

College of Natural and Health Sciences/Paul Greenwood

Hello Graduates! Well, it has certainly been an interesting couple of years!

While much of our last year together has been impacted by world events outside our direct control, your UT experience should not, and is not, defined by just the pandemic. Major intellectual transformations, establishing professional connections, and developing life-long friendships have been a part of your time at UT. Those events, over your entire academic career, have been the most critical in defining who you are now.

The faculty and staff of the College of Natural and Health Sciences has been proud to partner with you during your journey at the University of Tampa. The College motto is Connect – Transform – Succeed; a motto developed intentionally for the multiple meanings of each word. So let me take a moment to talk about each part of our motto.

#1 - Connect: Even before arriving on campus you began making connections to the University of Tampa, through contact with Admissions staff, your tour guides, and eventually your advisors. Connections with hall staff, your roommate, classmates, and faculty instructors have continued throughout your time at the university. But you have also connected with information in ways we hope you have not previously done. Information from one course connects with information from other courses, and your own intellect provides the means for finding, establishing, and solidifying those connections.

And we hope you have also connected with your developing profession outside of the University of Tampa. Through internships, research presentations, clinical placements, fieldwork, and service learning, you have made connections in meaningful ways, both broadly and deeply, across the Tampa Bay region.

#2 - Transform: One of the things I mention at the opening convocation for the first-year class, is “If you can imagine it, we will try to make it happen with you.” As you know, having enjoyed this university for a number of years, we rely on you to be active partners in your education, and I hope you have found us to be willing partners in your journey. We hope that we have provided to you a transformative educational experience at the University of Tampa, one that has fostered your curiosity and enabled your personal and intellectual growth.

#3 - Succeed: I believe I can safely surmise that when you began your journey at the University of Tampa, one of your ultimate goals was to succeed. But how you defined success at the beginning of your journey is very likely different than how you define success now. The definition of “succeed” is “to achieve a desired aim or result.” Wrapped in that definition is desire, something that may change frequently over time. But whose desire have we allowed to define our success? If you allow others to define your success for you, your own desires may not be fully realized. Whether you succeed or not is uniquely up to you; work to succeed in your own way, to match your own desires, and to achieve your own results.

So there you have it; Connect – Transform – Succeed. Make connections with the people around you, and engage with the natural world. Be an agent of positive change, and work to transform the spaces you encounter for the better. If you do these things, you will succeed, no matter how you define it, and you will most assuredly be a citizen of consequence.

Your time at the University of Tampa has made you smarter, stronger, more compassionate, more resilient, and more globally aware than perhaps any class before you. I have been proud to work with you and with the talented faculty who have focused directly on your education in our classrooms, in the teaching and research laboratories, in clinical settings, at field sites, and on internships. As you go forward from the University of Tampa onto whatever goals you set to define your own successes, please know that you will be a Spartan forever, and we will be here for you.

Congratulations to each one of you, and to the entire great class of 2021!