

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO RECORD



Volume 40, Number 1

December 1, 2005

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
CHICAGO RECORD
5710 South Woodlawn Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637

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Chicago, Illinois
Permit No. 8070

The Aims of Education Address “How About Becoming a Poet?”

By Andreas Glaeser

September 22, 2005

You have all come here to get what is called “an education.” Taken seriously, education is self-transformation. If *you* are serious, you have come here to become—to become something, or better, to become someone. If this is so, then how about becoming a poet? This is not a question; it is a serious invitation! And it is not just an invitation to the few of you who may, in the end, publish what we might agree to call poetry, but it is an invitation to all of you! For I believe there are poets in every human pursuit—in every profession, including law, medicine, and business. And I don’t mean physicians or lawyers or businesswomen who write poetry on the side. I mean people who are poets as surgeons, as judges, as managers. Let me explain.

For several reasons, I found it rather hard to write this speech. Besides being intimidated by an awe-inspiring list of predecessors, I became quickly beset by a curious nausea of language. Driven by my own research about the ways in which people come to support or oppose dictatorial governments, I wanted to speak about the relationship between liberal education, pluralism, freedom, critical thinking, creativity, and democracy. This is a big subject. Many people have written and talked about it before. In fact, this particular set of terms seems to be what one nearly always talks about once the topic of liberal education is broached. So it feels—unfortunately—rather tired. Worse, the virtues of “liberal education” are frequently extolled, while a focus on skill building and achievement testing makes education continuously less liberal. “Critical thinking” is often claimed by experts, by the mass media, or by political groups while they are more or less consciously doing public relations work for agencies on whose sponsorship they are dependent. “Creativity” has become a catchword abundantly used in marketing, as well as in job-axing corporate restructuring efforts. “Freedom” and “democracy” are the stock in trade used in political speeches to justify foreign and domestic policies which end up undermining rather than furthering freedom and democracy.

As I got depressed about the depreciated meanings of the very terms around which I wanted to structure this talk, I had an idea. It dawned on me that, broadly conceived, the topic of meaning loss and meaning making provided an excellent vantage point from which I could analyze the relationship between liberal education, critical thinking, freedom, creativity, and democracy. I began to hope that this speech could somehow contribute to the renewal of these very concepts. So, here I am. Before I go any further, let me clarify two central terms of my speech. I have so far spoken about words. Yet the problem of meaning loss and meaning regeneration also affects the combination of words into jokes, stories, or theories, as well as gestures, formulas, graphs, pictures, sculptures, etc. In other words, it affects all of our symbolizations. And this, then, is the first central term of my speech. The second central term is meaning which I understand as the power of symbolizations to orient us in the world. They do so by orchestrating our interactions; conveying knowledge;

exuding beauty; triggering insight; or assisting us in planning, remembering, or articulating happiness and suffering. Here is the plan for the next fifty minutes: I will begin the first part of this speech discussing the question of why the whole topic of *making* meaningful symbolizations should be of relevance to *you*. I will then go considerably deeper into this question by exploring how symbols come to have the power to mean anything at all. I will close the first part with a consideration of *how* meanings are lost and why they must be renewed. The whole second part of my speech will then turn toward what I take to be the key idea of liberal education and how, thus understood, it can further your freedom and creativity as artisans of meaningful symbolizations. Albert Einstein’s special theory of relativity will serve me as an illustrative example.

I

It may sound strange at first, but most of you, no matter what you will eventually do for a living, will find that producing symbolizations is a central aspect of your work. The case is obvious for artists, scientists, journalists, engineers, and architects. Thinking more broadly, you will find, however, that coming up with a diagnosis in medicine or clinical psychology, that writing a report on the current situation and future development of a particular company or market, that drafting a contract, policy, or law which will actually work is just that: an act of artful symbolization. However, not only your excellence as a professional but also the quality of your life in general is vitally dependent on the quality of the symbolizations you will craft. As we all know, the good life is an examined life. For that purpose, you will have to find fitting descriptions in the world which also connect your past with your present and your future. Even our relationships with other human beings require suitable words for their upkeep and the resolution of inevitable crises.

The Power of Symbols

If making meaningful symbolizations is so relevant, we might really benefit from an understanding of *how* symbols come to orient us. What is the power of symbols? Interestingly, in our everyday appreciations of symbols we oscillate between two extremes. On the one hand we mock them, for example, by calling them “mere words.” On the other hand we venerate them as first causes of existence, for example, in the Gospel according to John or the U.S. Constitution. How can we make sense of this?

In using symbols, we manage to “wrap” a part of the unwieldy manifold world as it appears to us into easily manipulable tokens. However, the wrapping relationship is complex. What precisely gets wrapped, even in one and the same symbolization, may vary considerably with context. For example, your answer “I will” to the question “Would somebody please close the window?” wraps only a very limited commitment on your part into your words. Yet, the very same words “I will” wrap a lot more when you are replying to the question “Will you marry me?”

Conventions and context markers help us to sort out exactly what symbols wrap in a particular instance. We know from stories, movies, and countless conversations that a marriage proposal is about committing a whole person, and we often set up or seize a context to convey that: after an extraordinarily delightful candlelit dinner with sparkling conversation, we might fall on our knees to break out into verse—or so goes one of the easily recognizable scripts. In spite of the help of these context markers, however, what precisely gets wrapped in an instance of symbol use remains principally open to negotiation and exploration. Many of our discussions and arguments aim to fix the content of wrappings. When you said to your father you would “help in the kitchen” he may have wondered “Does this *only* include doing the dishes, or does this *also* pertain to peeling the potatoes?” It is important to note that this may have been unclear to both of you. Your father’s question urges a dual clarification then: to him and to yourself. His intervention alters your consciousness, however minutely.

What you will say next about the meaning of your words will, in all likelihood, have little to do with what you had in mind when you made your initial offer. What is at stake is not the past but the rest of the evening. Your reply may depend on your ethics, the strength of your ego, your history with your father, the means of conflict resolution available to you, etc. Moreover, what you might be willing to accept retrospectively as having been included in your initial offer may depend less on *what* and more on *how* your father said it. The aesthetic quality of the wrapping contributes a lot to how it will be received. In sum, then, symbols do not simply wrap what is there. Wrapping is a dynamic, even a *generative*, operation undertaken from within a life lived in a particular way, with particular projects in mind.

Much of the power of symbols resides in the fact that wrapping and wrapped exist in different forms. The word “sun” is but a small orderly trace of ink on paper or a set of brief air modulations; yet, what it wraps is in many uses a lot bigger, hotter, and shinier—it exists in an entirely different domain. To be useful, symbols *must* be more approachable, manipulable, or transportable than what they wrap. Only then can they perform their greatest feat: making present that which is absent. A map brings distant lands to us, a statue evokes a goddess which we are unlikely to behold in this life, a string of words brings back a long-gone historical event. The ability to present the absent deeply transforms the way we exist. By invoking for us now what no longer is or what only later will be, symbols make us into temporal beings with a future and a past. By calling up locations where we are currently not, they give our actions spatial depths beyond earshot and eyesight. By extending our here and now into there and then, symbols allow us to plan and to remember.

Now, remember your old Lego blocks. What makes them such a wonderful toy is that they come in different shapes and colors which can be combined in interesting ways. When you were still quite young, you were happy to mount them in any way your hands could manage. You

might have named the results of your efforts something, e.g., “house for Mousey.” You might have even interacted with what you had built as if it was what you called it, even though the structure had no obvious resemblance to anything you would now call “house.”

As you became older, you undoubtedly endeavored to build either something you had seen or something you had mentally preconceived. For example, you might have built a Lego house resembling the house in which you lived. Doing so required not only increased skills of observation but also an increased understanding of what might be called the “logic” of Lego blocks: a growing mastery of the ways in which they can be assembled to produce particular kinds of visual effects. To become good at this, you had to take pleasure in playing with your Legos without too much concern for what it was that you might have wanted to build. You merely took pleasure in the logic of Lego blocks and its inherent possibilities.

Moreover, the logic of building with Lego blocks made you look at the house in which you lived with “different eyes” and think about it in new ways. If you were a Lego aficionado (like me), you learned to see and think Lego: you discovered aspects of your house you had not noticed before; and you asked questions about it, for example, regarding its statics, which you would never have dreamt of asking before. In fact, you always built more than you saw; and seeing with your contraption you also became aware that you always built less than actually existed. In the end, you might have become so swept up in Lego’s very logic that it began to feed your imagination to build things never before beheld by any human’s eyes or mind. You might have begun to make Lego fiction, enjoying it for its own sake.

Sophisticated symbol systems, that is, languages, resemble Lego blocks in significant ways. They differentiate *types* of symbols—for example, objects, relations, and qualifiers—which play different roles in the wrapping operation. And like Lego blocks, languages operate with logics of combination—which, in ordinary languages, we call grammar. Like Legos, then, they are suitable for sophisticated play. In fact, languages are the most wonderful play-sets we human beings have come up with. They easily put your old Lego blocks to shame. With different types of symbols at hand, we can build up big and complex edifices—super wrappings—like stories, formal proofs, or theories. And in language use, much as in Lego construction, something fascinating happens in the process of play. We simply forget that our symbols wrap anything at all. We begin to treat them as self-wrapping entities which derive their meaning solely from their relationships with one another. This is the step from using the figure three as a wrapping of three apples or oranges to taking it as a pure number among other numbers. We all set out on this path when we stopped calculating with our fingers; we went all the way when we became comfortable with algebra.

Through sheer play with symbols, we get self-contained universes of symbols—a world beyond immediate perception. All

languages enjoy significant degrees of autonomy from the world. This affects our lives profoundly. We now have a medium in which we can pretend, work through alternative possibilities, and build counterfactuals and hypothesis; we get imagination, fiction, and fantasy. Hence, we can step out of the maelstrom of life into the medium of symbols to ponder the world. Without symbols, there would be no reflexive thought—no learning outside of an immediate context of action.

