

On Becoming a Champion

The 2012 Sino-American Joint Program Commencement Ceremony
at the Ningbo Institute of Technology (NIT), Zhejiang, China

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President Jin, Party Secretary Fei, Vice President Yang, distinguished faculty and staff, proud parents, and especially the graduates of the University of Indianapolis (UIndy)-Ningbo Institute of Technology (NIT) Joint Program Cohort 8, Class of 2012,

I am deeply honored to deliver this commencement address on behalf of President Beverley Pitts and the university's faculty. President Pitts, who will retire at the end of June, offers her best wishes for a wonderful commencement ceremony and acknowledges her and Vice President Mary Moore's pleasant visit to NIT last September, when you celebrated your 10th anniversary. We are so honored to be part of NIT's glorious history, and we cherish our partnership.

We have worked together to overcome many challenges in the past few years, and we have pledged to work even closer in the years to come to continue to make our joint program one of the best in China and the US. We are very proud of the success of our joint program. We have to attribute this success to everyone, including the staff and professional staff, the faculty, the administrative leaders who have been working together both as a team and as a big family, and especially the graduates—you have brought both NIT and UIndy recognition at the provincial, national, and international levels. We salute your graduation today: you are champions.

We have a moral commitment to you. We must provide for you not just a good education but the best education any joint program can deliver. Your academic performance and positive life attitudes have assured us that our program goals and our guidance are on the right course. Your courage and hard work have placed our joint program on the map in China and in the US.

To assess student learning outcomes, I have distributed survey questionnaires to NIT students since 2010. We are so pleased to learn that over 90 percent of you expressed in the 2012 NIT Students American Experience Survey that you “have a sense of pride in the Joint Program.” In addition, about the same percentage of students who participated in this biennial survey said that UIndy has provided them with a good education. I also asked you in the survey to list a few general achievements that you have had since you came to America. The most often-mentioned achievements include speaking much better English, learning to be independent, gaining a better understanding of America, and improving your driving skills.

Furthermore, I must share with your parents the following findings: when I asked you “Has the relationship between you and your family changed since you came to America?” you answered that it has, with “getting closer with each other,” “more appreciation for my parents,” “more communication with family members,” “fewer complaints to parents,” and “learn how to manage money.” What a wonderful byproduct from spending two years in America!

You have grown. We want to congratulate you on your maturity as well. I hope you are as proud of yourselves as your parents are of you. You have worked long and hard to arrive at this point—academic accomplishments and mental maturity. You are the champions. But remember, in any accomplishment in life, there are many hidden heroes, so my congratulations also go to all your parents, grandparents, and extended family members for their continuous support in the past four years. I often said that your hidden heroes deserve half of your diplomas!

As college graduates, you are about to enter the most challenging and paradoxical era in world history. With all the technological advancements, civil wars in certain parts of the world, the global economic recession, the progress in democratization in many countries, the construction of speed trains, the high unemployment rates, and so on, the world economy seems to be growing and declining at the same time, and the world political system seems to be becoming more democratic in certain countries even as other countries have less freedom. You are about to enter a world that Charles Dickens described in his book *A Tale of Two Cities*, written in 18th-century England; he said, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness.”

Challenges lie ahead of you. Today, you are champions because you have achieved a difficult goal and are proud of that achievement, but today is just the beginning of an end. You have accomplished your first dream—to get a college degree—but you have many more

dreams you want to accomplish. How do you sustain your championship performance? How do you prepare for and achieve the new set of goals in life, graduate school, or the work ahead of you? As you are ready to launch into a new journey and become lifetime champions, I hope I will be able to share some thoughts and shed some light on these questions.

First of all, what is a champion? A champion is someone who can take charge in life (including of one's beliefs, feelings, and actions) and who has made the commitment to do something with passion, to do one's best, and to be proud of what has been accomplished. A champion is someone who competes with himself or herself more than with others. You don't have to be number one to become a champion, but you have to be the best, according to your own standards and expectations, to become a champion. The measurement for the "best" is not set by a referee or a committee but by you. Only you know what is your best, and only if you trust and believe in yourself will you be able to reach your best.

