

**//CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY//**

Thank you all for inviting me here today to celebrate with you

Well – this is it... it is almost over

A few more exams, a final paper or two and it is done

After years of hard work – as well as hard play – you have come to the end.....

And now “real life” begins.....or so they say

But I always asked myself – just when and where does this “real life” they speak of begin

Surely the hours you've spent studying,

the stress of getting a paper in on time,

the frustration that comes with group projects,

the desire to learn all you can....

plus holding down another job or two to pay the bills.....

is as “real life” as it gets.

I can tell you from experience - you have set the stage to handle almost anything

And in the end – you have a “piece of paper” to show for it

That is the tone expressed in those moments of utter frustration and stress – “all this work for a piece of paper.....”

I am sure I have uttered that very line on dozens of occasions -

But never underestimate what that paper means

It says to the world that you've been trained to think clearly, to research with integrity, to analyze with objectivity.....

Its says you are someone who can make commitments – and see them through

It says to potential employers that they are looking at a fighter – at a winner

The University of Victoria has an outstanding reputation –

You've had the opportunity to learn from some of the brightest minds in your field

–

As Newton said, "If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants."

He was speaking about Descartes – but the same is true for all of you – what you've had access to over the last four years is not something that should ever be taken for granted –

You are in the remarkable position to take the knowledge passed on to you and grow it – expand and challenge

I know you were looking for me to make an inspirational speech – but in reality, you are the inspiration

It is with you that new and creative ideas are waiting to take shape – ideas that will help us face the challenges ahead

I hope that doesn't sound too clichéd – but, as with all clichés – it is true.....

– I look to you for inspiration, for the ideas that will make a difference

As a society we are facing some very real challenges – and we can't turn our back to them

Climate change

Homelessness

(personal journey here – law school, street kids, master in ed, community development, to mayor)

Right now we are inundated daily with the real life fallout of the economic recession we are in

It is no wonder that there is a growing sense of apathy out there – that people are starting to feel a sense of frustration, and worse, despair.

We can – and must - work to make a difference..... in our own way, in our own field of interest

There is no one way – but instead it is the constellation of ideas and actions that ensure we are moving forward and improving the world we live in.

Lincoln said – “Let not the likelihood of our success deter us from a cause that is just”

There are many just causes – and even more creative, outstanding people to see them put right

My advice, for what it’s worth, is for each of you to take chances and be bold

( no other place I would want to be bike storey – not old until you stop learning)

That is what we need –

My advice once more, for what it’s worth, is for each of you to take chances and be bold

- follow your heart, use your head and change the world.

Now – I hope that I am not sounding predictable – in the famous 1997 convocation address to the MIT grad class, Kurt Vonnegut reminded the audience:

“Be careful whose advice you buy, but be patient with those who supply it. Advice is a form of nostalgia”

He classically broke from nostalgia by offering the one piece of advice he said they could bank on

“Ladies and gentlemen of the class of '97:

Wear sunscreen.

If I could offer you only one tip for the future, sunscreen would be it. The long-term benefits of sunscreen have been proved by scientists, whereas the rest of my advice has no basis more reliable than my own meandering experience.”

And now it is onto your meandering experiences that will shape your future – lead you to adventure, heartbreak, victories and defeats.....all are important

I have had the great pleasure in life to shape and reshape my role many times over – and I see that as a blessing.....you never need to accept only one version of who you are

We should be many people over the course of our lives – that is a sign of success.....if you look back in 20 years time you will want to reflect on those markers in time where a change occurred

Those events that had such an impact on you that they truly altered who you are

It is vital we remain open to those experiences, remain open to change..... otherwise we will not change a thing around us

Go forth and make change

Thank you