However, there are also problems with symbolic autonomy. If the world does not effectively constrain our symbolic play with its immense, if not infinite, combinatorial possibilities, then how do we make sure our play isn't just fun but also meaningful in our relationship with the world? In part, the answer is culture—complex traditions of symbol use into which we get socialized by learning a language. These cultures of symbol use often have a proven track record of producing meaningful combinations. The modes of scientific symbolization are amongst them. Nevertheless after some intensive play, we are faced with questions: "So what? Does our symbolization wrap anything at all? Do our symbols have the power to orient us?" With languages, those questions are never far away. This uncertainty is the source of our exasperation with language. It is a simple consequence of the fact that wrappings and what they wrap are different after all. Therefore wherever there are symbols, there is the possibility of doubt.

Of course the hope is always that when we put symbols to use in the world they do wrap and, therefore, organize it in such a way that we all of a sudden understand how it all hangs together. If it seems that way, we want to shout, "Eureka! I got it!" Through the use of symbols, the world—that unwieldy manifold—may suddenly look orderly, transparent, and navigable. Making meaning, that is gaining orientation through the use of our symbols, is exciting and empowering. Symbolic play brings the gift of insight and with it agency, which is the capacity for action. And this is the source of our enthusiasm for symbols as first movers. Ironically, then, the possibility of doubt, insight, and agency are three sides of the same symbolic coin.

Finally, shared symbols are literally the ground upon which we meet other human beings. They allow us to *share* in the presentation of the absent. They enable us to blend our imaginations, to communicate our thoughts, feelings, and bodily states. And thus, they make possible the coordination of our actions. Coordinated action, finally, creates the institutions which make up the fabric of our social life. Precisely because our symbols inform our actions and our actions make and break our institutions, the way we symbolize our natural environment, the family, and the state is a crucial component of what they *are*.

In sum then, symbols attain their power to orient us in the world because as wrappers they can make present what is absent, turning us into extended spatio-temporal beings; as a medium that is autonomous of the world and in which we can therefore play, they lend us the power to think and imagine; and as facilitators of social interaction, they enable us to form institutions.

Symbols are integral to the ways in which we exist.

How Symbolizations Lose Their Meaning

If this is so, how is it possible to lose meanings that we once possessed? Asked differently: how do symbols lose their power? For a beginning, it is useful to identify three classes of common meaning loss. The first class comprises forms of symbol *use* which destroy meaning. *Overuse* occurs when too many different phenomena are wrapped in the same terms. If everything is said to be "cool," nothing really is because the word "cool" loses its power to differentiate. *Overuse* destroys resolution. *Ill-use* occurs through the persistent employment of symbols in situations where it becomes rather obvious that they are misleading. If people persistently refer to other people as their "friend" while never treating them accordingly, one has reason to doubt that they mean what they say or that what they say means what we think it does. *Ill-use* may open an eerie gap between our symbols and our experience. My malaise in preparing this speech was prompted by the overuse and ill-use of the very terms—liberal education, pluralism, freedom, critical thinking, creativity, and democracy—I had picked as its organizing themes.

A second, very prevalent, class of meaning loss is generated by changing circumstances. Your parents' pre-9/11 map of lower Manhattan is in many ways entirely useless now. This shows that symbolizations may lose their meaning if their material, social, spatial, and temporal contexts change significantly.

A third class of meaning loss comes about because our interests, values, and ways of going about our lives change. You may soon find yourself abandoning your high school lingo with its special terms for teachers, fellow students, or subjects. If so, the reason may not only be that this lingo is specific to your high school and therefore unintelligible at this university. Instead, you may find that the ways in which you approach teachers, classes, and learning have changed so much that the old slang somehow "does not cut it anymore."

Now consider this: If our uses of symbols inform our actions and our actions change us and the world in intended and unintended ways, we unwittingly but inevitably outgrow the meanings of our symbols in due course. Meaning loss is an ordinary fact of life.

After what I have just said about the power of symbols, meaning loss is associated with losses in our spatio-temporal orientation, our ability to plan and remember, our imagination, our ability to cooperate with others, our sense of who we are, and, finally, our ability to act. Hence, meaning loss is a problem. This does not mean that all losses of meaning are bad. Quite the contrary, sometimes they are outright refreshing because they open up new possibilities for being. Luckily, symbols can be recharged with meaning. An important first step toward their regeneration is the explicit contestation of their old wrapping claims. Yet, contestation needs to be followed up with an alternative. This is so because people prefer living with depreciated meaning to living with no meaning at all. Therefore, we need to find ways to either

make new symbolizations or to rewrap the old ones in such a way that they can orient us once more in the world.

Poetry was arguably the first human practice of making or remaking symbols in a self-conscious fashion, that is, in a way which is cognizant of the *process of making* itself. In fact, in ancient Greek the verb *poiein* means "to make or create." Seen in this way, poetry can be understood as the art of making meaning, the art of charging worn symbols with new meanings, or the art of inventing new symbolizations which again give us an orientation in the world. Let us call the practitioners of this art "poets." Would it not be marvelous if you could learn to be a poet?

II

Orientation week is over. Now you have a pretty good idea of the possibilities and requirements of the program of study awaiting you in the next four years. Among the reasons for which you have chosen to come to the University of Chicago, our dedication to general education embodied in the common core may have had low priority or may not have figured at all. You may even have doubts about the practical relevance of such a course of study. In fact, you may feel that general education is something of a waste of time and resources because you already have a pretty good idea in which direction you want to take your education. However, it is precisely the idea of exercising yourself in a set of quite diverse fields of study which lies at the heart of what we call a liberal education. I would like to give this formulation precision and direction by claiming that *it is the key task of a liberal education to acquaint you in sufficient depth with a truly diverse set of modes of symbolic production.*

Modes of Symbolic Production

From what I have said in the first part of this speech, you might already have a pretty good idea of what I mean by "mode of symbolic production." No matter what kind of scholars we are—whether we study Verdi's operas, whether we investigate state building processes, whether we research the genome of some living being—in the end, we do write. Ultimately, scholars at major research universities live *for* and *of* writing. We strive to produce deeply meaningful symbolizations of some aspect of the world. A simple cross-sampling of our writing will tell you quickly, however, that we write in startlingly different styles. Even more astonishing are the radically different paths we follow, the research we undertake for coming up with these writings. A mode of symbolic production is a typical path leading to a particular kind and style of writing. These modes are practiced in workshops. Some of these workshops are organized in thoroughly artisanal fashion. They comprise a single scholar drawing on occasional support from research assistants, librarians, archivists, or local informants. Others are huge operations with a factory-size machine park, a professional management and support staff, and a number of collaborating principal investigators with scores of research assistants. Seen this way, large research universities are associations of symbol workshops that

practice the most diverse modes of symbolic production you are likely to find anywhere in the world. Behind the stern propriety of our neo-Gothic façades lies hidden a most colorful and noisy bazaar of symbol makers who are chiseling, weaving, carving, punching, and assembling some of the finest symbolic wares the world has to offer.

In part, our diversity hails from the different questions we ask about the world. These questions do not simply originate in an individual person's curiosity, however. Instead, they transpire from traditions of inquiry which interlace ways of posing questions with ways of answering them. In terms of this talk, they interlace the identification of meaning deficiencies with ways of meaning making. These traditions are accessible through canonized publications and organized instruction. And this is precisely where the process of producing symbolizations typically begins: with already existing writings that are either so rich that their meanings can be extended into uncharted territory or that are not quite or no longer rich enough for the purpose at hand so that their meanings need to be complemented or renewed.

And thus, we begin to formulate more questions and tentative answers. Being a scholar requires addressing these questions systematically by producing encounters with the world. For some kinds of questions, that which is sought in encounters are yet more symbolizations, say, theories or art objects; for others, they are pieces of nature, for example, elementary particles or fossils; for yet others, they are living people or the traces they have left behind in the form of garbage, ruins, or government records. These encounters are typically organized in structured ways called methods. Again, the differences are impressive. Some of us grab a laptop, a tape recorder, and whatever else seems necessary to live for a year among some group of people. Others design, organize, and conduct surveys presented to thousands of interviewees. Some of us help to build and operate huge machines to first isolate and then collide elementary particles at high speed. Yet others watch movies, painstakingly following the position and movement of the camera and the composition of the image in every scene.

What we bring back from these encounters are intermediate symbolizations often called "raw data": field notes and audiotapes; filled-in questionnaires; experimental protocols and detector plates; and tables listing movie scenes, camera movements, light effects, and color compositions. Central pieces of the wrapping work are accomplished in these encounters by describing and/or measuring carefully selected samples of that aspect of the world that is of interest to us. What follows, then, are various stages of autonomous symbolic play. Raw data are subjected to transformations which code and categorize them for easy access and further analysis. In consequence, we obtain coded transcripts, descriptive statistics, graphs, coded tables—all designating types of phenomena or variables. On these then, some further analysis may be performed to make visible connections between categories or variables. We thus get models formulated in words, equations, or diagrams. The final

symbolization, the publication, minimally combines an interpretation of the model backed up with data from various stages of analysis that are presented as evidence. Thrown in are more or less detailed remarks about the research process, including a list of the literature consulted, methods and theories employed, and the data sources used.

In this highly stylized sketch of five stages as they might occur in four sample modes, I have left out many aspects which dull and spice the experience: the writing of grant proposals; the critical discussions with colleagues, students, and friends; the presentations in the classroom, as well as at conferences and invited lectures; the competition, and sometimes the feud, with rival scholars; and the extensive mullings under hot showers or during breezy walks on the beach. I have also failed to mention the emotional drama and anti-drama of it: the sublime peaks of insight and the valleys of despair; the boring grind of the day-to-day work as we plow through it.

The linearity I have insinuated only occurs in stretches of the symbol making process. Typically, each move is undertaken with the others in view. The question, for example, is more often than not posed with an imaginary answer in mind; data are collected to feed a particular analytical machinery, which, in turn, is chosen for the kinds of models it may support. The actual work also loops forward and backward between questions, encounters, categorizations, analysis, and model building. Unexpected developments, surprising raw data, or unanticipated results of analysis may necessitate iterations of the process. This forth and back shows how wrappings emerge in the interaction between autonomous symbolic play and encounters.

