

# Bring Your Ship Out of Port

*William Hyland*

*Commencement ~ May 11, 2019*

Good morning fellow graduates, friends, family, faculty and staff here at Colby-Sawyer. We thank each of you for your continued support, which has made this day possible.

Today is the day many of us have circled on our calendars for months, *if not years*. The build-up to Commencement is much like the construction of a ship in preparation for its maiden voyage. At Colby-Sawyer, each memory with friends was a plank in the bow and every year a new mast in the hull. Looking back from the bow, we see nearly two decades of social and intellectual growth, dating all the way back to the beginning of this millennium and our birth. But today, as we reflect on our great work, we also look ahead at what is to come.

I am reminded of the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, who wisely said, “If the highest aim of a captain were to preserve his ship, he would keep it in port forever.”

While we’ve built our ships here at Colby-Sawyer, their final destinations should not be the shipyard where they were built. Rather, today is when we begin our next voyage to a new port. Our highest aims are ahead of us.

For some, embarking on a voyage could mean a literal journey to a new city for graduate school, or abroad, or a career – in other words, our highest aims to date. For others, however, the next voyage could be a symbolic one, not a geographical change but a personal voyage of self-discovery. But even as we look out from the bow toward our future endeavors, we should not forget to look back again at the port from which we came.

Many of us came to Colby-Sawyer as wide-eyed first-years who were about to live independently for the first time. I, for one, was still wearing my lanyard around my neck for the first four hours. Nevertheless, we came from all over New England, the United States, and the globe. But we all had one thing in common – we were new Chargers, and this was our new home.

We spent our college years together working and studying – playing, laughing, and learning – inside and outside the classroom. We’ve had drinks with Mama T and we’ve heard Michael Brown sing. We’ve enjoyed lawn games on this Quad and we’ve also survived the dreaded snow removal season. We’ve won championships for our varsity and intramural teams, summited Kearsarge, and skied at Mount Sunapee. We’ve made friends, we’ve made a family, and we’ve helped make a community.

As we leave today, our voyage begins again. And though we’re the captains of our own ships, we are still one fleet. As Colby-Sawyer alumni, we join a vast network of other graduates who will be there when we celebrate a milestone, or when we send up a flare in a time of distress.

So, my fellow sea-faring members of the Class of 2019, don’t let this be the end. Sail on as one fleet and continue to make memories that last a lifetime. I’ll see you back here at our home port for reunions, and I can’t wait to hear about your adventures.

Thank you.