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## Remarks of Class President

Alani Sweezy 2019

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Good afternoon, My name is Alani Sweezy and I am the Class President for the Illinois Wesleyan Class of 2019. As I was preparing my remarks for today I had a difficult time figuring out what to say to well over 1,000 people. I must confess that this was one of the few assignments I turned in late this year.

I thought that I would start with saying something inspirational but that seemed a little cliché, so instead I'll talk about our journey. 1,325 days ago, we collectively began a journey of a lifetime. To my peers, remember the uncertainty and excitement with which you first set foot on campus. To parents, guardians, siblings, and friends, remember when the grad you are here to celebrate first left home, first called home missing their favourite meal or asking how to do wash. How much has changed in these past few years. Class of 2019, we are officially grown!

We are about to begin our next big journey. Some of us will still miss home, still have questions about laundry or something else that will make our mother's roll their eyes at us a little bit. But even in those moments, we must think back to the strength of spirit and determination that got us to this moment.

Our education empowers us. It empowers us to be our truest selves, to live up to our values and stand up for ourselves, each other, and our communities. As Minor Myer once said, we should strive to not only go out into the world and do well but to also do good. Since we were little, we were often told that we were the leaders of tomorrow, that we would be able to change the world. As we graduate today, we can no longer say that we'll do it tomorrow or help make changes in the future. We must begin to do it today. Alice Walker once said that 'the most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any. I've learned this directly through my experience here at Illinois Wesleyan University. Any place that you go will be filled with both positive and negative aspects, but it is important that we not only enjoy the good experiences, but also find the courage to better the bad ones. This sometimes includes fighting for what you believe in, even when others are not there to fight with you. I thank my parents for instilling in me the ability to stand up for myself and what I believe in.

As we walk across the stage today I want to leave you all with a few words of advice. For many success is measured in the amount of money you make, how popular you are, or how prestigious your job is. But that isn't the case. Success simply put is loving yourself, loving what you do, and liking how you do it.