

GRADUATION SPEECH

"Ambitious, Masterful and awe-inspiring"

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UVI St. Croix Campus – Class of 2006

Good Evening.

Many of us have envisioned this day time and time again. Now that we're finally here, graduation symbolizes so many great things. For some, it represents a portal leading to their career development and financial stability. And we all know how important that is because we have had our share of financial burdens. To others, this day represents a pillar of excellent that we have long waited to see and to feel. But for all of us, today, our commencement day is our time to show our families, friends, and the community how hard we have worked and how **ambitious, masterful, and awe-inspiring** we have become.

But how did we get here? How did we become the **ambitious, masterful, and awe-inspiring** class of 2006? I'll tell you. We had an ambition to get there. We were determined to master our subjects. And even though we were awed by some of the classes, we felt that we had an obligation to ourselves and to our families to shift the awe from the subjects to ourselves. We became the awe-inspiring class of 2006.

We realized that we could not gain an ultimate sense of satisfaction in our careers without a college education. So we gave it all and applied ourselves efficiently to the studies of our respective fields. We made many sacrifices to get to where we are right now. Those of us who are single parents and dedicated employees or volunteers know how hard it was for us to find a balance within our lives that worked well with achieving our academic goals.

We were willing to go that extra mile and in some cases give that extra hour that we realistically did not have to complete our assignments, and prepare for our exams. Regardless of how difficult it became, we did it. We suffered through those long nights and we were even willing to give up our weekends just to get the job done. And let's not forget our most troubling emotional experiences. I know you all feel like me on this one because we were faced with times of stress and frustration; there were times when we just wanted to pull our hairs and scream; times when we felt that we could not deal with that particular professor or subject any longer. We experienced occasions of personal sadness. There were times when we felt that we wanted to give up. But we didn't. We did not give up. We made it through those rough times and we are stronger because of them. It is because of them that today we are the **ambitious, masterful, and awe-inspiring** class of 2006.

Even with all the little horrors that life threw our way over the past few years, there are many good things that we have gained. Many of us have gained life-long friendships with some of the most extraordinary individuals, including class mates and

instructors. We have had the opportunity of studying under the instruction of some of the world's greatest professors. Through our experiences here at the University of the Virgin Islands, we have been prepared to become the leaders of this territory. We have gained knowledge that we shall carry with us for the rest of our lives, and it is important for us to remember that we did not do it alone.

First and foremost, we thank the Almighty Creator for instilling in us the will to succeed through both harsh and pleasant times. We thank Him for giving us the strength that we needed to get through our long days and nights of work and school. To our parents, friends, and loved ones, we thank you for all the support you have given us during these years. We thank you for having the patience to put up with our frequent mood swings, and disruptive attitudes. To our professors, thank you for sharing your knowledge and wisdom. Thank you for guiding us in the direction of academic success. To all of you, we thank you for having faith in us. We could not have made it this far without your love and care.

My fellow graduates, as we leave here today, I urge you not to go out there and follow a path that has already been established by someone else. Let us go out there and create our own paths within this territory so that others behind us may follow in our footsteps. It is our turn to make our own marks within this territory. Let us stand tall and proud always; let no man or woman bring us down. It is time to show the world how ambitious, masterful and awe-inspiring we truly are.

And if we do not stay in the Virgin Islands, as some of us may not, let us remember always to hold the flag of UVI aloft. Let us be bold, brave and always be ambitious, masterful and awe-inspiring in all that we do. Let us be known by the company we keep; let us be remembered by the professionalism we take to the work place. We graduate today from a small University on a small island, but let us not be constrained by small ideas. Let us ever be ambitious in what we do, masterful in our undertakings, and let others be filled with awe at the level of our dedication to our work and to our home.