No one is born a champion. A champion is made and thrives even in adversity in the form of situations, physical conditions, mental states, unexpected problems, shortages of resources, and so on. Strength and character are built after one overcomes such adversities. Often, a champion has to learn the hard way, so you must have the determination to achieve an outcome that you desire and that will bring you personal pride. A champion has high self-esteem but does not have a large ego. A champion continues to cultivate inner strength. A champion must have not only physical fitness but also mental fitness, as both physical and mental fitness will bring strength. Marathon runners will never reach the finish line unless they have both physical and mental fitness. They know their limits but are not defeated by their limits. They have the courage to thrive beyond those limits, often breaking their own records.

Champions will accept the praise given by other people, but champions are not blinded by praise; nor do they become too content to make improvements. Champions cherish praise, awards, or rewards for their current accomplishments, but they will use these incentives as new benchmarks from which to do something even better. Many of you have received recommendation letters from your professors while you were applying for graduate schools or jobs. Champions humbly accept recognition from others—especially from those who write recommendation letters! You should not be shy in reading these nice letters about you. You should ask yourself, "Am I really that good? Have I really fulfilled my potential?" These letters about you will lead you to the next higher level of performance. You must continue to thrive, strive, and excel.

Becoming a champion is becoming a peak performer. You must develop a sense of mission that will prompt your passion and commitment. Know what you want, and go for it. Do what you enjoy and enjoy what you do. Don't be afraid of losing or of winning; instead, be afraid of not putting forth your best effort. People can encourage and support you, but the person who will reach that finish line is you. A champion has to make calculated risks. Merely taking a risk may be ill-advised, but when you take a calculated risk, you will have control of the situation. You are in the driver's seat.

It will take a lot of energy and commitment to excel, to become champions. You may have to make sacrifices at times. You will meet demands from all directions. You need to learn how to manage your time and set priorities. Time management is part of stress management. A higher level of time management skill is not just managing how to get things done in the time everyone has available—24 hours a day—but also being able to have fun while working hard. A champion knows how to take time out and relax a little bit. Don't feel guilty for taking a break. Taking a break is not withdrawing or retreating. Use your relaxation time wisely and see it as a chance to recharge your energy and reflect on your thoughts. I love watching movies. Regardless of how busy I am, I always manage to watch one or two movies each month. I especially like Chinese classic historical miniseries (中国历史古装连续剧). But I don't have the time to watch them all, so I watch a few chapters in the beginning, a few in the middle, and a few at the end. If I can't connect the entire story, I ask my husband. He is retired and has time to watch the DVD from the beginning to the end. Winston Churchill took catnaps daily, and he painted as his hobby. He had good ways to revitalize himself. Champions have lives with abalance between work and family and between work and leisure.

Sometimes a champion must be willing to fail. Those who never fail are those who never attempt anything. To reach peak performance, you must be willing to accept the risks, the pressures, and, above all, the possibility that you may be defeated. Champions are willing to do continuous learning and to find ways to improve themselves, to learn from their own performance records, and to learn from others. Champions may choose to receive additional training, read books, or ask their mentors to provide them advice. Many coaches will ask their players to study the opposing team, inside out and outside in, before and after a game. Learning gives us new insights and clues into reasons why the other team could do a better job than our team. Champions are the best learners. Champions learn not only the skills but also rules, attitudes, ethical teachings, and responsibilities. Champions are humble persons because they are willing to learn from other champions and also to be influenced by role models or mentors. There are many real champions in the world. Some inspiring examples are Abraham Lincoln; Helen Keller; Mahatma Gandhi; Martin Luther King Jr.; Albert Einstein; Margret Thatcher; Sun Yet-sen; Jack Ma; the most recent champion in basketball, Lin Shuhao (“Linsanity”); and many others whose lives are full of championship stories.

Build your support system. In China, we use the term “assisted by precious persons” (贵人相助) to describe one of the most important factors for success. Without these supporters, we could accomplish little. I have been very fortunate to have many of these precious persons surrounding me. I would never claim to have accomplished anything without thanking these “angels” first. Champions are good observers and listeners. The champion is like a “360-degree leader” in a company who is willing to take advice and feedback from all directions. There are many success stories in this world. Pick a few of these successful persons' biographies—learn about their success philosophies. In daily encounters, cham-

pions value differences of opinions and lifestyles. When they notice the differences that others uphold, they will pause a minute and seek alternatives. Champions are firm with their principles but flexible enough to consider alternatives.

