

Convocation 2021 Acadia University

- Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, graduands, let us begin today's ceremony by acknowledging that we are meeting here in Mi'kma'ki, the homeland of the Mi'kmaq people. We acknowledge the treaties of peace and friendship, and we thank the Mi'kmaq people for their generosity in sharing their homeland with us.

- Let us pray. Gracious God, we acknowledge your greatness and thank you for your wisdom, guidance, and love. We thank you for the gifts that you have created, the natural environment with its wonders and provision for our sustenance. We thank you for each other, and for opportunities to learn and grow. We ask for your blessing on our proceedings that our thoughts, words, and actions will honour you and provide a fitting celebration for the Class of 2021. We are grateful for life, that through your grace we are here to share the achievements of the members of the Class of 2021 in person and virtually. We thank you for sustaining them and us through the challenges of COVID-19. We thank you for parents, spouses, friends, family, faculty, and staff who supported them in tough times and celebrated with them their achievements along the way. We remember those who started with this group but for many reasons are not graduating today, grant them courage, vision, and hope to continue their journey to academic achievement by the paths and in the timeframe that is right for them. We ask your blessing on all members of the Class of 2021 guide, guard, and keep them oh God, grant them meaningful and joyful occupation, loyal friends and family, and life in all its fullness, amen.

- Class of 2021, congratulations on your achievement of your graduation. As University Marshall, my job today should be to announce you to the Chancellor who will confer your degree or diploma. Sadly, the pandemic prevents us from joining as a community to celebrate your graduation in person at a convocation ceremony in the traditional way. However, I hope that you can sense a measure of the pomp and circumstance that should be yours to enjoy your graduation from Acadia University. Over the past few years, you have faced many challenges. The essays, assignments and exams have been satisfactorily completed, you have learned and grown in so many ways and you have battered the final curve-ball thrown by the coronavirus pandemic. Your professors, instructors, and the whole Acadia community are delighted that you have succeeded. Now, at the end of this phase of your education you and those who supported you, have reason to take great pride in your accomplishments. Enjoy your day and never stop learning.

- Kwe' Kwe' Class of 2021, thumbs up. You made it. And we're all here to be witness to your graduating from Acadia. Hello, Teluisi Lorraine Whitman, Grandmother White Sea Turtle. It is an honour for me to stand in front of you at Acadia graduates, faculty, family, friends and thank you for this opportunity that I have been given. Before I continue my remarks I would like to acknowledge the territory, the unceded traditional territory of Mi'kma'ki home of the Mi'kmaq Lnu people. I would like to take time to thank president Dr. Ricketts, the faculty of Acadia for all of their support and guidance, mentoring, and assisting all of you students that are here today, along their journey and helping to guide you towards accomplishing your dreams and your aspirations. Graduates, your dedication has not gone without hardship and challenges along the way. And to reflect back when you first entered the doors of Acadia, and walked on the grounds, I can imagine the many emotions that you have felt, anxiety, excitement, encouragement, fear, loneliness, and even depression, but what we didn't know and none of us would have ever expected was to face a global pandemic. Wow. We were all challenged in ways not seen before, and those challenges we have are still here, we still have to meet them and we have to face it head on. The challenges of ourself isolating, limited travel, social distancing, constantly washing our hands, our masks and so on, that has not been easy, but yet through it all you've all continue to follow your dreams. You didn't stop from accomplishing your dreams and your aspirations, your dedication to diversify and modify your lifestyle to the various barriers set before you were admirable. And today as you have reached the finish line in your education we are all here to witness the significant accomplishments that you have all made, from the crisis of the pandemic and how it has changed your lives, our lives, your experiences at Acadia have only made you stronger people. A positive aspect of this pandemic is that your graduation now being broadcast virtually means that you are able to have more friends and family to enjoy and celebrate this momentum day, your day. Today is not a farewell but it's a celebration of humility, spirit and your quest of knowledge and of wisdom that you have obtained at Acadia. From today onward this journey will help you in your valuable contributions as the world awaits. My dear graduates, the world is a big, scary place but your passion for success and your endeavour to reach your goal is a pleasure to celebrate with you today. Today is your day to celebrate your accomplishments with friends, families, faculty members, you can now meet the world, seeing it in a new lens. Your opportunities are endless and you can move forward with pride because the choice has all been made by you. Wela'lin Thank you, faculty members, family, and most of all graduates of 2021. You now are on a road towards success and fulfilment. Stay focused on your goals, keep steadfast as you work towards your dreams. And may you all have success in making your dreams a reality, but now in the future you can now make it come true. Wela'lin, merci beaucoup, Thank you.

