

Tamara Endich, Student Trustee
Remarks to the 109th Undergraduate Commencement
UMass Dartmouth
May 24, 2009

Thank you Chancellor MacCormack, trustees, family members, friends, staff, faculty and fellow graduates of the class of 2009.

So here we are, awaiting the “last lecture” of our undergraduate careers at UMass Dartmouth. Only today, there are no notes to take and no pop quizzes.

We have to collect all the knowledge we’ve gathered up until now and prepare for the most important test of all – life after UMass Dartmouth (and hopefully we’ll like our professors.)

When we set out on this journey, we had no idea how l-o-n-g it would take to take to get here, but we made it! Looking back I’m sure there were times when we all considered throwing in the towel - wishing that for just once, the dart van would just drive us *off* campus, hoping the loop would break down on its way back to campus, or even considered taking a wrong turn on the way back from a Spring Break road trip to Florida. Today, **this moment**, which seemed so far in a future that it was hard to imagine, is here.

We made this journey together. All of our classmates, our friends and families, the caring staff and faculty - they held out their hands to help and guide us to reach our full potential. They are all here today, proud of our accomplishments, those that are measurable and those that are not - and are ready to push us one more time.

The Class of 2009 came in as the largest freshman class in the history of UMD, but every class after us has been larger! I guess you can say that we are a great advertisement for this school!

This University, the classrooms, lecture halls, the dorms, the library, sports fields, gym, Res ... these are not just buildings, they have been our homes and sanctuaries for the past 4, 5, or maybe even 6 years.

We took advantage of all that UMD has to offer, and while the school pushed our limits, we pushed the limits of the school. While experiencing all of the opportunities that this university has to offer, it was impossible to ignore the tightness of our community. The closeness, the personal bonds, and the caring – these are the qualities that make me the proudest to have attended this university.

But ... it is also a world class institution of higher education, a place that has brought the world to us and has prepared us to affect the world.

We, as a group, have had such a great impact on this University. We “got in the game” and we left our mark, creating change – our participation and our collective energy made a difference!

To highlight a few of the changes that we have witnessed while here; the Woodland Commons apartments, the Charlton College of Business the new research building, an illuminated football field to host Corsair night games and activities, a new emergency alert system, the construction of the Ferreira Mendes Portuguese American Archives, and the new learning commons in the Carney Library.

And these are just the physical changes! The programs we now offer have changed and grown to meet our needs and aspirations.

I am proud to have served as your representative on the UMass Board of Trustees. I have been fortunate to have served with student and faculty leaders, trustees, President Wilson, Chancellor MacCormack, and so many others – to advance the cause of UMass Dartmouth and public higher education.

That is -- to maintain the delicate balance of sustaining world class quality while keeping higher education quality within economic reach for all.

We have faced some very difficult decisions together as we try to sustain that balance. Perhaps the most enduring lesson I have learned as a UMass Dartmouth student and trustee is the value of choosing the hard right over the easy wrong.

Over the next few years, we are all going to be faced with hard decisions that will not make us popular. As one who loves this university and wants to see it thrive for another century, I ask all to do their best to set aside self interest and focus on our one common purpose – keepng UMass Dartmouth world class and within reach.

Class of 2009. Do something Crazy!