

Graduation 2013

Honorary Graduate – Response

Acceptance Speech by Honorary Graduate James Murphy

Thank you very much. You'll be pleased to hear that I'll keep this brief because, I'm sure you're keen to get outside and celebrate the amazing afternoon.

Thank you for the honour today and Thank You University of Essex for three amazing years that I had here. It's hard to believe that it was half a life time ago, and it's interesting watching all the graduates going up today and hearing the Chancellor ask them "So, what are you going to do now?" and it make me think "I wouldn't have had an answer at this point in time".

I went down to London catapulted out of Essex, full of expectations, and actually didn't really know what I wanted to do and did lots of different jobs for the first two years. I think is something that is very important.

Perhaps the pressures are so great now that you feel you have to know exactly what you need to be doing next, and getting on with it, in a very kind of disciplined and focused way. But I think you should relax a bit and enjoy the fact that you have achieved so much in your three years here. You should go out into the wider world full of confidence, because you will have learned a lot here, but there's a lot more still to learn. One of the things I still had to learn was what I really enjoyed doing and what was I good at, and actually – echoing the Chancellor's comments earlier on – what I believed was good to do. That's why I ended up doing what I was doing.

What I'll like to say is that I found my time here very inspiring and very enjoyable. It was inspiring in a number of different ways. I was in the Department of Government – a world-class faculty. That was an inspiration in its own right. Some of the people that I was privileged enough to be taught by. It was an inspiration to be in such a vibrant and diverse community, as the University of Essex. It was diverse then, it's even more of a global phenomenon now. I think it was also probably most inspiring in terms of meeting and making some of the friends that now I have for life, and friends whom themselves have gone out into the wider world and achieved so many great and different things.

I count myself as very lucky for having had time here at the University. I was lucky to go from a leading University into one of the country's leading industries – marketing, advertising, and creative communications. It is one of the things that we are world-class at, and have been for some time. I went from the University of Essex well equipped, as the orator mentioned. With all of that balance of skills, of knowing what's politically correct, and what's economically important, and balancing the different priorities that you have in those things.

So, in closing, I'm very honoured to receive the doctorate today and I'm very grateful for my time here.

Thank you very much.