

University Canada West

# UCW Newsletter

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Graduates at the 2011 Convocation Ceremony. Photo credit: Philip Thampy

## Celebrating the University's 6th Convocation

The atmosphere inside the gowning room was filled with nervous excitement as graduates gathered, awaiting their moment to cross the stage.

This year marks the sixth convocation ceremony hosted by University Canada West. Almost fifty percent of the university's eligible graduates representing both the Vancouver and Online campuses participated in the ceremony, held at the Vancouver Convention Centre.

As the students crossed the stage, many opted for heart-felt hugs rather than the traditional handshakes with the deans and senior leadership team at UCW to commemorate their educational journey.

When asked what their plans were after graduation, a majority of students expressed interest in finding work right away - some locally, in their city of current residence, and others looking to make a difference in cities across the globe. Many were interested in bettering

the communities around them by seeking volunteer work in conjunction with their "day job."

This emotionally uplifting event came to a close after graduates were congratulated by their family, friends and the university's staff and faculty members at the reception that followed. This year, graduates were able to keep their gowns. Many chose to continue wearing their gowns with pride as they exited the building.

# President's Message



November 19, 2011: University Canada West's 6th Convocation, and it was indeed a special day. Family and friends, some travelling long distances and all with great pride, celebrated with our graduates. also provided me opportunities to recognize the many ways in which our faculty and staff help students see and act on possibilities, and to thank our team for supporting our new Vision: "UCW is Canada's contemporary university. We are independent, accessible, and globally respected. We transform students into leadership-ready graduates for communities around the world."

This year, fifty applications for graduation were approved by Academic Council. The Chancellor conferred 24 (11 BCom and 13 MBA) degrees at the ceremony and 26 (2 BA, 12 BCom, and 12 MBA) degrees in absentia. As President, it was my great pleasure to acknowledge each graduate's success in their studies and to reflect on the powerful personal changes that were shared in graduate biographies and messages from our two Valedictorians. The day

UCW Alumni, I ask two things as you advance in the world. First, that as an educated citizen, you extend your new-found knowledge and your humanity to enrich societies here and abroad. And second, that you stay connected with us, continuing to be UCW ambassadors and active members of our community.

With best wishes,

Dr. Verna Magee-Shepherd

## Deans' Awards Recipients

The Deans' Awards are awarded to graduating students with the highest GPA in each degree program. This year, UCW congratulates the following recipients:

**Piergiorgio Guasina**  
Bachelor of Arts,  
Media and Communications

**Geng (Jackie) Sun**  
Bachelor of Commerce

**Col. Michael Minor**  
Master of Business Administration



Babu Sajjad. Photo credit: Mercedes Ledezma

One thing most may not know about Babu Sajjad as he passes by in the hallway is that he used to be a dentist. Sajjad, now a graduate of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, joined

the university at a time when the campus was based in Victoria, B.C. He remembers there being only a small number of students in the university's beginnings. "It's amazing the way [UCW] has grown."

## A Moment with a Graduate

Leaving his home in Chennai, India almost three years ago, Sajjad decided to put his career as a successful dentist on hold to pursue his MBA.

"I thought I restricted myself, and healthcare management administration was something I always liked. Even being a dentist, my favourite area of interest was more of administration and marketing the clinic," he said.

"Maybe 10-15 years ago you [could] thrive on a bachelor's degree. But with today's competition I think you need a master's degree irrespective of what industry you are in."

Now that he has graduated, Sajjad aspires to work for the World Health Organization because "healthcare is something that is every human's right."

## A Convocation in Pictures



The first row of the platform party, from left to right: Dr. Hancott, Mr. Farrell, Dr. Pett, Dr. Scott, Dr. Redpath, Dr. Magee-Shepherd, and Mr. Winter.

Students inside the gowning room prepare for the procession.



MBA students listen to the President as she delivers her message to graduates.



Graduates mingle with their family and friends at the reception following the ceremony.



## A Reminder for Graduates

Graduates who attended the Convocation Ceremony will soon receive a 5" x 7" print to commemorate their handshake with the Chancellor as they crossed the stage. Graduates can individually view and order additional photos at:

[www.artonagroup.com](http://www.artonagroup.com)

Click on "Order" and use the following login:  
Customer ID: **UCANCF11**  
Password: **UCANCF11**

## Graduation by the Numbers

**206**

Total number of graduates since UCW's first convocation in 2006

**65% vs. 35%**

Percentage of male vs. female graduates

**72%**

Percentage of graduates in 2011 who attended the majority of classes at the Vancouver campus

**28%**

Percentage of graduates in 2011 who attended the majority of classes online

**46%**

Percentage of BCom graduates out of total graduates in 2011

**50%**

Percentage of MBA graduates out of total graduates in 2011

# Staying True, Making a Difference: Themes in Valedictorian Addresses

This year's valedictorians, Babu Sajjad and Mouna Rhioui set out to inspire their class through their addresses at convocation. The following are excerpts from their speeches.

From **Babu Sajjad**,  
representing the Graduate class:

Man's greatest surprise is to actually do something that he feared he could never do. Now that we have our degree, the big question is, what's next? Is it going to be money, fame, power, or politics? I say, is it too much to ask for everything?

On a more serious note, as I see these happy faces in front of me, I remind myself, how fortunate we are to have had the opportunity to go to school. There are millions of bright minds around the world, who do not have this privilege, due to various reasons. Therefore, I suggest, we put this academic knowledge that we have gained to a better use, than just increasing the decimals in our salary.

"Be the change, you wish to see," said Mahatma Gandhi.

So let us try to take a step, in shaping this world, the way we would want it to be. Be it in any field, let us try to make a positive impact and shape it for a better future. You and I may not be alive to enjoy the benefits of change, but our future generation will and that my friends will be our legacy.

Try to learn something new every day, something that can have an impact on you and others; it can be a new word, an article, new language, or just trying to wake up earlier. At the end of the year, you will be richer in 365 new ways, and that makes a difference.

From **Mouna Rhioui**,  
representing the Undergraduate class:

"Stay focused. Stay true". Focus on your path and goals, stay true to your beliefs and roots.

We laid our foundation here by gaining an excellent education. Now is the time we start the hard work and shape our dreams by planning the key stepping stones. Our goals may sound impossible to some, crazy to others, but remember we are the only ones able to envision them. We are the masters of our plans, so let's not be discouraged by those who can't see the future our way.

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Life is a pool of diversified adventures and experiences. The frequency, determination, and speed that we swim within this pool of life will directly impact the likelihood of reaching our destination.

Our need to fulfill our dreams comes with a price. For some, the price is their precious time with family and friends, for others it is that TV show they love. Decide what sacrifices are necessary to make for your dreams to come true.

At the end, life is a story that we share with our grandchildren; some of us will share it with pride, others with regret. It is our choice to choose how we share this story.



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