



# Graduation Ceremony

Read the words from our Dean, Philip Vergauwen, and the testimonial of our guest speaker, Jean Van Wetter.

## Career tips from Philip Vergauwen, Dean of the Solvay Brussels School - ULB

There is an incredible « I know better » amount of advice out there concerning a successful career. All these well meant tips and tricks differ over time and too many of them, I think, are often just fading « graffiti on the wall ». Nevertheless, there are, as a matter of course of nature, a couple of evergreens, true essentials. They all have to do with what survives the current times or circumstances. In Italian, they would say, real and useful tips concern « le cose che restano », the things that will always be there, the truths that will always hold. So, let's go and give it a try !

We are talking career (and, in fact, life itself...), so let us focus on a couple of « C's ». First of all, there is **Community**. You can only make a career in a world inhabited by others, right ? So, Community is essential. There is competition and there is collaboration (all C's !) and most of the time, you'll face the need to be both competitive and collaborative. But what you need is **Commitment and Creativity** to find a balanced **Connectedness**. **Clarity** can help you combine the inner force (commitment) with the outer force (creativity) when making the right **Choices** for you. So, commitment and creativity are no goals, but means to an end, and making clear choices will define this end, which is always a personal **Challenge** that you face with **Confidence** (more C's!). But if the C's mentioned are all means to an end, what can help you define that end as a goal or purpose for you ? I think we all want **Completion** and **Celebration**. We find

satisfaction in the journey and in the destination, although no journey is unique and no destination need ever be final. Again, that is for you to decide... So, the very best time-proof advice would sound like ...

« Be a creative 'you' » that can and wants to shape the future in community with those around you. Be committed, hold on, have stamina, dare to make choices and do not fear challenges or changes, embrace them. It's the mind set of the confident that you need. Do not let arrogance, nor laziness, nor greed, nor impatience spoil the party of your career; focus on completion and do not forget to celebrate completion. Do not wait for full completion, for life is always about partial completion, and an end is always supposed to be a new beginning. Be ready for that new beginning, that next step. But know that the next step does not happen just like that: you make it happen if you decide « this is it » - or « this might be it ! ». The last important c's : have the **Courage to Criticize** yourself in a **Constructive** way.

*So, a lot of C's: let us just « C » what will happen and what YOU will make happen!*

**Philip Vergauwen**



## Words from Jean Van Wetter, General Director at Handicap International

Read the testimonial of Jean Van Wetter and the key advices he gave to our students.



I felt privileged and honored to be invited to speak at the recent Graduation Day. This ceremony is important for new graduates and their family as it marks a key step in their life. And I think the way the school organizes it is the right way, with a mix of grandeur, emotion and humor. I really enjoyed being "back to school" and seeing the Janson auditorium from a different perspective! The Dean's speech provided the right tone, focusing on innovation and emphasizing the need to remain humble.

As for my speech, it emphasized the strive for excellence and analytical rigor that has always guided the school but also the desire to be open to new ideas and people coming from different

horizons. I provided four advices to the new graduates:

- Trusting themselves while remaining agile and flexible;
- Being curious and analyzing situations using different reference points;
- Taking risks;
- Being creative and not hiding behind hierarchy and standards.

I also emphasized the Sustainable Development Goals and the need for

collaboration between the private sector, Government and NGOs to achieve them.

In a fast changing and ever more complex and interconnected world, leading business and economics schools are the one that smartly integrate societal elements in their curriculum and our school is on top for that.



## Thank you !

*The Solvay Brussels School – ULB thanks all the students and their families for having made this event a success.*

*Thank you to all the colleagues for their precious help!*