

May 22nd, 2020

Dear Stern Graduate Class of 2020:

Congratulations on your graduation from NYU Stern! You worked extremely hard to make it to this point and I hope you take some well-deserved time to celebrate your achievement with classmates and loved ones.

As a long-standing member of the Stern administration, I have had the privilege of working with many generations of graduate students. But you, the Class of 2020, have left a particularly memorable impression on me because of the resilience you have displayed in the face of profound change and the sacrifices you've made in order to complete your studies remotely during your final semester. You even managed to produce an entire Follies show almost entirely via Zoom, which was one of the most astounding feats of creativity and Stern pride that I've ever witnessed -- whether under quarantine or not. From live-streamed comedy shows to virtual interviews and final exams, it is not a stretch to say that these last few months will turn out to be a defining chapter of your lives and careers.

On the topic of careers, I want to offer three pieces of parting advice as you venture into the next phase of your professional journey. If you have had a career coaching appointment with me, these may sound familiar. First, I hope you avoid getting lured into the trap of constantly comparing yourself to others. Remember that you have a singular combination of strengths and life experiences that will take you far in your career. Stay in your lane, be yourself, and good things will follow. Second, try hard to bring humanity to everything you do. Keep others' needs in mind, ask for help when you need it, and express gratitude at every turn. If you can do this, you will undoubtedly have a fulfilling career -- no matter what industry you are entering or where on the globe you are destined. Finally, I urge you to continue to invest in your network. When you chose Stern, you became a part of the Stern family -- a global community of students, alumni, faculty and staff. On behalf of your new, extended Stern family, please stay in touch, keep one another close, and celebrate life's milestones together with us.

Congratulations again on this fantastic accomplishment. On behalf of everyone at Stern, I wish you happiness, health and good fortune as you embark on your next adventure.

Warmest regards,

James C. Kingham

James Kingham
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