

Invocation, Convocation 2020

Please join me in a moment of reflection.

As improbable as it might once seemed, we are all together today to celebrate the beginning of yet another academic year in the life of our college. The last six months have presented us with challenges like no other time in modern history. We have felt pain, fear, and enormous uncertainty over what the future brings. And, we have also felt great joy for the new possibilities this world is opening up for us.

Class of 2024, may your next four years here with us, in all the different models of learning, be marked not by fear of the unknown, but by the certainty of the joy we do know.

May you know the joy of perseverance, that resolve to not give up and keep on going until the end. The joy of your family members rooting for you from afar. The joy of learning, questioning, deconstructing, and finding new paths. The joy of discovering new lands, new questions, new possibilities that were unknown to you until now. The joy that comes from getting to know yourself, your strength, beauty, and courage.

May this next part of your journey be full of grace. That gentle, compassionate, patient, and kind view of the world, yourself, and others. May your interactions with your floormates and classmates, both virtual and in person, be surrounded by a cloud of grace and compassion. More than ever before, may you find grace in your going in and out of your learning spaces, as you join others in tents, dorm rooms, and virtual spaces all over our country and our world.

May you find it in your readings, your assignments, and your interactions with your favorite people on campus.

May you find greater margin to be kind to yourself during this stressful season.

May you find grace for yourself. Grace to spend time alone when needed. Grace to ask for help, grace to find new communities, and grace to recognize that our failures are not a reflection of our identity, instead, they are a reflection of our persistence and stamina to learn from them and keep going.

And for the next four years, but more specifically for the next season, may you find the ability to see yourself as you really are.

May you see your awesomeness, intelligence, humor, tenacity, strength.

May you see that what you have accomplished over the last few years is nothing short of amazing; and what you will accomplish in the future will surprise all of us, including yourself.

May you see that you carry within yourself the strength of your ancestors, the prayers and thoughts of your communities, the longevity of your traditions, the resilience of the lands you call home, and the hopes of your loved-ones for a brighter tomorrow.

May you spend the next four years journeying into your own world of self-discovery, and may you come out in awe of how remarkable you are.

For the next four years, may you grow in joy, grace, and self-awareness. May you grow to see what a beautiful world we live in, and may you work to protect it and make it better every single day.