



**Claire Wilson
Graduate, Geography**

I have graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a Master's in Geography. During my studies I researched the concept and application of sustainability initiatives for the tourism resorts of Whistler, British Columbia and Queenstown, New Zealand. My research was recognized through a grant from the New Zealand Ministry of Tourism. Prior to this degree I have worked extensively in the tourism sector in China, Mongolia, Russia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. I intend to work in the field of public policy upon graduation.

Commencement Speech

Who would have thought...

Who would have thought, that a chance encounter with a lovely Japanese American bloke on the shores of Lake Baikal would lead me to standing here today.

And standing here today, I feel honored and grateful to be graduating with such a delightful and enchanting group of people.

There's an old Maori proverb which goes;

He aha te mea nui i tenei ao: he tangata, he tangata, he tangata.

What is the most important thing in this world: it is people, it is people, it is people.

One thing that has struck me about this department is a great sense of community. The pluralistic nature of geography lends itself to this state, and as Aline once discussed with me – geography creates good citizens. This combined with the dedication to the subject, particularly from those in the geography club – Bren, Aline, Kevin, Mario, Anne, Tiffany and everybody else who have spent time in the geography lounge - when you probably should have been

studying. All these people have contributed to creating a community that you will take with you throughout the rest of your life and careers.

All this today would not be possible without the unwavering and diligent support of the faculty, staff and adjunct faculty who provide the backbone to this department. It's not an easy time to be employed by the California State University system what with budget cuts, furloughs and over capacity classes. Despite this adversity the academic integrity of this department is well above par and staff and faculty always have time for students.

I have so many fond memories of my time here. In 20 years time I probably won't remember the topic of many of the essays I wrote, but I will remember waxing and waning lyrically about the ills of the world in Dr Taylor's human geography seminar class; I will also remember how to argue like Rush Limbaugh or Mike Mike on the perils of climate change thanks to Dr Miller, I will remember listening to Dr Voeks' colorful stories and the 'excitement' I felt in GIS with Dr Carroll. I'm grateful for Dr Drayse's conscientiousness, which inspired me to get my thesis done. I am also grateful for the time getting to know Sherry via the nuances of Geog 100. But mostly, I will remember the many interesting conversations and enjoyable activities undertaken with all of the students here today.

As geographers, we are inherently curious creatures. As time progresses I encourage everyone who is graduating here today to embrace that curious tendency and seek out the various adventures which will come your way. And if any of you end up in New Zealand – my mum cooks a delicious lamb roast. Geography has prepared us well for these adventures and the people you are graduating with today are a fantastic support method to see you on your journey.

In Maori and NZ culture, it's tradition to finish a speech with a song or waiata. So I'll leave you with this song, te Aroha, which translates as Love, Faith, and Peace be amongst us

all.

Te aroha

Te whakapono

Me te rangimariee

Tatou tatou e.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou tena koutou katoa.



Sister Clara Garcia-Rocha, MC Undergraduate, Major in Spanish, Modern Languages and Minor in Liberal Studies

Sister Clara García was born in Mexico. At twenty years of age, while studying law at the University of Guanajuato, she discovered the calling of God and decided to devote her life to Him as a religious sister. As a missionary sister, she has served her community in various countries, is fluent in four languages, and has earned degrees at a Catholic University in Italy. She has completed a major in Spanish and a minor in Liberal Studies, and has graduated on May 23rd. With much gratitude to all the excellent professors and classmates of CSUF for their support with her academic goals, Sister Clara would like to use both her knowledge and experience to help others.

Commencement Speech

Dear Teachers, classmates, relatives and friends who accompany us on this very special day.

First of all, I would like to thank all the personal of Cal State Fullerton, and in particular the faculty of the Spanish and Portuguese program for allowing me the privilege of addressing these words to you.

The Book of Ecclesiastes quotes: “There is a time for everything,” and this is the moment for us; for our graduation. It is the time for us to end a phase in our life, and begin a new one. The diploma and the honors will pass, as life goes on. But what will remain in each one of us is the richness of personal experience that Teachers and Students have enjoyed working and being together at Cal-State Fullerton. How could we forget: The study-groups and the many sleepless nights to prepare for exams?, sharing the joy felt when getting an “A” or the support from one another when getting a “D”? The research for Term-Papers and loooooong Essays? The endless search for a parking space..? and the rush to go from one class to another...? All these and more, we shared with one another, as classmates and friends. Thank you to one and all for being who you are. Each of you made of these two years of study, a marvelous experience to me..!

