

Student Addresses

Hello, 您好, Hola, and Wowawawawa. That is me saying hi in English, Chinese, Spanish and Nerglish, the four major languages on the Saint George's campus; we definitely have a lot of fish around. I was quite surprised when I found out I was elected to be one of the graduation speakers. Although I believe that the major reason I am here is that I skipped most Monday morning meetings since I was a junior, including the one when graduation speakers were chosen, I want to give my appreciation to the people who gave me this opportunity.

However thankful I am, there is a problem. I have no clue how to write a graduation speech. For the first time in my life I am in a position to give useful advice, not to simply to argue against someone, which those who know me see as my natural position. I am a professional at just saying "no." (As a side note, I have learned that people won't always be happy if you are always arguing with them.)

I looked online for what a graduation speech should be like. Most of them are about how to be successful in the future.

However, that is all we are wondering about, and of course, I don't know much. Most of you surely know more than me. In fact, the most important and useful personal advice I could give is to never, ever challenge a metal door. No matter how fast you are going, even if you crush the door, it hurts!

I also heard many suggestions about constructing my speech. I could be like Russell, start with a famous line and develop it into a lifelong suggestion, and maybe add some tears at the end. However, I am not an experienced man like Russell.

Yao then gave me a valuable suggestion. If you can't offer a speech about how to be successful in the future, at least try to be funny. That seems more like me. I thought that offering a laugh might be a good idea.

My next task was to figure out how to be funny. I watched a video of Jerry Seinfeld, a comedy writer. There is one sentence I remember the most. Jerry Seinfeld said that his job is to waste time on stupid stuff so others can waste their time watching it. But is that really the truth? Is comedy, and making people laugh, really just a waste of time? I hope you don't feel what I am doing is stupid or a waste of time. But I do hope you think it is funny!

I am just trying to get everyone to laugh. I believe that those laughs are worth it no matter how small or how "stupid" they seem. Happiness is the most important thing. Skiing like a 6-year old down a tiny little slope is not nearly as cool as rushing down the hill like an adult, but it is safe, fun and much less likely to end by crashing into a door. On the whole I would recommend going slower on a ski hill if you don't want to end up in the hospital. It may not look as cool as going fast, but there is more benefit in the long run.

The same is true for my entire high school life: I came here because I didn't want to be like my friends in China whose life might be determined by a single test. I am here to take the slow way down the hill and to be happy. Dozens of Chinese parents might believe that I missed out by leaving China, but I have no regrets as I learned more here at Saint George's about myself, about life, about saying "yes" rather than "no," even about the stopping power of metal doors.

My unique experience, and those of all my classmates, construct the community of Saint George's. I give thanks to everyone.

Thank you, 谢谢, Gracias, and WaWooWa.

Go Dragons.

— Tom Wang, Class of 2019

Senior Tom Wang makes a humorous point during his Graduation speech.



I took a really long time to write this speech. Every time I would sit down to work, I would search for some piece of wisdom to impart. It took four drafts to realize I wasn't that smart. I'm not any wiser than my fellow students and definitely less experienced than all the seasoned adults here. To the Class of 2019 and current Saint George's students, I don't know what to tell you. I don't know how you should live your life; I barely know how to do laundry. I don't know how you should overcome challenges; during a tight ASB election, I promised 8th graders donuts until I won. I don't know any secrets to academic success; I can't remember half the things I've learned here. What the heck does funkify mean? So, in honor of our last day as dragons and because I lack any life hacks for success, I'm just going to tell you what I've liked about attending Saint George's for a whopping 13 years.

I'll begin with the way we start every school year: the Dragon Dance. I remember walking in a line with all my fellow kindergartners, looking up in awe at the seniors manning the dragon. Thirteen years later, I became one of them and although I spent my last Dragon Dance inside the dragon head, looking at my feet as Will and Maddy slowly guided me towards every bump in the field, I've enjoyed the tradition every year. I loved going to basketball and soccer games. There's no better atmosphere than a SGS crowd after one of our classmates hits a big shot or scores a crucial goal. I also played some basketball for the best C-Squad team in the state – don't Google that. But seriously, have you ever seen Brett Coles dunk on a 5-foot, skinny freshman? It's incredible... and horrifying. I liked playing baseball, partially because I like the sport, but mainly because I got to be involved in an absurd number of inside jokes. At Bingo Night, I enjoyed the camaraderie of screaming at Coach R with my classmates to call our numbers. It's a shame we never learned he doesn't hand select them. I loved serving on ASB, although, and partly because, I was forced to listen to Abby describe her "farm theme" in every meeting. Originally, we assumed she meant flannels and cowboy boots, but for



Senior Charlie Darnall delivers his Graduation speech.

Homecoming, she wanted all the students to dress as farm animals. Later, we shut the idea down again before she described what a farm-themed prom would look like. No one wanted the boat covered in mud. I cherished the senior lounge once I managed to develop an immunity to the smell of old Atilano's and an understanding that the roof is off-limits – for some reason. But seriously, why else would they build a roof right next to a window? In the classroom, the discussions fascinated me, although Holte's infamous "get back to work" often cut them short. But, truly, it's so wonderful being at a school where even the teachers love being around you. At least I can't think of another good reason why Rachel never kicked Jacob, Brett, Kai, and me out of class.

There is a theme in my favorite aspects of Saint George's: community. During my time here, I've gravitated towards the situations where I could interact with peers. The relationships I made through the activities I did were more important than the activities themselves. I know I am not that wise, but, at this moment, the culmination of hard work and fun times for the Class of 2019, I encourage you to appreciate the personal connections you've made here at Saint George's. The interconnectedness the school provides creates a caring, supportive community, that is hard to find anywhere else.

So, thank you to all the teachers, staff, coaches, friends and family who have helped us along the way. And thank you, Class of 2019, for an amazing experience. Go Dawgs!

– Charlie Darnall, Class of 2019