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- When I walked across this stage the first time four years ago at matriculation, I didn't know anything of the significance of this ceremony in this hall, and the people who sat in it, and the flags that surround us. All that I was aware of is that outside these windows and those green fields and the people I saw walking by, laid one of the greatest experiences that I could ever have.

It is these moments at sunset and sunrise, when we stand out in the dikes, and look back at the school that has risen us so high, that we realise we truly are blessed to live in a place such as the Annapolis Valley.

And this year showed us that so strongly, that our students can come from all over the world, far from their families, and be safe here, and be with friends, and be able to go to some semblance of their classes while also adventuring around the Valley, and dining and drinking with friends on Main Street.

There isn't one of us that hasn't faced challenges in overcoming this year and the past four. Late nights spent up studying, all those hard hours where we might have questioned, you know, who am I supposed to be, and is this really worth it?

And I hope that sitting here today, watching this convocation, and graduating in the 21st year of the 21st century, as the first generation to come into a newborn world, you realise that by simply being here, having come through graduating in a pandemic, it is that gift that you bring to the world.

Some of us just put our heads down and got through it. Some of us said, what can we still do, let's try and do it. And all of us faced this challenge and rose to it.

We had our first ever Virtual Research Symposium, where our science and honours students, and grad students as well, could present their research to professors as well as their peers in a virtual banquet hall. And our international students managed to pull off their signature International Banquet, despite that it couldn't be in Fountain Commons, they managed to have it in Meal Hall, and still share the wonders of our diverse students' culture.

We had a virtual Homecoming for the first time in 182 years. And our grad class, you, our students, managed to hold events in The Axe, and we tried valiantly to hold a week of Grad class activities this very week. But despite our best efforts, the pandemic keeps throwing challenges at us that we keep having to try to overcome.

So, with that, I say to you, go forth with the joy in your hearts that you entered this building with four years ago today, and with the excitement of the unknown, with the naive optimism that no matter what you face, you can do it. And you can do it greatly.

In pulvere vinces; In dust we conquer.