

00:06
- Good afternoon, President Kelly, Provost Sandell,
00:10
Dean Zeng, Board of Trustees, Dr. DeSalvo,
00:15
Faculty, family, friends, and the Class of 2021.
00:21
Today's a day of celebration.
00:24
We are celebrating obtaining our degrees,
00:27
but more importantly, we are celebrating greatness.
00:32
We have been in virtual spaces since March, 2020,
00:36
so to be here in person at Boston's legendary landmark
00:42
attending our graduation is a cause for celebration.
00:47
This year and a half...
00:49
(background cheers and clapping)
00:55
This year and a half has felt like a decade.
00:58
Life as we knew it changed overnight.
01:02
It has been a year filled with loss.
01:04
We lost life as we knew it,
01:07
people we know and love and jobs.
01:11
We lost pieces of ourselves.
01:14
Hearing myself say that, I feel the weight of my words
01:19
and yet I can't help but think that in all we've lost,
01:24
we haven't lost our greatness.
01:28
Greatness can come from anything
01:30
including a pandemic that is up ended our sense of normalcy.
01:35
It doesn't come from perfection.
01:38
Greatness comes out of the lessons learned from failures
01:42
and the growth experience through mistakes.
01:45
Greatness can even come from the decades long reframing
01:50
of systemic and institutional racism
01:53
that has happened in the history of America.
01:56
Greatness is knowing that we are better today
01:59
than we were yesterday
02:02

because of what the past has taught us, both good and bad.
02:07
Being humble enough to learn from the mistakes that we make
02:11
and those that we see others make is a part of greatness.
02:16
Recognizing the beauty in our flaws
02:19
to continually refine who we are
02:22
personally and professionally is part of being great.
02:28
Today, my charge to everyone here is this,
02:32
commit to purposeful power walking.
02:35
That is commit intentionally to walking in the power
02:39
that you possess each day.
02:43
Purposeful power walking is a journey of intention, purpose
02:48
and power that is filled with destinations of greatness.
02:54
It has carried me through my own destinations of greatness
02:58
such as obtaining my undergraduate degree
03:00
from Howard university
03:02
to my application and acceptance to suffix MPA program
03:07
to being the first Haitian-American
03:10
and second African-American woman
03:13
to receive the Commonwealth Suffolk Fellowship.
03:17
(background cheers and clapping)
03:25
To having an article published on my work
03:28
on how to build an anti-racist government,
03:31
to standing here
03:32
as the 2021 Graduate Student Commencement Speaker.
03:37
Just as I have purposely walked in the power that I possess,
03:41
intentional in building my legacy,
03:44
I encourage you to bring all of who you are
03:47
to every destination purposefully, without compromise
03:52
and walk in the power you possess
03:55
destined to building a legacy
03:57
pre-designed specifically for you.

04:01

COVID has taken a lot from everyone, but more importantly,

04:06

it has given us opportunities for greatness.

04:09

Thank you.

04:11

(background cheering and clapping)