PRESIDENTE
Cristina Ravaglia
Email presidenza@uwcad.it
RETTORE
William Turner
Email rettore@uwcad.it

Closing Ceremony 2021
Address by Teresa Pappalardo (1st year student)

July 22nd 2019; my second year, my friend told me about this incredible school he was going to, with a difficult acronym to remember (UW something). An amazing place with people from all around the world studying and growing up together.
November 3rd 2019; I send my application.
February 4th 2020; I get in
August 21st,
August 29th ,
September 7th ,
January 18th ,
February 24th ,
April 8th,
Today.

These are some of the significant days for my journey in Duino. They represent when I arrived here, my first Conad trip, my first open mic. When the school started, when I somehow managed to spend a fun afternoon in the library, when I got the Best package from home. And today, the day in which I have the opportunity to give a speech for my second years' closing ceremony.

The first impression that I had of second years was probably a bit predictable but I think it was very specific. I felt that I was watching from the outside a community of people that already shared a strong experience. I felt I was not part of that community, but I was sincerely more than welcome to join. If I think about it now, I still see the same community, I still see the same people connected by a strong experience, but there is a difference: now I'm part of it. I'm part of Duino.

I was thinking about Duino and what Duino is for me, who second years are for me. I was thinking about how these two things connect with each other. I don't think that Duino, simply as a village, is the perfect, idyllic place everyone pictured in their head before arriving here.

Despite every image you could have seen, I can assure you that we don't live in the castle. Duino is definitely not a metropolis, apparently the average age of Duinesi met on the street is… let's say consistently higher than college students' age. I wouldn't call Carso an amazing mountain and the

Adriatic sea has been defined to me as a "big lake with a view on Monfalcone industries". Cernizza forest is the only forest in the world in which you can try to get lost as much as you want, but you will always find yourself at the starting point.

But it is here that the role of second years has been extremely crucial for me.

Second years are the one**s** that have shown me the **right spot** in Carso to have a picnic and where to find tree-houses.

Second years are the one**s** that have introduced me to the tradition of dressing up as hippy or Rockstar on the last day of classes.

They have shown me how to prepare a show.

They are the ones that first brought me to have breakfast in Rilke.

They have introduced me to Daisy, the little dog on the way to Porto.

Secondi were always there to teach us how to appreciate this place.

After all, we **are** teenagers that have left our families to come here. Each of us is somehow finding people to consider as family.

I don't know if I can speak for the whole generation, but I feel that, among second years this is what I've found, a family.

A family that worries for you.

A family that takes care of you.

A family that is able to give you the right advice.

That, when rough times come, is able to help you and truly understand you. Because at the end, they already went through what we are facing now.

It's a bit difficult for me to explain this, but I think that this place has changed me somehow.

While I was thinking about what to say today, I went around asking questions to my co-years. I was curious about what the best thing they have experienced in Duino is; when you ask a question I think it is pretty natural to think about your own answer. At least I did. My answer is that the best thing about my experience here, is that it made me feel more HUMAN. With this I mean that I feel more aware of **what I am**, what **I want** and what **is surrounding me**. I feel allowed to be sensible, I actually feel encouraged to be sensible and I feel able to recognise sensibility in others. And I know for sure that second years have played a fundamental role in this.

To be completely honest though, I'm not the biggest fan of traditions. I think they can be limiting for the new generations. People change, things evolve.

But I think my second years knew this. In fact, the things I'm most grateful for are not the places that they have shown me, but the perspective that they taught me to have. They taught us how to see beauty everywhere. How to value what we have. They basically taught us how to make our own traditions.

I'm grateful for having met you all, secondi. I admire each of you, in different ways. Each of you is unique and this is what makes you strong, as a generation. I'm sure that, leaving this college you will find your way. On behalf of my whole generation, I wish you all the best.

Thank you, because you made us see Duino from your eyes, and I finally realized **why**: I realize why this is the most stunning place. I finally realize why, people say that Duino **is a place**, but it is **entirely made of people**.