

**University of South Australia
Graduation Address
Tuesday 22nd December 2009**

Chancellor

Ladies and Gentlemen

And most particularly Graduands

What an exciting day for you, your parents, partners and friends. Today is a day to celebrate a lot of hard work, and sacrifice by you, and I suggest in most cases by your parents and partners.

Today is also a day to reflect on the challenges you have faced; the people you met during this part of life's journey; the friends you have made and the things you have learned.

I remember some fifteen years ago of how proud I was, as a parent, to witness my two children receiving their degrees from this very University

I remember also, some forty years ago, nearly to the day, receiving my degree after studying at the forerunner of this University. On reflection what do I think I got out of these studies, so many years ago?

Firstly specific technical and professional knowledge – this is nearly a given. But far more important to me ... my degree gave me flexibility; confidence and an interest to learn more – a desire to soak up more information formally and informally.

The noted educationalist John Dewey states “*the aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education*”

A recent survey of graduates and their supervisors identified the capabilities that set the most successful graduates apart. The most highly ranked capabilities were:

- Being able to listen
- Working in a team
- Prioritising projects
- Understanding one’s strengths and limitations
- Ability to develop and use networks to help solve problems

So successful graduates – those that are making the greatest difference – of course need a base of professional knowledge and expertise but without other interpersonal and emotional capabilities this professional knowledge will often not be as highly valued.

It's important to reflect that you have lived in a culture and an environment that is radically different to the experiences you might have had at home.

You have developed personal as well as professional skills that will be of critical importance to you in the future.

To survive and indeed to be here today you, particularly, you have had to gain skills in communication, especially listening; time management; prioritisation of tasks; project management; team work and cultural awareness.

So don't forget to add these important skills you have acquired down on your C.V. as well as noting the award that you are receiving today.

Education is a powerful tool.

Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Nelson Mandela, stated that
“education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world”

Education through research, development and knowledge transfer has transformed the world, starting with the Industrial Revolution in the eighteenth century.

Even though our population, world wide, has continued to grow – education, in recent times, has also significantly allowed the average citizen to now enjoy a better standard of living.

We have seen improvements in life expectancy and declines in mortality from disease and malnutrition.

In just the last one hundred years oh how things have changed;

- Automobiles and aeroplanes
- Photography, movies, television, telephones, computers, the internet and digital technology
- We have gained widespread access to information – we now just have to “Google” anything we want to know
- Running water; flushing toilets, processed foods and life saving medical technology.

All this because of increased levels of education leading to research, development and knowledge transfer!

However, as we know, we have a long way to go.

Increased education, rising affluence and the end of the cold war have not reduced our capacity and willingness to fight over ideas, culture, religion and beliefs as the current climate change debate and wars in Afghanistan and Iraq attest to.

Former United States President John F Kennedy said that *“change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future”*

We now live in a world dominated by technology and information.

In Karl Fisch’s 2008 newsletter he suggests that;-

- China will soon become the largest English speaking country in the world
- The 25% of India’s population with the highest IQ’s is greater than the total population of the U.S.A.
- We are currently preparing students for jobs that don’t yet exist, using technologies that haven’t as yet been developed, in order to solve problems we don’t yet know we have!
- The top ten jobs in 2008 did not exist in 2004

- The U.S. Department of Labour suggests that people will have ten to fourteen jobs by the age of thirty eight;
- We are living in a new technological age – in 2008 there were 31 billion Google searches per month compared to 2.7 billion in 2006
- There are now 200 million users of ‘my space’ and if this was a country it would be the fifth largest in the world.
- And in the six minutes I have now been speaking almost one million songs world wide, have been downloaded illegally.

I have changed my career completely – three times.

I have had fifteen different jobs.

The only constant is change, you will no doubt change jobs many times and most of you will have many more than my three careers in the future.

So consider the award you will receive today as a base;

- A base for further qualifications
- A base for further learning
- A base for different jobs – different careers
- As just one part of the life long learning process with each stage building your confidence and preparing you to adapt to

change and indeed to drive the process of change in this ever dynamic world.

Today you are part of a group of 595 transnational students, gaining an international qualification, from a University, recognised world wide, with a reputation, built on more than a century's experience, as a leader in educating professionals and understanding applied research.

Of all the plaudits the university has received this year, the one which most accurately epitomises the ethos of UniSA is the inaugural Ashley Goldsworthy Award - which recognises sustained efforts to foster collaboration with business and is awarded by the Business and Higher Education National Round Table.

In my opinion, this sums up the difference between UniSA and others. At the very core of this university's activities is the quest to create and disseminate knowledge and engage a wide variety of communities to address the major issues of our time.

A noble mission indeed – but in the case of UniSA, these are not merely words ... the mission is successfully accomplished.

You are part of some 32,000 international students studying in Adelaide this year.

A recent survey of some 6,000 students showed you rated Adelaide as a safe, clean, green, accessible city with friendly locals.

The same survey also showed that, you have, at times, suggested we are a little boring, but from a parents' point of view this is probably a good thing.

We highly value the special contribution that international students, like you, make to our community.

You make our city more cosmopolitan and multicultural; you contribute a youthful vitality that helps energise Adelaide.

Your experience as an international student has hopefully enabled you to form relationships, partnerships and alliances that have the capacity to last a lifetime.

You have made a substantial investment in your future and I am confident it will pay dividends.

You are amongst the best and brightest of your generation and we will share your successes and proudly follow your career and achievements.

So, go out to the world – with confidence – follow your dreams – make a difference as our problem solvers of the future contributing to the economic and social sustainability of our global community.

Congratulations

Thank you.