**Chancellor’s Speech - Graduation**

***April 2015***

I would like to begin by congratulating every graduate here today. You have set yourself a difficult goal and you have achieved it. Don’t underestimate just how important this is. But this phase is now complete. The next challenge is what you are going to do with your degree. And the new goals that you have to set for yourself, again. And what you would like to excel in.. My only advice is to set yourself difficult goals and targets again, strive to be the best in the field that you have chosen, keep searching for the new and what is sometimes viewed as the impossible and always believe that you can change the world .…don’t strive for fame and fortune, but strive to be the best that you can ultimately be.

In a specialized field, what is far more important than pure knowledge and far more important than experience, is expertise. And not just expertise, but Creative Expertise. Ingenuity actually. Because the creative component is so crucial in today’s interconnected world…where it is all about finding solutions and creating the previously unthinkable of what makes a difference and changes the world for the better…and every day is a new day with new learnings.

I recently read this interesting book about one of the greatest companies of the 21st century as far as I am concerned…and that is Google. In it, Google’s former Chief executive, Eric Schmidt, asks the simple question of whether Google’s winning ways can be applied to other businesses as well? The critical ingredient, he argues, is to build teams, companies and corporate cultures around what they call ‘Smart Creatives’. This is the modern day term of Peter Drucker’s ‘Knowledge Workers’ of days gone by. ‘Smart Creatives’, are described as impatient, outspoken risk takers who are easily bored and change jobs frequently. They are intellectually versatile, typically combining technical depth with business savvy and creative flair. The defining characteristic of today’s successful companies is to continually deliver great products at scale and for that you need ‘Smart Creatives’..

So, going into the big wide world to find a job can be pretty daunting.… I will give you the example of my young nephew. He completed his LLB studies and articles and only then decided that he did not really want to become a lawyer…a bit late, right? He then embarked on a journey that was quite frustrating for quite a number of years trying his hand at different things but with no real game plan…and then eureka, out of the blue, he found what he loved…to become a social media fundi for corporates…to create their online presence , create customer stickiness, grow their fan-base, be creative, with the ultimate aim of having a digital communications business one day. He will soon be in his second job creating the social media function in the marketing division, but the interview process was quite something.

I will give you a quick description…he decided that he wanted to change jobs and work for a new business after less than one year in his existing job…he then developed a 10 slide power point presentation on what he would do differently with the brand and e-mailed it to the GM: digital solutions in his target company. He was invited for an interview based on his presentation, as if on cue. After the first interview, where he presented his power point presentation to a team of 5 people, he was invited back for an interview with the marketing director of the business. He then prepared another 10 slide power point presentation for the marketing director, once again with brand new ideas on how to grow market share by improving the brand’s digital presence. He was phoned the next day to say he had the job. So the moral of this story, it takes a different approach to get what you want nowadays..

Competition today is global and the war for the best talent is intense. Whether you have studied at NMMU or Harvard or Shanghai University, you must be ready to compete with the best in the world. Because you might end up working for a global or multinational company with offices in New York, New Delhi or Johannesburg.

In Jim Collins’s book “From Good to Great’ he talks about good being quite a formidable enemy of Great. Because good is ‘not bad’, good is ok, good is fine, good is not too shabby, good is pleasing, good is satisfactory. It is indeed very easy to settle for good. Because to be great takes extra effort and is often a leap of faith. It is also sometimes far easier said than done.. But once you have crafted your plan for greatness, it is about never losing faith, irrespective of the obstacles and naysayers, of establishing a culture of discipline with disciplined people around you, disciplined thought and action and using technology to it’s maximum advantage. Turning something from good to great never happens in one foul swoop, it is a process of many interventions but always with a clear end goal in mind. It is also about Greatness being a choice. We must choose Greatness over mediocrity.

This year, NMMU will celebrate over 6300 degrees and diplomas, which is a formidable achievement, once again.. This is the only university in the world that carries the name of the first all inclusive democratic president of the Republic of South Africa, mr Nelson Mandela. A global icon of the 21st century who was born in the Eastern Cape. A name that needs no explanation wherever you are in the world. And with that name also comes a huge responsibility to live up to what that name represents for anyone who has been touched and studied at this university.

I can assure you that wherever you might end up working in the world one day, you will never have to explain where the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University is situated or which country you are from. And remember your Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of Choice. Your choice.

Ndiyabulela Nangomso.