“Excellence”

A Commencement Reflection Speech by Abby Rand, B.S., Health Care Administration
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“Excellence. Our measure, our motto, our goal. As you drove here today to help us celebrate you probably saw these words all around you on Eau Claire’s seal. We’ve all heard these words for the past 4...4 ½...5 years (no one’s judging), but these words and this idea have been our constant. A constant that has seen us through the ups and downs of our college careers. So today, at the end of those careers, I’d like to take a few minutes and reflect on how we have showed excellence in these areas.

First our measure: It is fitting that the College of Business and the College of Education and Human Sciences get to graduate together because if you combine the mission of the two colleges you get: “Preparing you for success to enhance the lives of others,” what better measure to hold ourselves to? We’ve all come here with a plan for the future and we’ll leave here today one step closer to that future. No matter where we go or what we do if we all hold ourselves to the measure of our colleges and our University we will no doubt do them, and ourselves, proud.

Next our motto: We have had so many opportunities on and off campus to show our motto is excellence. How many of us were able to collaborate with our esteemed professors on a research project or applied ourselves to a work-study program? How many of us took advantage of the Blugold Marching Band or the nationally ranked Forensics speech team? How many times have we high-fived Blu on the way down the hill, or had a Statesmen escort us to class under an umbrella on a rainy homecoming day? These on campus experiences show not only our commitment to education but also our pride in Eau Claire and upholding its legacy. Additionally the opportunities we have been afforded off campus from the extensive study abroad program to the civil rights pilgrimage-these are educational experiences that we could not get anywhere else. These are the opportunities the make Eau Claire’s motto “Excellence” and make our experience here unforgettable.

And finally our goal: Since receiving that letter in the mail saying you were accepted to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, our goals have been the same---to stand here and move our tassels from one side to the other, to shake the Chancellor’s hand and receive our diploma. Whether after that you plan to be the administrator of a skilled nursing facility, become that 2nd grade teacher that all the kids want, or plan to be a counselor who helps as many people as possible, our common goal has always been today. So, congratulations you’re here! But before you rush off, take some time and look around you. First at those to your left and right--these are
your classmates that you have worked with for these past years, and whether you know it or not, they helped you get here. Then look behind you to the staff that helped shape you to be the presenters, thinkers, educators, and individuals you are today. And finally, look to the bleachers--to the parents and loved ones who have supported you and helped you get to this place. Thank them--either silently but even better out loud. Shake a hand, give a hug and thank them because they all helped us achieve our goal.

Excellence is our measure, our motto, and our goal. Whether we’ve thought about it or not those simple words have shaped what some will say are the best years of our lives. They have prepared us for whatever comes our way next and they will continue to shape our lives in the coming years. So the next time someone asks you ‘What exactly is a Blugold?’ Smile-and tell them ‘Excellence.’”