



Katrina Lacerna
Undergraduate, Asian American Studies

Katrina Lacerna graduated this spring with a Bachelor's degree in Asian American Studies. While at Cal State Fullerton, she served as the Student Coordinator for the Multicultural Leadership Center's "Desserts and Dialogue" program. She will begin graduate school in the fall, and is enrolled at San Jose State University School of Library and Information Science. After obtaining her Master's, she hopes to work in a public institution and serve her community as a librarian.

Graduation Speech

We are living in strange, trying times. All around us we are faced with strife, be it economic hardship, ideological divisiveness, or global conflict. It is naïve and irresponsible to ignore these realities. But to think that these obstacles are insurmountable would be just as reckless a notion, for I know the ambition, conviction, and idealism imbued in my peers whom we are recognizing today.

I believe all the disciplines we are honoring at this ceremony share the commonality of a deep concern and compassion for humanity. There is the principal desire to learn about oneself, one's people and culture, but underlying that is the wish to connect with all others in a deep, honest, and meaningful way. It is because of this unwavering dedication to the collective good, that I am convinced my generation can overcome any barrier, no matter how overwhelming.

In such uncertain times we may be tempted to play it safe, to retreat into the familiar. But I believe such circumstances call for innovation and visionary thought. I thank the tireless members of the Asian American Studies department for instilling in their students principles of justice, equity, and respect not just for those in the Asian Pacific Islander community but for *all* people

I would particularly like to thank Dr. Thomas Fujita-Rony who served as an insightful, wise, and caring mentor. His guidance and support was invaluable in making my experience at Cal State Fullerton a success. He not only provided sound counsel and direction, but challenged me to grow as an intellectual.

Like many of the other graduates I would not have reached this juncture without the encouragement and care of family. I would like to thank Mommy, Daddy, Eric, Michael, Lola, and Danny for each teaching me about love, compassion, and sacrifice. Without them none of this would have been possible. They inspire me on a daily basis to do, think, and act better; if not for their unwavering support and unconditional love I would not have made it this far.

Admittedly, I began this speech on a dour note. Yet this occasion is a joyous one, a time of great celebration. I only remind my fellow graduates of the social responsibility we as educated individuals are obligated to take on. And I believe with all my heart that we are more than prepared and well-equipped to remedy these ills.

Thank you.