



*Special note: The University's convocation ceremony, originally scheduled for Sunday, August 28 at 6:00pm was cancelled as a result of the adverse weather conditions related to Hurricane Irene. The text of planned remarks follows.*

## CONVOCATION 2011

### PLANNED REMARKS FROM VICE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES HARRY CHEN

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it's my pleasure and my honor to welcome the class of 2015 to the University of Vermont. Today you are embarking on one of the most stimulating, surprising, memorable journeys of your lives. And in light of how you have spent the last couple of days, the journey may also seem chaotic, exhausting, and a little bit scary. Be not afraid. You are entering a time when you will make new friends that will last the rest of your lives. You will learn more about the world, about other people, and about yourself than you ever thought possible. And four (or five...or six) years from now as you are graduating from this extraordinary University, you won't believe where the time went.

On these occasions it is tempting for someone like me to offer multiple gems of advice to you --- advice that will almost surely be forgotten instantly. I guess I'm no different, but I am going to focus on just one thing that maybe you'll think of again. In this new environment, you have the singular advantage of starting on a clean slate. Whatever you may have experienced until now in school is behind you. What is ahead of you is opportunity -- to experience all you can, to absorb knowledge everywhere you go, to reinvent yourself. When you are faced with something new and unfamiliar, set aside those old fears and

preconceptions and plunge in. You won't regret it. That's what college, and life, is all about.

Study abroad? Try it. Striking up a conversation with someone you don't know? Just do it. Taking a course about something you know nothing about? Why not? Trying a sport or activity you have never done before? What the heck? And don't fret about asking questions – that's what a University is all about. You have nothing to lose and lots to gain.

The opportunities here at UVM are endless. The greatest barrier to taking advantage of them are the limits we put on ourselves. Ignore them. Your time here promises to be some of the best years of your life. Make them count.

An unknown author once said, "When your life flashes before your eyes, make sure you've got plenty to watch."

Again, welcome to UVM. Enjoy your time at Vermont's University, and remember to take the plunge. You have a clean slate. Start filling it up today.

Thank you.