In sum: modes of symbolic production are techniques of wrapping the world into symbols. They are characterized by a complex movement between (1) questions posed within a tradition of inquiry, which informs what is selected as an interesting question, what can be used as a suitable method, what counts as an acceptable answer, and as a persuasive style of presentation; and (2) a process involving organized encounters with the world—particular forms of symbolic play using specific forms of categorization, analysis, and model building which pose “so-what?” questions in their own characteristic ways. They are lived in workshops which are structured by social arrangements characteristic for the mode. All modes of symbolic production aspire to be truly poetic. In that sense, good scholarship—good science—is poetry. It is a poetry you can learn at this university because—in comparison with other modes of symbolic production—the scholarly ones tend to be relatively reflective on the process itself.

Freedom

Why would a liberal education, the deeper acquaintance with a number of diverse modes of symbolic production, enhance our freedom? The first answer is that by moving between different modes, as well as by studying their history, we begin to understand that all symbolization is undertaken from a particular perspective. In the grand scheme of things, no symbolization

is necessary—even if, for the moment, it may feel inevitable. Given other questions, other forms of encounters, and symbolic play, they might have come out differently. Symbolizations have no dignity other than their power to orient us in the world. Every one of them is better or worse for answering some questions, while remaining mute on others; they are better as guides for doing certain kinds of things, while remaining irrelevant for others. Every mode of symbolic production is, by design, poetic in a certain domain only. That means, however, that the variety of modes we will need to symbolize the world adequately is bound to grow with the breadth of our interests and actual pursuits. Attuned to the power and limits of each mode, we arm ourselves against the temptation to reduce all modes to one. Even more importantly, however, the awareness of a choice of modes will liberate us to play not only within but also across modes whenever we get stuck with any particular way of wrapping the world. Accordingly, a liberal education may free us from the illusion that any one symbolization is *necessary*, while also making us more humble and more playful.

The second answer follows directly from the power of symbols to orient us in the world in connection with the limited meaning making capacity of individual modes. The more modes we know, the more we can open ourselves to the world. Every mode embodies a way of thinking, a way of perceiving, a way of imagining, a way of being and acting in the world. You may drive or ski differently once you know physics; you may appreciate the light streaming through the window of your room more acutely once you have studied Vermeer’s paintings; you may look with more curiosity upon your own emotional outbursts once you know psychoanalysis. Thus a liberal education may awaken your desire for deeper and broader experiences.

The third answer is that the knowledge of diverse modes provides us with a repertoire of techniques of constructive criticism. The research traditions underlying each mode concentrate on a limited range of possible critical moves at the expense of others. It can, therefore, be illuminating to exploit the critical techniques cultivated in one mode to use them in others. Whole schools of scholarly work can be created by such critical crossovers. Thus were created, for example, psychoanalytical literary criticism and constructivist physics. More importantly, however, the movement between modes leads us to ask more fundamental questions about the unspoken assumptions underlying each mode. Only in contrast to other modes do they become clearly visible. Thus, a liberal education may train us in the arts of constructive critique—which is a bit like learning karate, jujitsu, and aikido all at once.

Critique is an indispensable component of democratic citizenship because politics is strewn with claims about the world which cry out for interrogation. In response to at least the more important claims, we would want to ask: well, *how* do you know? From the quality of the questions asked and by the quality of the answers given to this question, we learn a great deal about how serious people are about their citizenship and how seriously a government takes

them as citizens. Of course it is an illusion to assume that we could possibly check all political claim making ourselves. Instead, we should demand an interlocking system of independent institutions which is not only capable of critiquing the entire process leading to a particular symbolization but which *must* also be able to produce credible alternatives. Checks and balances of *power* are fine to rectify errors retrospectively; only checks and balances on symbolic production create even a chance to prevent the commitment of major errors in the first place.

In sum, freedom has four components: the relief from necessity, the curiosity about and desire for deeper and broader experiences, the ability to critique and judge alternatives, and, finally, the courage to commit on reasonable grounds. And I have not yet spoken of that last part. After we have come to know a wider range of modes of symbolic production in some depth, we should know all the better why we prefer the one over the other for a particular issue at hand. Our choice is not made for lack of alternatives or out of sheer ignorance but for good reasons. Liberal education, thus, may enable us to make reasoned commitments to a mode of symbolic production for a given purpose.

Creativity

I said earlier that our symbolizations lose their meaning as a matter of course, and that we then need to either rewrap them or make new ones or both. Such rejuvenation of our symbolic work requires a lot of ingenuity and creativity. If this is the case, then how could we enable ourselves to be creative symbolizers? The precondition for creativity is the kind of freedom I have just described. The relief from necessity reminds us that we can do something; the desire for deeper or broader experiences furnishes us with a motive to act; the ability to critique and judge provide us with a road map for how to set to work; and our willingness to commit enables us to stick with it. The exposure to a variety of modes of symbolic production, finally, supplies us with a repertoire of ways to make meaning. Variety is important because, as creativity research has consistently shown, novel insight frequently occurs by transferring the wrapping techniques and forms of symbolic play from one domain to another. We call such transfers metaphors. Let us look at a concrete example of a creative leap enabled by metaphor.

This year, we are celebrating the centenary of Albert Einstein’s *annum mirabilis*. Between February and September 1905, Einstein wrote a pentad of papers out of which three had a revolutionary impact on the development of physics. Most famously, in the fourth paper finished in June, the twenty-six-year-old Einstein proposed the special theory of relativity. In it, he takes three decisive turns. First, he posits that, contrary to the then still regnant Newtonian assumptions, the universe does not have an absolute spatial or temporal orientation. Instead, measurements of lengths and of time are necessarily relative to an observer within an inertial system. The second turn is closely connected. If space and time are relative to a framework of observation, they have no meaning outside

of a clear measurement concept. Finally, in the third and perhaps most surprising turn, Einstein posits that light moves with the same constant speed no matter how the observer moves relative to the source of light. The postulate of a constant speed of light in conjunction with the quantum characteristics of light which Einstein had described in the March paper made sense of a number of seemingly odd experimental results on the basis of a unified theory. Other physicists, therefore, had a harder time defending the existence of an “ether,” that peculiar substance that was postulated by nineteenth-century physicists as permeating the entire universe in order to account for the wave characteristics of light. Put in the lingo of the modes of symbolic production, Einstein has suggested nothing less than a rewrapping of three central and old symbols: “time,” “space,” and “light.” He was successful because he did not merely critique the old wrappings. He offered an alternative!

In the first part of this speech, I have spoken about the generativity of symbols. By that I meant to emphasize that symbols do not simply capture what we had already known before. Instead, I said, their relation to what they wrap is typically open to further exploration and negotiation. Through a very simple example from the domestic division of labor, I tried to alert you to the fact that symbolizations produce surprises in this way. Einstein’s theory of special relativity is a good example. Einstein himself used it as a stepping-stone for his general theory of relativity published a good decade later. Even more interestingly, other physicists drew conclusions about what precisely he had wrapped which Einstein was not ready to follow to the end of his life.

How could Einstein come up with the theory of relativity? First, it is important to understand that throughout his life Einstein worked from a fundamental belief about the nature of nature which he did not derive from physics. Instead, it had deep roots in his ongoing studies in the *philosophy* of nature and in his spirituality. He was convinced that nature is governed by simple, all-pervasive, economical, and aesthetically appealing principles. For Einstein, nature was materialized reason, an imminent God. In all likelihood, he gleaned this understanding of matter from his readings of enlightenment philosophy, Spinoza above all. These readings date back well into his high school years, and they were continued throughout his studies in Zürich and among a circle of friends during his years as a patent officer in Bern. On the basis of his beliefs about nature, he felt that asymmetries in the explanation of natural phenomena were intolerable. One such asymmetry marred for Einstein the theory of electrodynamics, which was widely considered the crowning achievement of nineteenth-century physics. Maxwell, its finishing architect, offered two discrepant accounts of how a magnet rotating in a coil—or a coil rotating around a magnet—produces an electric current. Such asymmetries, along with seemingly inexplicable experimental results, offended Einstein’s spiritual-aesthetic sensibilities, thus motivating his work. Philosophy also influenced the way he found his solutions;

he was convinced that such problems could only be resolved on the basis of principles of a higher generality. And this is what he set out to do—*more geometrico*.

As far as the relativity of time and space is concerned, Einstein was greatly influenced by more than the philosophical writings of Hume, Mach, and Poincaré. Clock synchronization, the centerpiece of Einstein's concept of time, was a prevalent engineering concern in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Einstein himself had evaluated several patents offering solutions to this problem. His emphasis on measurement procedure was also inspired as much by philosophy as by his nitty-gritty work as a patent officer with its emphasis on the demonstrability of claimed effects. Finally, it bears mentioning that during his high school years in Munich, Einstein was an avid reader of popular science books which made much use of imaginary rides, for example, on light waves. This form of imagination was constantly employed by Einstein as a thinking tool.

Einstein's theory emerged, then, in the interstices between various modes of symbolic production. His fundamental motivating assumptions are metaphysical in style. His mode of reasoning is hypothetical-deductive, in the manner of philosophy or mathematics, which is, in addition, shot through with entirely (science-) fictional examples that are often somewhat shamefacedly called "thought experiments." Yet he employs this reasoning to make sense of inductively, that is, experimentally generated puzzles which have offended his spiritual-aesthetic assumptions. Finally, he mingles engineering sensibilities about measurement and demonstrability with those of positivist philosophy to inform his formulations of concepts. Einstein's genius is one of carrying over modes of symbolic production from one domain to another, and connecting them to a problem which he studied with great perseverance. His ingenuity is based on finding and focusing several metaphors on one problem.

Einstein worked and thought for years about a related set of problems. And he did so in close collaboration with others—with a few good friends, and, especially, with his wife. According to his own account, the very breakthrough emerged after a full day of discussions with an old friend. Two aspects of this story strike me as important. Symbolization needs to be done and redone with others who affirm us, challenge us, and offer us a space in which we can play with our symbolizations with almost no risks to our material well-being or social status. Yet, the creative leap occurs in seclusion from others, in the silent dialogue of a self within itself. Then, Einstein was a liminal person—someone who was socially located at the boundary between different worlds. Outside of a traditional university context, he could take his work where he, not his professors, wanted to go. He lived in Switzerland as a German; a Swabian, he grew up among Bavarians; among Swabians, he was a Jew; and among Jews, he was secular. Einstein was an expert in living in the spaces between worlds; in fact, he clearly came to relish it as a liberating opportunity.

