Good afternoon Rector...Vice Rector...esteemed faculty, staff, and students...honored guests...proud family members...and, most especially, our outstanding graduates.

I am delighted to be here with you today...to recognize your scholarship and celebrate your success...as together we mark the 20th anniversary of UMUC’s exceedingly valuable partnership with Irkutsk State University and The Baikal International Business School.

And I speak for everyone at my university when I say that it has been our distinct pleasure to help you reach this remarkable milestone in your lives.

A commencement ceremony is not an insignificant event. It is a truly special rite of passage...worthy of both tremendous joy and thoughtful contemplation.

It is a day of fond farewells and new beginnings...of great memories and even greater expectations.

And, of course, it is a day that marks the successful conclusion of an intellectually challenging journey to academic excellence and reward.

But commencement is, above all, a time to reflect on the many ways you will now use what you have learned to leave your mark on this world...not only as principled business leaders, but also as good global citizens.

Whereas the world was once shaped by nationalism, it is now being driven by globalism. And university partnerships such as this one are certainly exemplary of that trend.
As the largest public university in the United States and a truly global community of scholars, UMUC has a long and venerable history of serving students of all ages and nationalities…cultural and linguistic traditions…in many parts of the world.

With divisions on four continents, classrooms in 28 countries, and an award-winning virtual campus…we have made collaborative academic efforts such as this one an important part of our university’s mission.

Indeed by reaching beyond borders and across cultures to study with faculty members and fellow students from UMUC…the world has become your classroom. And you have learned to negotiate its multi-dimensional landscape…across a vast spectrum of values, ideas, and experiences.

Such extraordinary exchange has helped give birth to a new phenomenon…an emerging sense of global citizenship…which will serve you well as 21st century business knowledge leaders working in today’s increasingly interconnected global marketplace.

Having earned business degrees from two outstanding universities, you are now capable of running successful and innovative companies both here at home and abroad. And as good global citizens, you will undoubtedly promote a workplace that appreciates new perspectives and values cultural differences. You will also be prepared to look past the immediate and beyond the local…in considering the long view and the broad perspective…an essential attribute, to be sure, in today's interdependent world.

And of course, you will understand the power of civic responsibility and exercise it regularly…to connect the dots between global commitment and local action…in the service of common interest.

Today is your day….a day to consider your good fortune and celebrate what you have worked so hard to achieve. But tomorrow you will return to the real world of real choices…destined to become good global citizens in your own right…at a time when the challenges are indeed enormous and certainly without precedent.

Still you will use what you have learned to, in some way, transform your communities…your companies…your country…and your world. Knowing that as global ambassadors of the future, your ultimate legacy will depend on it.

Congratulations on this outstanding achievement!!
Will the candidates for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees please rise?

Under the authority granted by the State of Maryland to the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland, and by that Board delegated to me, I hereby confer upon you the degree of Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science, as in each case is appropriate, with all of the rights, privileges, and responsibilities thereto appertaining.

I now welcome all of you to UMUC’s worldwide circle of distinguished alumni. And let me say without hesitation that each of you has most definitely earned this great honor.

In keeping with commencement tradition and on the count of three – and not one second before that – please move your tassels from the right side to the left side of your caps.

ONE. TWO. THREE. CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS of 2011!

On behalf of the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Maryland University College, I am indeed proud of your accomplishments and wish you tremendous personal and professional success in the years to come!

Thank you,

Susan C. Aldridge, Ph.D.
President
University of Maryland University College
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