



*This is President Rosenberg's seventh annual blog chronicling the TUC-FIU partnership, the annual China Commencement and our students in the China program. This is his second blog post of this trip. Click [here](#) to read his first blog post.*

“Teachers open the door. You enter by yourself.”

This Chinese proverb certainly was in operation today at the graduation of our students in Tianjin. There was class valedictorian Jiao Meng, a soft-spoken graduating senior, sobbing lightly as she recounted the joys and idiosyncrasies of her FIU family during her four years in our program.

When she became emotional, dozens of our graduating seniors began to weep – the emotions of the moment weighing more heavily upon them than the joy of finishing their undergraduate studies.

Earlier, before the commencement, I had the privilege of a private discussion with this most promising young lady. In her strong, accented English, Jiao explained that she was from Hunan province. An only child, she hopes to become a hospitality consultant. While her mom does not have a college degree, her father studied business administration. Only her mom would be at commencement.



*I enjoyed meeting class valedictorian Jiao Meng during my trip to China.*



When I asked how she had excelled at FIU, she pointed out that she was merely following her passion. Her happy disposition matched her love for her favorite rock group – Mayday – which she identified as a leading Chinese band now emerging on the global market.

When I asked her how she felt about graduation, she mentioned her sadness the night before when she realized that she had just spent her “last night at FIU.” Then she confided that she was afraid she would cry during her valedictory, which she did.

Later, following the ritual group photo with all the graduates, the obligatory selfies, and the post-graduation luncheon with TUC (Tianjin University of Commerce) leadership, we were preparing to depart the campus. A fast-moving gaggle of former students passed, now out of robes and in jeans and backpacks. There she was, an apprehensive smile on her face, pausing, asking for one more selfie before she was off to a waiting car.



Most noticeable? Instead of the traditional graduation cap, Jiao had on a dark baseball cap emblazoned with the iconic New York Yankees logo.

Today, FIU proudly closed the door, but not before Jiao and dozens of other students had passed through it on their way to the next door in life.

Congratulations Class of 2017!

