

Graduation Speech – 18th May 2017

Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, distinguished guests, fellow graduates, university staff and guests.

Our national anthem encourages us to rejoice, for we are young, and free. What better example of this freedom than the ability to gather and celebrate our graduation? Education is an entitlement that many oppressed fight for the right to access. I implore you, do not let this momentous occasion rest lightly on your shoulders. So firstly, on behalf of the graduates receiving their awards today, we wish to thank those who in some way have advocated for our right to access educational opportunities.

We also would like to thank those who have self-sacrificed in some way, to support us in our journey. The ultimate act of kindness is through the giving to another person, whilst expecting nothing in return. To our family, friends, colleagues, mentors and all others, thank you for selflessly supporting us in our pursuit for personal growth.

We thank Federation University staff who support the delivery of programs, either directly or indirectly. I personally would like to thank those who have been involved in developing flexible pathway and partnership programs between the Tafe and university sector. I am a mother of two, working full time, paying off a mortgage and living in a rural area. Prior to today I have not set foot on a FedUni campus. I have been able to complete a degree due to initiatives such as distance education and online learning, with the support of my local Tafe. Thank you to those who develop and deliver flexible programs, that allow people like myself to access tertiary education.

Finally, I speak to today's graduates. There were so many opportunities for failure. So many barriers to overcome. Well done on not giving up. Take from this a new-found confidence to challenge yourself. I leave you with the words from an unknown source. "Even the biggest mountain can seem smaller if you take one step at a time." So today, celebrate the final step of this journey. Tomorrow take one small step towards a new life goal and aim higher than you ever imagined.

Thank you.