

**FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY
COMMENCEMENT**

UNDERGRADUATE CEREMONY

**May 17, 2009
10:00 a.m.**

President's Remarks to the Graduating Class of 2009

**Fairfield University
May 17, 2009**

Thank you Dr. Grossman.

So now, as you prepare to leave Fairfield and begin the next chapter in your lives, we feel a great sense of pride and satisfaction.

As much as we have enjoyed having you with us, the point of your study here has been to prepare you to engage with the world in a transformative manner, and to make that world a more compassionate and thoughtful place.

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 have 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. That way, as we continue to evolve and grow as a University we will do so informed by your experience.

Let me urge you then, to come back. Come back for homecomings and reunions with your classmates, or to visit your friends on the faculty or the administration. 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.

We hope as you go forward that you will remember how the education you received here has made you the person that you are: a person to be proud of.

As your teachers, we have asked you to reach for the highest standards, to reach for “the more.” We have asked you 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 take the next step of your life as an adult with an eye toward the promotion of justice over the promotion of personal gain. We have asked you to appreciate that making the world a more compassionate and loving place is not just an ideal to be admired, but also a personal responsibility that we all must embrace.

In short, we ask you now to go out into the world to do what St. Ignatius set out to do over 450 years ago — and that is, to find your particular way to “help souls.”

That is what a Jesuit 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.

Remember how much we care for you. You, our students, now our graduates, are the reason this place exists and the reason that we, your teachers and mentors, have chosen the lives we have chosen. 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.