

Convocation address of: Dr. Yue-Man Yeung
Delivered at Western University, Hong Kong, 29 May 2016

President Chakma, Chancellor Cowin, Provost Deakin,
Vice-President Cole, Deans, Senior Administrators and faculty
members, fellow graduands, ladies and gentlemen:

It has given me tremendous pride and honour to be conferred an honorary doctorate degree today and to be speaking to you at this august ceremony. I wish to begin by congratulating my fellow graduands and their families for years of hard work and steadfast purpose before arriving at this memorable and special day. This is a day you and your family will cherish for many years to come. The efforts you and your family have invested in your career have paid off. For me, I would take this opportunity to thank members of my family who have come from Vancouver, Austin (Texas), Singapore, and, of course, Hong Kong for this convocation, along with many relatives and friends from here and elsewhere with their sincerest best wishes.

Exactly fifty years ago I obtained my Master's degree from Western but did not have the opportunity to attend in person the convocation in London, Ontario. You are therefore a lot more lucky today in being able to attend your convocation at home in Hong Kong. Indeed, the Western Hong Kong convocation has been held annually for more than a decade. This is a sign of positive change, of the effect of globalization and greater integration between Hong Kong and Canada, and other parts of the world. The world as we know now is much better connected and integrated than we used to know in the past. It is on this theme of a changing world and how as new graduates you should face up to it I wish to offer some thoughts.

In order to be better able to connect with what I am going to say about this changing world, let me choose three letters in the alphabet, S, A, W, to draw the essence from what I am going to say. S stands briefly for self, meaning to prepare yourself for your

future, you have to begin to prepare yourself as an individual. Self-preparation is a life-long process, beginning the moment you were born. One has to train one's mind, body and soul in ways that continue to self-improve and self-tune as time gets on. For example, for a university graduate like you, we expect biliteracy and trilingualism, that is to be able to switch between English and Chinese in both written and spoken forms with ease. This is a hallmark of success of many Hong Kong Chinese over the years in Hong Kong and abroad. Self-evaluation is something you have to look upon yourself every now and then during your career. You have to find out what you are good at and particularly at critical points you have to decide whether you switch jobs or persist in what you have been doing. Turning points in one's career are inevitable but one has to balance the pros and cons and make a wise decision. Finally, in this rapidly changing world, self-learning is a life-long and uninterrupted process. You have to recognize that what you have learned at the university will become obsolete within a few years. Learning by yourself is a continuous process if you want to keep abreast of the time.

The second letter, A, introduces Asia, the obvious locus of accelerating development in the present century. China and India have led the dynamic and diversified continent to greater heights of global development. Before the onset of the Industrial Revolution, China and India were each responsible for 22-25% of the world's economic output. In 1600 Indian economic output accounted for 22.5% of the world, as opposed to Britain's 1.8%. China is now the world's second largest economy after the United States and is poised to overtake the leader in a decade or so. In fact, as measured by PPP, the GDP as measured by the most reliable sources, China, the USA and India are the first three lead countries in the world. The trends suggest strongly that Asia led by China and India will continue to dominate the world in economic growth. They will be assisted by Japan, Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and other tigers. As you might recall, the 19th century was largely known as the British Century, and the 20th Century was the American Century. It is therefore not farfetched to anticipate the present century as the Asian

Century.

Moving to the last letter, W, it stands for World, highlighting a world of rapid economic and technological changes. After the first industrial revolution premised on water power and steam, the second on mass production, the assembly line and electricity, and the third on computers and automation, the fourth industrial revolution based on cyber physical systems is rapidly coming on us. Yet globalization has led to the worldwide acceleration of economic inequality. The sustained downturn in oil prices have created wide-ranging impacts and can devastate already fragile and beleaguered middle classes. Despite their contribution to our lives, information technology and social communication can have their disruptive impact on societies. And most political institutions are proving slow-footed and unresponsive in the face of rapidly changing global events. These are some of the macro changes that globalization and digitization have brought upon humankind. As graduates with your heart in global concerns and trends, you should pay particular attention to rapidly changing issues at local, regional and global levels.

Before I conclude, I wish to take this opportunity to thank some individuals who have helped shaped my career, with particular reference to Western University. Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the guidance and advice of my former supervisor, Professor Jim Simmons had given me when I was under his care. He was the person who pointed the way for my doctoral studies at the University of Chicago after Western. Secondly, my parents were the guiding light for my studies during my career as a student, with my father as a role model. Thirdly, my wife Ameda had been a staunch supporter in my graduate studies at long distance and later together at Chicago. I would also like to thank my alma mater Western again, for recognizing my career and for the education I received to be a truly global citizen and to devote my work that covered many countries in the world. I am glad to say that our graduands today are similarly well prepared.

For all graduands at this convocation, I hope that the message

you will bring home is the need to be alert to the changing world in which Hong Kong, Canada and Western are embedded. I hope you can easily recall the message summarized by the word SAW. I also hope that you SAW the future in a general but connected way. Whatever is your next calling, I wish our graduates a bright future and success to your endeavours. For our graduates and others who are here, I wish you a wonderful day and many happy memories to bring home.

Thank you.

Yue-man Yeung