

School of Business Graduation Remarks
May 20, 2022
Dr. Kathryn J. Jervis, Dean

Good morning to members of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, families and to the class of 2022! Congratulations on graduating from the School of Business at The College of New Jersey!

To think back over this past four years must be like a roller coaster ride. You started on a big high in freshmen year, on campus, living the quintessential college student life. Then, the big downhill in 2020 that lasted WAY longer than anyone thought, right through junior year. But you came back, and hopefully for you, it has gotten better every single day.

Despite the ups and downs, you all have achieved incredible success. Most of you are graduating in four years. You wrote senior theses and made academic research presentations. You worked in internships in major corporations and smaller business entities. You entered the Mayo Business Plan Competition, or the Pi Sigma Epsilon sales competition, and some of you won. You were the president or member of a student organization. Your sports teams won. You provided community service. Delta Sigma Pi hosted a coat drive for the Salvation Army. The National Association of Black Accountants volunteered with the Trenton Area Soup Kitchen to name just a few. There are so many more that I could mention!

Your academic distinction is also impressive. Listed in the program are the names of graduates earning Latin Honors, that is, overall GPAs of 3.6 or better on a 4.0 scale. On this academic occasion, let us take a moment to further recognize you by asking you to rise when I identify your Latin designation.

Will the 50 baccalaureate candidates earning cum laude designation, signifying a cumulative GPA of 3.6 to 3.74, please rise if you are able, or wave? [Please be seated.]

Will the 30 graduates earning magna cum laude designation, signifying a cumulative GPA of 3.75 to 3.89, please rise if you are able, or wave? [Please be seated.]

And will the 22 of you graduating summa cum laude, our highest academic distinction, signifying a GPA of 3.9 or better, please rise if you are able, or wave? [Please be seated.]

Though, in addition to all these wonderful memories, we remember the challenges too. We remember one of your fellow students who was lost during your time at TCNJ, Carla Faust, an accounting major. In her memory, we have placed a ceremonial hood and commencement program on a seat in the front row. We continue to think about and remember her, and despite Carla's absence, we know she would have been proud of all your accomplishments. Let's pause for a moment.

Moving forward, you are on your way to a successful future in a fabulous job, or prestigious graduate school! How wonderful! At graduation, we always review the great things that happened, and the good things to come. Yet, suppose you made mistakes or failed at something in these past four years. Suppose that you don't have that job that you wanted yet or didn't get into that graduate school. Suppose a relationship fails. What then?

Please remember that you are human, and sometimes things are good, and sometimes things are bad. It just happens. Everyone succeeds sometimes and everyone fails sometimes. It is like the fable of the wise peasant who lived in China who was the proud owner of a white stallion. One day the stallion escaped. The villagers told him that it was such bad luck that the horse escaped. The peasant responded, "Who knows. Maybe it's bad, maybe it's good." The next day the stallion returned with 12 wild horses. The villagers came to congratulate the peasant for his good luck, and his response was, "Who knows. Maybe it's good, maybe it's bad." The fable continues on, though the moral is that good and bad will come your way. Just remember to maintain calm and peace inside yourself whatever happens.

Finally, as you think about success, think about what that really means. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, success means:

To laugh often and much

To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children

To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends

To appreciate beauty

To find the best in others;

To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch

Or a redeemed social condition

To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.

This is to have succeeded!

The faculty and staff of the School of Business extend our best wishes as you commence from TCNJ.

Congratulations!