Let me draw a final lesson from this example. Diverse modes of symbolic produc-

tion are not just characteristic of various academic fields, but they are constitutive of religions and cultures. Luckily, a top international research university such as this one attracts students from all over the world, not only from most walks of society in the United States. As a bazaar of symbol workshops, such a university is surrounded by residential quarters that are rich in diverse symbol-making traditions. They are yours to explore with as much interest and intensity as the academic modes of symbolic production. Learning about them is just as revealing. Clearly you could get by in these quarters using the generally accepted lingua franca of the place: English. But you would get only so far in understanding other cultures without learning their prime vehicle of symbolization: their language. Learning a language which does not share the fundamental structural characteristics of your own is an especially eye-opening experience for anybody interested in how differently we can wrap the world. For that reason alone, a liberal education in the sense discussed here is quite incomplete without acquiring fluency in at least one foreign language.

I have not found any investigation which directly demonstrates that liberal education *does* make people more creative. And yet, there is significant evidence that Einstein's story, his metaphoric focusing enabled by his liminal position, is rather typical for creative insight. Beyond the biographic study of creative individuals, there is strong evidence from investigations lodged at a higher level of social organization. First, there is positive evidence. Creativity often comes in bursts across many fields at the same time, concentrated in dense, cosmopolitan cities. Classical Athens in the late fifth and early fourth centuries, and Pataliputra (today's Patna) in the third century B.C.E. were such places; so were Fes in the fourteenth and Florence in the fifteenth centuries. Vienna and Tokyo saw such a burst at the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. Today, New York is, perhaps more than any other city—sorry, Chicago!—such an incubator of creativity. However, cities, even very diverse ones, are not necessarily creative hubs at all times. For cities to become fermenters of creativity, they need to become places of engagement between people with different ideas working with different modes of symbolic production. For that they need to offer people with diverse backgrounds several things. They need real career opportunities which allow them to become symbolically productive. And then they need an infrastructure of meeting places ranging from cafés to political, artistic, and scientific institutions, which facilitate a free, open-minded exchange between various modes of symbolic production thus sparking metaphors.

Second, there is negative evidence. And this is where my own research into the reasons why and how socialism collapsed becomes important. In the political and economic realm, socialism took great pains to homogenize its population. The idea was that the science of dialectical materialism had discovered the true laws of history and of human society. If only everybody could be taught Marxism-Leninism and be persuaded to act accordingly, then socialism

would come true as a self-fulfilling prophecy. Humankind would thus catapult itself into communism, the only conceivable just human order. At the same time, socialism thought itself embroiled in mortal combat with capitalism. All forces had to be mobilized in unity to fight the enemy. Although the praise of critique was universally sung, this had the effect of causing the actual practice of critique to be generally read as a diversion from the main task—the defeat of the enemy. Accordingly, critique was seen as a mere nuisance, a carping about, which was effectively in the interest of the enemy. Unity and unwavering support for party and state became the ethical ideal. In the interest of efficiency at war, pluralism was seen at best as an unnecessary luxury and at worst as an ideological floodgate for the forces of evil. In this call to unity in battle, armed with the supposed truth, socialism literally suffocated. It had no way left to determine whether or not its own symbolizations of itself still had any bearing on lived life, whether its symbolizations were still offering useful orientation. During the 1980s in particular, the self-praise of party and government began to deviate from experience. The economic plans were always advertised as over-fulfilled while people experienced increased shortages. An eerie gap opened between what was said about the country and what people experienced—a gap that was increasingly appreciated even by the party elites who saw the erosion of meaning with increasing alarm. Yet, they had no way to develop alternative symbolizations which would immediately have been read as subversive. Ossified institutionally, they had no way to regenerate meaning. Once the crisis accelerated in 1989, the governing elites literally had nothing to say and, therefore, no clue what to do. And thus, symbolically exhausted, they forfeited power without firing a single shot!

The biographies of innovative people, the creativity generating possibilities of cosmopolitan centers, and the political self-suffocation of socialism offer important lessons for *all* social arrangements. A pluralism of modes of symbolization, practiced in a multitude of symbol workshops enabled and freed to engage in creative borrowing from each other, is the very precondition for the regeneration of meaning under conditions of rapid social change in which meanings are lost just as fast. In an important sense, every mode of symbolization can be looked at as a culture. If this is so, then multiculturalism is not only not dead—or dangerous, as more and more politicians and intellectuals in Europe and America have recently claimed—but it is necessary for the continuous rejuvenation of meaning. Multiculturalism is an asset, not a liability. Perhaps I should say that it must be *made* into an asset, for multiculturalism needs to be *practiced* and not just preached to yield the fruits of freedom and creativity. We urgently need people who, like Einstein, can thrive in a multicultural environment, who relish rather than abhor it, who see it as a liberating opportunity rather than an anxiety-provoking nightmare. We need people who are free in the sense I have defined it just a few minutes ago. Liberal education is one of our best bets at nourishing such sensibilities by cre-

ating plenty of opportunities for becoming comfortable with leading a liminal life.

Throughout my speech, I have said that liberal education *may* make people more free and creative. For it does not do so automatically. You can live in the middle of a cosmopolitan city and remain entirely untouched by the diversity of modes of symbolization practiced there. You can go through a curriculum of liberal education without reaping any of its potential benefits. You can learn many modes of thought without ever making any metaphoric linkages between them. For this to happen, you need only to think that all those things around you are either neatly compartmentalized or in an important sense external to you and should remain so. Tourists, diplomats, and representatives of corporations often do that when they go to other countries—merely enjoying the titillation of the exotic while never letting anything come really close. The philosopher John Dewey once called such people "cosmopolitan idiots." They look educated, but they are mere kaleidoscopes of knowledges which they employ for their parochial agendas.

The point is not only to avoid becoming a cosmopolitan idiot but also to become a free symbol maker who is ready and eager to participate in the creative rejuvenation of meaning. For this to happen, you can not just surf on diverse modes of symbolic production—scientific, artistic, religious, or cultural. Instead, you *must* delve into them and engage with them to such a degree and at such a proximity, that they, in fact, stand a chance to alter the way in which you think, feel, act, dream, and imagine. To reap the benefits of diversity, you must *risk* yourself—ready to become transformed in the course of the engagement. This does not mean that you have to make your own all of the modes of symbolic production which you encounter on the way. You will undoubtedly find some of them misguided or even wrong. But you should know why. The point is that by fathoming the operations of diverse modes and by wrestling with their limits and possibilities, you stand a very good chance of becoming a freer and more creative person.

You stand at the gates of a splendid university—a wondrous metropolis of symbol makers ready for you to explore. Fearlessly walking its many streets, watching and listening intently, and asking questions with curious abandon may eventually make you want to participate. It may kindle in you a passion for making deeply meaningful symbolizations, those which orient us in the world by enhancing our power to think, our power to experience deeply and reflexively, our power to imagine, and, thus, ultimately our power to live better lives. You *could* become a poet. And where, if not here; and when, if not now? Welcome to the University of Chicago.

Andreas Glaeser is Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and the College.

Annual Report of the Provost for 2004–05

By Richard P. Saller

October 19, 2005

I write in a time of transition, following President Don Michael Randel's announcement in late July of his acceptance of the presidency of the Andrew Mellon Foundation, to begin next academic year. We are deeply grateful to Don for his leadership and tireless work on behalf of the University. His many accomplishments range from a stronger scientific connection with Argonne National Laboratory to a more cooperative and optimistic relationship with the communities around the University. During his term he completed some of the important initiatives started before 2000 and has begun others that in turn will come to fruition under future Presidents.

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, James Crown, has written to the whole University community about the search for Don's successor. A Trustee committee has been appointed, and a faculty advisory committee has been elected by the Council of the University Senate. They have begun their work of soliciting nominations. You are invited to suggest candidates.

Meanwhile, in a decentralized organization like ours, the responsibility for the continuity of academic programs rests in the hands of the Deans and department chairs. I am glad to be able to report that over the past year four Deans accepted reappointment for five-year terms: Rick Rosengarten in the Divinity School, Ted Snyder in the Graduate School of Business, Jeanne Marsh in the School of Social Service Administration, and Saul Levmore in the Law School (the terms of Ted and Saul to begin next July). To all of them I want to express my appreciation for the leadership they have provided and for their willingness to continue in their highly demanding jobs.

Faculty

The academic year 2004–05 saw more comings and goings among the tenured faculty than in the past few years. In contrast to the previous two years when faculty departures were about half the long-term average, over the past year the total of twenty departures of tenured faculty was slightly above the long-term average. The numbers are small, and year-to-year fluctuations are expected. Nevertheless, numbers alone do not capture the intellectual loss of individual departures, and the Provost's Office is doing a study of the reasons individual faculty give for leaving. At this point, it appears that the motives are very diverse and exhibit no dominant pattern.

On the positive side, we welcome a strong cohort of new faculty, including twenty-one tenured appointments.

Alexander Chervonsky (Pathology) from the Jackson Laboratory, his seminal discoveries concerning the factors controlling homing of T cells hold great promise for elucidating the pathogenesis of autoimmune diseases.

Michael Dawson (Political Science) from Harvard, a leading scholar on issues of race and politics, his recent book, *Black Visions: The Roots of Contemporary African-American Political Ideologies*, has reoriented the field.

Jean Decety (Psychology) from INSERM, pioneering in the use of neuroimag-

ing, his current research extends his earlier work on motor control and action perception to the study of social neuroscience.

Richard Fehon (Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology) from Duke, his identification and functional characterization of proteins located in the tight junctions between epithelial cells are revealing new roles for the intercellular junctions in cell function.

Joe Garcia (Medicine) from Johns Hopkins, a preeminent investigator of the mechanisms of acute respiratory distress syndrome and their relationship to patient care, he joins us as chair of the department.

Michael Glotzer (Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology) from IMP, Vienna, his recent discovery and initial characterization of the multi-protein centrosomal complex have shed new light on the molecular mechanisms of cytokinesis.

