Valedictorian for Ceremony C10 - 12 July 2026 Sunday (2:30pm)

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Good afternoon,

Professor Teo Kie Leong, Dean, College of Design and Engineering;
Mr Andy C Lee, Managing Director, Singapore, Alibaba Cloud;
distinguished guests, parents, friends, and, most importantly, the graduating Class of 2026, whom we are gathered here today to celebrate.

My name is Mohamed Taufeeq. I am truly grateful and honoured for this opportunity to address you on behalf of my fellow graduates as the valedictorian.

Let me begin by congratulating all of us on completing what has been a gruelling four years.

When we look back on our time here, it won't be the head-scratching equations or the endless array of mathematical symbols that stay with us. Most of us probably returned Fourier transforms and Maxwell's equations to our professors the moment exams ended. At least I know I did.

It also won't be the modules that started off manageable in week 1 and somehow turned into an entirely different language by week 13. A few in particular may spring to mind, but I'm sure we each had our own struggles.

What will stay with us are the people—and the experiences we shared with them.

The late-night Zoom calls with groupmates. The last-minute study sessions with friends.

The countless hours spent in labs working on our final year projects—during which, more than a few components were blown, and we somehow always ended each day with more problems than we started with.

These moments may have felt stressful, even dreadful at times. But I'm willing to bet that, a few years from now, these will be the memories we look back on most fondly.

But beyond these shared memories, I'd like to share a thought about the world we are inheriting, and why, despite all its challenges, we should not be afraid to hope.

We've often been labelled the "strawberry generation"—a term used to suggest that we've been raised in comfort; easily bruised, and unprepared for hardship. Maybe there's some truth to that. Maybe there isn't.

But what I do know is this: We are an incredibly adaptable generation, and that is one of our greatest strengths.

We have grown up in a world that refuses to stand still. We continue to pick up new skills and technologies that evolve and emerge at breakneck speed. Most importantly, we have proven that not only are we willing to adapt and grow; we are able to do so quickly.

The world we are stepping into can feel uncertain, even overwhelming at times. Every day, we are reminded of a world experiencing instability and rapid change—whether through ongoing conflicts, political tensions, or a growing sense of distrust both within and between societies.

At the same time, technological disruption continues to reshape how we live and work, often faster than we can fully make sense of.

It's easy, in moments like these, to feel anxious about the future. We may not be able to fix the world overnight, but we can begin by focusing on what is within our control—continuously learning and responding to challenges with resilience.

That is where hope comes from. Not from believing that the future will be perfect, but from believing that each of us is well-equipped to contribute positively to it. We are far more capable of making a difference than we often give ourselves credit for.

We owe a great deal of gratitude to NUS and our professors for this.

At every step of the way, they've encouraged us to constantly keep up—whether by embracing new ideas, giving us platforms to challenge ourselves, frequently updating the curriculum, or even encouraging us to engage responsibly with tools such as AI.

I think I speak for most of us when I say that over and above the content taught in classrooms, university has helped us discover more about ourselves.

So, to all our professors, faculty, and the university—thank you for giving us not just an education, but the freedom to experiment, to grow, and to become more than we ever thought we could be.

I'd also like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the teaching assistants and lab technicians for your endless guidance, patience, and remarkable trust that we would not somehow burn the labs down.

As we turn the page on this chapter of our lives, we must also never forget those whose names are written across the pages behind us—our family and friends, whose unwavering support has carried us to this very moment. Thank you for being with us every step of the way.

On a personal note, to my family: thank you for your constant encouragement and sacrifices. I would not be standing here today without you.

Our journey does not end here—if anything, it's only just beginning. The road ahead will not always be smooth. There will be setbacks, uncertainties, and moments of doubt.

But if the past four years have taught us anything, it is that we absolutely can adapt, grow, and keep moving forward.

So, wherever life takes us next, let us hold on to that hope.

Because if there's one thing I am certain of, it's that the Class of 2026 will not just navigate the future—we will help shape it, one step at a time.

Once again, congratulations, Class of 2026.

Thank you.