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**Valedictory Speech on the
24th Congregation**

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Honourable guests, Faculty Dean, Professors, Parents and Fellow Graduates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning! I am Ma Mingyu Derek, who just graduated from the Department of Computing with a Bachelor of Science in Computing. It is my great honour to be here and give the valedictory speech as the graduate representative. My four-year undergraduate life at PolyU definitely is one of the most unforgettable experiences in my life. I wish to take this opportunity to trace back our days at COMP and embrace the coming future.

I still remembered that my first programming course was taught by Dr Rocky Chang four years ago at PQ604. At that time, I wrote my first line of code and completed my first programming project; it was also my first time to do an endless debugging. In the following years, I learned how to solve problems by coding. My classmates and I grew up in the code world from making things work to making things great, and we even proposed new challenges. During the four years of study at PolyU, we took classes, attended tutorials, joined technical workshops, discussed with professors on various IT topics and even went abroad for international exchanges. All of the experiences have equipped us with knowledge in computer science such as artificial intelligence, networking, programming languages and web development. The professional skills we acquired in classes have prepared us to further chase our dreams and explore our career potentials. With our professional skills such as programming skill and system design skill, and our computational thinking behind each line of code, now whenever we encounter any challenges ahead, we are confident to say “Computing Solve It!”.

In the PolyU community, we learned how to apply the knowledge and skills to the real world. PolyU provided us with many opportunities that sparked us to understand the value of our skills. The service-learning project in Rwanda offered me an opportunity to step into the other part of the world. Rwanda does not have a good internet connection, the people there do not know how to use computers, and they do not have sufficient resources to obtain the latest IT knowledge. At that time, I realized that I am so fortunate to live in a place with a wide variety of information sources and knowledge. In the service-learning course, I learned that the huge technology gap does exist and the best way to solve the problem is to develop technologies that are cheap to access and easy to use. Through Work-Integrated Education internship, my classmate and I had a better understanding about the real working environment in the industry; through the capstone project, we solidified our ideas and learned how to do an independent study;

through various of competitions, we applied what we have learned to solve real-world problems. As mentioned in the motto of PolyU, “To learn and to apply, for the benefit of mankind”, the unique experiences at PolyU has provided many opportunities for us to make connections between the knowledge we learned and the real world.

Four years ago, I left my home, Inner Mongolia, with excitement and curiosity and came to PolyU to explore university life. At that time, everything here was new and unfamiliar to me. Today, I feel like Hong Kong is my second home. After graduation, some of my classmates got into graduate schools for further studies or academic research, some of us work in companies to develop their careers, some of us start their own start-ups and try their best to realize their ideas and make the world a better place. Now, I am going to leave PolyU, my second home to explore the new journey in the rest of my life. Although we are going to leave the university or even leave the city, we will cherish the friendship with our classmates and professors and never forget our memories at this campus. The friends I made at COMP let me understand deeper about the quote “If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together.”

Last but not least, I would like to say some words to my parents who are also here today. In the past four years, I only spent countable days at home. Their strong support makes me feel confident when I face challenges. I also appreciate the faculty members at COMP, who are always trying their best to not only teach us knowledge and skills, but also inspire us to learn the mindset of IT. They encourage us to embrace opportunities and provide valuable insights. Taking this opportunity, I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to our parents, professors and friends who gave great support and advice to our studies and lives. Without their support, it is not possible for us to achieve so much.

PolyU has nurtured us to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, innovative problem solvers and socially responsible global citizens, which empowers us to think differently and do differently to influence the world through technology. Computing makes everything possible. From writing our own apps to help others and building our own intelligent devices to connect the world around us, to exploring the possibilities to change the world by utilizing technology, each line of code is a small step for us. Looking into the future, I believe the young IT talents nurtured by PolyU will shape tomorrow and contribute to the advancement of society.

Thanks again to the guests, professors, fellows and everyone on site for the success of this very special congregation today. I hope you have a wonderful day. Thank you!