

VALEDICTORIAN ADDRESS

MFACC CLASS 2020

VALEDICTORIAN - JESSE DUFOUR



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**WRITTEN BY
JESSE DUFOUR**

Thank you, Professor Brooks. Good evening fellow graduates, faculty and our family and friends. But most of all, congratulations to the MFACC 2020 graduating class. We made it!

I am very proud to speak on behalf of this exceptionally talented graduating class, and be part of such a well renowned program. We have many MFACC and DIFA graduates before us to thank for this reputation. The program, and my graduating class, have brought together students from varying backgrounds and experiences. We have students with little experience looking for an education to support them entering the field of investigative and forensic accounting, up to seasoned professional enhancing their credentials. Each with their own perspectives, experiences and insights adding value to the collaborative academic experience.

I very much doubt any of us will forget our journey through the program, especially the final year coming together to overcome the academic barriers resulting from the pandemic. I speak for us all when I thank the faculty in the MFACC program for their agile response to the circumstances, setting us up to successfully complete our final few courses and graduate this year.

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Many benefits of this program were highlighted through how well we adapted during the COVID pandemic. The online format allowed us to continue to attend classes without interruption, even for the students on the other side of the world. The focus on groupwork enabled peers to support each other under different circumstances. The passion of the professionals in the program allowed for it to be adapted, bringing out the same exciting and exemplary educational experience the program is known for.

I have to commend my peers who successfully completed the program in different time zones. Especially going through the demands of the final capstone. I couldn't image completely flipping my sleep schedule to go under cross-examination in the middle of the night; I barely made it through with a proper night's sleep.

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work with a number of talented professionals through the group work in this program. I would like to thank them all for the opportunity to learn from them, and their support when I needed it. I recall late March, when the Government of Canada was requesting all Canadians come home. I was self-isolating in a hotel room for a week in Brisbane, Australia while my office and I worked through the night trying to find me flights home after multiple airlines cancelled the flights we booked. Then a multi-day journey began back to Canada with my pregnant partner. This all occurred right before our group project was due and my team stepped up to pull off a great project with minimal support from me. Thank you!

As much as I had looked forward to meeting my professors and numerous other professionals who support the program in person for the final capstone, I can't imagine it having been any better of an experience than what was organized virtually. The talent of everyone involved still created an engaging, exciting, educational and, to be honest, demanding final week of the program.

Beyond the support of faculty and peers in the program, many of us had significant supports outside of the program that made this all possible. We owe these people a lot of gratitude and I would like to extend a thanks on behalf of the graduating class. For me, I would like to thank my partner, Penny, who while pregnant travelled from Toronto to Brisbane and back again while taking care of virtually everything so I could focus on school and work. She also attended almost every class with me, and loved it. I would also like to thank my research project mentor, Bonnie Lysyk, who not only recommended I move into the field of forensic accounting, supported me obtaining my Masters Degree, but also provided a considerable amount of knowledge and insight into the work I did for my research project. I look forward to now transitioning into a forensic role within the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario and putting to use what I learned in the program to help prevent government programs from the costly and constraining impacts of fraud.

With that, I again congratulate my fellow graduates and look forward to seeing the impacts you will all make on the profession. Thank you.

Congratulations MFAcc Class2020!!

"Some people want it to happen, some wish it would happen, others make it happen." –

Michael Jordan



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