

**Elder Lorraine Whitman**  
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**Acadia University**

- 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 our self-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 continued to follow your dreams.

You didn't stop from accomplishing your dreams and your aspirations. Your dedication to diversify and modify your lifestyle through 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 significance 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 momentous 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.