Our life goal is to accept challenges and to search for excellence. Champions set high standards for themselves. They seek methods of self-development. The word “impossible” is not in their dictionary. Champions set clear goals for themselves. They have dreams that they are determined to reach. They set the best strategies for getting the job done. They focus on what they are trying to do. Learn to ignore what you can’t control, and learn to control what you can. The internationally renowned public speaker Anthony Robbins once said, “The amazing fact is that most events in your own life are within your control.” The well-known Chinese ancient military strategist Sun Tze said, “Know yourself and your opponent well; you will always win.” (知己知彼，百战百胜) Be honest with yourself, set realistic goals, and work with the best team, and then you are one step closer to the realization of your dreams.

Nothing comes easily. You must try to persevere in all difficulties and challenges. You must never give up. Becoming a champion is like climbing to the top of the Alps; there are hurdles and dangers you must encounter along the way. The Chinese phrase “the carp jumps over the dragon gate” (鲤鱼跳龙门) describes how the carp swims against the current and jumps over the dragon gate to reach to the origin of the Yellow River. It implies that you have overcome all obstacles (against all the odds) to reach the destination or the highest point. A champion never quits. When you believe in yourself and your ability, you will be well prepared and you will achieve your destiny.

Try to be a good and service-oriented person. You will encounter rapid social change, especially the process of globalization and the surge in information technology. Try to make a difference in business, in education, in politics, and in enhancing the quality of life not just for you but also for others. There is an ancient Chinese saying: “When you win, show no arrogance; when you lose, show no discouragement.” (位尊而不骄傲；逆境而而不气馁) Your inner strength and self-cultivation shall make you a true champion.

I hope my message will inspire and encourage you to beat all odds, to fulfill your potential, and to have a new life perspective. I salute you again, for you’re not only the champions of today but also the champions of tomorrow. Thank you for listening, and best wishes for you all.



成为冠军

在浙江大学宁波理工学院2012届中美合作班毕业典礼上的讲话

藍采風博士
印第安纳波利斯大学国际合作副校长



尊敬的金院长、费书记、杨副院长、各位老师、家长以及印第安纳波利斯大学-浙江大学宁波理工学院中美联合培养班2012届的毕业生们:

大家好！我很荣幸代表印第安纳波利斯大学校长比弗利·碧慈博士和全体教师在毕业典礼上致辞。在去年9月理工学院十周年校庆之际，碧慈校长与玛丽·莫尔副校长一同非常愉快地访问了贵校。匹茨校长将于今年6月底卸任校长一职，她衷心祝愿我们的毕业典礼取得圆满成功。能够亲眼见证理工学院历史上的今天，我们深感荣幸。我们非常珍惜两校间的合作关系。

在过去几年里，我们双方精诚合作，应对诸多挑战。展望未来，我们还将更加密切合作，力争使我们的合作项目成为中国和美国最成功的项目之一。我们为合作项目的成功感到骄傲。我们的成功应该归功于双方领导和教职员工的共同努力，大家就像大家庭的一分子，通力合作，充分发扬团队精神。我们的成功应该特别归功于毕业生：正是你们，为浙江大学宁波理工学院和印第安纳波利斯大学带来了省级、全国级甚至世界范围的认可。今天，我们向你们致敬：你们是最优秀的；你们是冠军。

我们承担了道德上的义务。我们必须为你们提供优质的教育，提供合作项目所能提供的最好的教育资源。你们的学习成绩和积极的人生态度使我们确信，我们项目确立的目标和给予学生的指导是正确的。你们的勇气和勤奋使我们的项目在中国和美国为人所知。

为了保证我们的教学达到预定目标，自2010年以来，我每年向理工学院中美班学生发放调查问卷。我们非常高兴地了解到，90%多的2012届中美班学生“对参与中美班怀有一种自豪感”。而且，接受调查的学生中有90%多的学生认为印第安纳波利斯大学为他们提供了良好的教育。在调查问卷中，我还请你们在座的2012届学生列出你们到美国以后在哪些方面最大的进步，其中提到最多的是英语口语进步很大，学会了独立生活，加深了对美国的了解，开车技术有提高，等等。

在此，我必须与你们的家长分享问卷调查的如下结果：当问到“从你来到美国后你与家人的关系有无变化”时，你们的回答是：“彼此间距离更近了”，“更加感激我的父母”，“学会了理财”等。这是在美国留学两年内除了学业上的进步之外，这些真是最好的“副产品”了！