Tatyana Golovkina (Microbiology) from the Jackson Laboratory, her important insights into the mechanisms of retrovirus infections are based in the use of the murine model, where virus/host genetic interactions can be manipulated.

Mark Hansen (English Language & Literature) from Princeton, based on research in the emerging field of new digital technologies, his latest book, *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with New Media*, demonstrates the impact of the digital revolution across contemporary culture.

Christopher Kennedy (Linguistics) from Northwestern, syntactician and semanticist, he examines how structure and meaning interact in such areas as vagueness in language and elliptical statements.

Franklin Lewis (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations) from Emory, his groundbreaking studies of two classical mystic Persian poets, Sana'i and Rumi, have established his prominence in the field.

John List (Economics) from University of Maryland, a methodological contrarian in field experimental economics, his experiments in real market settings are challenging the results found in the laboratory.

Viswanathan Natarajan (Medicine) from Johns Hopkins, an expert on lipid and oxidant signaling, his work has important implications in understanding the mechanisms of acute lung injury and airway inflammation.

Eduardo Perozo (Pediatrics) from University of Virginia, he has creatively combined the fields of ion channel biophysics and structural biology, employing methods that reveal the movements of proteins that allow for function.

Stephen Raudenbush (Sociology) from University of Michigan, a distinguished educational methodologist and Scientific Director for Analysis in the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods, he will chair the new Committee on Education.

Ilaria Rebay (Ben May Institute for Cancer Research) from MIT, her research on drosophila has recently established the first link between an organ determination network and an extrinsic signaling pathway.

Benoit Roux (Pediatrics) from Cornell, a biophysicist and expert in protein dynamics, his innovative computational analysis of channel function is reorienting the entire field.

Wilhelm Schlag (Mathematics) from the California Institute of Technology, an analyst of broad interest, he has made significant contributions in the areas of harmonic analysis, partial differential equations, mathematical physics, and probability theory.

Michael Sells (Divinity) from Haverford College, scholar of the Qur'an, Islamic mystical texts, and Arabic poetry, his current research focuses on the contemporary polemic between Western and Islamic militants over rights, democracy, and tolerance.

Douglas Skinner (GSB) from University of Michigan, his empirical research in accounting and finance has provided notable insights on topics such as voluntary disclosure and corporate dividend policy.

Mark Slouka (English Language & Literature) from Columbia, writer of award-winning fiction and essays, his latest novel, *The Death of Water and Fire*, will appear shortly.

Malika Zeghal (Divinity) from CNRS, as a political scientist she studies power relationships in contemporary Islam manifested in settings as diverse as the Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo and the West Side of Chicago.

This University has a great tradition of regenerating itself through outstanding younger faculty appointments, and this year is no exception. Sixty-nine promising scholars have joined the University at the rank of assistant professor this fall. It is our job as colleagues to do everything possible to enable their success.

Faculty Honors

Our outstanding faculty received a steady stream of honors and awards through the year—in fact, far too many to list. Here is a brief selection of the leading honors. *Olufunmilayo Falusi Olopade* and *Kevin Murphy* were named MacArthur Fellows. *Philip Gossett* received the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Distinguished Achievement Award. *John Brinkman*, *Friedrich Katz*, and *George Stocking* were honored with the Mellon Emeritus Award. The Howard Hughes Medical Institute named *Albert Bendelac* and *Milan Mrksich* as HHMI Investigators. The newly elected members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences are *Sheila Fitzpatrick*, *Susan Goldin-Meadow*, *Melvyn Shochet*, and myself (I couldn't be happier with the company).

Diversity

As you know, the Provost's Initiative on Minority Issues (PIMI) has been working over the past few years and is now completing its mandate. PIMI has made a number of recommendations, which we have begun to implement. Last autumn the President and I sent a letter giving the argument for why the initiative is a priority for our core mission as a University. In 2004–05 the efforts in faculty and student recruiting and retention have shown improved results, among them the better graduation rate for students of color. The Office of Minority Student Affairs has been reorganized, and I am delighted to welcome Ana Vázquez as its new director. To continue the important work of PIMI, I have appointed as Deputy Provost for Research and Minority Issues

Professor Ken Warren, who was instrumental in formulating the recommendations of PIMI.

Women's and Family Issues

I want to follow up on last year's report by noting two initiatives. First, the University is proceeding with a program to cooperate and provide financial support to local day-care providers in order to develop child care programs for infants and toddlers. The aim is to have University-supported places available for infants and toddlers at local centers within the next eighteen months. Second, Dean Robert Fefferman and Associate Provost Mary Harvey collaborated with faculty over the summer to write a grant proposal for the National Science Foundation ADVANCE Program to promote more women scientists. The development of the proposal generated several ideas that will be implemented regardless of the outcome at NSF.

Community

The University continues to support numerous initiatives in the surrounding neighborhoods, perhaps the most important and visible of which is the Urban Education Initiative. UEI brings together five elements with the common purpose of improving public education in the city of Chicago and the country. The five include the Center for Urban School Improvement (USI), the Community Schools Program at the School of Social Service Administration, the Consortium on Chicago School Research, a new academic Committee on Education, and a package of programs in the Office of Community and Government Affairs. The aim is to bring together the highest quality research on education with practical involvement in the public schools in the expectation that the best research will produce knowledge to identify the most effective practices for urban education. The empirical results are already promising. Our charter school, North Kenwood/Oakland, is achieving results with a very economically disadvantaged population that exceed Chicago Public Schools averages in all areas and state averages in many. The consortium is producing the most respected assessments in the country of student performance in an urban school district. These successes and others have drawn national attention as the most interesting experiment in urban education by a university and, as such, have attracted major gifts from foundations and private donors. Much remains to be done. This autumn the University has opened its second public grade school at 37th and Cottage Grove. The plan is to open three more, including a high school. The academic Committee on Education is off to a great start with the recruitment of Stephen Raudenbush, who will work with colleagues to develop research programs. As President Randel wrote, no issue is more pressing for the nation than public education, and the University of Chicago has a golden opportunity to make a decisive contribution.

Planning and Space

Last year's report gave details on the Campus Master Plan extension. That effort was completed a year ago, presented to campus

constituencies, and approved by the Trustees. The plan covers the next fifteen years and will undoubtedly undergo adaptation to changing circumstances. Implementation is underway. Following the move of the Graduate School of Business into their new facilities, Rosenwald, Stuart, and Walker were refurbished as the new home of the Departments of Economics, English, and Philosophy, as well as the College Admissions Office, the Humanities Dean's Office, and classrooms. The current renovation of the first floor of Harper will remake that space into classrooms, yielding a total of eighteen incremental classrooms for the College and divisions. On the West Campus the Center for Integrative Science (formerly the Interdivisional Research Building) has been completed, a facility that will enable exciting discoveries at the intersection of the biological and physical sciences.

On the drawing boards now are four other large projects to facilitate research and student life on campus in the future. The first is the addition to the Regenstein Library. After a long period of planning and discussion, the decision was made to build on land adjacent to Regenstein a high-density, rapid-retrieval system. This on-site option will keep the materials immediately accessible. Since the addition will likely be filled with journals and serials whose contents are listed online, the loss of browsing should not be a serious disadvantage. The addition will include a reading room for use of the materials and an area for the important work of conservation of the collection. For more details, see <http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/reg/addition/>. Regenstein, with its depth of collection and ease of access, has been one of the great research tools in the world for humanists and social scientists over the past generation. The planned addition should maintain its special advantages. Part of the challenge in the planning effort was the unparalleled rapidity with which the means of dissemination of knowledge have been changing. In conjunction with the addition of physical space, a task force is now planning how to configure the current building to serve the University in the future. If you have views, please contact the task force chair, Andrew Abbott.

The second major project is the construction of a new laboratory building for the clinical sciences. The design of the Center for Biomedical Discovery is nearing completion, and construction will begin soon at the corner of 57th and Drexel. The new building is needed because the renovation of the older buildings south of 57th Street would be too costly and inefficient, and would leave us with less-than-optimal wet labs. The older buildings will be renovated for more appropriate uses.

The third project is the renovation for the Division of the Physical Sciences of Searle and the Research Institutes. Unlike the space for the Division of the Biological Sciences, the layout of these buildings can accommodate twenty-first century science, but they are aging and in need of renewal of their infrastructures. Design of the renovation has begun with a view to construction over the next few years.

The final major project on the drawing board is aimed to improve student life.

The Shoreland dormitory has housed a generation of College students who have appreciated the independence of apartment living. But the condition of the building and the recent city ordinances regulating facades would make it very expensive to do the necessary maintenance (upwards of \$50 million). The decision was made to sell the Shoreland to a developer (who will return it to its original purpose of high-class apartments) and to build a new dormitory on the South Campus. This is one of several developments that will enliven that area of campus in the coming years.

This is a partial list of the physical changes underway on the campus. For a full description of progress on the Campus Master Plan, see <http://www.uchicago.edu/docs/mp-site/construction/>. The projects are large and expensive—the four projects above will in total cost more than \$350 million—but they are all important to the core mission of the University.

Financial State of the University

Last year ended with the University in a stronger financial position, though recent reports from other elite research universities indicate that our competitive position is no easier. The Chicago Initiative has now raised more than \$1.3 billion. The Trustees have recommitted themselves to the goal of \$2 billion and have focused on endowment to support students and faculty, our two most important assets. In addition, the value of our existing endowment rose by 18.1 percent in the year ending June 30, 2005. The strong market returns over the last two years will begin to show up in the University's revenue stream next year. Finally, our financial planning should be improved through a new ten-year planning model developed over the past year.

The Coming Year

The central administration currently is preparing for the ten-year reaccreditation review by the North Central Association (NCA) and for the competitive contract renewal for the management of Argonne National Laboratory (ANL).

The reaccreditation process entails (1) the collection of information to demonstrate that the University meets basic institutional standards related to education and administration, and (2) an in-depth analysis of a special topic, in our case the University's research infrastructure. A group of faculty and administrators has spent the past year gathering data on our research infrastructure (ranging from the Library to laboratories to information technology) and reflecting on our decision-making in setting priorities. The team of external evaluators will visit campus in early February, and the report will be publicly available thereafter. Some of you may be asked to speak with the team.

