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Senior Class Speaker
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Thank you peers for permitting me to share final comments on our Pomona experience. There is a reason why Sanja Godfrey is here today. There is a reason why Bisi Thomas Akinjo is here today. There is a reason why Christine Williams is here today. The reason is us.

I do not know how you all arrived here nor do I know in totality how you will exit, but I hope we have collectively enjoyed a process of intellectual and cultural enrichment. When we arrived at Pomona we were greeted by the words of fourth Pomona President James Blaisdell, "Let only the eager, thoughtful, and reverent enter here," and as we depart we are informed "they are only loyal to this college who, departing, bear added riches in trust for mankind." While the words of our 4th president heavily inform the foundation of our institution, I offer an additional insight. I urge you to revere the riches that have not been added but to honor that they have always been within.

I believe the throwing of seeds as we ran through those gates was befitting. Not because upper class strangers as they laughed and yelled in glee felt compelled to hurl bird seeds at other strangers, but because the beautiful process of our four year journey culminated in the adornment of carnations as we passed through the gates for the second time. The seeds to flowers exemplify the germination of our growth, the becoming of our blossoms; or rather it is only a minor allegory of our growth. In many ways we have flourished and blossomed way before our venture at Pomona. Yes, Pomona has engendered our growth however it has allowed us to further explore the known and unseen places of ourselves. In 2006 President Oxtoby introduced our class with a vast gamut of accomplishments. We were swept in fervor of sponsor and sponsee relationships, preparing ourselves for an unknown adventure, and to me this adventure is a minimal facet of our growth. Pomona College may have presented us with a task of intellectual rigor however we augmented our charge.

In these four years I have witnessed you all ignite campaigns for social transformation on and off campus. Whether the coalition of students that support workers justice is incongruent with the schools practices or not, as cultural workers they must smile because their students have enacted with vigor the ideals of their future. We have attempted to embody rather than simply theorize, and while our attempts at critical social inquiry may have seemed trite at times, it is our communal spirit of genuineness which has given it vitality. My class is preeminently polished, prepared to take on their Fulbright agenda, their venture in graduate, medical, or law school. Even enter the work force with the leading firms of our country. Our professors have performed outstandingly in preparing us for our time after Pomona; however I really want to stress the importance of revering ourselves. Our actions will not always be politically motivated, but in being ourselves intrinsically political. We will not be seeking social change in every second of our lives, however I know we will undergo recurrent transformations. These transformations may be minimal, and will not always entail grand epiphanies but will be the evidence of our making. We are becoming...

When I had the opportunity to attend dinner at the President's house near the closing of the semester, I sat with Vice President and Dean of the College, Cecilia Conrad. As she reflected upon the innumerable amount of students she has been able to teach and share time with, she expressed regret on the short amount of time she has gotten with each class. She conferred that students were like books, however it was unfair because she only got to see the book while it was not yet done....In all honesty I hope our tales never finish. As social texts, I have faith that we will form legacies that will extend beyond the terminus of our lives. That what we will create will go through processes of redaction and refining. It is those tensions, those ideas that have not been fleshed out, and finished chapters which will truly enrich our world. The actualizations of social change, the stimulus of the economy, and political plurality will be cultivated by how we envision and embody ourselves. It will be from the places of love and loyalty to our personal and communal enrichment.

From what I have witnessed, as a class we are not individually oriented. I do not project altruism upon every individual but I do cite our love for each other and mutual advancement. There is a reason why Pomona students do not see their education as peer competition. It is because from sponsor groups to mentor groups, OTL trips to slack lining, intramural sports to varsity, Ultimate Frisbee to baking, spoken word to music, coalitions to chilling amongst friends... our love is communal. Our reverence is for each other. I want us to revere ourselves because I want us to be conscientious of our power to make and dismantle, to understand that the potential of individual and cultural cultivation are not mutually exclusive but very much intertwined. In the process of making ourselves we can very much shape our world at hand.

Be respectful of the knowledge that has been conferred upon you by our professors, administration, and staff. Be eager, and thoughtful, of the new circumstances you will encounter, and enter those places with same charge that has been asked of you here. But most importantly class, enter yourselves. Continue to access the depths of your spirits without demarcation. Yield to no external or internal obstruction that may disrupt your exploration, and believe you are phenomena that engenders others. Author yourselves with indelible ink, and leave no conclusion that terminates your narrative.

Women and gentlemen, please thank Pomona College for giving you historical documents this day... Secretary Napolitano, I don't know when you will next speak with President Obama, but when you do give him a copy of this Pomona 2010 Commencement program. Inform him with respect but utmost assertiveness Michael Bright Hyphen Ogunleye-He does not know me, but he will know me by spirit. Please give him a copy and keep one for yourself. To him and everyone in attendance, this document details the significant people of our time... Know us by name, register our faces, and learn of our family legacies.

At Pomona, we have created what was absent when it was necessary, and we will do so after...We have strengthened what we have come in to because it was needed, and we will continue. We have inserted ourselves into social transformations; from sustainability movements to social protests, pub Wednesdays to spaces of creative practice, blue and white harmonies to communal solidarity. We have refused constituent myopathy and social inertia. Obama popularized "Yes we can", but for four years I have lived amongst "Yes I will", "Yes I have", and "Already done". Amidst recession, natural catastrophes, and global trauma, I am faithful in my class. Because in the work of our thoughts, the practice of our tongues, and the efficacy our hands we concretize the imagined, making our world always the process of our becoming.

