



First-Year Commencement Remarks, 2015

Matt Morash, Mount alum

Commencement Ceremony

Sunday, September 6, 2015

Hello my name is Matt Morash. As introduced, I am a two time alumni of the Mount first in 2011 from the BSc in Math and Physics and again in 2013 from the BEd in secondary Studies.

I am currently a Math teacher, teaching in the South Shore. I have a reputation for working with student councils, student empowerment, leadership, and encouraging young people to get involved. I am excited to look into the crowd today and see students that I have had the privilege to work with.

Today I have been asked to speak to you, the incoming class of 2019, as someone who has recently experienced all that the Mount has to offer but before I do let me share something with you all that you may not be aware of.

Throughout the year the Mount is home to 3 – 8,000 crows. They spend all day dodging traffic, digging through trash for a meal, and causing mayhem in Halifax but just as the sun begins to set and dinnertime is upon us they return to our hill. Crows mate for life and they return to




be with each other every evening. I do not find that at all eerie, in fact, I find it quite a romantic tale and often compare it to my own.

One of my most memorable teaching moments while at the Mount came from my final practicum at Lockview High School. A teacher at the school had his students submit scientific experiments to the Canadian Space Agency (CSA) to be performed on the International Space Station by none other than Commander Chris Hadfield. Two young women at the school submitted the idea of wringing out a washcloth in space to study the effects of the absence of gravity. You may be familiar with the Youtube video and if you are not please look it up this evening.

It was the final week of my education degree and while normally students participate in a capstone to consolidate all that we had learned, I received special permission from our coordinator to attend the live link up at Lockview High with Commander Chris Hadfield and CSA astronaut, David St. Jacques. Although I likely geeked out from being such a huge fan I can vividly recall the day. Normally I wore a shirt and tie to school but since I wasn't teaching I figured that it would be okay to dress more casually. I wore a grey cotton shirt, jeans, and slung my green back pack with marking over my shoulder. Perhaps this was too casual because when I went to sit with the teachers, one of them whom I was unfamiliar with, asked me to sit with the students on the floor.

After the link up and exciting washcloth wringing out we had the opportunity to stick around and meet a real live astronaut, David St. Jacques. As I approached him I immediately lost the ability to speak



normally and told him that I was sorry to be dressed so casually meeting an astronaut and that I had earlier been mistaken as a student. He turned to me, shook my hand, posed for the camera, and said the most influential thing I was told while studying at the Mount, “that’s okay, I am a student too.”

You’re going to find yourself challenged by new ways of thinking at the Mount and it will come in a variety of forms from everyone around you. I worked many jobs and was very involved while on campus here. I found that I learned as much from intended instruction at the Mount as I did from my peers, colleagues, professors, employers, and friends outside of the classroom.

I have only ever had one best friend in my life; don’t feel bad for me because she’s the best friend anyone could ever have. Two weeks ago we married and celebrated here at Vinnie’s. Unfortunately, I can’t guarantee that like myself and the other crows who frequent the Mount that you’ll find your soulmate here, but what I can guarantee is that you’re going to forge bonds that will stay with you for a lifetime, bonds with people that you have more in common with than ever before. I found myself as someone in high school who would hang out with a wide variety of people but often when I began a new chapter in my life I would hold back and spend a year “feeling it out”. If you can do me one favour this week, this month, this year, while you’re here, it would be to not hold back. Take risks, ask questions, and get involved. This university experience will be what you make it and you’ll love



every minute of it. Remember that you're here to learn and so, you need to be open to it!

Thank you! Have a great Orientation Week – be safe and have fun!