

## Kenya Z. Hyman's Commencement 2019 address

*Kenya Z. Hyman of Ajax, Ontario, Canada, is graduating with a degree in business management. She has been a member of the college's track and field team as well as the Women's Professional Network, the Women of Color Dialogue Circle and the Black Student Union. She has served as a resident assistant at Wagner and held two summer internships at Intact Insurance in her hometown.*

Hello everyone, I am overwhelmed with pride for what this day represents and honored to be speaking here today. I wanted to start with a heartfelt thank you to President Guarasci, who is standing on this stage for his last time as the president of Wagner College. To our Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty and alumni, all whom have helped me in one way or another to shape me into the educated young woman that I am today. To my fellow members of the Class of 2019, who have struggled in the same ways that I have, to be able to say that we finally have that degree. And finally, a special thanks to all the parents, friends and loved ones who made it all possible.

Before attending Wagner College, I was often thrust into positions of leadership that I would not have pushed myself into on my own. The talent and desire to make a change was there, but the confidence was not. And as many of my fellow graduates have experienced themselves, I was reluctant to try things outside of my comfort-zone. Coming to Wagner as a freshman, I remember looking up to the seniors and idolizing them, hoping that I could make a difference one day in the same way that they did for me. I saw seniors who were going out into the city and working their dream jobs. I know of others who studied nursing while they served as active club members, who were still able to graduate cum laude. Many people around me pushed me to become more involved on campus and to help make a positive change that they knew I could be a part of. I have helped to host events and meet with guest speakers, all because administrators had nominated me to do so; something that forced me to gain courage I was not too sure I had. As a member of multiple minority groups, I soon found myself working confidently to be engaged interculturally so that those around me could be inspired to do the same. Soon enough, I became that senior with a hoard of freshmen asking for advice and questioning how I was able to do everything that I do on this campus and still get a sufficient amount of sleep. But it's not just me, I have proudly watched my fellow students over the years. We have all grown so much in terms of personal development, civic engagement and academic achievement. They have become Executive Board members of their respective clubs, Resident Assistants, tutors and team captains. Many have become brothers and sisters of nationally recognized fraternities and

sororities. The people that started this journey have only become more proficient, bright and independent versions of themselves.

And so, what will come next? Some people on this stage will start their careers and others will start working towards getting another degree. We have all made an impact in the lives of those that we are leaving behind, and we are starting a new adventure. I had the opportunity to go on the Alternative Winter Break trip to Kenya in January with other Wagner College students. While we were there, we described our work as “adding a drop in the bucket.” Traditionally, that idiom refers to a person’s efforts as a very small and insignificant proportion of the whole. While in Kenya, however, we used the idiom in a positive manner, to mean that every small drop we added to the bucket would be another impactful step in the right direction. So, let’s take the wisdom from those that have invested their time into getting us here on this stage today, pair that with the knowledge that we have gained academically and socially, and use it to add our own drops of water to fill the bucket. To the Class of 2019, it is with great honor, that I encourage you to keep thriving and make positive changes in the world. Thank you so much for allowing me to speak on this monumental day in our lives, and congratulations to us all!