

Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack
Remarks to 109th Undergraduate Commencement
UMass Dartmouth
May 24, 2009

Let me first address our graduates to be--Good morning, Class of 2009.

I want to begin with a moment of silence in memory of Myja Ann Parviainen, a beloved member of the College of Visual and Performing Arts Class of 2009 whose degree in visual design will be posthumously awarded today.

Thank you.

Dear students, we are all here to celebrate your accomplishments and send you off to a prosperous and exciting new beginning. You may feel you need a moment to celebrate where you have been and how far you have come—but we remind you that all of this has been a warm up – to commence!

This is also our moment as a university community to remind ourselves how fortunate we are to be here, in a place and among people devoted to learning... devoted to encouraging and exploring ideas, developing talents and skills, and getting the most out of our human potential. We are all blessed by having the chance to learn from each other.

As a nation, as a university, as a community, there is no questions that we face some very daunting challenges. You are all entering a very uncertain world. It will require diligence and perseverance to find your place, but be confident that it will happen and that you will make a difference. UMass Dartmouth has prepared you for that.

Some generations before you have faced similar crises and used them to create new worlds of possibility. You can also turn challenge into new opportunity. Some communities around the world have faced much more dangerous conditions, and prevailed.

All of us here on this stage are counting on you to use your talents, passions, and knowledge to confront and conquer challenges. Your education is a great gift for you—but not just for you.

You are among the fortunate sons and daughters of this world. Still rare is the person who has the opportunity to earn a college 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 our students.

Would today's graduates please rise and join me in applauding YOUR parents, families, friends and mentors for their encouragement of YOUR personal journey.

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.

Please join me in saluting the faculty and staff of UMass Dartmouth.

Now, please join me in acknowledging one of our exemplary faculty members, the winner of the President's Public Service Award. The winner is a member of our Sociology, Anthropology, and Crime and Justice Department, College of Arts and Sciences. Susan Krumholz, please rise to be recognized.

Dr. Krumholz is a powerful example of how creative and courageous public service can enhance teaching and learning. Dr. Krumholz has brought the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program to UMass Dartmouth and the SouthCoast. The course brings university students behind the walls of the Bristol County House of Correction to take courses with the prisoners.

The course is based on a national model designed to deepen the dialogue about issues of crime and justice. The University students who have participated in the program receive a unique educational experience by coming face-to-face with the prisoners. The prisoners are exposed to the value of learning and critical thinking that could empower them to lead productive lives when they inevitably return to the community.

Dr. Krumholz, due to her strong desire to provide her students with a quality education and tackle the most difficult challenges of the community, took it upon herself to establish this program. We are a better university and society because she did.

Class of 2009, so many people have done so much to make today possible. Please, always remember that... always appreciate that... and return the favor to someone else when you have the opportunity.