



Closing Ceremony 2016

Speech by the Rettore of UWC Adriatic

Dr. Michael Price

Good morning distinguished guests, parents, graduating second year students, first year students, teachers and administration staff. Thank you for coming to this formal closing of the college that was UWC Adriatic 2015-16 and celebrating the graduation of the academic cohort 2014-16.

Due to the commitment of our teachers, administrators and many supporting agencies outside the college, UWC Adriatic is here for its students, and to fulfill its mission. Firstly I would like to pay a special thanks to those who have worked so hard to secure the support and financial resources that have helped to sustain the college for this graduating year. I give my sincere and considerable thanks on behalf of us all the region Friuli Venezia Giulia, for our buildings, all the food and warmth that sustains the students and a significant number of scholarships we offered to young people from countries around the world especially those in countries of conflict as well as from the FVG region. Some of you here are exchanged with other UWC colleges at selection so that there is a student from this region attending your national college, and we can have you here on an FVG scholarship. Others of you are here on full scholarships from your countries thanks to the contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A number of you are fully funded by the activities of your own National Committees. A small number of you were funded by UWC alumni and other contributors to the college annual fund, and others are sponsored by a variety of foundations and individuals including Fondazione Stock, Fondazione Cattolica Assicurazioni, Fondazione Banco Sardegna, Università Popolare, Fondazione CRUP, and Compagnia di San Paolo who donate whole scholarships to students of the college. As a college we are up to this point in time reliant on the far-sighted generosity of the people and institutions of Italy, and I hope this is something students will always remember. €43000 can be a life-changing amount in many different circumstances, not just as a UWC Scholarship. As students and alumni please help us to prove that they made the right decision. I would like to ask you all to join me and give a big thank you to those who have found and used the financial resources to make your experiences here possible.

This year Shelby Davis, who donates US university scholarships for UWC students, has pledged to match donations to each college up to a total of 1,000,000 US\$ per college. Matching means that

every single Euro donated to the college will be doubled by Mr Davis. If any of you here today would like to make a donation and know that it will have double the value you have given, now is a great opportunity for you!

Our college has a mission of its own...

UWC Adriatic welcomes young people at the threshold of adult independence and guides them on the way to being compassionate and conscientious individuals with the energy and understanding to work for positive change.

This places UWC Adriatic as a distinct element of the overall movement mission - *'UWC makes education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future'*

These are ambitious claims and difficult to measure if they are achieved.

'Turning the Tide' a report published this year by The Making Caring Common Project, based at the Harvard Graduate School Of Education makes the following observation and recommendations

'Too often, today's culture sends young people messages that emphasize personal success rather than concern for others and the common good. And too often the college admissions process... contributes to this problem. As a rite of passage for many students and a major focus for many parents, the college admissions process is powerfully positioned to send different messages that help young people become more generous and humane in ways that benefit not only society but students themselves.'

The report offers specific recommendations for reshaping the admissions process in US colleges including selecting students on the basis of evidence of them 'promoting more meaningful contributions to others, community service and engagement with the public good.'

Students should be showing evidence of having engaged in:

'Meaningful, Sustained Community Service; Collective Action that Takes on Community Challenges; Authentic, Meaningful Experiences with Diversity; Service that Develops Gratitude and a Sense of Responsibility for the Future'

I take this as proof that our message is still relevant and that the UWC educational model is ahead of other pre-university educational systems in preparing young people to make the world a better more caring place for us all.

Farewells:

Paul Stachowiak, Philosophy teacher at the college since 1988.

Julius Krajnak, Mathematics teacher from Slovakia, at the college since 1998.

Colin Thompson , Alumni Director at the college since 2005

Sarah Pierroz, Art and Environmental Science teacher from Canada, at the college since 2009

Kerstin Traar, Austrian Ministry of Education seconded English Language teacher at the college since 2010.

Steven Sibliz, Dutch Economics teacher, at the college since 2013.

Lastly, it is time to say farewell to the second years, who have been with us for less than two years, but it seems like only yesterday they arrived. As part of our UWC experience we try to prove to all members of our community that we are all capable of achieving much more than you realized. There is more in you than you know, as Kurt Hahn liked to say. As a natural counterpoint to this there comes a point for us all when we realize that we are not as 'outstanding' as we thought we were. This is a tough environment to stand out in, and some of us have had to learn to know our true capabilities and relative strengths, and to be secure that we can still be self-fulfilled and enjoy a sustainable, satisfying and rewarding life. So this is the balancing act of life. Be bold and challenge that which cannot be justified as reasonable or fair and yet cognisant of your own limitations and learn to live and work happily and successfully within them. The Social Anthropologist, Margaret Mead said "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." You leave today, second years, with some of you certainly on the way to being part of those influential 'small groups'. It is this courage and conscientious commitment which will distinguish you as worthy UWC graduates. With this hope for your future I shall end with a demand - 'Verità per Giulio Regeni'.

Duino, May 21st 2016