



JEFFRY FRIEDEN
STANFIELD PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE

The world faces many challenging problems, from global poverty to crippling financial crises. There is no shortage of people eager to alleviate suffering, or of proposals to do so. But willing people and ambitious proposals do not guarantee success. First and foremost, we need accurate explanations of why these problems exist. For proposing to solve a problem without clearly understanding its sources is like prescribing medicine without a making a diagnosis. The social sciences, done right, provide powerful tools to understand the world as it is.



CLAUDIA GOLDIN
HENRY LEE PROFESSOR
OF ECONOMICS

I have striven to teach you to question, think, make sense of the world around you, and use abstract reasoning and empirical tools. In the process, I have learned so much more from you.

You have, by example, taught me to find time to do community service and be more generous. You have reminded me through your everyday joys to play music, dance, exercise, and laugh. Your relationships with your parents have humbled me to be a more dutiful daughter. And your connections with the rest of the world have shown me the deeper meaning of travel to distant and occasionally uncomfortable places. Your creativity and humanity have never ceased to amaze me. Your ability to balance the academic, artistic, giving, and social parts of your lives is incredible.

Don't change (too much). And come back to visit anytime you happen to be in the Cambridge area.



DAVID LIU
PROFESSOR OF
CHEMISTRY AND
CHEMICAL BIOLOGY

A very heartfelt congratulations from one of your professors! Teaching more than 600 of you was both an honor and a real learning experience for me. It's been wonderful and gratifying to see many of you develop your interests and embrace so many activities over the past four years. Office hours, student-faculty dinners, judging a student Iron Chef competition, attending several of your concerts and performances, and getting to know quite a few of you remain some of my fondest memories in my ten years (yikes) as a faculty member at Harvard.

Best wishes for a stimulating and engaging start to the rest of your lives—and be sure to stop by and visit when you return to the area.

And clear-headed analysis is an essential prerequisite to effective social and political action, and to making the world a better place.

J. RICHARD HACKMAN
EDGAR PIERCE
PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL
AND ORGANIZATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY



I send you hearty congratulations on your achievement, and offer a simple admonition to carry away with you: Be careful about success.

When I started my own undergraduate studies at MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Illinois I was consumed with worry about whether I could possibly make it at such a fine college. But gradually I found myself less and less preoccupied with success, whether at MacMurray or in the wider world. Both my coursework and my classmates showed me that there are many different ways to construct an engaging, meaningful life. I learned that the most important thing was not to succeed in any traditional sense but instead to choose settings that would challenge me to keep on learning and growing—and never, ever to settle in, to adapt, to merely make do.

That is what the liberal arts do for people, and I hope it is what Harvard has done for you.



J. LORAND MATORY
PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND OF
AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Dear Class of 2009,

The year that most of you were born, I completed my graduate classes in social anthropology and embarked upon my first professional field research. Since then, communism has collapsed, but capitalism, after the so-called "Black Monday" of 1987, has also passed through another cycle of bust, boom, and even more catastrophic bust. You were toddlers during the first Gulf War, and, in all that you do as the future leaders of the world, you will have to manage the consequences of 9/11, the second Gulf War, and the invasion of Afghanistan. If the Cold War could be fought by proxy far away from home, there will be no place to escape the conflicts precipitated by U.S. policy in Israel/Palestine and the oil-producing Middle East.

Deregulation made our flights, our food, and our communications cheaper, but also less safe and reliable. The racially-tinged backlash against "big government" and the attendant social safety net liberated the wealthy to grow wealthier and left the poor to their own devices. You have come of age with the internet and the iPod, when the fate of the brick-and-mortar library is as much in doubt as that of the LP and the CD.

During your years at Harvard, it ceased to be a surprise that women outnumber men among the arriving first-years. Yet the progress toward equal opportunity for all has not been inevitable or effortless. A Harvard president lost his job after careless remarks about racial minorities, women, and political dissenters, but he also embraced more generous tuition-assistance policies. You welcomed Harvard's first female president, its first Dean of the College who is both black and female, and the first African-American U.S. President. Yet many African-American students, faculty, and administrators still find Harvard an inhospitable place, as reflected in the "Quad Incident" of spring 2007. The struggle for justice and equal opportunity is never finished.

Ahead of you are many uncharted miles. Yet, with your discipline, intelligence, and educational credentials, you will certainly prosper. Remember, though, that walled-off prosperity is not success in a world of deep interdependency among human beings. So, in your pursuit of the good life, also continue to educate yourselves and test the conceptions of truth and justice that you debated here at Harvard. And do your field research. Listen to and learn from everyone you meet: they know something that you don't. Daily raise your eyes to the yet-unpaved horizons ahead, attend to the life conditions of your least advantaged fellow travelers, and invite them to open new roads with you. Above all, never be cowed into silence over injustice to others—whether or not they look, speak, or worship like you. Your privilege is also your debt to stand up for and walk with those in need.



HOWARD STONE
VICKY JOSEPH
PROFESSOR OF
ENGINEERING AND
APPLIED MATHEMATICS

Dear Harvard Class of 2009,

I have been lucky to have taught at Harvard for 20 years, and every year reminds me of the joys of interacting with the talented, accomplished young people that make up the Harvard student body. Thanks for enriching my life and education. If I have been able to share some morsel of insight or inspiration with you, then that is even better.

Good luck with the next steps in your "journey," and always feel free to contact me if I may be of some help.

Along with you, I will be leaving Harvard this year—in my case to accept the chairmanship of the Department of African and African American Studies at Duke University. I am honored to have taught you and to have learned from you. I pray that we will meet again.

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