Dear Classics Graduates,

We very much regret not being able to celebrate you, and meet your families, at our famous graduation reception feast! We hope that eventually UVM will be able to hold an in-person ceremony. Meanwhile we congratulate you on all of your hard work and accomplishments over the least four years. It’s a big moment. As humanities graduates, you do not face some single, well-defined path forward. At first this can be intimidating, disorienting. You are not unlike the seventh daughter or son in a fairy tale. You are seeking your way in the world—and at a very difficult time in history. You will almost certainly wind your way from one thing to another. But despite the uncertainties, such a path WILL eventually lead you somewhere unexpected and delightful, where your particular qualities and virtues can best shine, and are best appreciated. Believe me, I’ve been there! Immersion in language, literature, culture, history, and philosophy has prepared you for a wide variety of fulfilling lives and fruitful careers. Classics students succeed because mastery of grammar and syntax teaches intellectual rigor, precise communication, and strong analytical skills, while the literary canon exposes one to the full range of human experience and helps develop emotional intelligence, analogical thinking, and historical perspective. Classicists thus acquire a breadth of view and depth of field which few other disciplines can match. I urge you to keep dedicating some time every week to the further exploration of ancient texts, and of course other literature! The more you read, the more connections you find between other texts you have read, and so the ancient world, and human experience more broadly, comes into greater and greater focus. Classical texts are readily available in affordable translations. Scour used book shops, start building a library, embrace the full range that the ancient world delivers—disturbing otherness, startling familiarity, incredible beauty, enduring wisdom. As Cicero wrote: Other occupations are not suited to every time, nor to every age or place; but these studies are the food of youth, the delight of old age; the ornament of prosperity, the refuge and comfort of adversity; a delight at home, and no hindrance abroad; they are companions by night, and in travel, and in the country (Pro Archia, 15-16). Please stay in touch with us, and let us know what you are up to. We follow our graduates’ unusual careers with great interest. We will always remember you, and welcome you back when you return to visit or, better still, settle with us in the Green Mountains!

With admiration and gratitude,

John C. Franklin Chair, UVM Classics