

Mr Couani, distinguished guests, family, friends, teachers and fellow students. I stand before you today, together with some of my fellow 2019 classmates, honoured to be part of the proud tradition of Year 12 graduates of this wonderful college. I entered St Pius in Year 5 as a shy, chubby-faced short kid with the world upon my feet. I left it, not so chubby but still as shy as a young man thoroughly equipped to tackle the world. To say that Pius has left an indelible impression, a life-long imprint of many memories is an understatement.

My achievement as the College dux of 2019, whilst still a surprise to me, is a result of the continuous assistance and guidance from a few people who I would like to take the opportunity to thank today.

Firstly, to all my teachers. Yes, all of them. Thanking each and every one of you by name would take too long. But know this, I am thankful and grateful to all of you. However, there are a few special mentions I would like to highlight, teachers who have played a vital part in contributing to my success:

Ms Manga, for always encouraging me to push past my limits. Her extensive knowledge of not only the language but culture enabled me to excel and articulate my Mandarin to a level I never thought I could achieve. She was always patient in answering every bizarre question I could conjure, no matter how difficult or random it was.

Ms Waterson, for putting up with our classes' antics yet always seeing something special in all of us. Thank you for navigating our stress and reassuring us when we were worried about the new English syllabus, and for encouraging us to practice writing as many essays to sample questions as possible.

Mr Wall, your vast knowledge and passion for such a mind-boggling subject has facilitated a keen interest which I plan to pursue in university. The endless supply of notes and questions in the google drive was a golden ticket which enabled me to not only improve my understanding, but delve deeper into some pretty demanding topics.

Mr Yue, for readily answering the hoard of questions our class always had regardless at times of the relevance to the course, ranging from zombie tariffs to tax avoidance. I was fascinated with your ability to answer the most perplexing concepts, and your many cool-looking curves and captivating theories which sparked my love for the subject.

Mr De Silva, you were instrumental in making Physics enjoyable and fun to learn for our whole class. Your role as not only a teacher, but a mentor and role-model has created unforgettable memories: ranging from Kahoots about transformers to illuminating the capacity of marbles to bludgeon.

Mr Masters, our year 11 and 12 co-ordinator who ensured everything ran smoothly like clockwork. Your vocation from a Pius boy yourself to one dedicating your life to help

produce fine young Pius men is truly exemplary-we couldn't have asked for anyone better to lead us.

To my year group, my countless peers who have shaped my college life into something extraordinarily special, thank you. The rivalry yet openness to help each other, the mutual respect, camaraderie and support we gave one another during the HSC is something I am grateful to be a part of. We had many productive, and completely wasted study sessions together; nonetheless, I found these extremely useful and important, and would recommend this as a possible revision method in your HSC year.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their persistent support and care which enabled me to fully immerse myself in my high-school life. Thank you mum for the early morning drives to band practice and Saturday sports. Thank you for allowing the home to be turned into my study fortress, for hoarding every single space possible for my books. Thank you dad for always encouraging me to never give up through my worries, and putting up with my need for near absolute silence when I studied.

To do well in the HSC, you don't have to be the smartest person in the room. Success doesn't come from what you do occasionally, it comes from what you do consistently. I have two words for it, "hard work". Just completing the assigned work isn't enough, you need to be doing a lot more. Boys, you need to be constantly challenging yourself, formulate exam strategies that fit you, and go above and beyond your abilities.

Having said that, it is also important to find the right work-life balance. Regardless of my countless midnight math marathons and late school finishes, they were always balanced with my involvements in extra-curricular activities. Whether it's playing sports on a Saturday morning or picking up an instrument-the balance is important to provide relief and an escape from the exam pressures. I found joining the Senior Jazz Band was a great way to de-stress, and get to know fellow students better.

If I may impart some words of wisdom for the current year 12 students, make your final year count. It may be challenging, but I can assure you it will be rewarding. There may be times you may feel stressed, disappointed, and disheartened- but remember this "Shībài shì chénggōng zhī mǔ"- Failure is the mother of success. It is built on learning and of not giving up, and is a vital part of succeeding. Where you are, a year from now is a reflection of the choices you make today.

Congratulations to all the academic award recipients today. I wish you boys the best of luck for your future. Thank you.