

Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack
Remarks to 109th Graduate Commencement
May 23, 2009

Today is about our students, and the wondrous potential that they represent.

I would like to begin today's ceremony by remembering a member of the class of 2009 -- Lindsay Field. Lindsay will be posthumously granted here Masters in Marine Biology later today. In her short life, Lindsay demonstrated a passion for learning and intellectual adventure. I would ask for a moment of silence in honor of Lindsay.)

Ladies and gentlemen, one of our great missions here at UMass Dartmouth --especially in our graduate programs --is to expand our research and knowledge creation engine. Preparing students who are innovative, entrepreneurial, and highly skilled is part of fueling that engine and certainly how we will build a bright economic, cultural and environmental future here in our region, across the Commonwealth, and beyond. We accepted you into your programs as some of the best and the brightest and we are now prepared to sent you out into our global village to make your mark.

Today, we are here to celebrate your accomplishments and the ongoing evolution of our university.

Today, we will celebrate several firsts:

We celebrate the recent approval of our PhD program in math education, which is going to play a leadership role in creating new strategies to inspire young people about the teaching and learning of math.

We are going to award our first PhD in bio-medical engineering.

We are going to award our first PhDs in Marine Science.

We are going to award our first masters degrees in Public Policy.

And our new School for Education, Public Policy, and Civic Engagement will award degrees for the first time.

This is our moment as a university to reflect on how fortunate we are to be here, in a place and among people devoted to learning, discovery, and service ... devoted to getting the most out of our human potential.

As a nation, as a university, as a community, you know that we face some very daunting challenges. You are all entering a very uncertain world. Finding your new place will undoubtedly be a challenge in these difficult financial times. But don't be discouraged you are well prepared and there is always a recovering rthymn in these downward cycles.

Similar crises have been faced before and they have been overcome by people who chose to use the crises to create new worlds of possibility. Some communities around the world have faced much more dangerous conditions, and prevailed through sheer perseverance and courage.

We know that you can do it because these are the hallmarks of UMass Dartmouth graduates.

All of us here on this stage are counting on you to use your talents, passions, and knowledge to confront and conquer the many challenges facing our communities and the world. Your degree is not just for yourself, it is a pledge of your talent to others as well.

You are among the fortunate ones. Still rare in this world is the person who has the opportunity to earn a college degree, let alone a graduate degree. This is our moment to reflect on how, going forward, we can

create more educational and economic opportunities for people all around the world and by doing so make the world more peaceful...more sustainable.

This is also our time to thank all those who have invested their energy, money, love and faith in helping you get to this place. Will the graduates please stand and join with me in letting your friends and family know how much you appreciate their strong support. You know you could not have done it without them.

Now, may I ask our faculty and staff to stand.

Our faculty endlessly inspire, mentor, challenge, and educate our students. They have been your partners in learning and they have learned from you as well. Our staff take care of all the details that make it possible for you to succeed. Say thank you to your faculty and staff members.