

## Student Lasallian Commencement Address

December 2021

Presented by: Kendall Zavadovics

Good morning, members of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Livingston, honored guests, faculty, staff, friends, family and fellow graduates. It is an honor to be speaking with you today.

To the Class of 2021, I want to take a moment to acknowledge all of our hard work. You should be proud of how far you've come and all the work you've put in. We started at Lewis not knowing where our journey would take us, and we definitely didn't expect it to be turned upside down from a pandemic. But in spite of it all, we did it.

I want us to reflect and think about our time here at Lewis. I want you to think all the way back to your first semester, when we were enrolled in the ICE course. We were taught who St. John Baptist De La Salle was and his impact on education. We were reminded of the Lewis mission and we learned about the Lasallian values.

I remember my professor posing this question to my class: "What does being Lasallian mean to you?" I'd like to share with you how I've experienced being a Lasallian at Lewis, and I invite you to recall your own journey.

Being Lasallian means associating with others. Getting involved on campus brings a sense of belonging. My freshman year, I didn't join anything. I saw all my high school friends posting pictures of their roommates and the friends they were making on social media while I was going to school, going to class and going home. That entire school year, I made six friends. Needless to say, I was having doubts about my college choice. I didn't feel like I belonged. But I decided to give it one more year before deciding whether or not I'd transfer elsewhere.

My sophomore year, I joined Delta Sigma Pi, a co-ed professional business fraternity. I knew it'd be a great way to get to know my fellow business majors. Joining this organization has brought me so many connections and friends that I will forever be grateful for. I met some of my friends for life. My Brothers will always be my Brothers. And I finally felt like I belonged.

Being Lasallian also means using what we've learned to help those who are less fortunate. Community service has always been important to me. We always have something we can give, whether it be time, money or effort.

During my time at Lewis, I had the opportunity to help 11 different non-profits, two of which were through my courses. Based on my digital marketing and PR writing classes, my teams and I were able to help a children's summer camp and an organization that aimed to help low-income families find affordable child care.

These experiences allowed us to apply what we've learned from our wise professors to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves. In doing so, we were sharing our quality education and demonstrating the Lasallian spirit.

Finally, being Lasallian means extending an arm of kindness and inclusivity to others. My junior year, I decided to add a minor in public relations and advertising, which fell under communications. The communications department is smaller, and it's definitely a tight-knit family. As a marketing major, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't worried about getting to know others.

But this tight-knit family welcomed me with open arms. The smaller classes made it easier to get to know everyone. The professors took the time to ask me how things were going.

I felt so welcomed that I decided to join the Flyer Newspaper for a semester. I knew absolutely nothing about journalistic writing, but everyone was quick to offer me help. They were patient and understanding while I revised my stories I don't know how many times.

Being Lasallian is something we've all experienced at Lewis, but it goes far beyond this campus. We've been gifted with a quality education over these past few years. Now that we've completed this portion of our journey, how do we share it? How do we make our world better?

I'll leave you with a challenge from Saint Pope John Paul II to use our gifts to leave this world a better place than we found it when he says, "learning to think rigorously, so as to act rightly and to serve humanity better."

Congratulations Class of 2021. We've done it. Now go out to the world and share your gifts.