I want to take advantage of this moment, to encourage each and every one of you fellow graduates, to remember always, that each one of us was created to carry out a unique mission in life: ***Do good to others, giving the best of yourself.*** "May you always have the courage and strength to defend the values and principles that lead you to become responsible, diligent, and kind to others." The greater your effort, the greater the benefits of the good that you do..! If we do this, humanity will be enriched by our contribution. It needs responsible and conscientious professionals that participate and impact today's society. The tiny grain of dust that we are putting into our midst is very valuable, and we are glad indeed..! Yet, out there in the world, in every day's struggle, do not faint though you may feel weak. Don't let yourself become paralyzed though everybody else seems to be. Be not afraid, though everything looks dark. Moreover, do not despair if you do not see immediate fruits from your efforts, because when you have a goal in mind, you would receive the enlightenment, and the fruits will arrive in due time.

My profound gratitude goes to God for giving me the capability and talents to face the challenge of studies. I sincerely recognize that the merit is not mine alone. I have simply done what I should. To tell you all the truth, my secret was the total confidence in the Most Holy Virgin Mary. She has always been my greatest support in all things.

My sincere thanks to my Superiors and Religious Sisters, since they constantly supported me, and gave me the necessary time to do all the work needed for my studies, without neglecting the observance to my religious duties. A very special recognition and gratitude to my Dad for his academic example...! And, my deepest thanks to my Mom, the rest of my family, and friends who supported me not only with their encouragement, but with their prayers.

Last but not least, I want to share the merits I have gained with all of ***my Professors***, both present and absent. You sowed the seeds of knowledge in my mind, and trusted me for the fruits that I would render. Thank you for leading me ---unconditionally--- with your guidance and counsels.

My prayers will always be with and for you all.

May God bless each and every one of you and lead you to higher goals that are so much needed by humankind.

Sister Clara García-Rocha, M. C.



Cody Ross
Graduate, Anthropology

I am, above all else, a traveler. It is thus no surprise that my academic career has led me into the field of anthropology. I am deeply interested in almost all fields in the academy, from chemistry, to philosophy, to economics, to linguistics, to psychology and neuroscience; it is, however, in anthropology that I have found my home, because to me this field is a rhizome, a network of theory and method, that can link all fields in the academy into a wonderfully integrative whole. I have two major interests in anthropology. Theoretically, I am interested in the intersection of philosophy of mind, evolutionary psychology, and neuroscience; my applied research focuses on the intersection of conservation policy, human motivation, and economic policy.

Commencement Speech

When asked to give this commencement speech, I was initially unsure of what I should say: I am far too realistic to give a speech brimming with glittering generalities - of the joyful futures that we will all surely have. Yet, I am too optimistic to treat such an opportunity with cynicism. So I began by reading what others have said at commencement speeches:

Kurt Vonnegut famously said *“Things are going to get worse unimaginably worse and they are never, ever, going to get better again!”*

Ayn Rand said - *“Do not let your vision of man be distorted by the ugly, the cowardly, the mindless. Do not lose your knowledge that man’s proper estate is an upright posture, an*

intransigent mind, and a step that travels unlimited roads. The world you desire can be won, it is real, and it's yours."

Desmond Tutu said – *"We are created for the Beautiful, for the Truth, for the Good. We know it! We are aware that this is a Moral Universe that Good and Evil matter, that Life and Truth matter. And yes, there are frequently many many times when it seems that evil is going to have the last word. Then, it doesn't isn't that exhilarating?"*

Kurt Vonnegut's mother committed suicide when he was 22. As a soldier he spent over a year in the German POW camp, unimaginatively called Slaughterhouse Five. He later wrote a book, by that same name, an anti-war novel of black-satire, frequently voted one of the best in history.

Ayn Rand grew up in Russia during Russian-revolution. Her father's business was confiscated by the Soviets. She immigrated to New York City with nothing but her philosophy and her passion. At first, her novels were derided then they became classics - due to the power of her vision.

Desmond Tutu is a famous opponent of apartheid. In spite of the horrors he has witnessed, he has dedicated his life to the defense of human rights, and the fight against AIDS, homophobia, poverty and racism.

To me, there is a beauty and a brutal honesty in the words and stories of each of the aforementioned – the Cynicism of Vonnegut - the Realism of Rand - the Idealism of Tutu. In their own way, they each shed light on the struggle of the human condition, the blackness and the light. None of them remained camped in a zone of light and comfort – No – They traversed the darkness. With only the small lanterns of their vision, they walked unknown territories. They laid down new roads. They did not fear the darkness. They brought light where there was previously none.

