

Commencement Message from the Chair

16 May 2020

Greetings ladies and gentlemen and humans all who join us today in this unusual format. We are gathered here today to celebrate the accomplishments of this extraordinary group of young people who constitute the Class of 2020 of the Department of Cinema Studies and Moving Image Arts.

Typically, I have a sort of stock speech that I give on this occasion: some history of the Department going back to the 1970s, a list of accomplishments and distinctions earned by our stellar faculty, some bragging about prominent alumni, a pitch to send money when you make it BIG, a few jokes about the weather, even a joke about Broomfield.

Today that all seems irrelevant, given the unusual circumstances in which we are forced to conclude this academic year. Destiny got in the way, and the tests that you have had to pass in the last four years (or six), are nothing compared to what you will have to confront in the next year or so. But there is no test ever devised by academia, or nature, or destiny, that does not have a solution, a key, a final answer.

Yes, you are all walking into an uncertain future. But there are a few things that are certain, and I am confident today to tell you that it is certain that this thing is going to end. It is certain that we will have the chance to reinvent ourselves many times over. It is certain that the *strength*, the *resourcefulness*, the *resilience*, the *inventiveness*, the *creativity*, and the *intelligence* that you have all demonstrated over and over again in the last four years (or six) will be part of the weapons at

your disposal when, sooner or later, it is your turn to take over -and make over- the world.

We are in the brink of a new and improved golden age of media, culture, arts, and creativity. It was already under way when we faced the current crisis, and it's not over yet, not by a long shot. Paradoxically, though movie theatres are temporarily closed (and many will be reopening, even in reinvented formats very soon!), television ratings, subscriptions to cable outlets, to streaming services, subscriptions to local, state, and national newspapers, magazines, podcasts, and all sort of entertainment and critical media are reaching historic heights. Research already indicates that people can't wait to get back to the movies, to the theater, to museums, to galleries, to live music events, and to all the things that our art and humanities education has so well prepared us for. It is certain that this crisis has put in evidence our dependency in all the things that we are good at.

There's a phrase, a cliché that has been hammered into our heads the last few months by the news media and the analysts, even national and local leaders, as if it were an effort to convince us that it is true. That phrase is "this is the new normal." Well, I tell you "No, it isn't." It's new, sure, but it's NOT normal and it's NOT what your life is going to be. Of that, too, I am certain. Get out there, take over the world, and if you can't take over yet, then give'em hell, stick to the man. It's your turn at the wheel, and I can't wait to see how far you take us... Do not forget that "commencement" means "beginning..." and this beginning is yours.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!!