

## Engineering Graduate Brannon Oliver

### Union College Valedictory Dinner Speech 2020

#### Why I came to Union College

Good evening everyone, I hope you are enjoying yourself. I would like to say a massive congratulation again to the first round of award winners tonight. You are all extremely deserving.

My name is Brannon Oliver, and I'm in my 4th year here at Union College. And I'm so excited to be standing in front of you all today. In this presentation, I thought I would go through how I decided to come to Union College and talk about this wild journey I have been on for the past few years - going back to how and why I came to reside at Union College all those years ago.

When I was in grade 12, I had aspirations to become a fighter pilot in the ADFA. I ended up going through all the application processes down in East Sale in Victoria. Going down there actually made me realise that I didn't want to pursue a career path in the Defence Force. This (kind of) opened the floodgates for a bombardment of spontaneous decisions, which somehow got me giving a speech in front of you all today.

My first freak decision was to pull out the old QTAC application and study Mechanical engineering at the University of Queensland - now did I have a clue what engineers did? Nope - not a clue, but somehow, I just went for it.

My second crazy idea was to come here and stay at Union College only for 1 year so that I could get on my feet in the big smoke. Oh boy, how that plan went out the window. 4 years later, I'm still kicking, and hopefully, you'll take something away from this presentation.

How Union College helped me through my studies. As I said before, I was only meant to come to college for one year, but looking back on that, I'm so glad I ended up coming back for a second, third, and fourth round.

Union College has always played a major part in my studies. If I hadn't had assistance in the first year of the Tutorial Program, I probably would be in my final year of a trade right now, and I wouldn't have met the amazing people I have come to call my family.

Going through Union College, I was able to make so many new mates across a range of degrees, not just engineering. I think everyone in the room will agree that this is the most invaluable aspect of college.

Going through Uni, you will also realise that these connections are your first point of call when trying to work out a problem or even share a tutorial solution or two. There comes a large aspect of uncertainty when studying at university. However, what was certain was Union was a special place where we were able to:

- come back and relax with best mates at dinner;
- have a cold beer with the floor (residents) while watching the Broncos lose each week; or
- annoy Bebo or Skermo for being from Tannum.

These are the little things that made Union College special to me, and it's no surprise that it's all due to the people that are there. But all jokes aside, just that one year at Union College put me in a position where I was able to branch out and meet some industry reps from a range of companies, one of which was Anglo-American. For those who don't know, Anglo-American have supported me through my time here at Union and have helped me call this place home for three years longer than I initially anticipated. For this, I will be forever grateful.

Extra-curricular

Throughout the rest of my studies, I have been lucky enough to be involved with some engineering undergraduate societies and take on an executive role within those teams.

Although I loved being surrounded by those socially awkward engineers every day, my highlight position would be that of (Union College Resident Advisory Forum) co-chair. I have enjoyed running around and annoying the office staff for the past year and trying to make a real difference within the community, no matter what shape or form that is. Seeing how the Resident Advisory Forum has helped out, making life just a little bit easier has been one of my biggest highlights. I'm so proud of how the team has stuck at it during what's been an unpredictable year. Oh, and a special thanks to Brodie for putting up with me as well. I am also really excited to see how James and Harry will go next year; I know you guys will do an amazing job and help keep Moz and Greta in line, so good luck.

Looking toward the future: Yes, I will be ending my time here at Union this year, and I'm excited to see what's on the cards for the future. Next year, I have been offered a graduate mechanical/piping engineer position at Worley Parsons, and I'm excited to get my hands dirty in the real world.

Looking back, Union has been my home away from home, and I have cherished every single memory I have of this place. I have made lifelong mates and memories. I've had way too many Sunday night RE's and Thursday exchanges, and I have had too many late-night trips to Deno's. But that's all part of the journey, and I look forward to hearing a few more of those stories from you guys next year.

I'll conclude by saying that - I remember the move-in day like it was yesterday and all I can say to you all sitting in the room today is to make the most out of your time here at Union. It will go faster than expected.