From what I have learned as a student here, I have only one suggestion for the graduating class. Travel – not just outside of this country - this culture - but outside of your own feelings of comfort and security. Climb mountains, because with each and every step we take coldness sinks in, and pleasure fades. The air grows thin with altitude. Our muscles scream with pain. We march toward an unfriendly and alien world, toward rock and frost. Yet, with each step we take, we can see more of the world. At each step human consciousness is elevated. To stand on a mountain top is to take the human heart, mind, and will and make them the Pinnacles of Earth,

the only place they have ever belonged. Some mountains are made of stone, others of emotion, others of invention, and still others of the great mysteries and challenges of our world. Find your mountains – conquer them. For you too will lay down new roads armed with only the small lanterns of your vision. May you all bring light where there previously was none.



Maria D. Quintero
Undergraduate, History and Latin American Studies

María D. Quintero completed a dual-major in History and Latin American Studies with an Art minor; she will be pursuing a graduate degree in History. Her parent made the decision of immigrating to the United States over twenty years ago with the hopes of providing their daughters with equal access to education. At California State University she enjoyed being president of Latin American Studies Student Association (LASSA) as well as an active member of Phi Alpha Theta, History Students Association, and the Humanities & Social Science Inter-Club Council. She approaches her academic studies through an interdisciplinary lens. Specifically she is focused on cultural history with an emphasis on non-traditional sources, such as visual representations and oral histories. She enjoys spending time with her family and close friends relaxing near large bodies of water, traveling, knitting, and volunteering with young people.

Commencement Speech

I began by trying to make note of and comment on the trends and significance that commencements and other such right of passage ceremonies have played in our cultural history. However, since I have been dutifully trained to write papers that average upwards of 20-pages I quickly had to forego that approach. Instead I will start by telling you a simple story:

There was a man, a very religious man. He was pious and full of faith and the one thing he was it was that his God could see him through anything. Well, in this man's hometown there was a flood warning and everybody was told to evacuate. So after a day of constant raining the man prayed to God, simply thanking him because he knew he would come through and save him from the flood. Therefore when his stubborn neighbor asked if he wanted to go to leave for higher ground with him seeing as they were knee deep in water, the man refused simply saying, "You go ahead, my God will save me" The neighbor insisted to no avail and left. The man simply climbed on his roof to wait there. With over half of his house underwater, a rowboat came by and the boatman asked him to come along and evacuate with him. But the man replied, "You go ahead, my God will save me." The rain continued and a helicopter came by, a rope ladder was tossed but he told them, "You go ahead, don't worry about me, my God will save me." Eventually the man drowned but seeing as he was a faithful servant he went to his heaven and he met his God. Once he thanked his God for the welcome and said "I don't mean to seem ungrateful but I only have one question my God: why didn't you save me?" to which God replied "Oh I tried. I sent your neighbor, a boat and a helicopter. What were you expecting, flaming chariots?!"

As our academic journey in the history department of California State University Fullerton come to a close we move forward to the next stages in our personal and professional lives and hope for opportunities.

Let us be warned by this man's tale that opportunities may not always meet our expectations.

The opportunities that may be presented may not be as glamorous and high-paying as we wish they were. However, make the most of each opportunity you are given.

I'd like to take this time to thank some of the people who have presented me with such opportunities: first, to all my past professors and Dr. Haddad for selecting me to address you today "muito obrigada."

Additionally, my undergraduate experience would not have been the same without my golden peers, berry best friends, some low-brow company and all those meaning-well good times!

I extend my deepest gratitude to RR and BC, better known in academic circles as Dr. Raymond Rast and Dr. Benjamin Cawthra. Thank you for taking a chance on an undergrad and opening as many possibilities for growth to me as you have and continue to do. It is due to your dedication, passion and example that the standards have been set so high for my academic career beyond this point.

Above all to my supportive family: since I don't have the words to properly thank you I want to just let you to know that, "los quiero muchisimo! No estuviera aqui sin sus sacrificios y se que siempre puede depender en su apoyo."

As we look around and reflect on how we have, or could have, made the most of our experience here I invite you to look forward. Lastly, I challenge each and every one of us that as we continue in life to let our actions define us, not just our words. Regardless of a person's color, creed, background, paperwork and/or documentation, let us try to create opportunities for the people we encounter. It is then up to each individual to take that opportunity and save oneself.



Peter Roberts
Graduate, History

Peter Roberts attended the University of Texas at Austin as a National Merit Scholar, earned a B.A. in English Literature with a minor in Spanish in 2001, and was on the Dean's List his last four semesters. This spring Peter completed an M.A. in History with a focus on Early Modern Europe at California State University, Fullerton while working full time as an editor and high school teacher. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in the same field. He enjoys spending time with his wife and two young children. While at CSUF Peter was a member of Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honor Society, and winner of the 2009 Lawrence B. de Graaf Outstanding Graduate Student award. His paper "Violence as the Voice of the People: Early Reformation Iconoclasm as Negotiation" won the 2010 Ric Miller Prize for Best European History article in *The Welebaethan* journal of history.

