

Class of 2020, welcome home. Although you were forced to leave these grounds in a hurry last time you were here, this place is still yours to call home.

This is still the place that nurtured your love of the arts, sciences, history, languages, government. This is still the place of that great last athletic season, or that final BOC hike. Bowdoin is where you selflessly and humbly learned to serve the common good in ways that honor your neighbors and [that](#) centers solidarity. Here, you learned to fight for justice, use your voice to advance the cause of democracy and human rights, and believed that things can improve when we work together to create more just and generous societies.

Although the last [eighteen](#) months have been challenging, they have also been the background in which you stood tall, became more adaptable, more creative, and found ways to thrive.

You moved across the country and to different parts of the world.

You got jobs, earned spots in grad schools, volunteered, joined the armed forces, became the first one to finish a four-year degree in your family.

In a season of great turmoil, this time has made you stronger, wiser, and better able to weather the storms that inevitably arise.

As we gather today to celebrate your many accomplishments and strengths, we also pause to give deep thanks to those that came before us.

The mothers, fathers, aunts, grandparents, and friends that raised us. The community that charted the path for us. The elders who resisted oppression and sacrificed it all for their

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grandchildren. The ancestral and indigenous peoples of these lands that have stewarded its water and soil for generations.

Class of 2020, as you get ready to leave once again, may you go forth from this place with the same strength that has surrounded and grounded you all these years; with the same perseverance that got you this far. Go forth from this land with hearts full of joy and thanksgiving for the lessons learned and the wisdom acquired during your Bowdoin years.

Go without fear of what's to come. Go forward toward making peace in every corner of our world; go and live your life to the fullest, knowing you can do hard things. Live your best possible life with the confidence that you have loved ones cheering you on at every step. Go with open hearts and minds to welcome the sun, the rain, the cold, and the warmth. Maintain hope, lean on each other, learn from one another, be gracious toward one another, and be kind to yourselves.

May it be so.

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