- Graduands, honoured guests, colleagues, family, and friends. It is my distinct pleasure to welcome you to Acadia University's 2021 Convocation. The first Convocation in Acadia's 182 year history that has been held virtually. So from wherever you're watching, whether it be right here in Wolfville, across Canada, or around the world, I welcome you to celebrate the achievements of our graduating class. And so to you, the Class of 2021, I say congratulations. You've done it. You've successfully completed your academic studies. And you're about to receive the degrees that you have worked so hard to achieve. And you've done it under extraordinary circumstances. Since March, 2020, when we had to abruptly close our campus and move our courses and our operations entirely online, you have seen your studies and your lives disrupted by this pandemic. I'm proud that Acadia was able to provide you with the opportunity to complete your studies on campus if you were able to do so. And we were one of the very few universities in Canada to be able to provide that to its graduating class. But even then, of course, the experience was not exactly the way you would have chosen, but whether you completed your degree remotely, or here in person, you have shown determination and resilience and you have seen this through to the end. You've done it. And now it is time for you to own it. You are a unique class for many, many reasons, but one of them is because you have faced unique challenges and you will be the better for it, but you're also a very special class and a very special class to me. Most of you began your studies at my first Matriculation Ceremony here in University Hall in 2017. And so we have come through this Acadia journey together, you and I. And I'm so sorry that we cannot celebrate your Convocation Ceremony in person with your family, your friends, and your fellow graduates. But I promise you that I will invite you back to campus to celebrate your success and your achievements in the near future when we were able to do so, and I look forward to that occasion and I hope you do too. But now it is your time. So take ownership of this moment. And as you go forward in the next phase of your lives make sure you live up to the great promise of being an Acadia graduate. Whether you're going on to further studies or to that all important first job, or maybe you're simply taking some time out to think about your next steps after the experiences of the last year, whatever it is, seize that opportunity that this Acadia degree gives you to chart your own course for your future. And to your parents, and to your families, and friends who are celebrating your graduation today, let me also add a word of thanks. You have nurtured and supported our new graduates dreams and ambitions. They couldn't have done this without you and I'm sure you're all delighted and probably a little relieved to see them graduate today. And I expect some of you have even paid for their journey. Thank you. And perhaps if you're with your family and friends now is a moment maybe to give them a hug if you're able and thank them for everything that they've done to see you through to this very special moment. Graduands, I want to thank you for spending this very important part of your lives with us at Acadia, despite the impacts of the pandemic, I hope you will treasure your time spent here. You are part of a proud 182 year old tradition. And you're about to join the most passionate and dedicated alumni of

any university anywhere in the world. I ask you to become active members of the Alumni Association and use the global networking of amazing Acadia graduates who have gone on to great achievements in their lives. And you are joined today by seven honorary degree recipients who are true exemplars of successful careers and lives lived a former Prime Minister of Canada, a renowned indigenous leader and former Senator, a world-class athlete and Olympian, a respected religious leader, a patron of the arts and passionate supporter of Acadia, and the two outstanding doctors who led Nova Scotia's highly successful management of this pandemic. As I have said to previous graduating classes, it is how you act out your lives that determines the impact that you will have on the world. So let these extraordinarily accomplished individuals be an inspiration to you as you go forward and make your mark. So this is your moment, your achievement, and your opportunity to fulfil your dreams. You've been transformed by the experience that you've had here at Acadia, and you are now ready to take on the ever transforming world. So seize this day, make it yours, and make us proud. I know you will. And so today I salute your accomplishments and on behalf of the faculty and staff of Acadia University let me say how deeply proud we are of your success. Congratulations and welcome to the next exciting chapter of your life as a member of the Acadia family. And remember, you are the author of this chapter. So make it count. And I for one look forward to reading it. Thank you. Congratulations on a job well done.

