



# DEBATES OF THE SENATE

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## **ACADEMIC YEAR-END**

Statement by:  
The Honourable Patricia Bovey

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

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### ACADEMIC YEAR-END

**Hon. Patricia Bovey:** Honourable senators, we are approaching the end of the school year, and the spring university convocation season is here. I rise to extend my admiration for teachers, professors, students, parents and all educational support staff who have worked in so many new and important ways.

It has been quite a year: one of anxiety, uncertainty, changing realities, with everyone having to shift their lives on a dime. This truly difficult education year saw most university classes on Zoom, teachers and students shifting how they teach and how they learn. In schools, patterns changed substantially too. Parental engagement was necessarily greater than ever before, and I can only imagine the stress levels as parents juggled work, parenting and this new role of being at-home, full-time tutors.

So today I stand to thank publicly and congratulate all. To those graduating from universities with undergraduate and graduate degrees, I say you have demonstrated a tenacity for your studies which has been tested in new ways. You are unquestionably self-starters, a skill many employers are after, so I wish you well as you start this new chapter of your life.

To those graduating from high school, I applaud you too. Many of you have gone through much of your final year of school solo, at home, on Zoom and without the social lives which I well know sustain you. For some, internet access and lack of technology posed additional problems.

As for students of all ages, I know across this country some have been able to be in class all year, but in other parts of the country that has not been the case. You have been in the classroom for some spells, but attended via Zoom for weeks on end. Often, those plans changed overnight.

To parents, I am full of admiration. Many of you have been working full time and been home-based tutors simultaneously, at a time when you could not even set up play dates for your children and when many of the places where you could take your children for a much-needed diversion were closed — theatres, museums, swimming pools and more.

Colleagues, many of those parents working full time and being the daily tutor are our staff, our Senate Administration and in our own offices. I really thank them for keeping up with us as we have learned to do our jobs differently while not able to work with them face to face. We are truly blessed with the dedication of our professional teams.

May we all look back on this academic year as one in which we realize much was learned and accomplished, despite its uniqueness and stresses. I know we all look forward to and hope for a more normal 2021-22 academic year. In the meantime, again I thank teachers, students, staff and parents, as I wish all a wonderful summer. Thank you.

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