

will not be able to differentiate between the good laps and the bad ones. We will not have the time to prepare for the most important laps. Accordingly, we will never win the race, as life is not about winning the whole race; it is just about winning a few laps. Just record the best time in one single lap, and you will be the winner.

AUC had us experience how life works because it was all about the small choices. It was all about the laps we raced and the laps we skipped. It was all about the challenges we chose to experience while knowing that we have so little control over the process.

Your GPA, the competitions you have won, the achievements you added to your CV — to me, all of these factors are just words on paper because we as human beings are defined by experiences rather than results.

- Trying out for a sport that you never knew existed, then realizing it is the best thing in your life
- Scoring a bad grade in a course because you preferred to work on the script of the play rather than write a paper
- Taking an elective in your fourth semester that encouraged you to change your major
- That one friend who would always have your back in group projects
- Having someone you never knew by name help you with a paper and save you from failing

To me, these are the things worth mentioning about AUC. These are the kinds of experiences that help define who we are.

And to still end with a deep message to my fellow graduates: Class of 2017, just chill!

Thank you.

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Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering
Bachelor of Accounting

94th Commencement
Bachelor's Degree Candidates

June 17, 2017

On behalf of the graduating class, I would like to welcome you all to the June 2017 commencement, and I would also like to thank you for sparing the time to share this special moment with us.

Every year, one student from the graduating class is chosen to deliver a speech about how AUC has impacted our way of thinking, our characters and our lives. In many cases, such a speech usually describes how AUC provided the best possible education that will enable us to become better leaders who can stand ready to face the many challenges awaiting us in the outside world. Yet, these speeches often gravitate toward a deep motivational message to the graduating class such as: “You are the light in the dark” or “Life starts at the end of your comfort zone” or “Life is like a marathon; if you are not moving forward, you are falling behind.”

People who say such phrases and believe in them are deeply trapped in a very challenging capitalist world, to the extent that they are afraid of being comfortable, afraid of taking a break. They are so insecure about their lives that they see competition in everything. They would never miss an opportunity. They would always assert themselves in every aspect of life to achieve the best academic career, the best social life, the best professional career and the best athletic life.

What we really need to understand is that not everyone who is wearing a cap and gown in this room today is meant to be a billionaire or celebrity. Some of us would welcome the lifestyle offered on a farm with a small family, a small house, where the ultimate pursuit of happiness and comfort is our goal. Still, far too many of us are bombarded with words like: “Life starts at the end of your comfort zone.” So our passions may begin to change, and we may potentially accept that our lives are meant to be hard and tough to be lived right, not quiet and peaceful.

With this said, I have asked myself the following question: “What does it mean to acquire an education at AUC?” If our educational attainment is not about preparing us to become famous billionaires and celebrities, maybe it is about our academics and the value we place on those pursuits. When I considered things this way, I began to think more critically about my double major in mechanical engineering and accounting. In mechanical engineering,

we had professors explicitly say, “All you need to gain in the next five years is an engineering sense.” Later, I realized the engineering sense is simply an enhanced form of common sense. On the other hand, in accounting, we have a very unique program that teaches you everything you need to know about accounting and prepares you very well for corporate life. However, during my last semester, I enrolled in a course titled Automated Accounting, in which the description should read, “Hey, you have learned everything about accounting in the past four years, but guess what? We now have software that can do everything you know, automatically.” With these revelations, I reached a rather important conclusion, which is: The past six years and the hundreds of thousands of Egyptian pounds my father paid were definitely not about what I studied, since what I studied turned out to be nothing but enhancing my common sense then being substituted by software.

But I continue to query: If these years were not about what we studied or about preparing us for being the best leaders in the world, what were they really about? I realized that these years here at AUC were just like any other years in our lives. They were more about the choices we make and the meanings we give to those experiences.

- Our time at AUC was not about making us the light in the dark; it was about having us experience the light and the dark.
- Our time at AUC was not about making us realize that we have to run out of our comfort zones; it was about having us experience being both comfortable and uncomfortable.
- Our time at AUC was not about training us for the marathon of life so we can keep running from the moment we graduate until the moment we die. Rather, it was about guiding us to realize that even if life is a race, it is not a marathon. It is our “best lap time race.”

Our lives are full of laps. Every challenge we face is a lap, and then every time we have the choice to either race or chill out, we can wait for the next lap. Every time we choose to race, we can experience something new. If we continue to treat life as if it is a marathon, we will never chill. We will instead race each and every single lap. We will face every single challenge, but then we