

2022 College Dux Address

Lucas Rutter

Good afternoon everyone, and thank you for having me. I have been privileged enough to have attended St Francis de Sales College from 2018 in Year 8 to my graduating year of 2022. I feel extremely humbled to be receiving this award and I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone involved for putting on today's event.

I've been asked to share my experience and a bit of advice from my journey through schooling. I want to make it very clear that I am by no means a perfect person, and not everything I say will apply to everyone here. Learning is unique to the individual- a big part of learning is developing your own strategies on how you will reach your own goals. Some of my advice will directly relate to academics but a lot of what I'm going to say focuses on your journey through senior school more broadly.

I'd like to begin with one of my bigger pieces of advice though which will apply to everyone. And that is the importance of remaining true to yourself and to your passions, ambitions and interests through schooling. We're at the beginning of a pathway into the future, laying the initial pavers of the life ahead of ourselves. For most, the idea of studying the two Advanced Maths, Physics and Chemistry as Year 12 subjects is ridiculous. But for me, I've developed an enjoyment of those subjects, and getting the results which I did was my personal measure of success. But that just isn't the same for everyone; we're born differently with a diverse range of interests and talents, which is part of the beauty of life. Do everything you can to work towards your own goals and don't worry about what others are doing, because we're all paving different pathways - not only through school, but through our entire lives.

I never wanted to make Year 12 solely about the schoolwork and achieving the highest ATAR I possibly could, because it simply doesn't need to be even if you're striving for a high result. I won't deny that I'm a hard worker but the idea of doing mountains of homework to get ahead does not appeal to me in the slightest. All through the year, I saw TikToks of random people time lapsing their routine of waking up every day at 5am to get in a couple of hours study before the day had started... all credit to the people who do that, but for me I couldn't think of anything worse. I put balance at the forefront of my plan to tackle senior school, making sure I find time for the aspects of life I enjoy outside of school. I love music, and I wanted to continue participating in the school and community bands and all the performances involved. I've also held a part time Coles job since Year 10, and I wanted to continue that, managing a 20 hour-per-week roster for most of the year. Leadership also played a significant part in my Year 12 because being a College Captain was a privilege which I wanted to uphold to the best of my capabilities. My passions will of course be different to everyone else's, but my theory stays the same - aim to do well in school but not to the point where it comes at the expense of yourself; make time for the things that make you happy.

Having said that, achieving highly comes easy for nobody, especially if you're going to load up on extra-curriculars. School can be a really tough journey; whether that be academically or socially, we face our fair share of challenging situations especially when we're in high school. And a lot of the time, response to that challenge involves two qualities: resilience and grit. Resilience recognises how every challenge presents an opportunity for growth and personal development. Grit is your capacity to push yourself through these challenges, put in the hours where it's needed, and recognise that the hard work now will pay off down the track. It's high school, at some points it's going to be hard and ultimately you can't avoid that. Your successes will depend on your response to the challenge; that's your attitude towards learning, your willingness to push hard at points even when it's difficult, and your ability to bounce back from adversity.

None of the people receiving awards today have got to this point easily and without a fair contribution of resilience and grit. However, these people are human and not much different to everyone else. For me, I distinctly remember Year 8 and 9 Science being super confusing at times and dreaming of the day I could drop it once and for all. As it turns out, things changed and I did two Sciences in Year 12. And as I said earlier, I'm not perfect at all... over the years there's been lessons where I've done close to nothing and chatted the whole time. There's been SEQTA uploads at 11:58pm on a due date. And there have been times at school where I've thought "I don't know what I'm doing, why am I doing this, I'm completely over this". I know for certain that I'm not the only one with these experiences among the high achievers today. Because reaching even the toughest of goals isn't about being perfect, it's about taking each day as it comes and just accepting the things which are outside of your control. It's about navigating the obstacles which that day presents, and progressively working towards where you want to be. And it's everyone's responsibility to make sure we support and motivate each other while we're doing that - don't leave your mates behind and don't be the force that's stopping others from achieving their potential.

While I'm here, I'd like to take the opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the people who have supported me to get to this point. My subject teachers - Mr Andrews, Ms Fenton, Ms Clements, Ms Nelson and Mrs Hall whose dedication towards not only my learning but to so many others' seems infinite. To Mrs Mattner - thank you for always being there for me and for every contribution you make to foster the learning and wellbeing journey of students. And to mum and dad, thank you for enabling me to come to a school which has truly made me into the person I am today, but more importantly, thank you for your never-ending encouragement, support, and love.

The post-school stage of my life journey which I am now beginning is filled with a myriad of unknowns. My dream is to be an airline pilot, flying 400-million-dollar planes filled with passengers and travelling the world while I'm doing it. But that reality is a long way away; as with any job, you work your way up from the very bottom. And for me it will be done whilst carrying about 150 thousand dollars of student debt. But it's all in quest of that dream, and as long as I'm inching closer to that dream every day, I think the hard parts are completely worth it.

Finally, I ask you to simply remember just how lucky you really are to have an education. I know that there's always little grievances you may have with school, and you can trust that I'm no exception to that by any means. But it can be difficult to comprehend what a privilege it is to come along every day to a great school with great teachers and their drive to deliver a high-quality education. Approaching schooling with a good attitude is the key to almost every success people have. This stage of life doesn't last forever, so make the most of it. Amidst the struggles that school presents lies the great parts... the opportunity to connect with so many people, the fun lessons where the teacher's the biggest legend around, the class parties, the joys of success, and all the long-lasting memories that you make. It wasn't until the day everyone went back to school this year when I was at Coles filling bananas that I realised how much I'd love to be back. So work hard and make it count, because nothing but opportunity lies ahead of you, but in doing so, don't take it all too seriously. With that, thank you very much for listening, I'll pass back over to Ms Matthews.