

Class of 2020 Commencement

May 30, 2021, Delaware Stadium

Welcome back, Blue Hens! What a wonderful day to celebrate your graduation!

I am so happy to see you! And I am thrilled that we could be together — here in person and online — with your families and your friends.

As I've said before, your class holds a special place in my heart, because most of you started at UD at the same time I did in 2016. So, I truly missed the Commencement ceremony last year. And I am so grateful that you made the trip back to UD so we can mark this special moment with the incredible Class of 2020 ... the best class to ever graduate from the University of Delaware!

On behalf of your professors and the entire staff and administration of the University, I want to say how proud we are of you ... how inspired we are by your boundless optimism and your never-ending commitment to building a better world for us all.

So much has happened since the last time we were together on campus — when the world turned upside-down — in March of 2020.

We have endured a global pandemic of a new disease, as well as unprecedented social and economic upheaval. You had to make difficult sacrifices to protect yourselves and those around you. You had to adapt — quickly and frequently — to fulfill your academic and research commitments at UD. And you embarked on the next chapter of your lives — whether that's a career, further education, or military or community service — during one of the most disruptive years in generations.

A year ago, as you finished your time at UD, you essentially made a promise to yourself — maybe not spoken, maybe not even consciously. But you promised yourself that you would overcome all of these challenges in the pursuit of your goals and your dreams.

Over the past year, you have shown uncommon resilience and admirable courage in working toward your goals. For many of you, this meant moving to a new home, learning a new job, meeting new people — usually without the normal social interactions that make such transitions easier. For some of you, it has meant postponing or revising your plans ... building your resources so that you can seize the right opportunity when it arrives.

Whether you have achieved your goals and moved on to new ones, or you're still pursuing them, the fact that you are here today is a clear demonstration of your deep commitment to fulfilling the promise that you made to yourself a year ago.

That's why today is not only about celebrating your graduation from UD. It is also a celebration of every accomplishment since then — whether large or small — and a celebration of the journey you have taken over the past year ... and the people you have become.

As you reflect on the past year, I hope that being back on the UD campus today inspires you to remember and renew the promise you made to yourself ... and to renew your commitment to fulfilling it. It has served you well, and it will continue to guide you in the future.

We — your families, your friends, your fellow Blue Hen alumni and everyone here at the University of Delaware — believe in you.

I am extremely optimistic about the future knowing that our Class of 2020 is out there changing the world!

Congratulations! You are Blue Hens forever!

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