- Hello, graduating class of 2021. My name is Olivia Shive and I'm your Grad Class President. Welcome to the very first virtual convocation ceremony. I never thought that we would be celebrating our graduation from Acadia in this way, but graduating isn't always about a big fancy event, it is about the celebration of the four years of hard work, stress, and exhausting self-discovery in which we are all still able to do. I want to start off by congratulating every single one of you, as you are all truly amazing. Today, we celebrate our accomplishments and our dreams. Looking back it really has been the time of our lives. It is an extreme honour to be here today representing the special group of people that I get to call my Acadia family. I would like to thank the students, faculty and staff who have made such an impact on our lives, without their help and support we would not be in the position that we are today. We are now being welcomed into the vast Acadia Alumni community, and I can assure you that we will bump into our alumni family at every turn as we make our way through life. We have the opportunity to return every year for homecoming alumni events, to stay connected and continue our love and support for this amazing school. This year has not been easy, but we all faced it with impeccable strength and resilience. This year has prepared us to be stronger individuals allowing us to adapt to any situation now and for the future. It is finally our time and it feels somewhat normal, but really there is no normal. There is simply change and it is up to us to decide what we do with that change. It felt like an eternity, and I

didn't think the day would ever come where we would end this amazing journey but here we are. We must go live the lives that we have always imagined, and 'Oh the places we will go', the opportunities are endless. Whenever you find yourself doting how far you can go, just remember how far you have come. I know only great things will come out of this graduating class. As I have gotten to know a lot of you during the four years here at Acadia, you were all kind, worthy, and extremely hardworking. You portray all of the skills needed to be successful in life. Now it is simply a matter of doing. The Acadia community has prepared us for everything that the future has to hold, it has allowed us to discover what we love and has shaped us into the passionate individuals that we are today. I am forever thankful for this close-knit little town and I am more thankful for you all, as you have allowed me to lead you through your final hurrah. My hopes for us all is health and happiness no matter where the road takes us, like Conan O'Brien once said, "work hard and be kind and amazing things will happen". Thank you all.

- Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Provost and Deans gathered here today, I have the honour to present to you those graduands that the Senate has dully declared worthy of the honour, and that they may receive a degree, certificate or award by your hand.

- Today in absentia, I confer upon you the appropriate degree, certificate, or award with all the rights and privileges pertaining to that degree. Congratulations to each and every one of you.

- On behalf of the graduating Class of 2021, we're pleased to invite Class President Olivia Shive to accept the hood for her degree.

- Greetings to the Class of 2021, you did it. One of my great privileges as Provost is to recognise the Acadia faculty. One of the outstanding features of Acadia is the connections that students make with faculty. When I speak with alumni they often tell

