



**President's Speech**  
**Commencement Ceremony**  
**Class of Fortitude 2024**  
**June 2024**

It is an immense pleasure to stand before you today, Class of Fortitude, to honor your achievements and your tremendous potential for the future.

- Your class name truly embodies your experience. Indeed, fortitude is courage in adversity. It is resilience in hardship, the strength to keep trying when others would just give up.

The challenges you faced have shaped you. They have taught you lessons no classroom could. You have learned to adapt, to persevere, and to thrive, and this will serve you well in life.

Today is a day to express our gratitude for your remarkable qualities and, above all, for everyone who has helped you get to this point:

- your families who have been your constant support;
- the faculty who have guided your academic journey; and,
- the administrators and staff who have shaped your learning environment.

Commencement Day marks the beginning of a new chapter, one where all graduates are universally urged to leave their mark on the world. However, instead of big words, I will only ask you today to be yourself.



Considering what our country has been through, you would be forgiven for focusing on finding a job and securing your immediate future. Yet, everywhere you look, the world now offers more opportunities than ever before. Technological innovations are driving global development goals and connecting humanity in novel ways. Challenges are still all around us, that much is true, especially in Lebanon, but if there was ever a time to dream big, it would be today.

As you ponder your next steps, I encourage you to consider how you – and no one else – can build the Lebanon of tomorrow. As our future economists, engineers, architects, lawyers, doctors, and educators, you will design a landscape of collaboration and solidarity. Do not shy away from the deep conversations that are inevitable to build the society to which we all aspire and do not be afraid to assume your rightful role in this process.

Throughout your time at USEK, you have repeatedly shown the highest and most beautiful human qualities. Compounded with the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, these are your weapons to build a better world. My recommendation to you, Class of Fortitude, is to keep doing what you have always done best: dream big and always have the audacity to keep trying!

Congratulations, and best wishes for a life filled with purpose and success.