

Graduation Ceremony 2018

L'Auditori, Barcelona

Vice President,
Alumni President,
directors,
professors,
graduates,
families,
ladies and gentlemen,
friends.

Whenever the oceanographer Josefina Castellví, who was born in 1935, is asked what led her to become the first woman and female scientist to set foot in Antarctica, she always says it was her desire for knowledge.

This human curiosity, capable of moving Heaven and Earth, capable of taking us further than we could ever have imagined, can imbue us with a marvellous feeling of plenitude.

I can assure you, seen from up here, your faces today reflect this feeling of relaxed and emotional satisfaction.

Every one of you has conquered your own private Antarctica.

As you know, everything today is quantified: we have apps that count our daily steps, surveys that constantly measure our satisfaction and numerous indices for practically every aspect of human activity.

If you've seen the latest Campus news, you'll have read, for instance, that the UOC is now among the 600 best universities in the world (note that according to UNESCO there are a total of 18,500 in the world!)

Obviously, this is heartening and are making every effort to improve our future position. But, if asked, I would say that no index, however successful, can compete with the view I have, right now, from up here on this stage.

No image captures the strength, richness and complexity of the UOC as well as the look on your faces does.

The satisfied faces here, like those featured in the earlier videos, have overcome difficulties and deadlines, have invested time and hope, and have accumulated knowledge and skills...



«As UOC graduates you stand out because, along with the digital competencies expected of you, you have also acquired other values held in high esteem, such as time management, organizational capacity and teamwork»

These are not empty words. In an evolving, competitive labour market, as UOC graduates you stand out because, along with the digital competencies expected of you, you have also acquired other values held in high esteem, such as time management, organizational capacity and teamwork.

The commemorative mosaic designed by the artist and computer graphics expert Jaime Serra, in which every pixel is one of you and every colour a study programme, is the perfect metaphor for the impact – on society in general and the labour market in particular – made by each and every one of the 7,332 graduates from the class of 2017-2018: diversity and emotions, plurality and colour, richness and digitalization...

Today, a day of celebration, which is both intimate and collective, is a good moment to reflect and look to the future.

You should see this mosaic as a testimony to what you have achieved and, above all, as a reminder of what you have to contribute.

Gone are the scattered hours of social and family life, gone are the continuous assessment activities, synthesis tests and exams.

Behind us now are the experiences shared with fellow students, the educational guidance we received from our teachers and the advice of our tutors, who welcomed us on our first day... and have helped us up to now.

We can only speculate the future in front of us will be diverse, plural, plenteous, colourful and digital, just as you yourselves are. In front of us lie new horizons and new challenges requiring new efforts and new travelling companions. In front of us lies a

future that is, above all, yours.

And let me make one thing clear: the UOC will always be ready to participate in your tomorrow, as it did in your yesterday, and has in your today.



«It might be by developing your ideas and projects with the help of the UOC through Alumni, or through the Hubbik entrepreneurship support platform, or its investment vehicle, Invergy»

It might be by developing your ideas and projects with the help of the UOC through Alumni, or through the Hubbik entrepreneurship support platform, or its investment vehicle, Invergy.

It might be through one of the official programmes we offer, with a diversity of courses and learning formats tailored to those who want to learn, refresh their knowledge, or get ahead.

Let me state it in cruder terms: make use of us as best suits you, and what you can't find, demand it from us.

As the physicist Mae Jemison said, "Don't let anyone rob you of your imagination, your creativity, or your curiosity".

Our university is at your service to meet learning needs that are no longer limited to a stage in life, a specific age, a given environment, or a strict format.

Learning is no longer a phase, but a need and an opportunity that will accompany us throughout our lives.

In the words of the chemist Rosalind Franklin, "science, (and knowledge in general, I would add), science and everyday life cannot and should not be separated".

Therefore we need to mobilize all our potential to turn universities into true knowledge hubs, to attract all possible talent and to open up to new ideas.

The Kundala group has performed for us two versions of contemporary classics: Hallelujah, by Leonard Cohen, and Respect.

The latter, although written by Otis Redding, became a hit when sung by the recently

departed Aretha Franklin. The queen of soul made that song her own, to such an extent that she even turned the meaning on its head.

What was originally a complaint by a husband supposedly ignored by his wife became a feminist war cry, a demand for respect.

The choice of song is no coincidence, nor are the quotes of the scientists that have enriched this speech.

Because when we talk about never wasting any talent, when we talk about equality and equal opportunities we are, above all, referring to building a fairer society, with values that are based on equality, justice and non-discrimination.

The historian Lina Gálvez put it more strongly:

“We must include the talent of women if we want to be well prepared for this fourth industrial revolution”.

Because, in the end, all of us, on and off the stage, men and women, share the same goal: generating and connecting knowledge to meet and anticipate the needs of society, the labour market, research and, above all, the future needs of everyone here today and future graduates who will follow you.

I said at the start that everything is quantified, everything is measured.

So, let's be consistent and allow me to congratulate you 7,332 times. Congratulations to you all.

Thank you very much.