me of the connection that they've made with a particular faculty member, and how that has contributed to their future success. I'm sure the Class of 2021 is no exception, that you would agree that the faculty of Acadia are outstanding and the personal connections have contributed greatly to your success. While this is always the case, this year is especially so. When a global pandemic hit just before the end of classes a year ago, the Acadia faculty adopted quickly to complete the academic year in a virtual setting. This year Acadia University committed to deliver classes on campus in a safe manner while guaranteeing that students could complete their courses, even if they couldn't make it to Acadia. Other universities move to a virtual environment and some operated in an in-person setting, Acadia committed to do both. We could not have done that without the dedication of the faculty, while we knew that we could do it, we also knew there would be challenges. The Acadia faculty have stepped up over the last year and we have accomplished more than we could have imagined when we started this journey. I'm also honoured to introduce to you six distinguished Acadia faculty members who have been awarded the designation of Professor Emeriti upon their retirement from Acadia. They have dedicated their remarkable careers to the pursuit of excellence and their commitments have contributed to our unique Acadia student experience. In recognition of distinguished scholarly and professional excellence and meritorious service at Acadia University, the following are awarded the title of Professores Emeriti. In the year 2020 Dr. Barb Anderson of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, School of Nutrition and Dietetics. Dr. David MacKinnon of the Faculty of Professional Studies School of Education. Dr. Dave Shutler of the Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences, Department of Biology. And for the year 2021, Dr. Ann Vibet of the Faculty of Professional Studies, School of Education. Dr. James MacLeod Faculty of Professional Studies, School of Kinesiology. And Dr. Patricia Rigg, of the Faculty of Arts, Department of English. I'm also very pleased to introduce the recipient of the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Award for faculty excellence in teaching. This award recognises a continued record of excellence in teaching students and the future alumni of Acadia, and is an expression of the associations pride and appreciation for outstanding faculty, their service to the education of Acadia students and their promotion of the best interests of Acadia University. This year's recipient has been a professor and leader in Acadia's Earth and Environmental Sciences Department for the past 26 years, supervising 30 masters and 48 honours students since 1994, he's taught 11 different courses ranging from first year to graduate level in a wide range of areas from Hydrogeology to Environmental Impact Assessment. He's an expert in environmental and risk assessment, groundwater and surface water contamination, and coastal erosion. He has served with numerous professional organisations and was recently awarded the Distinguished Service Award by the Atlantic Geoscience Society and the Acadia Faculty of Pure and Applied Sciences Teaching Award. He's also a little bit of a TV star in case you don't know. It's my pleasure to award the Associated Alumni of Acadia University Award for Faculty Excellence in Teaching to Dr. Ian Spooner.

- Mr. Chancellor, on behalf of the Provost and Deans gathered here today, I have the honour to present to you, those individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the academy or society and whose accomplishments, leadership, and community service are deemed to be extraordinary and worthy of honoris causa recognition, "for the sake of honour", as their actions are believed to reflect an appropriate standard of excellence, consistent with the values and the spirit of Acadia University. Mr. Chancellor, I present the following individuals that they may receive honorary degrees by your hand. The Reverend Dr. Malcolm Card, Doctor of Divinity, honoris causa. Kyle Lowry, Doctor of Humanities, honoris causa. Nancy McCain, Doctor of Humanities, honoris causa. The Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Doctor of Civil Laws, honoris causa. Dr. Robert Strang, Doctor of Science, honoris causa. Dr. Gaynor Watson-Creed, Doctor of Science, honoris causa. And The Right Honourable Paul Martin, Doctor of Civil Laws, honoris causa.

- Today in absentia, for your contributions and upholding the ideals and values of the Acadia University, I confer upon you the appropriate doctorate degree with all the rights and privileges pertaining to that degree. Congratulations to each of you.

- It is now my great pleasure to invite The Right Honourable Paul Martin, to address convocation as the keynote speaker. As a former Prime Minister of Canada, and Minister of Finance, The Right Honourable Paul Martin has an extraordinary career of public service and has, since retiring from politics, dedicated his life to many causes, including promoting the rights of indigenous people in Canada. It's a great pleasure now to have The Honourable Paul Martin address convocation.

- Thank you, President Ricketts, and members of Acadia University's Faculty and Board of Governors, for this honorary degree, which I am very proud to receive. And thank you for the invitation to speak to the class of 2021, who I want to congratulate for their hard work, and who probably think that after all they've been through that I should have had

