



GRADUATION SPEECH

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Graduate/Professional Commencement Ceremonies

Friday, May 9, 2025 • Rick Case Arena, Taft University Center

Class of 2025, what a glorious day!

And what an accomplishment.

One that you will remember for the rest of your lives.

Trust me on that.

Today you'll be sharing a rite of passage that goes back to the mid-12 century of Europe.

That's when the world's first universities began to grant degrees.

You're now part of a nearly 1,000-year-old tradition— one that's steeped in joy, relief, reflection ... and, of course, celebration.

And speaking of celebrating, let's do this...

... Before the festivities begin in earnest, let's take a minute to celebrate everyone who made this day possible.

And to do that **I'd like to ask every parent, every guardian, and every educator** to stand for a moment.

*I'd like for you to stand so that our **Class of 2025 and I** can give you a round of applause.*

So, please, don't be shy.

Stand up and be proud because you deserve it.

(parents, guardians and professors stand while Dr. Moon leads applause)

Thanks to each and every one of you.

You are as much a part of the NSU Shark Family as your newly minted graduates.

(Pause)

I wish I could tell you I spent weeks pondering what to say today.

But that's not the case because it's so obvious.

Class of 2025... what you've accomplished – and endured – these last few years is nothing short of extraordinary.

Most of you entered NSU just as the pandemic was beginning to subside.
In fact, in the fall of 2021, we made the decision to resume in-class instruction.

After a few scary years of isolation, anxiety and loss, you came to campus and thrived.

Indeed, you proved to be a living, learning laboratory for resilience, adaptation and re-connection.

And because of this, I would go as far as saying that perhaps no other generation has been more job-ready on Day One than this year's graduates.

(Pause)

I like the idea of Day One. And I appreciate people who live life as though every day was Day One.

Because it is.

So, think about today as Day One. We call it Commencement Day for a reason.

Graduates, your dreams don't end when you cross this stage in a few minutes to pick up your diplomas.

Rather, you are commencing a new chapter of discovery ... and exploration ... and opportunity.

A new life of continuous learning ... and growing.

And we'll be right here to help you every step of the way as you progress in your lives and careers. This year, more than 6,000 NSU graduates from our various colleges and degree programs will join the more than 215,000 alumni who preceded you.

That's a collective talent pool that:

- Educates our children and future leaders
- Increases opportunity for all

- Enable breakthrough discoveries in science, industry, human health, and planet health
- Empowers business and our economy
- And enhances the health and well-being of millions

In fact, don't think for a minute that you're leaving NSU today. Rather you're just beginning your journey into the greater Shark Family.

And we'll be here for you ... always. Count on that.

Here, at this great university, we talk a lot about excellence ... and what excellence looks like.

On that front, please allow me to recognize two developments that will have a significant impact on our great university and the people we serve for decades to come. Two milestones that were achieved during your time here at NSU.

Indeed, thanks to this year's graduates and those before you, NSU has now attained the elite status of a Carnegie R1 Research Institution.

With this recognition, we join an elite few universities that have earned this designation as important research institutions.

Our achievement of the R1 credential is testament to the passion and commitment of NSU faculty, scientists, students, alumni, and donors who have paved the way for decades.

A hearty congratulations to you all!

(Dr. Moon leads applause)

The second milestone I'd like to bring to your attention is our recent designation by the Carnegie Foundation as an Opportunity College and University. This classification recognizes the extent to which institutions like NSU foster opportunities for student success.

Specifically, it measures how we are enrolling students who are reflective of the communities we serve ... and how the earnings of those students compare to peers in their area.

I am happy to tell you that we rate higher than UF.

In 2025, just 16% of all U.S. colleges and universities earned the Student Access and Earnings Classification.

And we just learned of yet another distinction for your university that adds even more value to your degree—NSU is one of only **21** Universities to hold BOTH the RI AND the Opportunity designation.

NSU is one of only **two** private universities in the nation with these two designations in this category

This is yet another credential to demonstrate NSU's positive outcomes that benefit our students and professions...our patients and their families...and the greater communities and partnerships we serve.

You are part of a very elite group of high performing universities.

So many of our students, faculty and support staff here are responsible for these accomplishments.

Again, let's take a moment to salute this excellence.

(Dr. Moon leads applause)

Excellence comes in many forms at NSU.

Yes, it's about the faculty, curriculum, research, support systems and facilities that make for a great education.

But it's more than that, too.

It's also about the spirit, integrity and character of a place and the people who represent it.

Your spirit of resilience ... integrity ... and continuous learning have represented NSU well these past few years.

Your acts of leadership ... of service ... where you extended yourself to give even more of your time ... your intellect ... your heart ... your purpose ... to care for and help others may well be the most defining moments of your time here.

Keep that up, graduates.

Keep it up...and pass it on. Give to those who come after you.

Mentorship and role models are essential to how we become what and who we are.

Outside of our care for the patient, our commitment to those who come next is and always has been critical to the progression and future of our profession.

Advances in technology will lead us to places we cannot see today.

Technology will never replace the substance of our interpersonal skills and the development of our humanism, a side of medicine that is of cardinal importance.

We only achieve this with the gift of interactive mentorship. Be aware of the duality of your responsibility.

You are the future of healthcare.

And you're just getting started.

Our world needs you ... each one of you.

So, what does excellence really look like?

To answer that, let me now ask each of our graduates to stand.

(Graduates stand)

Ladies and gentlemen, this is what excellence looks like!

The Class of 2025!

You are the future; it's your world to enrich.

I can't wait to see what you'll do next.

Congratulations, Sharks

Way to go!"