

Graduation Ceremony 2
Graduand's Address
Monday 21 November 2011 at 1630hrs
JESUITS' CHURCH – VALLETTA

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Ph.D graduand and representative of the students

It is an honour for me to deliver this address. Today marks one of the more significant achievements in our lifetime, and a resounding closure to years of hard work, research and publication, which has been finally accompanied by the gratifying feeling of accomplishment.

And it is indeed this, and no other aspect that has spurred us on in this journey to bring us here today.

This journey has not been without its challenges. The largest and most is that of self-discipline. This is radically different to our undergraduate years; where we are effectively set on rails, with well defined goals, milestones and deadlines. At a post-graduate level, your worst enemy is yourself. This is especially more so when the program is on a part-time basis. In my day job I am CEO of an internet gaming company. Believe me when I say that there are always more important, more pertinent and higher priority tasks than completing one's research or writing one's dissertation.

Furthermore, many of our respective faculties have had to operate from a restrained budget – in my case that meant that the cost to exhibit and present each of the 12 international conference papers or journals published had to be borne completely out of pocket. Due to the rapid changes in the market more funding is required to support the development, exposure and subsequent competitiveness of our academics.

But if we truly believe in what we have set out to do, we will prevail, and our presence here today is testimony to that. All the persistence in our journey to take our academic achievements to the next level, the endless hours toiling behind our research, to labour to have our names committed to scientific journals and papers have paid off today, as we can nonchalantly brush off the last few years of our lives as “hard work”.

A post-graduate degree is an important distinction in an increasingly challenging economic climate. Gone are the days where a first degree was a distinct advantage for the industry. We now inhabit in a global playing field where cheap labour, commoditised services and mail-order degrees are all too prevalent, and it is becoming increasingly harder to differentiate. Hence the need for specialisation, creative thinking and a new radical approach to the way we mentor our peers, colleagues, and future alumni.

And our journey has only just begun. As graduands today, we have the duty to take our ingenuity and enthusiasm back to academia and the industry, where we need to

incentivise and inspire a new generation of thinkers. Receiving a PhD is recognition of creativity, a commitment to always look at a problem as a new challenge on how to innovate. We also need to urge the powers that be to invest more significantly in tomorrow's intellectual property. We will not make a better world by imitating ideas cheaply, but by thinking differently, inspiring creativity, and most importantly putting passion into everything we do.

Remember that each of us here today have a very special mission. The future of our island, indeed the entire industry we live and work in, depends on our ability to rapidly adapt to the ever changing environment, recognise a gap in the market, design and build a technical solution to address that gap, whilst relying on good, trustworthy expertise from worthy colleagues like yourselves. Only in this way will we truly manage to create a brave new world that is stimulated by intellect as opposed to desire.

In conclusion, I would like to thank our respective tutors for their invaluable mentoring, our families, friends and loved ones for their endless support, and last but not least our University for providing us with the opportunity, resourcing and initiative to enrich ourselves and inspire future generations of alumni through our creativity.

I will end by quoting Ralph Waldo Emerson, a lecturer and poet, someone who has been a personal inspiration because he also strayed away from the norm, from one of his own graduation speeches: "Do not follow where the path may lead. Go, instead, where there is no path and leave a trail."

I congratulate you all having made it here today and, wish you and your loved ones a lifetime of success, and most important of all, happiness.

Thank you.