



ADDRESS TO GRADUANDS – AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY
May 1st, 2006

Naumai Haere Mai Tena Koutou Katoa

- Talofa, Ki orana, Malo e Lelei
- Chancellor
- Vice Chancellor
- Members of Council
- Members of the University
- Graduands
- Families and Friends

Today is a peak experience occasion for not only our graduands but also their families. It is the culmination of years of aspiration and determination. For graduands, in particular, it is an occasion which will last in your consciousness for the rest of your days. I hope you really enjoy it.

Warm congratulations to each graduand on your success. We all honour you today. Your achievement at this great University is a monument to hard work, if nothing else. However, we also acknowledge the pride this day brings for your parents and family and for the other significant individuals in your life.

This is an occasion also where we offer gratitude to all those who have encouraged and supported graduands achieve their academic goals: included are family, teaching staff and the community of the university who have all played a part in enabling graduands reach the goal of gaining a degree. Thank you for the part you have played in the life of your particular graduand.

The United Nations Education, Scientific And Cultural Organization established in 1946 has the following as its Mission Statement: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”.

Our life is what our thoughts make it. As graduating educators it is vitally important that your personal vision commits you to uplifting those you will educate. All of us need to be committed to creating a society that honours individual citizens. We cannot allow defeatism to overwhelm the bold leadership and inspiration that is necessary to face the anti-peace forces active in the world.

Leaders like you are dealers in hope. Leadership is the locomotive of peace and must always be encouraged to blossom wherever it is found. Without leadership, nothing positive happens in human existence.

As the world grapples with conflicts and terrorism, and some would say with threats to civilization itself, our education institutions have a pivotal role to play in promoting the importance of the spiritual (hauhora) dimension of students' humanity. Virtues, values, ethics are all starting to take centre stage in society as individuals and nations begin to realize we each need one another, in order to make progress and to live together harmoniously. In fact one of us is never as smart as all of us.

It is up to each of us to encourage young people to become active as a local, national and international citizen, who contributes to the common good, where a 'fair go' and dignity are central to people's lives. As educators we are called upon to be magnanimous in our attitudes, since peace only emerges through a generosity of spirit.

People today are crying out for new ideas and actions, which are inspirational and which touch their lives. As the late Chinese Premier Deng Xiaoping once observed, "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white, providing it catches mice". Being effective and making things happen is the challenge you now face, while standing up and being counted with excellence in all of its dimensions as your benchmark.

You have become an elite international citizen as a result of your tertiary education. This means that your dreams are now the spark plugs of your ambition and achievement. What altitude you ultimately achieve in your career, and life generally, will always depend on your attitude, which in turn will depend on what sort of person you decide you want to be.

An educator is one who gives life to the soul and spirit of another. Be assured, your influence on others can be immeasurable. In fact you will shine like a star for eternity if you seek to give this life to others.

You have a bright future as a result of your university education. The University community wishes you well as you step out into the world and make things happen.

Again, warm congratulations on the success you today celebrate.

Pat Lynch
1 May 2006