

AUD GRADUATION CLASS OF 2021

Held on October 17, 2021

Dr. David A. Schmidt | AUD President

Speech

Thank You Yumna for such a moving and inspirational speech.

Once again, welcome Mr. Al Suweidi, distinguished guests, AUD Governing Board, faculty, staff, and of course, parents, families and **graduates**.

To the AUD Class of 2021, ...

Today, marks the **end** of one phase and the **beginning** of another. It also marks a new **challenge**.

But, you know much about challenge. And, perhaps even more about resilience. As your valedictorian so eloquently said, because of your spirit and determination, you are indeed the Class of Resilience.

If I may focus for a moment on those two words Yumna so fittingly used to describe the AUD Class of 2021, spirit and determination.

From March 2020 onward, your collected determination in moving forward to continue your education was truly admirable.

And, you moved forward with such spirit. With every new mandate, new policy, new rule, you adapted, you persevered, you improved and most amazingly, you provided spirited understanding, support and empathy to those of us issuing the mandates and policies.

You never once staggered or faltered. You inspired AUD's mantra "The Learning Never Stops" and it never did.

Please note the significance of this, for it is truly sets you apart. It says everything about your character, both collectively and individually. But, I would expect nothing less from AUD graduates.

Life will continue to be full of unexpected surprises and challenges and I am certain you will all have the same spirit and determination moving forward.

As you embark upon this new chapter of your life, with excitement and eagerness for what has yet to come, your time here at AUD will be reflected upon often. Remember this moment!

With every roadblock you encounter, every disappointment you face, every disruption that you confront, and there will be many, rest assured that you **will** have the same resilience to overcome the challenges in front of you. You have proven yourselves.

Nothing truly grand or meaningful is accomplished alone. In the reflection of these moments, and in particular, the reflection of your accomplishments, you realize that you are supported by those who love you and who believe in you.

As Yumna so movingly said, her family was her inspiration and her motivation. For **your** motivation, **your** inspiration, for those you love and are loved by, continue to make them proud and to pay it forward. Continue to appreciate and acknowledge the love and support they have given you,...and give your love and support in return.

Regarding inspiration and motivation, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the essential inspiration and motivation of your time here at AUD. The heartbeat, the embodiment, of the AUD mission's commitment to excellence, the AUD faculty.

Please, an appreciative hand for the faculty of The American University in Dubai.

Also, today marks a milestone as well with the first graduating class of AUD's EMBA program. A special recognition to our 1st EMBA class of graduates.

I would also be remiss if I did not extend another special thank you and acknowledgement.

I was eight months into my presidency when the Pandemic struck. In navigating the Pandemic and continuing to remain true to AUD's mission, **your** resilience and **your** determination, and; most importantly, your **empathy**, had a profound and inspirational impact and I am most appreciative.

Empathy, is one of the most noble of characteristics. Mr. Bill Bullard once said, "The highest form of knowledge is empathy." -end quote

If this is true, and I firmly believe it is, then you, the AUD 2021 Class of Resilience, are wise well beyond your years. You provided immeasurable support to me personally, and to AUD as an institution. I will remain forever inspired.

Thank you and Congratulations AUD class of 2021.