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DEVRY COMMENCEMENT SPEECH

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TECHNOLOGICAL WIZARDRY – VISION AND REALITY

MR. PRESIDENT, HONORED GUESTS, FACULTY, FAMILY, FRIENDS AND CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION...

...I AM PROUD AND PRIVILEGED TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENT.

AS CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATION, YOU ARE ACCOMPLISHING A MAJOR LIFE OBJECTIVE TODAY.

CONGRATULATIONS ON EARNING YOUR DEGREE –YOU MUST BE PROUD OF YOUR ACHIEVEMENT AS ARE YOUR FAMILY, FRIENDS AND FACULTY.

COMMENCEMENT IS THE DAY UPON WHICH ACADEMIC DEGREES ARE CONFERRED.

IT IS THE DAY WHICH MARKS THE COMPLETION OF YOUR FORMAL EDUCATION AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEXT STAGE OF YOUR LIVES – A TRANSITION FROM THE KNOWN TO THE UNKNOWN.

YOU ARE NOW MASTERS OF YOUR SUBJECT AREAS BECAUSE DEVRY UNIVERSITY IS A RECOGNIZED LEADER IN TECHNOLOGY-BASED EDUCATION.

ONE COULD SAY THAT YOU ARE “WIZARDS.”

NOW IT IS TIME TO REINVENT YOURSELVES AS YOU MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM BEING INSIDE DEVRY TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

YOU WILL RISE AS EXPERTS – NO LONGER APPRENTICES – ALTHOUGH YOU WILL ALWAYS BE STUDENTS OF LIFE – NOW YOU HAVE THE FOUNDATION – IT IS TIME TO CLIMB YOUR CAREER PYRAMID.

THIS IS MY OWN PERSONAL VALUES STATEMENT:

“I WILL DO TODAY WHAT OTHER MEN WON’T, SO THAT I CAN DO TOMORROW WHAT OTHER MEN CAN’T.”

LET ME SHOW YOU HOW...

WHEN I WAS EARNING MY DEGREE, I PURSUED A TECHNICAL EDUCATION ALSO – ALTHOUGH NOT THAT LONG AGO, TODAY’S STANDARDS OF TECHNOLOGY WOULD APPEAR TO BE MAGICAL BACK THEN!

WHAT IS FAMILIAR TODAY WAS UNFAMILIAR YESTERDAY – CAN WE REMEMBER WHAT THE WORLD WAS LIKE BEFORE THE INTERNET?

EINSTEIN SAID, “THE PROBLEMS IN THE WORLD TODAY CANNOT BE SOLVED BY THE LEVEL OF THINKING THAT CREATED THEM.”

HIGHER ORDER EFFECTS DICTATE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES NOT YET IMAGINED.

FOR EXAMPLE, KEN OLSEN, FOUNDER OF DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION, THE COMPANY THAT LED THE MINICOMPUTER ERA, COULDN’T ENVISION A USE FOR A COMPUTER IN THE HOME.

IN 1943, THOMAS WATSON, CHAIRMAN OF IBM, SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THERE WOULD BE A WORLD MARKET FOR MAYBE FIVE COMPUTERS.

WHAT WERE THEY THINKING?

TECHNOLOGY MUST BE DEPLOYED WITH STRONG VISION, MISSION, EXECUTION AND CONTINGENCY – THAT MEANS WITH THE LEADERSHIP AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS, NOT JUST TECHNICAL SKILLS, THAT CAN ANTICIPATE THE FUTURE WHILE IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE PRESENT.

WHAT IS WIDELY USED TODAY MAY BE EXTINCT TOMORROW – HENCE THE NEED FOR LIFELONG LEARNING THROUGHOUT OUR CAREERS.

I UNDERSTAND HOW YOUR COMMENCEMENT IS A TURNING POINT – I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL; I FELT THE SAME WAY HAVING TRAVELED THE SAME PATH.

I WENT FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE BOARDROOM, BENEFITING FROM CHOICES WHILE LEARNING FROM MISTAKES MADE AND OPTIONS NOT EXERCISED.

THIS IS HOW I LEARNED GOOD JUDGMENT.

I WOULD BE SURPRISED IF YOU DID NOT KNOW A FELLOW GRADUATE OF MINE FROM MY ALMA MATER, EXETER UNIVERSITY:

J. K. ROWLING, AND HER FAMOUS CHARACTER, HARRY POTTER.

ALTHOUGH WELL EDUCATED, J. K. ROWLING EXPERIENCED HARD TIMES AFTER COMMENCEMENT – YET SHE PUT HER WRITING SKILLS TO THE TEST AT HER LOWEST MOMENT.

HER EDUCATION PROVIDED THE FOUNDATION TO HER CAREER AS A WRITER.

SHE IS NOW ONE OF THE WEALTHIEST WOMEN IN BRITAIN.

HOW IRONIC BECAUSE TOMORROW IS THE COMMENCEMENT OF ANOTHER ERA AS BOOK FIVE: “HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX” HITS THE BOOKSTORES.

THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX – PHOENIX, A CITY IN WHICH DEVRY RESIDES – SO WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MYTHICAL BIRD – THE PHOENIX?

THIS BIRD OF EGYPTIAN MYTHOLOGY LIVED IN THE DESERT FOR AT LEAST FIVE HUNDRED YEARS. IT THEN CONSUMED ITSELF BY FIRE, LATER TO RISE RENEWED FROM ITS OWN ASHES.

PHOENIX...A CITY...

A MODERN CITY IN ARIZONA IN THE SANDY AND WIND-SWEPT DESERT, THAT ROSE FROM EARLIER INDIAN CIVILIZATIONS – NOW A TECHNOLOGICAL METROPOLIS IN THE SILICON DESERT – AT A HIGHER LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT.

PHOENIX...ANOTHER DEFINITION...

A PERSON OF UNSURPASSED EXCELLENCE – ...MMM...PERHAPS A GRADUATE OF DEVRY.

PHOENIX...THE SAME WORD...DIFFERENT MEANINGS.

PHOENIX...AND YET ANOTHER MEANING – “HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX” IS ALL ABOUT WIZARDS AND WIZARDRY.

SO WHAT IS WIZARDRY IN CONTEMPORARY TERMS?

A WIZARD IS SOMEONE WHO PRACTICES MAGIC, OR A PERSON WHO IS VERY SKILLED AND GIFTED – A GRAND MASTER IN THEIR FIELD OF COMPETENCE.

WIZARDS HAVE VISION TO SEE THE UNKNOWN AND CHANGE THAT VISION INTO REALITY, OR MAKE THINGS DISAPPEAR.

WE OFTEN ASSOCIATE WIZARDS WITH THE PAST – MERLIN AND CAMELOT.

BUT THE WONDERS OF THIS MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD WOULD REALLY APPEAR MAGICAL TO MERLIN AND HIS PEERS.

LOOK AT HOW THE BOOK “HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX” IS BEING SOLD ON THE INTERNET.

TECHNOLOGY IS WIZARDRY AND THE TERM “WIZARD” IS EVEN BAKED INTO THE WINDOWS OPERATING SYSTEM – SO WIZARDRY, A PRACTICE FROM THE PAST, IS VERY MUCH A PART OF OUR TIME.

YOU ARE WIZARDS IN YOUR FIELDS OF SPECIALTY AND YOU ARE WEARING THE REGALIA OF ACADEMIA – A PRACTICE THAT IS STEEPED IN TRADITION FROM THE MIDDLE AGES WHEN STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WORE CAPS AND GOWNS AT ALL TIMES – SACRED SYMBOLS OF THE GUARDIANS OF KNOWLEDGE.

THE ACADEMIC CAP IS QUITE ANCIENT AND IS CALLED THE “MORTARBOARD.”

THE LITERAL MORTARBOARD IS USED BY BRICKLAYERS TO CARRY SMALL AMOUNTS OF MORTAR.

HOW APPROPRIATE, BECAUSE AS A FLAT SURFACE, THE MORTARBOARD REPRESENTS THE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION UPON WHICH A CAREER CAN BE BUILT. IT IS SYMBOLIC OF A TOOLSET.

YOU HAVE MASTERED TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION – YOUR TOOLSET – NOW IT WILL TAKE A LITTLE WIZARDRY FOR YOU TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL CAREER SYMBOLIZED BY A PYRAMID.

THE WIZARD’S HAT REPRESENTS THE PYRAMID OF AN ORGANIZATION – WITH THE NEW ENTRANTS ON THE BOTTOM AND THE LEADERS AT THE TOP – SO I WILL NOW REPLACE

MY MORTARBOARD WITH A WIZARD'S HAT SYMBOLIZING THE TRANSITION FROM
COMMENCEMENT TO CAREER PATH.

*** CHANGE MORTARBOARD TO WIZARD'S HAT QUIETLY***

I CHALLENGE YOU TO FOLLOW ME IN MAKING THE TRANSITION.

SO WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL CAREER PATH?... TO GO FROM
TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL TO MANAGERIAL AND EXECUTIVE, OR
ENTREPRENEURIAL?

IT TAKES TWO COMPETENCIES THAT COLLECTIVELY I CALL STEWARDSHIP – CORE AND
MANAGEMENT.

CORE COMPETENCIES ARE THE UNDERLYING TECHNICAL SKILLS THAT YOU HAVE
ACQUIRED AT DEVRY – THESE SKILLS ARE THE FOUNDATION TO YOUR CAREERS.

MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES ARE THE UNDERLYING ENTREPRENEURIAL, LEADERSHIP
AND MANAGERIAL SKILLS THAT YOU WILL NEED TO RISE UP THE PYRAMID TO TAKE A
GLOBAL, HOLISTIC VIEW.

