GRADUATION SPEECH

FOR

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Hello everyone! I’d like to welcome all of the graduates, families, and friends of this year’s graduating class of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and I would like to extend a special hello to President \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Dean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Dean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, Dean \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the distinguished members of our Board of Governors. Every year, we have the privilege of participating in commencement exercises, and every year, the experience gets more and more special. This year is no exception. Of course every year we hear that the best thing about graduation is that the commencement address is the last boring lecture you’ll ever have to listen to in school…**GRADUATES**! …ME? Boring? Never! (**Wait for the laugh**).

To all of our graduates, **CONGRATULATIONS! YOU DID IT**! Each one of you should be very proud of your achievements. We know that it seemed to some of you that you overcame obstacles and moved mountains to be able to complete your studies- and clearly it worked! No-wait a minute…. that was the **EARTHQUAKE**!” (**Wait for the laugh**). And speaking of that earthquake-was I the only one that didn’t feel it? I was concentrating so intensely on completing that blow up obstacle course that I missed the actual tremor…and by the way, like all of you today, I won! Earthquakes are caused by the seismic shifts of the earth’s plates, and much the same happened to each one of you as you attended your classes, took your tests, wrote your papers and worked to **earn** your degrees. All of that studying created the opportunity to experience a critical shift in the way you view the world and your place in it. Congratulations to each one of you who saw the opportunity and promise of having a college degree. In life everyone has obstacles to overcome and each one of you managed to keep your eye on the finish line and complete your studies, and that is very honorable. Whether you had child care issues to manage, work schedules to handle, or other challenges to conquer while attending classes, we salute you for your ingenuity, perseverance and devotion to receiving your education. The beauty of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Community College is that we have students from all walks and stages of life and I am sure each one of you learned not only your lessons, but also plenty about life thanks to your classmates.

As students, you were part of a special world for the past 2 years, where you concentrated and focused on learning. As graduates and adults, guess what? You’ve been “bumped up the food chain!”. It is your turn to inherit the responsibilities and rewards that come with being an adult. The world will present its challenges to each one of you, and success will be measured in the way you deal with each situation you encounter. There was a British writer named Oliver Goldsmith. He defined success in very simple terms. He said, “Success consists of getting up just one more time than you fall.” I know that each one of you knows how to do that. I have faith in each one of you to remember to get up, dust yourselves off, and continue on your life’s journey. Also remember the words of the great comedian Milton Berle. Although he spent most of his career making people laugh, he demonstrated how smart and resilient he was when he said, “If opportunity doesn’t knock, **build a door**.”

It’s time for each one of you to build the doors that will open and lead you to the next phases of your lives. We all wish you success in all that you attempt and remember what I just told you about success. When life seems overwhelming, just remember to get up and get back on course. In the words of Dr. Seuss, “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who’ll decide where to go!”

Congratulations to all of you and may you continue to achieve all that you want in life!

Thank you all!