**Yolanda Rosa Rosa’s 2019 Commencement Speech**

Director Jeanette Espinel, Distinguish members of Schiller International University Scholarship Committee, faculty, and staff, family and friends, tonight I am grateful to this life for presenting this magnificent opportunity and privilege of sharing my words with all of you, but in particular, with my peers of the 2019 graduation class.

There no way for me to start my commencement without thanking my parents Alfredo Rosa Cruz and Yolanda Rosa Santiago not only for being my role models but for also being my heroes. Their constant aspiration to excel in life. Their constant perseverance facing any adversity. Their constant presence to provide their love and to my siblings, and fulfill the need for having a healthy and unified family environment, have always been enough motivation to face and surpass the many challenges throughout my life’s journey.

Likewise, I am genuinely thankful to Alex, my husband, for accompanying me during the last 11 years of my life taking care of materializing my dreams with his unconditional love and dedication. And last but not least, I am very grateful to my two sons Rodney and Xoel, who had set the bars very high in pursuing their goals through their studies. To all of you, I dedicate this academic achievement tonight.

Since I was a little a girl, I have lived in an accelerated pace always seeking to attain the ultimate goals in the least time possible. When I reached high school, I wanted to shorten my time to start university studies, and I did. During that process, I experienced situations that interrupted my education time. I married, I became a mother, and I worked as well. Not having enough time to resume my studies, I went through a two years career college that prepared me in the working field of Hospitality and Tourism. Through those early years, I gained a vast experience working in the Marketing department and managing events for different hotels while having direct contact with clients coming from all around the world. A fantastic opportunity that till these days, I appreciate.

I was fascinated with the fact that my job was granting me the chance to know and work with diverse people, diverse mentally, and diverse visions. People with different background, different cultures, different understandings, at the time, creating the challenge of getting acquaintance with their wants and needs from their perspective. Lucky enough, I went to live and work in the Middle East to be precise, Kuwait and Bahrain. All these exposures served me as motivations to expand my knowledge at an international level to continue attaining more success in my career. As a result, once again, I wanted to obtain in the least possible time the necessary knowledge and practical approaches to have a better vision coming from each of my international clients while planning and performing their events. Well, I managed to complete a diploma in a year and a half. Still, somehow, some way deep inside of me, I wanted to achieve a higher degree of education although time was my constraint.

It is in 2014 when my son Xoel, shared with me his desire to find another education institution to continue his studies and I offered to help in his search for the alternative of an online learning curriculum from an accredited University. This is how I discovered Schiller International University, and I chose to enroll in the International Relations and Diplomacy BA degree that I completed in 2018 and started right after it my Master degree. A determination that I will never regret.

There have been many professors that left a mark on me during my studies among them, Professor Henry LaChapelle, who continuously reminded his students that there was no short cut in the path to success. His words echoed in my ears, encouraging me to continue my race to the end. Dr. Lyman Hussey, a man of precise words and yet colossal wisdom, has also influenced my academic studies with his extraordinary contribution. Last but not least, I cannot forget the excellent administration at Schiller that continuously took the extra mile with their many valuable pieces of advice.

Today, I must convey that Schiller International University allowed me to pursue my academic studies by providing an educational environment where, first of all, diversity is embraced having a common denominator, working together combining the many contributions of each to achieve a goal. A subject that these days we as societies to adopt and treasure.