IN A WORLD OF EVER INCREASING CHANGE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO UPDATE THESE SKILLS
FROM TIME TO TIME THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING, EVEN IF IT IS
NECESSARY TO RISE FROM YOUR OWN ASHES LIKE THE PHOENIX.

WE KNOW THAT THE ONLY CERTAINTY IS UNCERTAINTY – THAT'S WHY IT IS THE
MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES THAT WILL BE YOUR TICKET TO SUCCESS AS EITHER
FUTURE EXECUTIVES OR ENTREPRENEURS.

THE ABILITY TO SEEK OPPORTUNITY, TAKE RISK AND INNOVATE NEW IDEAS ARE EXAMPLES OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS.

THE ABILITY TO *ASPIRE* AND *INSPIRE* ARE EXAMPLES OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS.

SUCCESSFUL LEADERS CREATE A COMPELLING VISION OF THE FUTURE – A SENSE OF PURPOSE WITH A SET OF VALUES AND PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE DECISION-MAKING.

LEADERS INSPIRE OTHERS TO FOLLOW AND TO SHARE THEIR VISION – THE RESULTING CHANGE PROVIDES MUTUAL BENEFITS TO ALL.

BUT IN ORDER TO BE A LEADER, YOU MUST FIRST LEARN HOW TO FOLLOW.

TO ASPIRE AND TO INSPIRE ARE THE PEOPLE CAPABILITIES THAT ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL TO SUCCEED IN LIFE.

REMEMBER THAT SUCCESS IS A DECISION NOT AN ACCIDENT.

THE ABILITY TO *PLAN*, *ORGANIZE*, *EXECUTE* AND *ADJUST* PERFORMANCE ARE EXAMPLES OF MANAGERIAL SKILLS – THESE ARE THE PROCESS CAPABILITIES THAT SUPPORT THE PEOPLE CAPABILITIES THAT DELIVER RESULTS.

MASTERING PEOPLE AND PROCESS CAPABILITIES MEANS EARNING A PLACE IN LIFE.

IT MEANS FINDING THE PATHWAY TO ACHIEVE FULL POTENTIAL WITH THE SATISFACTION OF MEANINGFUL CONTRIBUTION.

STEWARDSHIP MEANS THINKING FIRST, THEN ACTING – IT MEANS DOING THE RIGHT THING AND THEN DOING THINGS RIGHT.

ACCORDING TO FUTURIST FRANK FEATHER, WHO COINED THE PHRASE “THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY,” ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS ARE BECOMING JUST AS IMPORTANT AS EXECUTIVE SKILLS.

ENTREPRENEURS ADD STRUCTURE TO UNSTRUCTURED SITUATIONS JUST LIKE WIZARDS MAKING SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING – AT FIRST THEIR IDEAS ARE LIKE MORTAR ON A BOARD, BUT AS IDEAS TAKE SHAPE, STRUCTURES EMERGE – USE YOUR MORTARBOARD TO SHAPE YOUR CAREERS ACCORDINGLY.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS ABOUT RISK TAKING IN START-UPS OR, AS INTRAPRENEURS, IN MORE MATURE CORPORATIONS.

THERE WILL ALWAYS BE COMPETITION, BUT LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE – REMEMBER THE MEANING OF THE WORD “TEAM” – TOGETHER EVERYONE ACHIEVES MORE.

OPPORTUNITY WILL STARE YOU IN THE FACE TIME AND TIME AGAIN – YOU NEED VISION TO PERCEIVE AN OPPORTUNITY AND COURAGE TO REMOVE THE OBSTACLES TO MAKING YOUR VISION A REALITY – WIZARDS KNOW THAT KNOWLEDGE IS THE SWORD AND WISDOM IS THE SHIELD.

YOU NOW HAVE THE FOUNDATION UPON WHICH TO BUILD YOUR CAREERS – YOUR WEARING THE MORTARBOARD ATTESTS TO THAT ACHIEVEMENT.

YOU ENTERED THIS AUDITORIUM AS STUDENTS, NOW IT'S TIME TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR CAREERS AND RISE UP THE PYRAMID.

AS YOU LEAVE, I CHALLENGE YOU TO PUT ON YOUR WIZARD'S HATS AND CAST YOUR TECHNOLOGICAL SPELLS.

THE MAGIC OF YOUR WIZARDRY TODAY WILL BE THE REALITY OF OUR TOMORROW.

BUILD YOUR CAREER PYRAMID ON THE DEVRY FOUNDATION.

BE PREPARED TO REINVENT YOURSELF AND RISE FROM YOUR OWN ASHES THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO LIFELONG LEARNING.

JUST LIKE THE PHOENIX, ALLOW YOUR IDEAS TO RISE AND TAKE YOU WITH THEM TO INFLUENCE THE FUTURE AND MAKE YOUR VISION A REALITY.

THE POWER OF A FEW CAN INFLUENCE THE MANY – YOU *CAN* MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

BEST WISHES, CONGRATULATIONS, GOOD LUCK IN YOUR CAREERS AND I WILL SEE YOU ON THE BEACHES OF THE WORLD.