

GSM DAY 2025 – Speech – Bon voyage for your new life by Senior Lecturer Alexandra Carst

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Good afternoon, dear faculty, graduates, and students!

Today is a day of celebration, a moment to reflect on how far you've come and to look ahead with excitement and anticipation. As you step into this new chapter, I want to share a personal story that has shaped my own journey.

When I was in high school, I told my parents I wanted to study abroad in Denmark. They supported me, despite the uncertainties. Then I told them I wanted to study business and Chinese. My mother hesitated. Later when I said I would go to China to continue my studies, she asked me a question I'll never forget: *"Why do you always choose the most difficult, the most challenging path?"*

My response was simple: *"Because otherwise, it would be boring."*

My mother has continued to ask me the same question whenever I've made similar decisions, like pursuing an internship in Italy, a double-degree PhD, or an academic career in Japan. Every time, she wondered why I didn't take the easier, more straightforward path. And every time, my answer remained the same.

Because choosing the path that excites and challenges you makes life more meaningful. It forces you to grow, to adapt, and to discover strengths you never knew you had. The choices you make may come with obstacles, moments of doubt, and unexpected twists, but the lessons you learn and the experiences you gain will be invaluable.

As you move forward in your education, careers, and personal lives, I encourage you to embrace challenges, rather than fear them, and take the road that excites and inspires you. The destination matters, but what truly shapes you is the journey. Every step, every lesson, and every setback will contribute to the person you become.

So, be bold in your decisions. Keep learning, because education is a lifelong pursuit. And most importantly, embrace the challenges ahead with confidence and passion. Good luck and Congratulations!