

So here we are. Sometime between four and however many years it took, we're leaving college.

Where to from here? The answer to that question is as varied as the students who make up this year's graduating class. Many of us know (or claim to know) exactly the next step to take, whether that step is an internship, a full-time job, or even a backpacking trip through Europe. Others, like me, will tell you we have no idea. The big thing about college is learning about yourself, and many of us will leave our majors with some vague idea of the job we'd like to get or business we'd like to start, but nothing more.

Whatever we decide, most of us will agree that Pleasantville was a perfect place to foster our minds and bodies in this critical learning phase. Outside of that hedgehog infestation, which, frankly, I thought was a little overblown, the city has been nothing but accommodating to our sometimes silly, sometimes rowdy behavior.

The same can be said of our wonderful university. I'm a totally different person than I was coming in as a freshman four years ago. I hope I'm also a better one. I've learned so much about so much—my field, my interests, myself, and so on—I feel like, were I to go back in time, my younger self wouldn't even recognize me! I can only hope this passion for learning carries over when I have to search out the info myself instead of biking to class and taking notes. I suppose real-life experience will teach all of us a lot either way.

The biggest thing I learned—and again, I'm probably speaking for a lot of us here—is that we only get one trip around this rock, so we might as well enjoy it. You have to find a balance between work (school or otherwise) and fun. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." It's not just a quote from a movie; it's the truth. A well-rounded person is someone who knows a little bit about every topic his or her friends discuss, and an interesting person can take that info and have a conversation about it, even if his or her knowledge is lacking.

To everyone who touched our lives, we say thank you. To parents who stood by us no matter what. To teachers who tried to instill in us a passion for learning. To administrators who wanted to make our college experiences as amazing as possible. To advisors who helped us decide what path to take. To friends who were there for pizza parties, study sessions, and everything in between. And to all those others we depend on. Without you—*without each other*—there would be no purpose to being here, no way to advance. Life, like society, is exactly what we make of it. Thanks to all the loving, kind people I've met during my time in Pleasantville, my concerns about both life AND society are much smaller. If even half the people I encounter after I leave here are anything like my Pleasantville cohorts, I know I'll have nothing to worry about.

And so, Pleasantville Community College Class of 2013, I invite you to take your tassels, flip them, and toss those hats in the air. Why? We did it! It's certainly a huge milestone. I'm sure most of us will remember this day—if not the night after—clearly for the rest of our lives.

Sincerely, and from the bottom of my heart, thank you all.