



## Important information on writing a winning commencement speech!

Being chosen as a college commencement speaker is a high honor and a capstone of a successful college career. Many spend a lot of time preparing a speech, only to learn that someone else was awarded that honor. How can you improve your chances to present your speech at Commencement?

### Here are some guidelines:

- **Tell a story:** Talk about personal success, such as struggles ending in triumph, or momentous decisions and life-changing experiences that have shaped who you are today.
- **Make it personal:** Add touches that show who you are. Humor, modesty, or even a little boastfulness is OK!
- **Make it universal:** Commencement celebrates the achievements of all graduates. Don't forget them. Acknowledge those who have travelled this road with you, as well as the people who have supported you along the way. However...
- **Don't make this the Oscars:** Leave the long list of "Thank yous" to Hollywood actors accepting their Academy Awards. While showing gratitude to those who helped you reaching your goals is recommended, it should **not** be the bulk of your speech.
- **Be yourself:** Be sincere! Nothing kills a speech—or an audition—like the appearance of phoniness (or sounding insincere) or "phoning it in" (or sounding lifeless).
- **Be original: DO NOT** write a speech filled with quotations from famous people or clichés about success and hard work. Those speeches don't get chosen.
- **Be clear:** Sloppy, poorly organized, or incoherent speeches aren't chosen, either.

If your speech is chosen:

- **Be flexible, open-minded, and available:** The selected speech will likely go through much revision for final polish, and we'll take the time to coach the winner on effective public speaking. Be ready and willing to work with the professors on the commencement committee.
- **Relax!:** Don't worry about being nervous! Some of Miramar's best and most memorable commencement speeches were made by graduates afraid of public speaking.