

Student Speaker Remarks



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Major: Speech Pathology and Audiology

Minor: Health Services Administration

Early Childhood/Child Education

Greetings to the esteemed faculty, our dedicated staff, and, of course, my outstanding classmates. One of my favorite quotes is by Molière. He said: “The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.” If anyone can relate to overcoming a great obstacle, it’s the Lehman College Class of 2020. Whether that be because you are the first in your family to receive a college degree, or you worked jobs throughout college, or you had children along the way, or even that you managed to complete classes during a global pandemic—remember that the bigger the obstacle, the more glorious you are in overcoming it.

Lehman College students truly embody what it means to overcome. We represent a wide variety of ages, cultures, countries, and languages. Yet, our differences do not separate us, they unite and empower us. We truly work together to overcome food insecurity on our campus by supporting our food pantry, we overcome status barriers by donating professional clothes to the career closet, and we work to overcome homelessness by raising awareness of these issues through our activism. At Lehman College, we know that we can overcome anything because we are all in it together. To everyone graduating this year, you should be incredibly proud of yourself, because you beat all the odds. Whether it took you four years or 10-plus years, you are here today because you made it.

As a first-generation college student and a child of immigrants, I felt that obtaining a college degree was something out of reach. When my parents attended my high school graduation, my dad, in particular, got emotional. He had never been given the opportunity to finish high school. As immigrants from Pakistan, my parents have seen hardship that they worked hard to protect me from. I told my dad that instead of crying at my high school graduation he should wait for my college graduation. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19,

we are unable to have a graduation ceremony in person at this time, but that does not mean that I still do not expect him to cry. This virtual ceremony is just another example of overcoming. We still recognize the accomplishments of all Lehman college students and the endurance that we have exhibited in achieving our goals.

Lehman College’s considerate faculty and staff recognize their student population and work diligently to overcome barriers. I felt so supported during my college years here. As the club president for the service club, Circle K and the secretary for the Lehman Chapter of the National Student Speech Language Hearing Association, I fell in love with the Student Life Building. It has become my home on campus, where I felt that connection that students often lose on a commuter campus. Thanks to David, Margaret, and Nate, who worked tirelessly to ensure all the clubs had everything they needed for a perfect event. And let’s not forget Mr. Sullivan—the heart of it all.

As a student of Speech Pathology, I felt incredibly welcomed and accepted. The professors have a vast amount of knowledge and experience, and they even encourage undergraduate students to volunteer in the Speech Clinic. Leslie, Professor Cogburn, Mary Boylan, and Professor Michelle Washington are some of the most incredible human beings, mentors, and professionals that I have met. The dedicated individuals at Lehman College encouraged me to apply for my master’s and I am thrilled to announce that I will be attending Boston University in the fall for their speech pathology graduate program.

I started by talking about the various obstacles that each Lehman College student has to face when entering college. As an incredibly diverse school, we understand that we each have our unique challenges to face—myself included. However, Lehman College is truly the place where I overcame these obstacles with the guidance and support from my mentors and peers. As a first-generation college student, I am going to be starting my master’s! It has been a monumental journey.