我们祝贺你们长大成人，走向成熟。我希望，就像你们的父母为你们骄傲一样，你们应该为自己感到骄傲。你们一路拼搏，终于走到了这一步——学有所成，心理也日趋成熟。你们是最优秀的；你们是冠军。

但是，请记住，在你成功的道路上，还有许多无名英雄。为此，我要向在座的你们的家庭成员表示衷心的祝贺，他们在除了学业过去四年里一如既往地支持你们。要知道，你们获得的学位有一半是你们身后这些无名英雄的功劳。

你们即将作为大学毕业生步入充满挑战和矛盾的历史舞台。当今科技迅猛发展，内战还在有的国家进行，全球经济呈现衰退趋势，众多国家推进民主化进程，高速铁路正在加快建设，失业率居高不下，等等。在这样的背景下，世界经济同时呈现增长与衰退的趋势，一些国家政治体制更趋民主，还有一些国家仍然缺乏自由。你们即将进入狄更斯小说《双城记》所描述的世界。他这样写道，“这是最好的时代，这是最坏的时代，这是智慧的时代，这是愚蠢的时代；这是光明的季节，这是黑暗的季节。”

挑战就在你们面前。今天，你们已经成为冠军，因为你们实现了艰难的目标，应该因此而骄傲。但是，今天只是结束的开始。你们已经实现了人生的第一个梦想——拿到了大学学位。然而，还有很多梦想等待你们去实现。你们如何才能保持冠军的状态？如何准备并实现人生的一系列目标——是继续攻读研究生还是踏上工作岗位？在你们即将开始新的旅程、继续冠军之旅时，我希望能够与你们分享我的一些思考，为你们回答这些问题带来一些启示。

首先，什么样的人才是冠军？冠军能够掌控自己的人生（包括自己的信念、感情与行动），尽自己的所能满怀激情去做事，并为自己取得的成绩感到自豪。冠军更多的时候是与自己竞争，而不是与他人竞争。要成为冠军，未必一定要当第一名，但一定要按照自己的标准和期望，成为最好的。“最好的”这一衡量尺度不是由裁判或委员会设定的，而是由你自己设定的。只有你最清楚自己的优势所在，只有信任自己，才能充分发挥你的优势。

没有人生来就能当冠军。冠军是后天造就的，甚至能在逆境中顽强成长，这些逆境包括身体问题、心理问题、突发问题、资源短缺等。在战胜这些逆境之后，人的性格和力量均得到了提升。冠军常常需要付出艰辛和代价才能获得，因此，你必须下定决心，争取达到想要的结果，这会给你带来自豪感。冠军具有很强的自尊心，但不会妄自尊大。冠军不断培养

内在的精神力量，他们不仅需要健全的身体，更需要健全的心智。马拉松运动员要同时兼备良好的体力和心智，才能跑到终点。他们了解自己的局限，但不为之所限。他们有勇气超越局限，打破自己的纪录。

冠军会接受别人的赞扬，但是，不会被赞扬所蒙蔽，也不会因赞扬而沾沾自喜，不求上进。冠军珍惜他人对于其目前成绩给予的赞扬、奖励或回报，但他们会把这些作为动力，作为新基准，以便今后更好地做事。你们中有很多人为申请研究生学习或工作而拿到了教授的推荐信。冠军只是谦卑地接受别人给予的认可——特别是来自写推荐信的人。在阅读有关你的推荐信时，不必感到羞怯，你应该问你自己，“我真有信里写的那么好吗？我是否真的发挥了我的潜力？”这些推荐信将促使你更好地展示自己。你一定要继续努力，不断奋斗，追求卓越。

成为冠军就是要成为一个有最佳表现的人。你必须要有使命感，它会激发你的热情 and 责任感。知道你想要什么，然后尽力为之奋斗。做自己喜欢的事，享受自己做的事。不要担心成败，你应该为自己没有全力以赴而担心害怕。别人可以鼓励你，支持你，但只有你才能到达终点。冠军必须有计划地去冒险，盲目冒险是不明智的。当你有计划地去冒险时，你就会掌控全局，你在掌舵。

