

First and foremost, congratulations to all the 2020 and 2021 graduates! You have each set a goal to improve your education, expand your opportunities in life, and work towards a better future by enrolling in post-secondary education. Today you celebrate the attainment of these goals. You have accomplished this task despite the extraordinary circumstances in which we have all found ourselves these past many months. Despite the unforeseen and ever-changing restrictions and learning environments, you persevered. You have had to show remarkable flexibility and adaptation, along with incredible intrinsic motivation and dedication. I'm not sure if these will be allowed on your resumes, but we all know that schooling these semesters has taken a little extra magic.

Ellen Degeneres gave the following advice in 2009, and it seems to ring even more true in 2021:

“For many of you, today, success is being able to hold down 20 shots of tequila. For me, the most important thing in your life is to live your life with integrity and not to give into peer pressure to try to be something that you're not, to live your life as an honest and compassionate person, to contribute in some way. So to conclude my conclusion, follow your passion, stay true to yourself. Never follow anyone else's path, unless you're in the woods and you're lost and you see a path and by all means you should follow that.”

Northern Lakes College, your friends, family, and community are all standing behind the new 2020 and 2021 graduates. As we look ahead to a world slowly returning to 'normal', we encourage all our graduates to take the lessons of living and learning in a pandemic to the workforce. Remember that we are all dealing with our own challenges and that compassion, education, and community are our greatest weapons.

Now is the time to take your future into your own hands, just like you did with your education. Trust in yourself, you have already proven that you can conquer the most unpredictable time and changes that any of us could have imagined! You are resilient, you are smart, and you are now Northern Lakes College graduates!!!

Brian Panasiuk
Mayor, Town of High Prairie