As you know, the federal Department of Energy (DOE) has required for the first time that the University compete for the contract to manage ANL. Our relationship with Argonne has become increasingly integral to the University's scientific research, and the winning of the contract correspondingly important. Vice-President for Research Thomas Rosenbaum is leading the large and highly complex effort to assemble the University's proposal to be

submitted in the winter. As part of our effort to extend the University's value to ANL and DOE, we have recruited Northwestern University and the University of Illinois to join the Board of Governors and to participate in a Science Policy Council. The Department of Energy's decision is expected next summer.

Obviously, the coming year will be an important one for the University. I hope that it turns out to be productive for all members of the University community.

Richard P. Saller is the Edward L. Ryerson Distinguished Service Professor in the Departments of History, Classical Languages & Literatures, and New Testament & Early Christian Literature, Committee on the Ancient Mediterranean World, and the College, and Provost of the University.

The 480th Convocation

Address: "The Fun Index"

By Richard A. Shweder

March 18, 2005

I wonder if you remember the "fun index." It was a ranking of 300 American colleges and universities put together by some clever Harvard students a little over a decade ago. It got lots of publicity in the mainstream press. The University of Chicago was ranked number 300 out of 300, just behind the United States Military Academy. Russell Baker, the *New York Times* humorist, immediately responded in an op-ed essay. He complained that his alma mater, Johns Hopkins University—which was ranked number 296 on the fun index—should not have been outdone by Chicago. Yale University was ranked in the bottom ten, too. Florida State University had the distinction of being number 1.

That playful and prankish fun index—confirming the view that the University of Chicago, Yale, and Johns Hopkins just can't compete in the same league with the fraternity parties and nightclubs at Florida State—managed to make administrators at many colleges around the country, and even in Hyde Park, a bit nervous. So, over the past decade we have invested heavily in the life of the body as well as the life of the mind. We have a new swimming pool, which we love, and a new award-winning dining hall at Bartlett. We have a new business school center right across the street, which, quite fortunately, achieves part of its splendor by remaining in the shadow of Rockefeller Chapel rather than overshadowing it (as some had feared). And if the fun index still existed, by now the University of Chicago might even have nudged a bit ahead of Hopkins and Yale in providing those satisfactions in life that are abundant and readily available at Florida State University. Perhaps our ranking might have risen to number 287 or even number 252 on the "going to college to have fun index"—the type of fun they have at FSU.

The most resounding and noble reaction to the fun index, however, came from George Will, the political commentator. George Will is a "political conservative," which is a rather difficult-to-define notion these days, when religious fundamentalists and libertarians are supporters of the same political party. And George Will graduated from Princeton. Yet he revealed himself to have maroon-colored blood running through his veins and to be a great admirer of the University of Chicago's classical, or should one say premodern, conception of having fun.

George Will liked the idea that somewhere in America there is a university with a Socratic-sounding philosophy of education, which can be boiled down to a single maxim: "If someone asserts it, deny it; if someone denies it, assert it"; and where "Anything you can do I can do *meta*" is a popular refrain. He liked the idea of the University of Chicago as a temple of critical reason where you leave your identity politics at the front door—a place where every voice is encouraged to become autonomous, assumption-questioning, and self-critical. He liked the idea that at the University of Chicago no person's voice is deferred to or granted special authority because of the speaker's social or government-defined census status as an insider, whether male or female, American or non-American, white American or black

American. In his retort to all the publicity about the fun index, George Will stepped forward and in effect gave an honorary degree (or more accurately a degree of honor) to the University of Chicago. And he did so in a syndicated column which appeared in a few hundred newspapers around the world. The *Washington Post* gave his column the title, "Fun in a Cold Climate." Three months later, applications to the University increased by 24 percent.

It was pleasing to see George Will spreading the word that the brain is an erogenous zone at the University of Chicago. That is one of our claims to fame, and it appeals to some very special women and men (young and old) who are eager to place their minds, their emotions, and even their identity politics at risk, as well as to engage in some hard-hitting assumption-questioning conversations (and this is true whether you are in the Graduate School of Business, the Divinity School, the graduate divisions, or the College). But there are other things that make us a peculiar (and priceless) academic institution. One is that we refuse to be compliant in the face of political and social pressures. Another is that we are not risk-averse. Indeed, we have often been blessed in this community with courageous leaders who have made us great and have kept us great, by being intellectual entrepreneurs and by being willing, again and again, to invest in things that we really can't afford. Perhaps our leaders have believed that it is the fully examined and budgeted life that is not worth living.

During a recent admission season, I received a letter from a prospective student from China who wrote: "The United States now, like the T'ang dynasty in Chinese history, is the center of world scientific research, and the University of Chicago is a mecca in the mind of a student like me." Of course it is possible that I am just a fool to think it was an honor to have been placed at the very bottom of the fun index along with Yale, Johns Hopkins, and, yes, the United States Military Academy. Nevertheless, I am here today at this joyous occasion, when we gather to confer titles and honor academic achievements, to invite you, however foolishly, to imagine that our real claim to fame at the University of Chicago is that we are mavericks, freewheeling, tough minded, intellectually annoying, against the current, out there on the fringe, sometimes even a little beyond the pale.

So, let's see . . .

Some of us do worry these days about the danger of becoming bland, politically sensitive, excessively budget minded, mainstreamed, and "nice"—a bit too much like the rest. About fifteen years ago, shortly before Florida State University became *numero uno*, I created a file that I call my "Late, Great University of (*fill in the blank*)" file. This is my neo-antiquarian file. This is where a University of Chicago professor revalues the past with a sense of irony about contemporary lapses of courage in the academy and current retreats from the ideals of a Peter Abelard (the first great scholastic skeptic, who infuriated the Roman Catholic Church in the twelfth century by subjecting sacred texts to multiple interpretative readings) or from the ideals of a Robert Maynard Hutchins (the

famous University of Chicago President who eloquently and politely told the Illinois Seditious Activities Investigation Commission—which was akin to the House Committee on Un-American Activities—to shove it and defended academic freedom in one of its darkest hours).

Looking into this file, I can admire the intellectual virtues associated with a Thucydides, the great ancient Greek historian; or with a Socrates; or with a Hannah Arendt, who was a brilliant and very provocative member of this faculty in the 1960s. Virtues such as a principled commitment to impartiality and accuracy in one's descriptions of political and military events and of other societies; and to fair and thorough exploration of the other side, even when the other side holds views that are upsetting, unpopular, or unsettling to vested structures of interest and influence. "Speaking truth to power," indeed.

This is the file where the University of Chicago really shines, even as one worries about external and internal threats to the independence of the academy and any lessening of the spirit of free thinking and robust debate on our college campuses. This is the file in which one tries to form an image of a mythic age of truth (what Hindus call Satya Yuga) in the history of the academy, when it was thought to be a very good idea to separate anything that can be separated from anything else—especially the worlds of the politician, the merchant (the businessman, the banker), and the scholar—and to be wary of all funding (including government and foundation funding) that comes with *any* strings attached. Over the years, surveying the national academic scene, I have found that I have been able to add items to my "Late, Great University of (*fill in the blank*)" file at a brisk rate.

Some of the items in this file are mere tidbits, early warning signs at other universities: for example, some recent items concerning two Ivy League presidents, one at Harvard and one at Columbia, both of whom have fallen out of favor with their faculties. The Columbia president, who is (ironically) a scholar of the First Amendment, is criticized for his failure to forcefully defend the right of his own faculty members to hold views that are offensive to the merchants and politicians of the world; while the Harvard president is criticized for even mentioning points of view that are offensive to some members of his own faculty. Disappointingly, at both universities too few members of the tenured faculty ever take intellectual risks. (A colleague once quipped that it is not "true love" but rather "tenure" that means "never having to say you're sorry." Yet can there be true academic love, one wonders, without accepting the responsibility to speculate, think outside the box, and take some creative chances?) Disappointingly, at both universities far too many members of the tenured faculty spend their time demanding apologies from those who dare to be provocative or to challenge received truths. They haven't left their identity politics at the front door. When an academic institution such as Harvard University (including its president) feels it must offer apologies to the thought police for the forthright expression of unpopular views, you know

that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

In contrast—that Chinese applicant had it right—the University of Chicago is a mecca for an international community of free spirits who also love lively debates corrosive of dogma. Meditate with me for a moment on some of those wonderful romantic assertions of dignifying (and emancipating) academic principles that can be readily found in venerable (sometimes even official) University of Chicago speeches and documents. I turn to these speeches and documents when the atmosphere of decline at other universities has become so thick that the mere recitation of noble truths seems quaint or old-fashioned. One of my favorite items is the speech given by the Chairman of our Board of Trustees on the occasion of our one hundredth anniversary in 1992. He quoted our former President Robert Maynard Hutchins, who stated, "The faculty is not working for the trustees; the trustees are working for the faculty." Such words might have come from any of our Presidents; Don Randel, in his earliest comments when he arrived on campus, said as much. And our Provost, Richard Saller, understands and exemplifies such academic principles as well as anyone in our community.

The basic idea expressed by those words may seem counterintuitive, but it helps define the conditions that make for greatness in the academy, as well as for a vibrant and healthy society. Here is another way to make the point, by the philosopher Arthur Lovejoy: "The distinctive social function of the scholar's trade cannot be fulfilled if those who pay the piper are permitted to call the tune." It is a splendid, even if wishful, vision: the luminous image of enlightened patrons—merchants, investment bankers, politicians—who understand the virtue and long-term social benefits of free and unfettered inquiry, and who believe it is wise and dignifying to resist the natural temptation to try to use one's wealth and power to "call the tune." If you ever become very rich or very powerful, strive for that type of wisdom—and nobility.

