

## **Annette Warner – BSc (Hons) Business Management – Graduation Speech**

Honorary guests, academic staff, family and friends and most importantly graduates.

It is my honour and privilege to stand before you.

On behalf of the graduands, those here present and those who could not be with us today, I want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have helped us over the years.

During our years of study at GSM London we have been fortunate enough to have professors and lecturers, whose wealth of knowledge and experience have given us deep rooted foundations in our areas of study. Many have nurtured talents of which we didn't know we possessed or perhaps forgotten, they have encouraged us to think more critically and for this we are grateful.

We would like to thank the Academic team both past and present for your dedication and support, and a special gratitude to the Deputy Dean, Christy Traore who on her arrival in 2013 took a hands on approach and helped us out whenever and wherever we approached her.

We also express our gratitude to the executive team and those who have supported us in practical ways behind the scenes; from the administration staff, the tireless librarians and the support staff.

Next, to our family and friends, whose support has been behind our success. Thank you for tolerating us when we were so stressed and could not see our life beyond an assignment; you were there with us when we were completely drained of life, patience and energy. Without your network of support, we could not have gone through the challenges brought upon us by our academic demands.

And a personal thank you to my heartbeat sitting in the audience, the reason I stand here today, you have been my driving force all the way through, and I thank you son!

And now to my fellow graduands:

The real honour is being amongst each and every one of you, some of you I have gotten to know, some have become my friends and some we are meeting for the first time.

It has been a long road not without its challenges.

We went through the motions of spending hours in the library, starting assignments at the last minute and staying up late burning the midnight oil to say the least.

For many, graduation marks the end of formal student life - the end of semesters and of thinking group work/ presentations are way too tiresome and that a 9am class is far too early.

We have learned so much more than the theories and models of management and economics. What we have learned are time management skills, accountability, taking ownership of our work and finally courage, a better understanding of ourselves and belief that **"I can do this" "I will succeed"**.

Today we have a great feeling of achievement that comes from the knowing that we did our best, we've received our education at GSM London and our degrees from the University of Plymouth and

are equipped to take on the world, but this does not make us the smartest people around. If we think we are, then we need to reflect on what the Japanese say:

**“None of us is smarter than all of us.”**

So we need to build bridges between ourselves and others. Our achievement should never separate us from others; instead, it should draw us closer to them in a spirit of service. This is what, in professional circles, is called networking. In organisations, it’s called team building. And in life it’s called family, friends and community. We need to approach others in the mutual respect of equals.

Our life is our destiny. Academia will no longer impose assignment deadlines for 2,500 words. **No**, Our life is for us to create.

We have simply built a strong foundation for the future and must now independently design and build, as in the words of Bob Marley **“Every man gotta right to decide his own destiny”**.

Graduates I want you to remember that the challenges you may face are necessary components to your success – and when things get hard remember it’s not always a sign that you’re doing something wrong it’s often a sign that you are doing it right.

So as this chapter we shared now comes to a close, I hope you enjoy your celebration without any hesitation. I urge you to go forth and begin the next chapter of your life’s dissertation.

And with that I salute you all in saying “congratulations on this your graduation”.

**I now invite Sir Robert Burgess, Chair of the GSM London Board, to close the ceremony.**