to work a little harder to get my degree. Again, to the graduands, let me thank your parents, especially your mothers, as it's mother's day, your friends, and your loved ones who supported you all the way, because Canada will benefit enormously from the contributions you will make to our future. At Acadia you have been taught to innovate, to create, and to master a storm. This is important because your generation is being asked to rise to the challenges which are of a magnitude we haven't seen since the world Wars. How you choose to face those challenges will have a lasting impact, not just on you, but on the generations that will follow you. The two overwhelming issues that you face are hardly a secret. The first is climate change. According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2020 is on track to be one of the three warmest years ever recorded. All of which occurred after 2015. Even more concerning the atmospheric concentration of greenhouse gases continue to rise this year despite the fact that we all spent that time tucked away in our homes because of COVID-19. The second issue is the pandemic which has ravaged our world and our way of life. We were not prepared for COVID 19, you know this. You all made countless personal sacrifices towards our greater goal of controlling and eradicating the virus. Had the world been more prepared your sacrifices would not have had to be so great. Clearly the world is prepared to work together today to mitigate the consequences of COVID-19. The question is, are we prepared to work together tomorrow to prevent the next pandemic, which is unknown. In this context, some members of the World Health Organization have set up an independent commission to explain what a new normal might be. The argument they make is valid. COVID-19 was only the latest microorganism to jump from animals to humans, it was able to do so because we created the conditions that made it a probability. Quite clearly, we need to invest in early warning and better data systems, so that future infections are identified more rapidly. A pandemic by its very nature is a global attack. And so the response to the next one must be based on collaborative research, information sharing, and a renewed support for multilateral bodies such as the WHO. Here Canada must play a decisive role as nations struggle to come together to ensure the future. What does this mean? It means we must learn from history. After the First World War countries refused to work together. They created the League of Nations, which was the forerunner to the United Nations, but then they shut it down. They refused to work together economically causing the greatest depression in modern history, and ultimately they gave birth to World War II. On the other hand following the Second World War, countries joined together they created the United Nations and the great multilateral institutions all in the recognition that it was impossible to carry on without the infrastructure supporting collective action. The result was more positive change, and the strongest global economy in recent history from which everyone has reaped the benefits. Yours and the generations to follow, must not allow the world to repeat the same mistakes that were made after the First World War. And Canada has a vital role to play here, especially as the super powers continue to disagree at arms length, for Canada to play this role we must maintain a leadership position in the G20 and in the other multilateral institutions to which we belong. And why do I raise this at

your graduation? It's because we are a democracy, and your voices and your opinions will be of great importance to the role Canada plays. For while governments initiate change it is people who drive it, who sustain it, who never let go regardless of the politics at play, whatever you do, if you're a professor, an artist, a computer scientist, a researcher, you must push for global cooperation. These are not empty words because if you find it within yourselves to harness the full breadth of what Acadia has given you, working in community, the ability to innovate, you will be at the forefront of those leading us to better outcomes. This is the challenge that I would put to you today and I know that you are capable of rising to it. Well, I was studying up for this event, as any good student would do I read Acadia strategic plan, in it President Ricketts articulated a perspective which I could not support more strongly. And I quote, "You are the first generation of students who will graduate into a world that is physically transforming at a rate never before seen in human experience, not only the human world is changing but the planet itself is transforming before our eyes". End of quote. Graduates, you came to Acadia to learn and to pursue the next great innovation. The next great dream, the next great collaboration. Let there be no mistake, you must hold on to what you have been given here. It is the anchor that will keep you rooted to what matters as we all face up to our responsibility to each other as Canadians and as citizens of the world. And on this, I would make my final request of you, due to the very nature of our country, which is a great mosaic of diversity, Canadians have a unique opportunity to work with those who seek a global unity of action, but at an important facet of doing so is to demonstrate that we can deal with the chasms within our own country, especially those which arise from the treatment of the First Nations, the Métis Nation and the Inuit of this land. For all of us, reconciliation is the crucial moral and economic issue of our time. Indigenous people are the youngest and the fastest growing segment of our population, they have not been given the tools they need to succeed. Even today 40% of Indigenous children live below the poverty line. 50% of children in child welfare are Indigenous. Imagine the trust that needs to be rebuilt. Reconciliation isn't just a word, it's a very real practise and each and every one of us must actively support and indeed live. It is the road that allows young Indigenous people to pursue their ambitions in Canada's business world, ambitions such as were demonstrated in Nova Scotia a few months ago by the purchase of 50% of one of Canada's largest seafood companies by a coalition of Mi'kmaq Nations, opening doors for the next generation of their young. This is an example of a people refusing to accept a status quo that doesn't work. And with that, I suspect the example you'd like me to follow is not to speak too long. So let me leave you with one last comment. As you enter the world as alumni, know that Acadia has given you a gift that is priceless. It is the knowledge that you can make the difference, when you feel the urgency in you use it to fight for a world that works. Don't settle. Don't settle when your question feels like it wasn't really answered. Don't settle when you can build bridges, not barriers. Thank you.

