

August 22, 2008

I am grateful to have this opportunity to welcome the class of 2012 to Niagara University.

I also want to welcome transfer students that are new to the university.

I know that many of you were born in 1990.

That was a special year in my life because that's the year I started college.

I want to mention my favorite movie at that time in my life because I'm going to borrow a line from it to give you some advice and encouragement as you begin *four very* special years in your life.

When I went off to college in the fall of 1990, my favorite movie was *Say Anything*.

The main character in the movie, Lloyd Dobler, has just graduated from high school.

He's not going to college, he's not sure the military is for him, basically he's not sure what he wants to do with his life.

So he says:

"I'm looking for a *dare to be great* situation."

I love that line.

A dare to be great situation.

I have to tell you, I've always thought that college *is* a dare to be great situation.

Like many things in life, college is what you make it.

Imagine if, in these next four years,

You earn a grade point average of...2.2...

C's...average...good enough to graduate.

But you wait until the last minute to work on assignments for your classes.

You only do the bare minimum of community service that is required of you.

You don't bother setting up an internship that relates to your major.

Imagine what an ordinary experience that would be.

Imagine how fast these four years will fly by and what a shame it would be if you found yourself saying:

"I should have tried harder."

“I could have done better.”

Dare to be great.

There are great opportunities for everybody at NU so there is no excuse to be ordinary.

The key is to get involved.

Join clubs.

Get an internship.

Do community service.

Join student government.

Go to plays.

Be in plays.

Get involved.

I have one more piece of advice for you and that's to plan ahead.

I can't tell you the number of times that students have come to me in May of their senior year...panicked...“I don't know what I want to do with my life.”

You don't want to find yourself in that position.

You don't have to plan the rest of your life *tonight*, but you *might* wanna get started before May of your senior year.

Four years, even fewer for transfer students: a time to learn, a time to open your mind, a time to make lifelong friends, and a time to develop your passions.

Dare to be great.

Good luck to you all, and welcome to Niagara University.

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