Chancellor Martin, distinguished platform guests, family, friends, and most importantly...the graduating class of 2016! Good morning! On behalf of the Senior Class Council, I bring you greetings on this day of honor and celebration.

“Change can hurt, change can be uncomfortable, and can also be difficult in the beginning.” After 125 years of continuous change, I think we all can agree that our University has evolved tremendously. From sharing an annex with Shaw University to now being ranked as the number one Historically Black College/University in the nation, who’s to say that change is a bad thing? Change is necessary for growth. Change is inevitable and adapting to change is unavoidable; it is how you do it that truly determines the outcome.

So…...how did you adapt to the various changes when you arrived back on campus in August and the Memorial Student Union was no longer the heart of our campus? Did you reflect on all the friends you made during the New Student Orientation gym jam in Exhibit Hall? What about spending your lunch in the Aggie Sit-In munching on a Blimpie’s sub prepared by Ms. Donna? Did you think about the night we spent celebrating in Stallings Ballroom when our first black President was elected into office for a second term, or did you think about those Wednesday nights spent in the basement for karaoke night? Although we all have many memories of the Memorial Student Union, experiencing this change on our campus allowed us to learn to adapt to change because *change is necessary for growth.* Though we did not realize we were being taught a ‘life lesson’ in the midst of adapting to this great change on our campus, we all unconsciously learned how to face the various changes and challenges we will encounter throughout life. We are now prepared more than ever to face the challenges and changes that lie ahead of us.

I’m a totally different person than I was coming in as a freshman, and I am sure you ALL can say the same about yourselves. Not only have I changed as a person, as my plans and goals began to come into fruition, they have changed as well. Having and taking advantage of the many opportunities to step outside of my comfort zone and take many leaps of faith has allowed me to learn so much about so much. I feel like, were I to go back in time, my younger self wouldn’t even recognize me!

I believe we can all take comfort in knowing that the education we received during our years at North Carolina A&T has prepared each of us to be diligent, creative, innovative, and successful. We are fortunate enough to be graduating from the finest HBCU in the country, where our professors know us by name and not by number. Where our classmates became our lifelong friends, and where we were taught to be better students, better citizens, and better people. Without you—*without each other*—there would be no purpose to being here, no way to advance. We came to A&T in 2012 as 800 individuals, and now we leave together as a group, forever connected by our time here. Thanks to all the loving, kind people I’ve met during my time here at North Carolina A&T. If the people I encounter after I leave here are anything like my Aggie Family, I know I’ll have nothing to worry about.

**Conclusion:** If you can reflect on your initial feelings during your freshman Move-In day, whether it be anxiety, excitement, or an equal mixture of both, those feelings are almost identical to what many of us are experiencing right now as we anxiously wait to walk across the stage as a graduate of North Carolina A&T State University to begin a new chapter in our life. *Change is necessary for growth*. How this statement may be simplistic, it can be applied to our lives as students of A&T and will apply to our lives as Alumni. Just like the Memorial Student Union, we have served our time, created memories, impacted lives, and left our mark on our beloved campus. Although it is hard to say goodbye to our alma mater, we must be in constant search of our purpose and how we can reach back to help those who come behind us...and as we take on this thing we call *life*, we must also strive to *be* the change we wish to see in the world...because that is what AGGIES DO.

As I conclude, I want to take this last opportunity to thank you, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, on behalf of the graduating Class of 2016, for everything you have done for us over these past four years. Because of you, we embody the true meaning of A.G.G.I.E. P.R.I.D.E.!

So, the graduating class of 2016, can I get an AGGIE PRIDE? \*AGGIE PRIDE!\*