

UniSA Graduation Speech – Mr Jim Hazel

Wednesday 23 April 2025 at 3:30pm

Chancellor, The Honourable John Hill

Provost and Chief Academic Officer and Standing Acting Vice Chancellor,

Distinguished Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington AO;

Members of the Official party and Academic staff;

Graduands, their families and friends;

Distinguished guests all.

I acknowledge that we are on the traditional land of the Kaurna people and that we respect their spiritual relationship with the land.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I recall a conversation with my son on his graduation. Like you he is a UniSA graduate.

He asked me for career advice; I told him the most important thing was to make a plan, maybe a 5 year plan, mapping where he hoped to go.

Now I felt bad about this, because what I had done was the complete opposite...I had just made it up as I went along!

Making a plan is fine, and many of you will. But its just as ok to make it up as you go along:-

- taking advantage of opportunities
- having an adventure
- reacting to the circumstances as you find them

And I must say that I think 5 year plans will be especially difficult for you with the pace of change today. Maybe the jobs you will have in 5 years time don't even exist yet!

You will all have opportunities. You are qualified. You have knowledge and skills.

And there are more things to do than there are good people.

Accordingly, you should leave here confident and enthusiastic.

The world is waiting for you.

There are, however, some simple things that will help you on your journey.

You should do what you say you're going to do.

This sounds simple, but its surprising how many people do not.

If you say you will have a report done by Tuesday, do it. If you say you will call back tomorrow, do it.

If you do what you say you will do, you will be ahead of 90% of people, the 90% who won't do it.

Gary Player was a famous golfer, too long ago for most of you to remember.

He regularly won tournaments with a 40 or 50 foot put on the last hole. A reporter said to him one day, "you are a very lucky golfer!" He replied,"yes, and the harder I practice the luckier I get". I think my point here is obvious.

You may have got the correct impression that I like sayings; an easy way to deliver sometimes complex ideas.

Well, another of my favourites is “you meet the same people on the way down you met on the way up!”

How you treat people, how you develop relationships and networks, will be critical to your success. I expect this to continue to be the case, even in the AI world!

By and large, the people who you give a “leg up” to, will at some point do the same for you; the people you show kindness to, will generally return the sentiment at some stage.

Help as many people as you can. Be kind. It will help you.

Your network and how you interact with it can be your greatest asset. And of course, UniSA and the new Adelaide University are both part of your network!

I stand here, looking back, with satisfaction of a business career almost done.

But also a little envious of you, just starting out.

But I think I have lived up to a quote by the legendary pioneer of gonzo journalism, Hunter S Thompson.

“Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body. But rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out and loudly proclaiming, “wow, what a ride!””

I hope that you will quote Hunter S Thompson when your career is done!

Thank you.