Commencement Speech

Hi. It's actually a little funny to me that I'm up here, and here's why. As an undergrad at the University of Texas, I was placed on scholastic probation and nearly kicked out for failing too many classes. That was after two years of majoring in, but not really studying, chemical engineering and pre-med in the hopes of guaranteeing my financial future. I changed my major

to something that I enjoyed, English literature, and ended up on the Dean's List for good grades my last four semesters.

As History majors, you probably don't need me to tell you that it helps to study what interests you. But based on my experience, I would encourage especially those of you graduating with your Bachelor's today—don't write off grad school just because your undergraduate career may have been less than stellar. If, as I was, you aren't sure about a Ph.D., a Master's is a good way to test the water and can be a solid stepping-stone to the next level. Feel free to work a few years before you get serious about it—but keep it in the back of your mind as a way not only to move up the pay scale but more importantly to become better at your job, to enrich your knowledge of the world, and simply to face and conquer a new challenge. Someone once told me that you're not old until you stop learning, and I for one don't plan to ever get old.

My thesis committee, Dr. Nancy Fitch, Dr. Joe Gonzalez from Liberal Studies, and particularly Dr. Gayle Brunelle, made my time here especially rewarding. I was a little intimidated at first by Dr. Brunelle because I had heard that she was tough. But it didn't take long to realize that she has an incredibly broad expertise and the ability and willingness to pass on as much of that expertise as students are willing to absorb. Now I'm convinced that tough professors are the best—they expect more of students because they expect and give more of themselves.

Lastly, I'd like to thank my wife, Monique, who was gracious beyond measure in forgiving and covering my shortcomings as a husband and father during the nights and weekends spent researching and writing. She and our two kids, Benjamin and Isabelle, never stop amazing me and supporting me with their unconditional love. Thank you.



Travis Patterson

Undergraduate, Psychology

Travis Patterson graduated Summa Cum Laude in May 2010 with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. During his undergraduate work, Travis conducted extensive research with Dr. Richard Lippa in the Psychology Department, which resulted in a publication. He has served continuously on both the University Curriculum Committee and Graduate Education Committee, and is also a member of the honor societies of Psi Chi and Phi Kappa Phi. Travis made the Dean's List every semester while enrolled at the university, and also received the Outstanding Undergraduate Award. He will be returning to Cal State Fullerton for the Fall 2010 semester to earn a Master of Arts in Psychology. After that, he plans to pursue a Ph.D in Quantitative Psychology and to conduct research on a possible cure for Alzheimer's disease.

Commencement Speech

As I stand here before you today, I look back and am reminded of my senior year in high school where I had a 1.8 GPA and was on the verge of not graduating. A few weeks before my supposed graduation, I was failing two classes, and my high school actually withheld my cap and gown until they received verification of my final grades. In the end, I was able to score high enough on my finals to walk with the rest of the class. Thankfully, the scare of not receiving my diploma, and the thoughts of where I may have ended up had I not graduated, enabled me to turn things around. At that point, I was determined to start fresh at Fullerton College with a newfound motivation to succeed. From that motivation, I was able to transfer to Cal State Fullerton with honors, and two busy years later, I find myself here speaking before all of you.

So why then, you might ask, do I mention all this? Well, when I compare the person I was during my first semester at Fullerton College with who I am today, I realize just how much the last few years have helped me to grow. Knowing this, I encourage each of you to reflect on your own college beginnings to see for yourselves just how much your education has shaped who you are. Though there may be few jobs out there to actually apply our new degrees to, the important thing is this. It doesn't matter if it took you four years to get here, or ten. What does matter is that you are here. You have risen to the challenges that a college education presents, and despite the current job market, the knowledge we have gained is something that no one can ever take away from us. I hope you all remember this as we leave here today. Do not be discouraged if you can't get that dream job you hoped to have right after graduating. Instead, keep in mind all that you have accomplished up to this point, and let that motivate you to go forward in whatever it is you choose to do next.

In closing, I would like to take a moment and thank those who helped me get to where I am today. Mom and Dad, without your encouragement and compassion over the years, I would have lost the motivation to see this day through long before actually doing so. Grandma, grandpa – the unconditional love you have shown me gave me the energy to never give up, and for that I am eternally grateful. Lastly, my thanks go out to Dr. Richard Lippa for his guidance, wisdom, and understanding. I would not be up here today had it not been for you. Thank you all and congratulations class of 2010.