

Justin Esposito Salutatorian Speech

Mr. Karsten, Br. Schady, members of the administration, faculty, family and friends, and fellow graduates,

Good morning.

How can I sum up something as important to us as our time at Molloy?

My own story begins not with me, but with my brother, John. As I finished middle school and decided on high school, my brother, a Molloy alumnus, would occasionally tell me:

“Justin, high school is going to be a slap in the face,” — often trying to slap me in the face to illustrate his point!

In reality, my brother only had good things to say about Molloy; in fact it is almost entirely due to his experience that I chose Molloy. John’s time at Molloy began with a shock: he was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis, a chronic bowel disease, causing him to be absent for a month. I firmly believe now, that had John gone to high school anywhere else, this initial setback would have had a negative effect on his entire high school experience.

Molloy has a way of giving special attention to those students who need it.

Though I was aware of this unique quality throughout my time at Molloy, as I'm sure many of you were, I was never really able to explain it without sounding corny or clichéd. I think Mr. Klimas summed it up best for me at Freshman Camp: "Molloy takes care of the kids who need it most," he said, "the ones who might have trouble at other schools."

It is this emphasis on caring that allowed my brother, and students like him, to overcome the challenges they faced during high school.

For me, Molloy offered the promise of a new start, the famous "reinvention" I had always heard was possible in high school. However, it was a very slow process for me. I began high school shy and quiet, and mostly kept to myself and a small group of friends.

I became involved with Esopus, and by leading groups there I became more confident. My experiences - our experiences- allowed us to open up, and I'm sure many of us have similar stories. Whether through sports, clubs, volunteer service, or classes, we became comfortable at Molloy in our own way.

So why am I talking about becoming comfortable?

It might seem ironic to focus on Molloy as our second home when the main theme of today's ceremony is leaving that home and moving on.

However, discomfort is not necessarily a bad thing.

It is important to be uncomfortable sometimes — uncomfortable with new places, new people, new ideas. It's how we develop and grow.

This is probably most significant phase in a cycle that has been present in every major advancement in our lives,

from nursery to elementary to high school and now college.

At each stage, we leave familiar surroundings just when it seems we have finally become accustomed and comfortable with them.

Though the future may be scary, we can rest assured that we will be able to handle it because of the strong base Molloy has given each of us.

The qualities of compassion, open-mindedness, and awareness that have surrounded us at Molloy have affected us whether we realize it or not.

I believe that we Stanners have the valuable quality of actually **caring about** the world we live in.

In today's world, where it's so easy to be cynical, that is truly a priceless trait.

As we move on to college and the rest of our lives, I deeply hope we continue to develop that trait.

Considering that, perhaps it won't sound so strange if I end with an appeal:

be uncomfortable!

Thank you, Class of 2015.