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# Remarks of Class President

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*Illinois Wesleyan University*

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**May 2, 2010, Commencement**

**Remarks of Class President  
Alessandra Bollero '10**

Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for being here today. I have the honor of formally welcoming President Wilson, the faculty, staff, parents, friends, and mentors who have gathered to help the graduates sitting before me celebrate their commencement into postgraduate life. Today is an opportunity to reflect on the achievements, triumphs, and relationships that have manifested over the past four years as a result of our decision to attend Illinois Wesleyan University. Although I have to admit the suburbanites significantly outnumber us out-of-staters, each of us entered with different foundations that coalesced to become the distinguished class of 2010.

Reminiscing back to move-in day on campus, we all remember feeling exhilaration and anxiety as we bid our parents adieu and introduced ourselves to our roommates. During Fall Festival, we sported our bright green Turning Titan T-shirts, and cheered on prospective friends proudly performing in the talent show. Many of us soon discovered Bloomington's culinary jewel, Avanti's, and quickly learned that purchasing coffee mugs and sweatshirts from the bookstore was a legitimate form of Christmas shopping. Some of us girls enjoyed the buffet-style dining at Saga a little too much, and may have been considered candidates of the "freshman 15" trend, as so accurately classified by our Men of Character over at the Sigma Chi table. During our first attempt at class registration, we may have been spotted sprinting across the quad in our underwear in an attempt to get admitted to a Gen Ed requirement. We no longer had Mom telling us to "go to your room and do your homework", and thus time management was of the essence. Around exam time we may have discovered that 1:30 a.m. was too early for the library to close. Some of us were challenged to understand the eye-opening realities of the world in our gateway colloquium courses, and exhausted the discussion-driven classes facilitated by Wesleyan professors. Most of us had the honor of being rewarded for our hard work before returning home for the summer, as we fueled our friendships and boosted our GPAs during the season of Play term.

Some of us returned to campus sophomore year a bit tentative regarding our major selections, and may have decided to pursue other interests. Former English majors entered the business program, and history majors became political science converts. Whatever our fates, we learned that getting to know the professors in our respective departments on a personal level would be our best resource in capitalizing the cost of our education. We began receiving emails from the Career Center about building resumes and internship opportunities in an attempt to help us see past the cap and gown.

What seemed like a blink of an eye brought our upperclassman status. We moved off campus and learned how to cook, or at least how to stealthily steal our housemates' food without them noticing. We toasted our first alcoholic beverages ever on our 21st birthdays. Some of us ventured abroad, where we learned to survive on a nonexistent budget and converse in foreign languages. Others juggled internships with on-campus jobs, and competed in intramurals and attended our colleague's senior recitals. Our nursing friends woke up at 5 a.m. to attend clinicals, whereas others patronized the idea of scheduling all classes after lunch. We let the band lead our cheering at night football games, and hoped so badly that the basketball teams would make it

past the elite 8. We have taken pride as Titan athletes and fans in realizing continued success in the CCIW and NCAA tournaments, as we've watched more and more championship banners get mounted in the Shirk center.

Throughout our years, though, we have changed individually and collectively. We are no longer timid freshmen who wait for others to break the ice in classroom discussions. We have been confronted by challenges and adversity, both within the confines of our campus and what lies beyond. Some may have undertaken roles as executive board members, and proposed budget requests from Student Senate. Some were contenders on political panels, and discussed pros and cons of the health care debate. We raised money for natural disasters and disease research, and together viewed the inauguration of our country's first black president. We sat helplessly as the worldwide economy spiraled out of control, and witnessed in disgust the biggest Ponzi scheme in corporate history. These topics of modern reality penetrated our psychology papers, medical school application essays, and our university newspaper. Learning how to formulate personal opinions about these events and experiences is what makes us prepared for what lies ahead. This university has encouraged us to shape ourselves, rather than mold us into its own product. In promoting personal creative expression, this institution has granted us the responsibility to cultivate and evolve into the polished class that we have become. As trailblazers in our respective concentrations, we have come together as a class to leave our perpetual mark on the Wesleyan culture.

However, our role as Titans does not terminate here. Today is a springboard into the future for ourselves to become serving Titan alumni. Three summers ago I met a man by the name of Frank Livingston, a graduate from the class of 1951, who through conversation discovered my membership on the women's golf team. He began cutting out *Argus* articles about our team and sent them via mail to my parents. He also posted copies in our clubhouse with my name highlighted so that family friends could follow our success. I later found out he did this type of thing for a lot of current students and their families, and although he has recently passed, he lives on in my mind and heart as the ideal alum: someone so proud of his university that forty years following graduation, he still proactively sought ways to fulfill his role as a Titan. How will we actualize our gratification as alums in our future contexts?

Whether we realize it or not, we would not be who we are without Illinois Wesleyan University written on our diplomas; we are unique because of this credential. We have all contributed significantly to the dynamic of this illustrious class and student body. Now it's our time to discover new opportunities in locations near or far, and although we may feel the same exhilaration and anxiety we did stepping foot onto this property, we have the confidence and skill set to undertake the challenges and adversity that lie ahead. I wish you the best in your future endeavors, seniors, and remember to carry the pride of forever being an IWU Titan.