

Hafa Adai, Good Afternoon Everyone. Thank you for the warm welcome. My name is Mia Sara Dizon Madlambayan, a psychology and sociology double major, representing the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. I am your Fall 2018 valedictorian.

I would like to congratulate my fellow graduates on their accomplishment here today. I know we all struggled for this, and we did it, so give yourselves a round of applause.

I'd like to give special acknowledgements to my family, friends, and especially my other half, for their unwavering love and support on this journey. I would also like to thank my fellow psychology and sociology majors and minors, as well as the faculty who have become my mentors. It was through joint effort, sharing, tears, laughter, and coffee that I stand before you today as your class valedictorian.

My college career actually started late. After high school, I went straight into the workforce. I actually thought college was not worth it if you could just work your way up from an entry-level job. However, after 1 year in a telecommunications company, I realized that this was not what I wanted to do forever. I realized that I wanted more, but I wasn't sure what that meant. So I came to UOG to begin my college career in 2014 as a fearful and unsure freshmen, and I am so happy I did. In the words of the legendary Ru Paul, "So many times, people are afraid to start something because of fear of failing. But, it can be fabulous, because it leads you to the next thing." I fell in love with the psychology and sociology courses and the people in them, and it redirected and refined my vision of what I want to do in life. And even though I graduated "late" in comparison to the social norm and even my own classmates, I never regretted my initial time in the workforce. It was through the combination of work experience and school experience, that I developed the person I am today.

So my advice for everyone in the audience, is to work within your own timeline. In our world of frequent exposure to different lifestyles through social media, we live in a time where it is very easy for us to compare ourselves with others, lowering our own self-esteem and even self-worth. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt "Comparison is the thief of joy." Instead, take life at your own pace. Believe that everything that you do is for a reason. Every experience you have, whether good or bad, shapes who you are. As each of you accepts your diploma, keep in mind that these pieces of paper represent a collection of experiences and relationships we have cultivated here at the University of Guam. And as we move on to the next phase of our lives, it is these lessons, relationships, and experiences that will guide us to the next step. Remember, there is no rush to fulfill society's expectation of success. Success happens whenever and wherever YOU decide.

Thank you. Biba UOG.