

March 24, 2020

Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on your graduation!

I welcomed the 2016 cohort into GIS and was looking forward to celebrating with you, to bring a formal closure to your university career, and to send you off, so to speak, to your new journeys in life. It is a pity that we cannot gather together for the occasion, but be assured that I had you in mind when I wrote this message.

Take a moment and consider the tons of readings that you have pored over, the many presentations you have delivered, the endless trail of papers that you have written, the many hours you have spent listening to lectures and debating and discussing with friends and foes in the classroom...and of course, the broad and deep knowledge that you have acquired as a result.

For some of you, what you have learned is directly related to your next endeavor. Those of you who have learned all about marketing, finance, branding, entrepreneurship will be applying your acquired knowledge quite directly to your jobs in business. Obviously, moving onto graduate school in Sociology requires you to draw on all that you have learned about sociological theories and analyses. How about those of you who have studied ESL and are taking a job with a trading company? Or those who have acquired a solid background in International Relations or English literature but will become airline staff?

Let me remind you that we have never meant to train you for a particular vocation. We have never meant your education to be an "immediate gateway to a job", so to speak. This is a university, not a vocational school. However, there's nothing to worry about.

The GIS liberal arts education that you have received is not defined only by the broad and deep knowledge you have gained – and there's plenty, just think about all the readings you have done, the papers you have written. But beyond and through the knowledge that you have gained, you have also acquired skills and developed orientations that should allow you to pursue diverse careers, and to chart your own path in life: cultural awareness, decision making skills, problem solving skills, communication skills, team work, and more. These are the skills that any for-profit or non-profit organizations look for in their staff. And you all have gotten a head start at GIS.

You should also have found out that liberal arts education is not only about breadth and depth of knowledge, or giving you skills that you can use for life. It is also about developing a sense of social responsibility. Having a sense of social responsibility means that you recognize yourself as a member of the social world. It implies empathy with others, and becoming aware that you are "partially responsible for the conditions found in [your] social environments" (Hironimus-Wendt & Wallace 2009, p.78). It can also be very simply put as: don't just complain, do something, and do something good that would make life better not only for you but also for others.

Leaving GIS and Hosei University, you are stepping into a world that presents with a lot of challenges. There is evidence of an increase in intolerance and an intensification of inward-looking orientation, in the midst of unstoppable globalization and growing diversity of any human communities. However, I am confident that your studies and the myriad experiences you have accumulated in the past few years have prepared you to take on any challenges.

So, go out and make the world a better place. Congratulations again.

Best wishes,



Diana Khor  
Dean, GIS

p.s. We are planning a home-coming event in the Fall, 2020. We'd love to see you all again. Stay tuned!

Reference: Hironimus-Wendt, Robert J. and Wallace, Lora Ebert. (2009). The sociological imagination and social responsibility. *Teaching Sociology*, 37 (1), 76-88.