

IBEI Graduation Talk (Barcelona July 3, 2017)

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Bona tarda a tothom!

That's one of ten things I can say in Catalan, which— as many of you know— I learnt from watching a lot of Barça trophy celebrations over the years.

Buenas noches, good evening, everybody.

First off, I'd like to thank my peers for choosing me to represent them and speak on their behalf. In a school this small, it's a real honour. And, as the only person of colour and woman to be nominated, can I say what a delight it has been to have won both the popular vote and the electoral college.

Contrary to popular belief, I don't actually love the sound of my own voice, so I'm going to make this quick.

To be totally honest, I really struggled with this speech. My friends, I have to say, were all quick to offer advice and help. I also got several requests for special mentions, you know who you are. I was told the success of the speech would be judged on the amount of laughs I got, so please be kind. It feels like a lot of pressure to be judged on being funny and on saying something intelligent.

So, I thought a lot about what to say. Should I deliver some blistering remarks on the state of international politics? I'm sure I don't have to tell you that it's been a bit of a rollercoaster twelve months in our field. I could have spent ten minutes easily discussing what's happening around us today.

But at the crux of it, I felt that today should be less about what's happened outside our little IBEI bubble and more about the people who helped us cope with it: each other.

Together, over the last year, we've tried to make sense of the new reality we're facing as the future leaders, diplomats, academics, and experts that we are. We are all from different backgrounds and have different viewpoints, but we were able to come together in a way that enabled us to learn from each other and broaden our horizons just a little bit.

But more than what we studied, what came to matter to us are the friendships we made. In each other, we found understanding, the same frustration, laughs when we needed it, and alcohol when all else failed. We were pushed together by horrific group essays and a shared hatred for presenting in front of class, united by the constant love of a good party that somehow always seemed to get that little bit out of hand. And in that mysterious way, just as we were hoping for time to slow down so we could savour it, just as we were all feeling less like *guiris*, it sped up and here we are, eight short months after we came together, going our separate ways.

It might be a cliché to say this, but I know tonight won't be the last time I see a lot of these people. I speak for myself now when I say that amongst this group of people I have found friends for life, but I'm sure every one of my classmates will tell you the same.

I would just like to say a sincere thank you to all of my classmates, for the support and friendship you have shown me. Thank you as well to all the professors who have helped us make sense of it all along the way. Thank you to our families and friends, those who are here to support us and those who couldn't be here. I'm sure I speak for all of us students when I say that it's occasions like this, when we can celebrate with you, that make anything we achieve that much sweeter.

A los españoles y los catalanes, un especial mensaje. A vosotros, os quiero dar las gracias en nombre de todos los extranjeros. Esta ciudad nos ha tratado muy, muy bien y estaremos agradecidos para siempre. Deberíais estar orgullosos de vuestra ciudad, de vuestro país y de vuestra gente. Mil gracias por todo el cariño que nos habéis demostrado. Mis compañeros y yo llevaremos nuestros recuerdos y las bonitas historias de este país a todos los lugares del mundo.

Para mí, este año ha sido un sueño. Hace siete años que vi a Fernando Torres en la tele— sin camiseta, obviamente— y empecé un amorío con el futbol, el Barça, y España. Me he pasado mucho tiempo soñando con vivir en Barcelona y que haya pasado por fin... no me lo puedo creer. Cada día aquí es un sueño hecho realidad y yo sé que, si al final me tengo que ir de aquí, volveré seguro en el futuro. Barcelona es la ciudad de mi vida y yo sé que esa es la realidad para muchos de mis compañeros también.

Y con esto termino con el español, por favor, perdonadme por matar vuestro idioma.

On that note, I'll wrap up. Thanks for listening to me waffle on for the last few minutes. I'm so happy to have been here today, celebrating this milestone with you all. If anyone knows anybody hiring, please do pass out your business cards at the reception, we're all getting a bit desperate now.

Muchas gracias y visca Barça!

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