想成为冠军，需要付出大量的精力，作出承诺，有时候还要作出牺牲。你要满足来自方方面面的需求。你需要学会管理自己的时间，确定重点。时间管理是压力管理的一部分。时间管理的更高技巧不只是在一天24小时里完成工作，而是在努力工作的同时保持愉快的心情。冠军知道如何休息，如何放松自己。在休息时不必感到自责。休息并不是退出。巧妙安排自己的休闲时间，并把它作为恢复体力和进行反思的机会。我喜欢看电影。不管有多忙，每个月我都会看一到两部电影。我特别爱看中国历史古装连续剧，但没有时间从头看到尾，于是，我就挑选开头、中间和结尾的几集看。如果这样看完后我还是无法理解整个故事，我就问我先生。他已退休在家，完全有时间从头到尾看完碟片。温斯顿·丘吉尔每天要小睡片刻，他把这个称作他的爱好。他找到了让自己恢复体力、精神饱满的好方法。冠军要能够平衡工作和家庭、工作与休闲。

有时候，冠军要能够接受失败。从未尝过失败滋味的人，是那些无所事事的人。为了有最佳表现，你们必须要愿意承担风险、压力以及失败的可能。冠军愿意不断学习，不断完善自我，吸取以往经验教训，虚心向他人学习。冠军还会接受额外培训，博览群书，听取良师益友的建议。许多教练会在一场比赛开始前和结束后，让他的队员研究他们的对手，里里外外，透透彻彻。通过研究，可以了解对手取胜的原因，得到启发。冠军最善于学习，他们不仅学习技能，而且学习规则、态度、道德准则和责任。冠军为人谦卑，他们愿意向其他冠军学习，受榜样和良师益友的影响。世上真正的冠军不计其数，一些给人激励的例子有：阿伯拉罕·林肯、海伦·凯勒、莫罕达斯·甘地、小马丁·路德·金、阿尔伯特·爱因斯坦、玛格丽特·撒切尔、孙中山、马云，以及最近涌现的篮球冠军林书豪，还有其他学多人拥有成功的故事。

建立你自己的支持系统。在中国，我们用“贵人相助”来说明这是成功最重要的因素之一。没有贵人的支持，我们一事无成。我很幸运我的周围有很多这样的贵人。我所取得的成

绩，首先要感谢这些天使般的贵人。冠军善于观察，善于倾听。冠军就像公司的一位“360度全方位领导”，博采众长。世上的成功故事不胜枚举，不妨挑选几位成功人士的传记读读，学学他们的成功理念。冠军能在各种场合尊重不同的意见，不同的生活方式。当他们注意到差异存在时，他们会停顿片刻，以寻求其他解决方案。冠军坚持原则，但又不乏灵活变通。

我们的人生目标是迎接挑战，追求卓越。冠军为自己设定高标准，找寻自我发展之路。他们的词典里没有“不可能”这个词。他们为自己设定目标，他们有一心追寻的梦想。工作时，他们做出最好的决策，并全力以赴。他们学会去忽略无法控制之事，学会去控制所能控制之事。中国古代著名军事家孙子曾经说过，“知己知彼，百战不殆。”只要诚实待己，设定可行目标，与最好的团队合作，你们就会离梦想的实现更近一步。

没有什么事情是唾手可得的。面临困境与挑战，你们必须坚持，永不言弃。冠军之路就像阿尔卑斯山登顶之路，沿途充满屏障和危险。中国有句俗语“鲤鱼跳龙门”，讲述了鲤鱼如何逆流跳过龙门最终到达黄河的源头。这个故事告诉我们，必须克服一切障碍才能到达目的地，到达最高峰。冠军从不放弃。当你们相信自己，相信自己的能力时，你们就能做好充分准备，实现自己的梦想。

要做一个善良的人，做一个助人为乐的人。你们将会经历快速的社会变革，特别是全球化进程和信息技术迅猛发展阶段。你们要为改进商务、教育、政治领域和改善人们的生活质量而努力。你们这么做，不仅是为了自己，而且是为了他人。中国有句古话：“位尊而不骄傲，逆境而不气馁。”你们的内在力量和修养使你们成为名符其实的冠军。

希望我的这番话能给你们启示，激励你们去克服一切困难，发挥自身潜力，树立新的人生观。在此，我再次向你们致敬，因为你们不仅是今天的冠军，还将是明天的冠军。谢谢大家，并祝大家一切如意！

（此中文稿由浙江大学宁波理工学院外国语学院张萍老师翻译自英文原稿。）