Or consider this principle, taken from a famous 1972 University of Chicago report on academic appointments (the so-called Shils Report): "There must be no consideration of sex, ethnic or national characteristics, or political or religious beliefs or affiliations in any decision regarding appointment, promotion, or reappointment at any level of the academic staff." Today on many college campuses that principle is viewed as an impediment or as old-fashioned or as controversial, and it has been set aside or ignored. Yet, I suspect some of the faculty members on the committee that prepared that report (which included world-renowned scholars of Asian, African, and European descent) might reasonably have argued that the principle is resonant with the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr., and that we should feel proud, not embarrassed, to defend it and to act on it; so that his dream—the triumph of character over color, of individual over (stereo)type—might come true.

But the item that makes me feel most proud to be a professor at this university (where I have now thought and taught for thirty-two years) is a document—an extant

and influential official policy statement about our institution's conception of academic freedom. It is known as the Kalven Committee Report. It was written in 1967 by a faculty committee that included the historian John Hope Franklin, the future Nobel Prize-winning economist George Stigler, and faculty from all the academic divisions in the University. The committee was chaired by Harry Kalven, Jr., who was a professor in our Law School. Kalven was a Socratic eminence and a brilliant stylist, who wrote a seminal book called *A Worthy Tradition: Freedom of Speech in America*.

The Kalven Committee Report describes a fundamental aim of the University of Chicago as follows: "A university faithful to its mission will provide enduring challenges to social values, policies, practices, and institutions. By design and by effect, it is the institution which creates discontent with the existing social arrangements and proposes new ones. In brief, a good university, like Socrates, will be upsetting."

In the service of that mission (and of our worthy tradition), the report points to two sacred (and closely linked) University of Chicago principles: "institutional neutrality" and "faculty and student autonomy." The University as an institution is cautioned against taking any collective stance on the social and political issues of the day, out of respect for the autonomy of its faculty and students, out of respect for those individuals in our disputatious community who may embrace an unpopular or politically incorrect point of view.

The academic freedom ideals defined by Harry Kalven, John Hope Franklin, George Stigler, and others are extraordinarily difficult to uphold and defend. There are many powerful forces in our contemporary society (both inside and outside the academy) that threaten the principles of student and faculty autonomy and institutional neutrality at the increasingly timid, cowed, and restrained universities and colleges of America. And I don't just mean the USA Patriot Act. Those who love Kalven's report in principle don't always love it in practice; for example, when they want the University (or the Office of the President) to take a collective stance in support of their own favorite social or political cause, or cultural hero. And not everyone loves the report, even in principle; for example, one finds some members of our own community arguing (as do some politicians and bureaucrats in Washington) that conducting research is an indulgence (or a favor) and not a right. There are even those in the academy these days who believe that any student or faculty member who talks to human beings as part of their research should be required to have his or her project approved in advance by an official institutional licensing board (the so-called Institutional Review Board), in part to guarantee that no one asks questions that are too upsetting to some. The T'ang dynasty did not last forever and neither will the spirit of our great university, unless all of us (faculty, students, alumni, and academic administrators) honor it, defend it, and guard its gates.

Dear students, friends, colleagues, kith, and kin. On this celebratory occasion, when one reflects on our deepest values

and looks with hope towards a glorious future, it is thrilling—indeed it is a great and deeply satisfying form of fun—for the faculty to be able to congratulate you on becoming graduates of the University of Chicago and to welcome you as heirs to this "worthy tradition."

Standing up here in this wooden box suspended in space in Rockefeller Chapel, I confess to feeling a bit like some Puritan preacher of old. This is a bit worrisome. For I am sure you remember how H. L. Mencken defined Puritanism: "The haunting fear that someone, somewhere, may be happy" (or shall we say "having fun"?). So permit me to reach for a climactic antidote.

Some years ago, in 1993, around the time that the University of Chicago was ranked number 300 on the fun index, I delivered an Aims of Education address in this building (which is the architectural symbol of our self-esteem), welcoming new students to our campus. The very first line of that address read as follows: "No one ever died of homesickness" were the most comforting words told to me during my first days at college." Now it is the year 2005. Homes change. All of our lives move on. History moves on. And here we are together on a graduation day at the University of Chicago, in a very grand and wonderful ceremony, on what is perhaps your final day in this community. And the very last message of this convocation speech, a small piece of avuncular advice (don't worry, it is not "buy low, sell high") offered to you by this member of the faculty, with love, with admiration for your accomplishments, and with many hopes for your future (and futures), is this: Make up your own fun index, and then pursue it for life; but also remember to stand up for your convictions—that above all else. It is our way to be number 1. It is the only true way to be number 1.

Richard A. Shweder is the William Claude Reavis Distinguished Service Professor in the Departments of Comparative Human Development and Psychology, Committee on Southern Asian Studies, and the College.

Summary

The 480th convocation was held on Friday, March 18, 2005, in Rockefeller Memorial Chapel. Don Michael Randel, President of the University, presided.

A total of 490 degrees were awarded: 27 Bachelor of Arts in the College, 7 Master of Science in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 12 Master of Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 17 Master of Science in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 36 Master of Arts in the Division of the Social Sciences, 338 Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 6 Master of Liberal Arts in the William B. and Catherine V. Graham School of General Studies, 7 Master of Arts in the School of Social Service Administration, 1 Master of Arts in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 2 Master of Public Policy in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 13 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 9 Doctor of Philosophy

in the Division of the Humanities, 5 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 6 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Social Sciences, 3 Doctor of Philosophy in the Divinity School, and 1 Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Service Administration.

Richard A. Shweder, the William Claude Reavis Distinguished Service Professor in the Departments of Comparative Human Development and Psychology, Committee on Southern Asian Studies, and the College, delivered the convocation address, "The Fun Index."

The 481st Convocation

Address: "Race, Politics, and the Costs of Compromise"

By Cathy Cohen

June 10 and 11, 2005

To the graduates of 2005, let me say that it is an honor to stand before you representing the distinguished faculty of the University of Chicago at this very important and joyful occasion. I, along with my colleagues, congratulate all of you, your families, and friends on your accomplishment today! I believe that it is crucial at this time of celebration that we not lose sight of the fact that your extraordinary achievement—securing an exceptional education and graduating from one of the best universities in the world—is an achievement that is not available to all who would choose such a goal.

Institutions around the United States spent much of the past year holding forums, debates, and conferences aimed at celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, in which the United States Supreme Court unanimously struck down legal, state-sponsored segregation in public schools across the country.

The *Brown* decision of May 17, 1954, did not spell the end of segregation. It did not even bring about the end of segregation in public schools, as school districts openly and covertly defied the decree, necessitating what is often called the *Brown II* decision of May 31, 1955, when the Supreme Court instructed districts to end segregation "with all deliberate speed." For all of its limitations, however, the *Brown* decision was important because it served as a formal, public marker that Jim Crow segregation, the legal system of racial segregation entrenched in the South and practiced in the North, could and would be successfully challenged.

Thus, the promise of the *Brown* decision was not limited to ending segregation in public schools or merely securing integration. The promise of *Brown* instead rested on the most democratic of aspirations—that all individuals will receive equal education, that all will receive equal opportunity, and that all will be afforded equal respect. The most radical possibilities of *Brown* lay in the country's forced recognition of black people's humanity and their full membership in the nation. As author and social critic Ralph Ellison wrote in 1954, "[t]he Court has found in our favor and recognized our human psychological complexity and citizenship and another battle of the Civil War has been won."¹

Brown was but one decision. Other events in the fifties and sixties made this period one of the most important eras in this country's political history. The Civil Rights movement, the signing of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and the continued mobilization of many Americans for the cause of racial equality were thought to signal a significant turn in racial politics, bringing us closer to the fulfillment of democratic promises enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

Yet fifty years later, those political victories have been met with serious challenges, questioning such policies' relevance for today's society. Those in and out of universities have witnessed, for example, the attacks on programs such as affirmative action. Opponents of these race- and gender-specific policies have argued that

forty years into the post-segregation era, we no longer need design nor continue policies meant to address the history of legal discrimination endured by blacks and other marginalized groups for over four centuries.

It was, of course, W. E. B. Du Bois who declared in his canonical text *The Souls of Black Folk* that "the problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line." You, Class of 2005, at the beginning of the twenty-first century have inherited a culture in which the potential of a multiracial society has not yet been met and the problem of the color-line remains unresolved. The racial landscape you will encounter is, thankfully, absent the most visceral components of Jim Crow. But it still harbors some of the ideas, practices, and customs that undergird state-sponsored segregation. This is not to deny or minimize the epic advances we have made in the realm of racial politics and racial justice, but to acknowledge that we also face the reality that in far too many places we still live with at least two societies, separate and unequal—disparities which directly threaten our democracy and by extension the promise of *Brown*.

As you no doubt learned at the University of Chicago, the facts do not, as promised, always speak for themselves. Instead they often offer contradictory evidence, providing the basis for multiple interpretations of the world. Scholars of racial politics have found evidence of just that—namely, that people from different racial and ethnic groups utilize distinct approaches to evaluating politics and progress in this country.

White Americans, the research suggests, tend to emphasize what they believe are individual characteristics when explaining the fate and behavior of themselves and others. They see an open, fair, and much-improved racial society, which they believe allows individuals to advance on their own merit. On the other hand, research shows that African Americans and members of other marginalized racial groups take a more group-centered approach to evaluating racial politics. They most often prioritize structural conditions and shrinking opportunities in their explanations of behaviors and attitudes. For African Americans who routinely live with twice the unemployment rate of white Americans, who continuously confront residential segregation and consequently less-than-adequate public schools, the issue is not merit but opportunity.

Let me be clear: no community operates as a monolith, espousing one set of beliefs and analyzing issues from one point of view. My own scholarship has focused on just such divisions in black communities. However, though such differences exist in communities, when researchers look at the general trends in public opinion we find that individuals from different racial groups view the world in markedly different ways.

For example, recent data revealed that the increase in youth voting in 2004 touted by the media and politicians was largely driven by the increase in voting among Latino and African-American youth. These young voters differed in their candidate of choice based on race, with young African

Americans and Latinos most often voting for John Kerry and white youth more often casting a vote for George W. Bush.

Some scholars argue that the increase in voting, independent of the racial divisions, indicates that the promise of *Brown* and of a fully functioning democracy is within our grasp—that we have reached a point in our history where all citizens, regardless of race, are engaged in debate, where they participate so as to ensure that their interests will be protected and represented by the state, and where they believe that the simple act of voting is their responsibility and will have an impact.

