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2025 Convocation Address
Master of Science in Social and Economic Policy
Ryan Family Auditorium

Good afternoon to our wonderful faculty and staff, friends, and my incredible fellow graduates. Standing here today, I feel a mix of excitement and gratitude. Graduation isn't just a ceremony—it's a celebration of countless hours of effort, resilience, and growth. Each of us has a unique story of challenges we faced and milestones we achieved, and today, those stories come together in this moment.

During my time at Northwestern and CUHK, I experienced many “firsts.”

- My first time receiving a B — which instantly made me question my identity as an “A-sian.”
- My first mature NLP project and my first digital marketplace project — and honestly, before starting them, I had to Google what “NLP” and “digital marketplace” even meant.
- And my first time getting nearly one hundred rejection emails in a single week — my inbox was completely bombed.

I can smile while saying these now, but every failure and every moment of starting from zero was genuinely painful.

Still, I'm grateful that I didn't give up.

And alongside those difficult firsts, there were also meaningful ones — across both CUHK and Northwestern:

- My first time teaming up with classmates I barely knew, who later became great friends.
- My first time learning to adapt — adjusting the way I study, the way I think, and the way I respond to challenges.
- And my first time — after failing an interview — choosing to sit down and reflect instead of running away, and realizing that “not trying” is actually the biggest failure. I wrote that into my personal values.

After each setback, I felt myself becoming stronger, more mature, and more grounded.

This is what I learned from my years at CUHK and Northwestern — two places that shaped me in different but equally meaningful ways.

To everyone here today — may we continue to grow, to try, to fail bravely, and to rise again.

Thank you to all the professors for your encouragement and support.
And thank you to my friends for walking with me through every high and low.

Congratulations, everyone.