

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPA COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

Commencement Address by Ariel Acosta-Rubio (Class of 1984)

Today, I hold the honor of being the first international Hispanic graduate who is speaking at the 138th commencement of this fine institution.

While today is graduation day, tomorrow is another important day. We celebrate Mother's Day. Class of 2014, please give a *round of applause* to your Moms. Know that you owe them everything. My mother is here today, Zelma. She thought she had seen it all at 85 years-old. She came here especially today to see me wear my cap & gown.

So, I have wrapped my heart and mind about what I want to say to you. I have wondered why The University of Tampa **chose me**. All I have to share is my OWN story, but how do I keep you entertained?

I don't want you to remember me as the speaker who is finally wearing his cap & gown. I want you to remember this speech through a message, what I share with you today to serve as inspiration.

What I am is a mere mortal. Just like you. I have flaws. I am not perfect. At the same time though, I do have three ideas I want you to remember:

Here is the first one:

1. LESSON ONE: Failure - You will FAIL and likely hit rock bottom (once or over and over)

After I received my degree in a Bachelor's of Business Management with a minor in Economics,

I went to work for several companies and sought the advice of many mentors along the way; my most important mentor was -- my father. I always knew I wanted to create my own path and be an Entrepreneur just like my father. Many "careers" came and went and then at the age of 33, I found myself UNEMPLOYED.

I could not find a job in Venezuela and I decided to come to Miami in search of a job.

I worked on my resume, met with MANY headhunters and NO-ONE ever called me. I felt like a FAILURE! I was desperate and I felt USELESS. I felt as if I hit rock bottom. I stopped feeling bad for myself and decided I would create my own job opportunity.

I painted houses, cleaned buildings and looked for other opportunities to make ends meet.

Until one day, I had the opportunity to make an investment purchase and buy a tiny retail space in a mall.

I partnered with my wife, Maria Alejandra Bravo and her cousin, Miguel Bravo. Miguel suggested that we open a

In 2001, CHURROMANIA had opened several stores in Miami and our headquarters were located

My dear Spartans, it is you who NOW has the opportunity to shape the FUTURE and provide growth for your communities and your countries. You are RESPONSIBLE for living your dream and becoming the LEADERS of TODAY and TOMORROW.

We believed that our dreams have come true. I helped make popular a new food category that competes with larger chains. We bring joy to children and adults who crave the nostalgia of a sweet churro.

I hope this story (my speech)