

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT**

GRADUATE CEREMONY

**May 17, 2009
3:00 p.m.**

President's Remarks to the Graduating Class of 2009

**Fairfield University
May 17, 2009**

Thank you Dr. Grossman.

So now, we come to the end of this very special day for all of us. I hope you learned from Dr. Mezey's commencement address, and will allow me to say a few words to you as you prepare to leave Fairfield to engage with the world as teachers, therapists, engineers, nurses, leaders in business, or specialists in your area of scholarship and study.

First, let me simply urge you to keep in touch. Fairfield University is a community — not simply a community of students, but as I hope you will come to appreciate — it is also a community of graduates and friends that extend beyond the borders of the campus into every corner of the world, and into every professional and vocational endeavor. You are now and will always be a member of that extended community, and ambassadors for this University in whatever career you pursue.

During your time of study here, you shaped us all with your questions and enthusiasm, with your passion for learning, with your good humor, and through the close relationships that you forged here, which I am sure will be with you for the rest of your life.

As your teachers and friends, we hope that you will continue to shape the University by staying engaged in the work that we do, by keeping in touch with your classmates and professors, and by sharing with us the challenges and triumphs you encounter on the road ahead. This way, as we continue to evolve and grow as a University, we will do so informed by your experience.

I also want to commend you all for your courage and your convictions. As a Jesuit and Catholic University, we have an obligation to ensure that we don't simply teach our students the skills they need to be successful — though I think we do that very well — but we also, we hope, ask our students to reach for a higher standard, to reach for the "more." We have asked you all during your time here to look into your own hearts. We have asked you to discern that along with the privilege of education comes the profound obligation to be of service to those who need what you have to give. We have asked you to enter the professional world with an eye toward the promotion of justice over the promotion of personal gain, to see that making the world a more compassionate place is not just an ideal, but also your personal responsibility within the realm of your professional expertise.

In short, we ask you now to go out into the world as professionals to do what St. Ignatius set out to do over 450 years ago — and that is, to "help souls." That is what a Jesuit professional education is all about, and it is because these values are the essential and eternal values that they continue to be as vital today as they have ever been. There is so much good work that needs to be done in the world. We have done what we can to help you prepare to do that good work, and I have every confidence that you will.

Thank you, for all your good work. You leave Fairfield the objects of our hopes and longings, our dreams and aspirations. And you leave of course with our best wishes, our blessings and our prayers. God be with you all.