

Speech for Graduation Ceremony – Bangkok University

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My colleagues and I are very pleased to once again represent Ohio University on this very special occasion. As Doctoral Program advisors and administrators, we are reminded at each of these ceremonies of the dedication and effort it takes to be awarded the Doctoral degree. We are proud of the individuals we will recognize on this stage later in this ceremony. The challenge of synthesizing past research is great enough, and the task of creating original scholarship is even more daunting. To do so while reading outside one's own native language is ever so much more time-consuming. As advisors and administrators, we have great admiration for the accomplishments of our Bangkok University students—you and your family members and friends are justified in being very proud of everything you have achieved.

Over many years, Ohio University and Bangkok University have shared a special relationship. As the first doctoral degree program in communication in Thailand, Bangkok University has made an outstanding contribution to society; we are honored to have been a part of this program. We have had the pleasure of working with faculty and administrators, and 4 separate classes of doctoral students. Our scholarship and our teaching have been enriched through these experiences. In particular, we have enjoyed the year that each class of Bangkok University students has spent in Athens, Ohio—living and learning alongside other doctoral students from across the United States, India, Japan, Romania, and Venezuela, to mention only a few of the countries represented in our Ohio University doctoral program.

To all graduates today, but especially to those we have assisted as doctoral advisors, my hope is simple: that you accept the challenge to make a positive difference—to use the knowledge you have gained in giving back to your family, the university, the community, and the nation. As the philosopher, Herbert Spencer, suggests, “the great aim of education is not knowledge, but action.” To make a difference, then, requires that we use knowledge to further action.

A special message to the Ohio University doctoral candidates whom we will recognize formally later in today's ceremony: having been trained in communication, you understand what it means to engage others in ways that continue the conversation, to provide the means for constructive dialogue to take place. Do not shirk from the responsibility that advanced understanding and knowledge have placed on your shoulders, but take those actions necessary to enable problem-solving through civil discussion of differences.

The French philosopher, Chaim Perelman, has observed, "Learning is what most adults will do for a living in the 21st century." If we have succeeded as teachers, we have instilled in you the desire to learn—to continually focus your mind on new ways of

resolving social, political and economic problems that trouble communities as well as nations. Using that desire to make a better tomorrow than we might otherwise have is our reason for investing so much time and energy in bringing all of us to this occasion.

If it is true that “to those to whom much is given, much is expected,” you will honor us in meeting the challenges ahead.