I am honored to present this year’s farewell speech to our Graduates of 2017. Why? Simply put, I like these students. They are a very likeable group of young men and women. They are kind, modest, humble, and hard working. They have quietly gone about their work without demanding attention or the spotlight. I appreciate their resourcefulness, their earnestness, and the valuable contributions they have made to the school. It is a group that puts the community ahead of self and that is indeed rare in this day and age.

I am especially proud of this year’s senior class:

Saoud Al Ahmed, Salheha Al Asaidi, Mubarak Al Khayarin, Fatima Al Maadadi, Gharissa Al Muftah, Jassim Al Naimi, Omar Al Saidi, Majed Al Salem, Sharifa Al Issa, Saeed Al Majali, Marco Artero, Shannon Barry, Jurgis Blumbergs, Jamie Cameron, Mathias Castro Mena, Catalina Chirvase, Dain Choi, Sanlorf D'Silva, Khaled Dakak, Diego Estrada, Maheen Farooq, Joud Fostuq, Alejandro Garcia, Miral Hussein, Noor Khan, Chaelin Kim, Miray Kucckurt, Mohammed Khan, Rawan Hezam Ahmed Al Mansoori, Nivedita Mohanraj, Guillermo Morales, Inaki Poyales, Andrej Pozderac, Sara Raissi, Dhiman Sengupta, Maryam Zaher, and Noor Zaidan, (39)

You have been exemplary in many ways, but you have always been very modest about what you have achieved. I do encourage you to display and celebrate your accomplishments a lot more often.
This was the class of many high achievers. Because several of you had high GPAs and were so close in grades, selecting the Valedictorian and salutatorian was incredibly difficult. The valedictorian is the senior student with the highest grade. The salutatorian is the student who has the second highest grade. There was a pool of 6 students we could easily have drawn from to grant them awards.

Each one of you has gone beyond yourself to contribute to the school or the educational program. Members of this class also worked diligently to plan activities and projects that would benefit the whole school. The recent Roof Top Project is an example of this. Under the guidance of Mrs. Rodenbough, the American High School Diploma Students planned, developed, and constructed a roof top garden just across from the science labs. Their initial presentation about the project was one of the most professional and persuasive I have ever witnessed.

This project took months of planning, fund raising and convincing others for the project to go ahead. The application of their knowledge garnered through their studies at ACS to realize their plan was evident.

You, the class of 2017 has shown a great deal of initiative right from the beginning. You were the ones who planned your own senior council. You planned their own senior celebrations, and you politely and responsibly advocated on behalf of your class.
This is a class that will make great strides and reach their goals. They will do this all without calling attention to themselves. They will also align their goals with what they believe is the best for all.

As a group this class has diligently forged ahead to complete their studies with minimal complain or fanfare. It is a truly understated and humble group. Yet their talents, values, and work ethic ought to be celebrated. This is a group that quietly gets on with things without fanfare or need for adulation. In my experience it is those quiet hard workers, such as these students who tend to reach the pinnacle of success. Their understated tenacity is indeed admirable. They may not want to shine the spotlight on themselves, but these individuals deserve to have the spotlight shone on them for they have worked hard, overcome obstacles and they have helped each other. They have shared notes, information, and tips as to how to best achieve their goals. They have also provided each other with motivation and encouragement. It is truly a generous group in their support and thoughtfulness regarding each other.

When you, as a class or individuals wanted to achieve or obtain something, you did not demand. You asked politely, and provided convincing rationales and justifications. You were always very measured and reasonable in your approach, and showed utmost respect
These students are very practical and realistic. They were realistic about their grades and abilities, and they chose colleges that aligned with their abilities and interests. I am convinced that this graduating class can put in the methodical steps and work to accomplish any target that they set. This is indeed praiseworthy. However, I am encouraging you to not be so practical sometimes, and take delight in the more lighter and creative side of life. Allow yourself to enjoy the beautiful, the whimsical, and the artistic. Danny Kaye, an American performer said, “Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint at it you can.” I encourage you to do so.

Within the larger context of the world stage, divisions and conflicts based on differences are being played out to sometimes disastrous consequences. However, the class of 2017 have embraced differences and used this as something positive to learn from each other, cooperate and build strength through diversity. This is a class that will definitely lead by example showing care, consideration, and ultimately respect for others of different cultures, races, and socio-economic backgrounds. Your truly international outlook is to be commended.

You have so much to offer the world. Go forth and take your place. This world needs you. It needs your kindness, your caring natures, your consideration and thoughtfulness of others. Your grace and humility are outstanding. Use that along with your other laudable skills to make humanity that much better.
You have made it to graduation, which took patience, dedication, and a lot of hard work. You are to be commended and you have earned our respect. Well done, class of 2017! It is your moment. Bask in your limelight!