Father Maher, Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, staff, students, Mom! Yes, my mother-in-law is here! Finally, she can see that I am worthy of her son!

Before this event began, I asked a young lady here what, if she had one, would be her question for me. She was very young, and I believe unfamiliar with my career as an artist, save for one of my songs called “Feels Like Home,” which she knew from the TV show called Dawson’s Creek. I told her I have held a job as a music artist now for 21 years and never had another job. She asked me if there was anything else I would rather be doing.

The answer is “no.” The reason that there is nothing else that I would rather be doing is because I followed my heart.

I followed my dreams, my destiny and abilities, and pursued a life in music. I loved the way peoples’ faces would transform, when I was a little girl and I would perform at the piano for them. That feeling is highly convincing and I was set on feeling it forever.

Recently, my husband and I joined forces with Neil Young, Feist, the Barenaked Ladies and others to help the world-renowned environmentalist David Suzuki in his campaign to change the constitution of Canada so that the environment – waterways, air, land masses – would have rights.

We brought our children to the event to meet David one night and anticipated what kind of advice he might give to their young, impressionable minds. It was a simple piece of advice that he gave: “Follow your heart.”

“When you follow your heart, there will be no greed,” he explained. “There is not only a quest for financial gain or status, etc.”
God makes so many of us! And he keeps churning us out unique, all with a different purpose. When you follow your heart, the orchestra of life on Earth is more beautiful. It’s more peaceful, balanced, and harmonious. It is the fruition of God’s vision.

In following my heart to become a singer, my other layers and dreams came true: the perfect husband, a beautiful family, and a clear call-to-action as a humanitarian and activist.

I have had an adventurous life: sat on the tundra with the polar bears as they waited for the ice to form, and sat in awe in the bay in Northern Canada as baby belugas fed with their mothers in the summer. I have touched down in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to see abandoned hospitals and a will to survive adversity that I will never experience myself, and I have met people in Iraq and Southeast Asia who literally gave their lives for social justice.

I have met people who have never been loved or hugged and who are now recovering in compassionate arms. I could see that it’s never too late for love.

I have experienced so much self-realization for which I could never pay any amount of money. I have been forgiven and given opportunity after chance after opportunity, all because I followed my heart.

It has been said that mastery is repeating something perfectly over and over again. My advice would be to follow your heart each day over and over again, every chance you get.

Thank you for having me today.