

Hannah McClelland and Maddalena Castellani  
Inauguration Speech – Head Student Representatives  
Friday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Good morning everyone! Buongiorno a tutti! My name is Maddalena and she's my better half - I'm Hannah, è un piacere essere qui.

For those who don't us we have been representing the student body for the past year, and we are now starting our second year of the Graduate Degree.

As we were told 3 days ago we had to do this speech, I looked up to what previous students in our position said, and they all sounded better than me.

So I thought: I better be sincere with you.

I don't like formalities, I don't like speeches, I don't like monologues - I prefer dialogues.

I don't like many thing, I kind of sound like a dictator, but we kind of are Hannah!

Why?

Because we were the only one candidating for this position last year.

Jokes aside, the important message here is that it is crucial you are engaged, not for others, but for yourself first.

Ladies... empower yourself and take the lead in society.

For you all, the quality of your experience here will be directly correlated with the amount of engagement you put in.

I dare you, VI SFIDO, to go outside your comfort zone, mettetevi in gioco.

Going back to the speech, it was important for us to be here to make you feel welcomed by fellow students to Pollenzo,

and we thought to share with you a few things we've learned along the way.

I will start from a true story, that took place in a remote and forgotten village in Tuscany, called Barbiana, in the 1950s. There, a young priest called Lorenzo Milani (I encourage you to look him up) started teaching to 6 farmer's children, that for geographical and economic reasons, had been left out of the educational system.

This school of Barbiana featured 2 frames in the classroom:

the 1st said: I CARE. It means: "mi importa, mi sta a cuore", which is the exact contrary of the "me ne frego" of fascists.

The 2nd frame held a small message taken after the Cuban Revolution, same frame and message I saw every day for 5 years hanged in my own high school.

It said:

"children who don't study don't make good revolutionaries"

"I bambini e bambine che non studiano non saranno buoni rivoluzionari"

What does this message mean to you? What does being a revolutionary even mean to you?

Nowadays?

I would love to know! later at lunch if you want to come and chat with me.

To me, it means that to bring about change,

I need to be curious, I need to be knowledgeable, and I must be passionate. Creativity without knowledge is empty, as knowledge without creativity is sterile. Education is what gives you the opportunity to develop your curiosity, knowledge and passions, but we should never forget that access to education is a great privilege.

It is a privilege that brings me purpose and I am aware it is my responsibility to use this privilege to raise others and pass along what I have been so fortunate enough to receive.

(I hope that's how you want to use your privilege too).

Knowledge is fundamental, but it is simply not enough if it's not shared and translated into real, concrete action, reason why I encourage you to PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH.

Not many people get to be here so don't let this time pass you by, you would regret it, it is up to you to seize the day and make the most of this experience, whatever that means to you, leave your mark.

!!! Leave the past behind, start challenging yourself today, because today is the first day of the rest of your life.

My own little revolution is being a gastronome, that's why I came here to Pollenzo to learn how to address the challenges of our generation, so strictly linked to how we are in Nature, we eat, we live.

The best thing about being a gastronome is that we see the world through holistic lenses: while others SEE IT just in black and white, we can SEE IT in all its shades.

We gastronomes, are the connecting bridges between apparent separate islands, disciplines, people, we make discuss happen!

Hannah, what do you think?

[Hannah's part]

Speaking of connection, I'd like to share a little piece of advice our class received from a professor the other day - it's quite simple - he said always play tennis with someone who is better than you. This is to say that in the community we have here in Pollenzo don't waste time trying to be the best, seek out those who have something to teach you, seek out those who you can learn from, who you can collaborate with and eventually maybe be lucky enough to teach something to yourself. With the incredible challenges we face today it is essential to recognise that we are in the same fight even if the way we approach the challenge is different. I encourage you to support the people who sit to your left to your right in the back of the classroom and in the front row, engage with those who are in different masters, in triennale in magistrale they are learning things that may bring new light and make your unique path stronger. Inspire one another by being brave enough to support one another and be humble enough to question yourself and realize you cannot do it alone. Go find the people exploring their passions: those building the garden, the entrepreneurs supporting local fisherman, the artists painting with the passata (you should know we are a bunch of crazy people here)- find those who do things differently, who shift the paradigm. Be the one exploring your passions. This time will be over before you know it so lean into this community with your whole heart - if you do, it will be here for you not only during your studies but well after.

well, we know, we gave you many questions, we hope you'll find your own answers, we'll find answers together,

Let's change the world raga.

In bocca al lupo! Make this university yours. The applause is for you.