The University of Akron

Commencement Exercises

Fall 2024

Remarks

R.J. Nemer

President

Welcome, everyone, to this special ceremony.

Congratulations to the graduates from the Buchtel College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Business, the College of Health and Human Sciences, and the College of Engineering and Polymer Science.

Graduates—you are to be commended for your dedication and the perseverance that brought you to this point.

In fact, by virtue of earning your degree—no matter what milestone of education you're celebrating today—you join a minority of the population in having achieved this level of intellectual pursuit.

On behalf of The University of Akron leadership team, I am honored to have the opportunity to address you today.

I'd like to extend a special welcome to the families, friends and guests of our fall 2024 graduates.

Your support has, without question, been meaningful, as you have uplifted, sustained and journeyed alongside these individuals during their educational experience.

As president, I am honored to have the opportunity to participate in this commencement

In doing so, I'd like to thank my colleagues that have guided our students to this level of success.

I'd like to express my gratitude to The University of Akron faculty and staff for all they do in creating a welcoming environment, ensuring student success, and supporting all in our 360-degree educational experience.

Thank you for your dedication to intellectual pursuits and thought leadership.

Our faculty's in-class instruction and commitment to experiential learning and community engagement has prepared and propelled today's graduates for career readiness.

Graduates, I encourage you to enjoy the symbolism of today's commencement and to take pride in your considerable work that brought you here today.

I'm happy I had the opportunity to meet so many of you personally in various contexts here at The University of Akron, and I'm celebrating graduation with you.

I always enjoy speaking at December commencement.

In the midst of *too many* parties, holiday fanfare, increased traffic, and the end of another busy fall semester,

this ceremony gives us a chance to celebrate the beginning of professional journeys.

Graduates, you have the opportunity to symbolically and literally transition from the role of student into the role of the professional position you've aspired toward.

As an alumnus of The University of Akron—a December grad myself—I also appreciate the unexpectedness of fall graduation.

In fact, last year, I specifically remember looking for a graduation card in December and realizing how few choices there were in the stores.

That's because society typically expects graduations to occur in May and June.

Graduates—I want you to embrace the unexpectedness of completing your degree at this time of the year.

I'd like to share with you three lessons that I learned from graduating at an unexpected time.

First, this timing can set the tone for the rest of your professional career. Surprise people. Be creative. Be unexpected.

Second, take comfort and pride in the uniqueness of your own professional journey.

Third, never let the expected traditions minimize your very *real* accomplishments.

I could talk about each one of those principles in depth, but we're here to celebrate the achievements of our graduates.

However, in my journals, I did find a passage from Henry David Thoreau I'd like to read as encouragement to today's graduates:

Thoreau wrote: "If one advances confidently in the direction of dreams;

if one endeavors to live the life imagined;

then they will meet with a success unimagined in common hours."

Congratulations to our graduates. Thank you for committing to your education as a Zip.

We are proud of your accomplishments and wish you the best in everything—both the expected and the unexpected.