

Thank you for a wonderful introduction!

President Vaughn,

Distinguished Platform Guests,

Family, Friends, and loved ones,

My Esteemed Faculty Colleagues,

THE CLASS of 2020!!!

THE CLASS of 2021!!!

Yes! We have gathered here TOGETHER today to celebrate multiple graduating classes!

I know that all great speeches have three key points,... there are three tokens of wisdom to help you navigate through the journey of life and assist you as you start your next season.

Sooo... this may not be a great speech, because I really struggled to find three things to tell the Classes of 2020 and 2021!

I came up with two, but they are two things these Classes already know.

First is Persistence! What can I tell the Class of 2020 and the Class of 2021 about persistence?!?!

These graduates that came to campus 2, 3, 4 years ago, to learn how to learn, they were exposed to new concepts, theories and techniques on our beautiful, sunny campus. Then... they had to go away. And while away, they had to persist in their education. They persisted by learning to use new tools, by mastering emerging technologies then returned to campus to complete their degree requirements... academic requirements and standards that did not change the entire time.

The Classes of 2020 and 2021 know how to adapt and persist.

It's a well-known joke that all UT graduates earn at least two degrees, one in their chosen major or discipline and the other in Construction.

These graduates know how long it takes to replace a one-story building with a 7-story building and a parking garage.

These graduates know how long it takes to dig a hole for an Olympic size swimming pool.

More importantly this means that the Classes of 2020 and 2021 understand how to be patient as they go through the construction season,... they understand that during the construction season there will be minor inconveniences like

blocked sidewalks, noise during the day,

pop-quizzes,

unanticipated homework assignments,

Class of 2020...Class of 2021 you