- Thank you Mr. Martin for those inspiring and wonderful words to our graduating class of 2021. I want to congratulate all of our honorary degree recipients. And I'd like to invite all of you to watch additional video coverage both of Mr. Martin, but also of all of Acadia's newest honorary degree recipients who have all recorded special messages for you, and these are posted on our convocation website.

- Good afternoon. As your Chancellor, I have the privilege of offering the last few words at this year's Convocation, which I would love to do in person but unfortunately that cannot happen. I do want to congratulate each and every one of you on the extra effort that has been required for you to complete your studies and earn your degrees in this unbelievably challenging year. Dr. Ricketts and I would only have the privilege of presenting you with your degrees at University Hall stage and celebrating with you on this wonderful day, but again, COVID has taken all the fun away. I do however have a few comments to make for you as you decide to leave this wonderful place and move on with your lives and careers. Whether you are planning postgraduate studies or lettering in a rapidly changing and challenging workforce, I do want to encourage you to keep the relationships that you have made here at Acadia alive, they are so important and I hope each of you will nurture them into the future. I know speaking from personal experience I was a graduate of the Class of 1968, hard to believe, and talking to so many other alumni, that this is all part of keeping the Acadia tradition and culture alive. Whether you have had shared experiences in the classroom on the athletic field, just socialising, or even as roommates, these things can last a lifetime. The friendships you make here will be the most important ones you have ever made in your life. You were all now proud members of the Acadia Alumni family, and I hope each and every one of you think of yourselves as ambassadors for Acadia. I would encourage you to keep in touch with your professors they want to hear from you, to attend the alumni events in your neighbourhood or wherever they occur, to read the bulletin, to come back to campus whenever you can, and to help us recruit future students for this university keeping Acadia strong and healthy and moving ahead is all part of what you can do to help, and allow future students to share the experience at Acadia that each of you have had. Now as the post-COVID era is behind us and hopefully that will be later this year, I want to offer each and every one of you the best of good fortune in your lives, the experiences and the learning that you have had here will help you in the future and help make the world a better place. And you, I know we'll carry on the proud tradition of all the graduates that have come before you. Thank you for listening. ♪ Far above the dykes of Fundy ♪ ♪ And its basin blue ♪ ♪ Stands our noble Alma Mater ♪ ♪ Glorious to

view ♪ ♪ Lift the Chorus ♪ ♪ Speed it onward ♪ ♪ Sing it loud and free! ♪ ♪ Hail to thee
our Alma Mater ♪ ♪ Acadia hail to thee ♪ ♪ Far above the busy highway ♪ ♪ And the
bustling town ♪ ♪ Reared against the arch of heaven ♪ ♪ Looks she proudly down ♪ ♪ Lift
the Chorus ♪ ♪ Speed it onward ♪ ♪ Sing it loud and free ♪ ♪ Hail to thee our Alma Mater
♪ ♪ Acadia hail to thee ♪ ♪ Lift the Chorus ♪ ♪ Speed it onward ♪ ♪ Sing it loud and free ♪
♪ Hail to thee our Alma Mater ♪ ♪ Acadia, hail to thee ♪

- Let us pray. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified of the future. God goes with you. God will never leave you nor forsake you. May God bless you and keep you. May God's countenance shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you. May God bless you all the days of your life and give you peace. Amen.