

Valedictorian Speech for Ceremony C15 - 14 July 2026 Tuesday (10:00am)

Wang Qiulin

Bachelor of Engineering (Biomedical Engineering) with Honours

A very good morning to Mr Bahren Shaari, NUS Trustee;
Professor Teo Kie Leong, Dean, College of Design and Engineering;
Adjunct Assistant Professor Swati Jain, Consultant Neurosurgeon, National University Health System Singapore, & Academic Fellow, National University of Singapore;
Distinguished Guests, Fellow Graduates, Parents and Friends;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Wang Qiulin, and it is my great honour and privilege to be standing here today on behalf of my peers as the Valedictorian of the Biomedical Engineering Class of 2026.

Today marks the end of a long academic journey and the beginning of our next chapter in industry, research, entrepreneurship, and beyond. For many of us, this milestone has been years in the making, shaped by hard work, sacrifice, sweat, and perhaps a few tears. So, to each of my fellow graduates: congratulations on this hard-earned achievement. Please join me in giving yourselves a well-deserved pat on the back.

I'm not sure how many of you still remember our very first lecture-cum-welcome talk, by our inimitable Professor Alberto Corrias. He spoke about how business giants, like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, are so widely known and recognizable, while quiet heroes in Biomedical Engineering, like Dr. Willem Kolff, the Father of Dialysis and the reason our kidney failure patients have a continued chance at life, remain obscure in the eyes of the public. The great Isaac Newton once wrote in his famous letter to Robert Hooke in 1675: "If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."

May we then carry with us the examples of those giants whose impact was measured not by fame, but by the lives they've changed. And remember that these are the kinds of impact we ourselves are capable of creating, whether we become engineers, researchers, entrepreneurs, educators, clinicians, or leaders in ways we cannot yet imagine. Thus, may we never grow jaded; may we never become apathetic; and may we remain curious, compassionate, and committed to serving something greater than ourselves.

So, if there's one theme I hope we carry from today, it is this: success is not only measured by recognition, but by contribution. In Biomedical Engineering, many of our greatest role models may not be household names, but people whose work gives others a second chance at life. Let's strive not only to see further, but to serve better.

At this point, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the people who came alongside me:

Thank you to Mum and Dad, for your selfless sacrifice in raising me and caring for me.

Thank you to the best older sister in the world, for always looking out for me even when I'm annoying.

Thank you to my Godpa and Godma, for treating me like your own son and blessing me with the love of Christ through your prayers.

Thank you to all my friends for the countless bittersweet moments and the emotional support I so needed sometimes.

Thank you to all my professors and mentors for your guidance.

And not to forget all our lovely lab technicians, admin support staff, and teaching assistants, who have always been so friendly and helpful.

Last but not least, thank you to everyone whom I have had the privilege to meet along this journey. I would not be standing here without all of you.

In closing, Class of 2026: Go out there to pursue work that matters, to serve with humility, and to become worthy of the shoulders we stand upon. Congratulations once again, and happy graduation!

Many people tend to focus on the latter part of that statement, but I find the first part equally important.

"AI won't replace humans."

AI may power the future, but the human touch- the emotions, physical interactions, and even the human flaws- are aspects machines cannot replace. AI, ultimately, is only a tool of mankind.

The same is true of our own successes: they do not carry as much meaning in silo. Behind our pursuit of academic excellence are people- mentors who guided us, colleagues and classmates who worked with us, and friends who listened, as well as family members who stood beside us. Their contributions may not appear on our transcripts, theses, or certificates, but they are certainly woven into every achievement we are celebrating today.

In our personal lives, many of us likely missed important family gatherings, celebrations, and moments with loved ones while balancing work and study.

Yet the people around us remained patient. They accepted our absence and understood our stress even when we had little time left to give.

For some among us, the opportunity to express our gratitude may no longer exist. Time moves only in one direction, and some people may no longer be here to witness this milestone with us.

That reality reminds us of something important: while knowledge can be acquired, titles can be earned, and careers can be built, the time with people we love is far less replaceable.

As we celebrate this milestone, it is only fitting that we acknowledge those who made it possible. To our professors and mentors, please accept our heartfelt thanks for challenging us, guiding us, and sharing your knowledge with such generosity. Our heartfelt thanks also go to the administrative team, which has worked tirelessly to support us.

Once again, to our families, partners, and loved ones—thank you for being our anchor.

On a personal note, I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Zhai Wei, Dr Zhao Miao, as well as Dr Li Xinwei for their guidance throughout my PhD journey.

To my parents, family and friends seated here today, as well as many others beyond this hall — thank you. This achievement belongs to you, as much as it does to me.

Today is not the conclusion of our story, but the beginning of a new chapter. But as we continue to pursue our ambitions, let us be just as intentional in nurturing our relationships and never lose sight of those that give our accomplishments meaning.

Knowledge may advance society, but it is the human connection that gives purpose to what we do.

Congratulations, Class of 2026.

Thank you.