

This is it.

We are alumni. Each of us will go in our own directions out into a great big world filled with infinite possibility. Some into business, others into government, some into freelancing, and others right back into academia. Each path is valid and unique, each path will be your own.

When I came to Finland I was following my heart. I was sure that this big world had opportunity waiting in it, and when I arrived here my dearest friend, (now my wife) reminded me not only that the world was bigger than I could imagine, but that Finland was a place where motivated hard-working people could improve themselves.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Paul Nix. I have been here for the past few years, mostly in the production lab around the corner in C-block, studying Mechanical Engineering, Design Material Science, and Fabrication in the Plastics Technology program, now Material Processing I think. I am a Californian, and an immigrant to Finland, and I am the sort of guy who firmly believes that "stranger" well that's just a word for a friend you haven't met yet. That said, it has been a struggle adjusting to life in Finland. Not a lot of sunshine or hugs to go around, but plenty of music in a minor key, and all the pickled herring a guy could ask for.

Looking around here I am reminded of how I came to Arcada, I took my entrance exams here. And the first day of the intro week I remember milling about the big square meeting the people who I would spend the next few years learning about, just as much as I have learned about material science I learned about all of you. Some of the people I met will come and go in my life, and others will be lifelong friends. But I encourage each of you to take this opportunity to strengthen your ties to one another, and to remember that no matter where you go in the world the network you built here in Arcada will go with you.

Take some time and energy to be Californian about it and tell people about the impact that they have made in your life. Take the extra time to add them through a few forms of social media, it doesn't have to just be LinkedIn or facebook, it can be Instagram so that their cat photos brighten up your days in the new environments you find yourselves in, or what have you. Do it so that when you run across an article they would like online you can link it to them, or when you have found their exact double at a café in Rome you can send a selfie, or when an employer mentions that they are looking for someone with just such a set of talents you can reach out to them. We are all going to make a significant impact in the world and I think we owe it to one another, and to Arcada, to maintain our connections.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and my fellow students for everything that has happened during my time here. From my first year when I ran up to Mathew to ask how I should proceed with the design project ideas that I had been drawing on napkins, to the way Erland has kindly tolerated my overwhelming curiosity and constant presence in the lab; the staff here have shown remarkable patience and professionalism throughout. Mariann Holmberg's Intro to Plastics course showed me that there were not only a mountain of things that I didn't already know, but that it was alright to be just as ridiculously excited about them as I felt like being. So now I can be a proper engineer about it and start conversations about pieces of plastic rubbish because let's face it, it is downright fascinating how many design hours have gone into some of them. I want to thank Rene for his attention to detail, his passion for composites and the dreams he fosters in young men and women who will keep the spreadsheets and CCSM software for the day we decide to start side-businesses repairing boats and fabricating things out of our garages. Thanks to Paronen for remaining busy and setting an example of an engineer who never rests. And a special thanks to Mirja for keeping track of every project I've done and all the work that has led me to this stage today.

Because of the staff here at Arcada I found lab internships that got me credits, extended projects that helped keep me funded over the summers, even the support I needed to get grant funding for my own project that took me halfway across the globe to collect and classify the accumulation rates of different kinds of plastic in a village setting. That wasn't just teaching faculty helping that happen, there is a lot going on every single day in all of those offices upstairs, they keep the lights on, and help idiots like me to sort through all the necessary paperwork, keep track of how we are doing, and even vaccinate us if we're into that; and all of you here working at Arcada, all of you have my gratitude. I am currently working in a successful Helsinki Edtech startup, and they never would have come knocking, that is correct they came for me, if it had not been for the outstanding programs and resources available here at Arcada. So thank you all. Last but not least a huge thank you to the kitchen staff for keeping me fed, fantastic work, you are absolute heroes!

So whether you become the CEO of the next big unicorn of a startup, or an underground filmmaker doing art pieces in Borneo, or just go on to save life after life after life by being there for people on their worst days with a cool head and a smile, or like me just go on to try and make things a little more efficient; no matter what it is that you choose to do... keep in touch.

We'll all be here making that great big world a little smaller and more familiar.

So go get 'em!

Approx runtime 6 minutes 45 seconds.