

Sam Pasqualoni

Class of 2022, President of the Student Government Association

Commencement Greeting – Sunday, May 22, 2022

Good morning students, faculty, and guests. My name is Sam Pasqualoni and I have had the extraordinary privilege of serving as the Student Government Association President over this past academic year. I am deeply humbled by the opportunity to speak with you all today. I am so proud to be a part of the class of 2022. Just in this crowd, we are surrounded by Olympians, Fulbright Scholars, and world-renown artists among so many other accomplished graduates.

First and foremost, congratulations to the class of 2022! You have so much to look back upon and be proud of over these past four years. Today is all about you and your accomplishments so share them unabashedly with all your guests and classmates. Also, a big thank you to all our families and friends, many of whom are here today. Without your guidance and support, none of this would have been possible. To all those graduating, don't forget to thank your family, friends, faculty, and anyone else who helped you get to this point today.

Just about four years ago, the class of 2022 stood here on Waterman Green for the culmination of convocation. As a class, we all marched, candles in hand, from the Patrick Gym all the way here, for the twilight induction ceremony, welcoming us to UVM and Burlington. Today, we find ourselves in the same place with a similar sense of beginning ahead of us, albeit with a few more credit hours under our belts and greater familiarity with each other and our awesome surroundings.

Like many of you, I came to UVM looking for a sense of purpose. I had a general idea of what interested me, but little to no idea of how to realize what I enjoy into purpose. During my first year at UVM, I filled my outlook calendar with familiar and new interests to see what stuck. Eventually, I thought I found my purpose. Then I found another purpose, then another. Turns out, my sense of purpose fluctuated as I learned more about myself and the world around me.

Academic adversity made me question whatever purpose I believed I had at a given time. Moments such as glancing at the first question of my final Organic Chemistry 1 exam with Dr. Wurthmann or getting comments from my advisor on the initial draft of my first publication were examples of this. Were the steps involved with what I ultimately want to achieve too much? Turns out they weren't. From polling my friends and colleagues, we tend to learn more from adversity than anything done in comfort. And luckily, none of my interviews asked me to identify cis-1-isopropyl-3-methylcyclohexane.

We are fortunate to be surrounded by faculty and staff who care about helping us find our purpose. There aren't going to be many other times in our lives where we will be supported by so many brilliant mentors who want to see us realize unique success.

Whatever your purpose may be, I hope you have a general idea of what it is. UVM has given us such a great opportunity to explore and learn more about ourselves. Without a sense of purpose, what is there to work towards? If we can chase something we care about, hopefully, life should be a lot more meaningful than otherwise.

Just as I started, I would like to end by congratulating the class of 2022. As we spend our final hours on campus, let's reminisce on all our experiences that made our time here unique. Late night study sessions in the Howe Library, waiting in line for an iced maple madness at Henderson's, and watching the sun set behind the Adirondacks, were just some of the moments which made my experience at UVM so special. I hope you all had the opportunity to capitalize on the foundation which UVM provides to find your sense of purpose and happiness. Thank you for listening to me speak today, and I wish everyone nothing but the best. Congratulations class of 2022, somehow, we did it!