

Thank you Dr. Forgione for that warm welcome, and thanks to Provost Guffy, Deans, Faculty, Staff, initiates and their families who have joined us today.

I'm honored to be here with you today and equally delighted to be a part of the Phi Kappa Phi community of scholars, as a Texas A&M Corpus Christi Alumni and I want to congratulate each and every one of YOU on being invited to become a Phi Kappa Phi member.

There are more than 12 thousand students here at Texas A&M Corpus Christi and 66 of you are becoming a part of the oldest honor society that recognizes academic excellence across all disciplines. Look around this room, as Dr. Forgione mentioned, you are the scholars who have earned this prestigious honor and if you would, give yourselves a round of applause!!

Now, let's offer our gratitude in the form of applause to the faculty, family, and friends who have made your being here today possible!!!

Phi Kappa Phi's motto "Let the love of learning rule humanity" resonates with me on a number of levels... as a student, teacher, parent, spouse, child, mentor... and I could go on.

When I thought about how special today would be for all of us, I began to reflect on my journey to get here as I'm sure many of you did. I have a plaque at home that reads "Happiness is found in the journey, not the destination..." I don't know about you but I'm feeling some serious happiness right now...

But today is simply one step farther down our much longer scholarly path. My learning journey was not always easy. However, regardless of how hard the tough times have been, I have persevered just as you have. It is not the good times that define us, it is how we respond to the tough times. How glorious is it that we can fail and learn from those experiences in order to achieve amazing new things that go on to shape our destiny?

As you go forward on **YOUR** journey, I hope that you will Stay Curious, Lead and Be Resilient, and Show your Gratitude

Stay Curious

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder and thirst for new knowledge. As you have likely learned, curiosity and critical thinking are essential to your success as a student, and I can tell you that it will be crucial your entire working career.

We are a part of a networked, knowledge economy and there is a growing need for interdisciplinary collaboration to solve the world's challenges. Innovative technologies, abundant information, and vast quantities of data are now more accessible than ever, transforming economies around the world by disrupting how companies do business, how governments deliver services, how labor markets function, and how people interact with each other. Tap in to the power of your curiosity so that you are a lifelong learner and are a part of the solutions that will define our future.

Lead and Be Resilient

Never settle for the path of least resistance, take chances and try new things. In the immortal words of Ralph Waldo Emerson "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail."

Charting new territory is difficult and you may come to crossroads where fear muddies your decisions, but you must trust yourself and understand that failure can be a wonderful teacher. Be resilient in the face of failure. Use it as a teachable moment and rise to new challenges, let these challenging times inspire the greatness that lives inside of you. Remember to lift others up throughout your journey as wells...

Leadership isn't about being great, it is about empowering others to be great... Find those along your path' who are talented, full of potential, and willing to work hard and help them succeed. Point them out to those who don't notice them and create new pathways for THEIR future.

To borrow a phrase from the Disney's "Meet the Robinsons"... keep moving forward. In tough times, if you keep moving forward, then your strength will find you. When you get the chance to sit it out or dance... I hope you dance...

And finally, Be Grateful

Psychologist and researcher Dr. Emmons of the University of California, has conducted several studies about the power of gratitude & says "Without gratitude, life can be lonely, depressing and impoverished. Gratitude enriches human life. It elevates, energizes, inspires and transforms. People are moved, opened and humbled through expressions of gratitude." In his research, he found that those who wrote in a journal daily about what they were grateful for were more optimistic and felt better about their lives than those who journaled without focusing on the positive.

In another study, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions. The assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to

someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, the participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness. Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships and yes, even decrease risk of heart disease.

I implore you to consider who you might thank for their support of your scholarly journey and challenge you to thank them as soon as possible, while this idea is still fresh in your mind. The relationships that you establish, nurture, and maintain over your lifetime are powerful. They are what keeps us grounded, inspired, motivated, and makes us human. We can all get caught up in the hustle and bustle of our everyday lives but if we remember to show our gratitude to others, then we will **maintain our humanity.**

My preparation for this talk provided me with an opportunity to reflect on my own journey and while it is not yet complete it has been full of amazing adventures and wonderful people. I would like to thank Dr. Canales not only for inviting me to be here today but also for the mentoring, support and true friendship that she has given me over these last 16 years.

And so now, I end by asking each of you to Stay Curious, Lead and Be Resilient, and share your gratitude throughout your life's journey. Take time to care for those you love, be bold in embracing life, and dedicate

yourself to making the world a better place. Invest in your learning, explore your passions, and live each day working to make your dreams a reality. You pursued excellence for a reason. Let that be your guide and magical things will happen!

To quote one of my favorite people “May your future be filled with exciting new places, great opportunities, and wonderful adventures”...