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President Alexander's Comments to the Class of 1966

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You members of the Class of 1966 have now been certified by the Faculty as having completed all degree requirements. You have passed through the mediaeval ceremonial of receiving hoods and changing tassels. You have had stamped upon you in the splendor of this hour the warrant of this institution that you are men and women of education and competence.

These ancient customs are externals--the signs and seal of our corporate confidence that each of you will put your learning to use and that many of you will bring glory to your lives. These externals, however, ought to symbolize the internal changes which education--true education--- can accomplish. None of today's ceremonies nor even the diploma to be hung on your walls will mean anything unless these interior changes have actually occurred.

What are these changes wrought by true education? Their sum can, I think, be described as the enlarging of your capacities as human beings.

Your minds should now be more capacious than they were. You should now have ample room to grow in the life of the mind. This, in fact, ought really be one of the most tangible results of your education here: that you know how much you don't know; ~~that you now know better than before~~ that you have only just learned how to learn.

Your capacities for the better life should have been expanded by your experiences here. Having tasted at the fountain of culture and civilized pursuits, having gazed upon the noblest works of man's history and present, you will go forth with appetites whetted and thirst for good unslaked.

Your capacities for caring for your fellow should have grown, too. Education of the sort offered by Southwestern should have opened your hearts as well as your minds. Tolerance of opposition and willingness to hear contrary views should characterize your lives, because you actually do care for your fellow man, as Professor Queener so eloquently challenged you last night. Let no one leave this place with a sectarian mind; that is, let each of us be open to others in the freedom of our own spirits.

Finally, you should have gained increased capacities
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for joy. Let the portents of toil not dim the
prospects of joy: joy in life, joy in nature, joy
in work, a deeper joy even in the bosom of despair.
Joy in a frenetic age is a precious commodity indeed,
~~xxxxxx~~ but frenzy's sordidness is the joy that arises
in faith. In the words of e.e. cummings:

you shall above all things be glad and young.
For if you're young, whatever life you wear
it will become you; and if you are glad
whatever's living you will become.

We wish you well; we bid you Godspeed as you
set out to partake of the joys and gladness of true
humanity.