpose and belonging.

As I begin to end my journey here as an undergraduate student, I admit that I still don't have that all figured out. Rather than finding my niche among a student body, I will be navigating an entire city of individuals also trying to "figure it out." The world—somewhat surprisingly—feels even bigger now. But I think that may be the point. Everyone is trying to achieve a life that feels . . . "right." I experience simultaneous sensations of comfort and distress from this notion. But in times of doubt, I've always looked to those whom I respect and trust. Someone very special to me shared a quote on one of the first days we met. And it's stuck with me ever since.

It was from Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden*. For those who don't know, Thoreau wrote *Walden* after he secluded himself in the forest, attempting to experience life in its purest form (if there is even such a thing). When he explained his rationale for voluntarily quarantining himself in a shack in the woods, he said, "I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms." Thoreau sought to live life not only with purpose but also—more importantly—with presence, to experience all right in front of him.

The parts of college that we should reminisce about are so far beyond the diploma we'll soon be receiving. We must appreciate all the moments that led up to this milestone. The times of laughter, enlightenment, joy, and failure. Think about connecting with a new professor. Or that wave of relief you felt after getting through finals week. Or that burning frustration after getting locked out of your dorm room. Take these memories with you as well, both big and small! Today is a day to stand firmly in celebration of our journeys. Take time to soak in these last moments of our undergraduate experience. Notice what it feels like to wear your cap and gown. Hold on to that anticipation as you wait to hear your name called before walking across the stage. This will only happen once.

This is also a time to be excited for new beginnings. Something is waiting for each of us beyond the gates of Trinity. Regardless of where we end up or what we are doing there, it's safe to assume that each of our lives will feel drastically different than they have as a Trinity student.

As we enter the next stage of our lives as college graduates, let us remember our moments of happiness and fulfillment. Take them with us. Figure out how to recreate them. The same goes for the lessons we have learned here. Bring them along, and continue to be open to learning more. Don't be a stranger to challenge. Reach for the best versions of yourselves. We are entering a world in need of open minds, in need of patience, in need of kindness.

As I look out into this crowd, I see so many faces that I am both proud and grateful to know. You all have given me something very special to carry with me beyond 300 Summit Street, and I am so excited to see where we all end up.

Get excited about the future, but don't forget to live graciously, live generously, and most importantly, "live deep."

Once again, congratulations, Class of 2023.