

Good afternoon,

Director Keller, members of the faculty, staff, family, friends, fellow students.

For anyone who does not know me, my name is Kristo Kentala, and I'm the president of the Student Government.

I remember one of the first days in our auditorium across the street after preterm, it was a presentation of strategic studies and out of some reason, I came just a few minutes late, and I tried to open the door really quietly and sneak in. Now normally when you come late, it doesn't go unnoticed and when you enter, you perhaps look the person in the eyes who is sitting in the front, you nod, and try to sit down fast without catching much attention.

Well, of course it did not go unnoticed this time either, but unfortunately for me, it was professor Cesa who was presenting... and as I came in, he gave me a look that could have killed me right there on the spot. And as I walked in and tried to find an empty chair, I could feel a burning sensation as he followed me with his eyes, letting me know that this was not a good start for me. At least that's what I was thinking...

In fact, later on as we were waiting for the microwave to be installed for students use, well, I won't say his name, but a certain Colombian student suggested that food could be warmed during Theories of IR by letting Professor Cesa stare at it for a moment.

Anyway, this event had of course nothing to do with the fact that I chose different courses during both semesters.

When I understood that I would be giving a speech today, I wondered what I was supposed to say. Not all of us are graduating, most of you are still going to DC next year, and on the other hand, even if I am one of the older students, (John, can you hear me) I felt that it would be strange for me to give lessons of life for the rest of you during the following 10 minutes. So last October I thought, that perhaps a fun thing would be to go through the things we have done during the past year, but rather than me talking about them, there could be a better way.

This is why I was every now and then taking videos at different parties and events... not because I was a stalker, Camilla... and I asked, Kharisma, who also had a lot of material of course, to do a video about the whole year. As this was a surprise, we used some of the photos on your Facebook pages so if you see something that is yours and you do not want it there, let me know because we would like to make this public. But for now, enjoy. VIDEO

As this is the last year for some here at SAIS, I want to especially thank Director Keller for being such good Director. We, the SGA had the opportunity to take part in the Advisory Council dinner a few months ago, and there were several speeches in his honor by distinguished members of the council who all know him much better than I do, so based not only on my own experiences but also on what I heard from the others, SAIS has been very fortunate to have Mr. Ken Keller as Director and I wanted to say thank you as the representative of all the students. APPLAUSE

As for Margel, it has been truly a pleasure working with you, we have had weekly meetings for the past 9 months and I think it has been a lot of fun. I am sure that I speak for many students that

we appreciated highly your advice during the year and I think SAIS loses an asset with all the insights you have on the courses. I wish you all the best and hope that we will meet in the future again. APPLAUSE

As for Nelson, thank you as well. Nelson was actually the first person I was in contact with when I was applying to SAIS and we had a nice chat 18 months ago in Giulio's. I wish you the best of luck with your future projects, which I am sure will be very successful, just as you have been at SAIS – I mean you did single out all of us 200, the future leaders of the world, from an applicant pool of thousands and thousands of other young bright minds, right? APPLAUSE

I would like thank all three of you and ask my colleagues to extend you these flowers and cards, each signed by almost all 200 students. The same goes for the rest of the faculty and staff, you get one pretty flower instead of a bouquet, as these are student funds we opted for a second free drink for the students... We thank you and hope that you continue working with the same passion and interest for future SAIS students. APPLAUSE

At this point I would also like to wish Professor Plummer good luck as the future Director of SAIS Europe. The SGA had the opportunity to interview the candidates for the new Director and drafted a strong-ish letter together with the DC SGA to Dean Vali Nasr in favor of Professor Plummer, and we were and are happy to see that it is Professor Plummer who will lead SAIS Europe and do his best to ensure that our University will continue to be among the top International Relations Universities in the world in the future as well. APPLAUSE. We are giving you this bottle of

wine, well, just because we think you might need it some evening next semester...

Thanks also to my team, Irena, Giulia, Roy and David, I think we did a great job and had a lot of fun while doing it. Ambra will give you this small thing as a small token of my appreciation for your effort.

Most of all, maybe a cliché, but a big thanks to all of you, the students who made this year as great as it was. Now, I promised I would never do this again, but as I started this presidency with a poem... well, I made another one. And bear with me, some things are really hard to rhyme...

Indeed, perhaps the best year of our lives we just had,
but no worries, there will be others, so no reason to be sad.
We've learned a lot of interesting things during our courses
things like trade, energy, history and details about military forces.

**During the finals I saw many worried about curves, supply and demand,
While others were already outside enjoying the weather and getting tanned.**

We will miss SAIS, Italy, the gelato and all the food,
not to mention the wine that always put us in such a good mood.

Now, it's good to keep in mind, that our degree is in International
Relations,

and whether it be between NGO's, private companies or even
nations,

in the end it is about interaction between humans, in different
organizations.

Our actions in the future will not only be based on time spent in
classrooms these years

but also our values, integrity, personality, and things we've learned
having a few beers.

So yes, inside or outside of SAIS, a fact is that a great deal we have
learned,

and yet, many of us think about the future and employment keeps us
concerned.

“Now you will get whatever job you want because you are the best of the best”

Well, it might not be that easy, and it’s likely you’re gonna be a bit stressed.

I am confident though that the SAIS degree will open many doors, Remember your SAIS network, and perhaps that job you want will be yours.

"Your time is limited, so don't waste it living someone else's life." Steve Jobs said,

I think it made sense, so I included it here so that it would be read.

So do in life what you want to do, look for the job you want and forget about what the others think

Do it for the reasons you think are important, and if you need advice, ask a SAISer for a drink.

To conclude, anyone of you with a big couch in DC I have to give a warning,

I just might surprise you next year and stand outside your door one morning.

Congratulations to every single one of you, good memories from here we will have quite a few.

Now I’ll stop, and we’ll still have a few more speeches all right, but after that, let’s start this commencement party with all its might.

Thanks.