Unfortunately, reality is never so simple, for other trends and policies pose a direct threat not only to the promise of *Brown* but also to the promise of a fully realized democracy in the United States. Researchers note, for example, that our nation has the highest incarceration rate in the world—ten times higher than other Western democracies. We hold over 25 percent of the world's population of incarcerated people in U.S. jails or prisons at a cost of some \$50 billion.² Today, according to data from the U.S. Department of Justice, there are over two million Americans in jail or prison.

One consequence is that nearly one-eighth of African-American males in this country are not allowed to vote because they are incarcerated or have served time for a felony offense. In a number of states, disenfranchisement continues even after prison. We must ask ourselves what policies that strip away from citizens the most basic of democratic resources—the right to vote—mean for the functioning of our democracy? What does it mean for how resources are allocated? What does it mean for the validity of local and national elections? And what does it mean, as Ellison wrote, for the nation's ability to acknowledge—and, I would add, value—the human dignity and citizenship of black and other marginalized groups?

Fifty years after *Brown*, I am reminded of education's potential to help transform the world every time I encounter a group of politically committed undergraduates, every time I interact with graduate students who detail new ways of seeing and understanding the world, and every time a young black child who lives in the neighborhoods west and south of our campus comes to know of the University of Chicago as one of world's great intellectual institutions and not as a policed landscape with seemingly little relevance to his or her life. The promise of *Brown* is made manifest every time that same young child comes to imagine him- or herself sitting where you are or standing where I am today.

You have been privy to one of the most intense and energetic intellectual communities in the world. But I hope during your time here you have also learned that intellect is most powerful when it is mindful of the lives it can change, the people it can empower, and the societies it can transform. The litigants of *Brown* and the others challenging segregation fifty years ago encountered a country that legally and in practice declared black people and other people of color to be second-class citizens. Even in that context, the litigants of *Brown* spoke boldly with the aim of transform-

ing society, understanding that they were never guaranteed success nor survival but that their progress and the futures of their children could be better secured by action instead of silence.

The prophetic poet Audre Lorde implores us to speak, writing,

When we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard nor
welcomed. But when we are silent
we are still afraid. So it is better to
speak remembering we were never
meant to survive.

Class of 2005, please remember that to live fully is to incur risk. And to live connected to others, especially those more marginally positioned in our society, it is necessary to speak and act, risking status, power, and influence. To take such risks is, I believe, the fulfillment of the promise of *Brown*. It is life lived prioritizing the human dignity of all people and in pursuit of a fully realized democracy, even when society's laws and practices tell you differently. So to the Class of 2005, I wish you a life of happiness, success, and risk-taking!

Notes

1. *New York Times*, May 18, 1954.
2. Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Source Book on Criminal Justice Statistics*, 2001, table 2.1.

Cathy Cohen is Professor in the Department of Political Science and the College, and past Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture.

Address: “Being Silly, Seriously”

By Harry L. Davis

June 12, 2005

Examining empirical evidence is one hallmark of the University of Chicago style, and I’ve learned over the years that—when I am the evidence—it can even be a wonderful cover for talking about myself.

In that spirit, then, I’d like to share some data about my decision to interview here for a faculty position in the early sixties. It would be tempting, of course, to tell a story that emphasized a carefully thought-out decision on my part. But to be perfectly honest, I wanted to interview here because the comedy team of Mike Nichols and Elaine May was associated in my mind with the University of Chicago. As a doctoral student at that other business school north of here, I remember listening to recordings of their funny, intellectually playful improvisations—for example, a conversation between a patient with serious psychological problems and her therapist who continues to hiccup throughout the session. Back then, I thought that an institution that would welcome people as talented and wonderfully wacky as these two must indeed be something special. All in all, it was a silly reason for selecting Chicago as a good place for a job interview.

Now I do take some comfort in the fact that others have decided to become a part of this institution for reasons that seem equally dubious. For example, the late Katharine Graham, who was publisher of the *Washington Post* and a Trustee of this university, wrote about her decision to attend Chicago in her autobiography. Her father had vetoed her desire to study in London, but he told her that she could leave Vassar after her sophomore year and enroll at any college within the United States. One day while flipping through the pages of *Redbook* magazine she happened to see a picture of the newly appointed, twenty-nine-year-old, handsome President of the University of Chicago—Robert Maynard Hutchins. Not only was he good-looking, but the university was co-educational and located in a big city. In what has to be another silly reason for choosing this university, she decided to enroll.

I think some of our mentors must have been dismayed at how Mrs. Graham and I took such a serious step for such silly reasons, but the outcome of our decisions did stand the ultimate empirical test: It worked. So with that as a recommendation, let me devote a few moments to the subject of being silly—sometimes.

When the word “silly” is attached to someone or to an idea, it’s generally not meant as a compliment. Silly is synonymous with unsophisticated, ignorant, or lacking in common sense. Accordingly, William Frederick, Duke of Gloucester, and William IV both received the nickname of “Silly Billy” to capture their foolish, empty-headed ways. We’re supposed to grow out of silliness. (“Quit being so silly.” “Ask a silly question, get a silly answer.”)

So, why would a convocation speaker choose to anchor his remarks on a word

that many adults want to expunge rather than embrace? Is it perhaps that he has nothing serious to say? Or, could it be that he’s concerned that voices within each one of us, as well as those from others, block some apertures into serious ideas—or, for this audience, an aperture into serious business?

Deliberate silliness is paradoxical because it puts us in control: When we are silly, we can view the world through different lenses of our own choosing. Silliness frees the imagination, allowing us to see possibilities not constrained by the need to please someone or get everything right to pass someone else’s standardized test. Being silly can mean testing the view on our own terms—trying a zoom lens, or a fish-eye lens, or a panoramic lens.

Now, the imaginative lens stands in sharp contrast with a technical perspective, which values objectivity, neutrality, and impersonal ways of perceiving. The American poet Wallace Stevens contrasts these two lenses with each other in his poem “Six Significant Landscapes.” In the last stanza he writes:

Rationalists, wearing square hats,
Think, in square rooms,
Looking at the floor,
Looking at the ceiling,
They confine themselves
To right-angled triangles.
If they tried rhomboids,
Cones, waving ellipses—
As, for example, the ellipse of the
half moon—
Rationalists would wear
sombros.

Stevens begins his poem in a linear world defined by walls, ceiling, floor—creating a sense of being confined. And then there is a transformation into new shapes—the half moon, a sombrero—square hats like the mortarboards you’re wearing today—put aside. It’s as if he recognized that while a fish-eye lens, for instance, would ruin a passport photo, it might very well do something artful with the shadow cast by a sombrero.

Indeed, being silly can be like posing before fun house mirrors to view *ourselves* in multiple ways. In their silly ways, children delight in make believe—in playing “let’s pretend.” On any given day when I was young, I could be a magician, then a pirate, and later Superman (that is until gravity took hold).

Regrettably, you are probably past the days of “let’s pretend.” But, rather than searching for that one identity, I’d propose to you that in shaping our careers we can benefit from multiple identities—some of them as young as childhood, and only one as old as today.

The quintessential “self-made” businessman Benjamin Franklin was considerably larger than this single identity. His multiple personae, in fact, are the embodiment of a trickster—that figure in society

that “rattles the cage” in order to challenge cultural conventions. Franklin entered the public stage at sixteen, writing as an elderly woman criticizing the hypocrisy of the elite in Massachusetts. He wrote in London newspapers as a Briton (a London manufacturer) and at other times as a New Englander (an American). He knew precisely what identity to bring on stage to reach his intended audience.

I tend to agree with the Chicago Symphony’s Daniel Barenboim who has suggested that having multiple identities is not only possible but, indeed, is something to which to aspire.

If these small, but powerful, voices within each of us don’t kill the imagination, the words of others can. Ideas are sometimes put down not because they are really foolish but, rather, because they threaten widely held beliefs.

In other cases, the put-downs have more to do with the messenger. The social psychologist Dan Wegner divides the world into two types of people: the bumbler who enjoy going through life trying to get something done and the pointers who never do anything themselves but love to point out the bumbler’s bumbles. The word “silly” is a favorite weapon in the pointer’s vocabulary.

Now I have to acknowledge that many, if not most, ideas labeled “silly” are just that—silly. But a small number of ideas judged to be foolish do mature and do impact the world—FedEx, eBay, even Silly Putty®. Low probability outcomes such as these pose a dilemma for organizations because a large number of tries must take place, most of which will be unsuccessful and deemed, after the fact, to have been bad investments. (It’s a dilemma reminiscent of a long-standing belief in business that about half of what is spent on advertising is wasted, the only problem being that we don’t know which half.)

Not unlike businesses, but in a more permissive economy, the best universities are places that tolerate, even encourage, serious dialogue about ideas that many would consider silly or foolish—perhaps even dangerous. Stuart Tave, now an emeritus professor of English at this university, once opined that more dumb things happen at a university than at any other accredited institution. In a 1989 convocation address, Tave described the best faculty and students as smart, self-confident people—even a bit arrogant—who take big risks that stretch themselves to the edge and beyond, much like great athletes. And it’s because of this quality of mind that they are also capable of pulling their intellectual hamstrings, making big mistakes and fools of themselves.

The University of Chicago has a particular place in its heart for those who seriously pursue risky ideas. Two examples on the research front immediately come to mind.

The late Professor Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, who won the Nobel Prize in 1983, was severely criticized by the then leading astronomer Sir Arthur Eddington for his work on the evolution of stars. Eddington tore into Chandra’s work—a *reductio ad absurdum*, he called it—and then pronounced that there should be a “law of nature to prevent a star from behaving in this absurd way.” The audience laughed.

Eventually what was labeled absurd would be vindicated; his insight had been correct and black holes would be accepted.

In the Graduate School of Business, George Stigler used to tell the story of Ronald Coase’s first visit to the University, to discuss his proposition that when there are no transaction costs, the assignment of legal rights has no effect on the way economic resources would be used. Stigler wondered how such a fine economist could make such an obvious mistake. So, believing that the idea was silly enough to debate, twenty Chicago economists met with Coase. Stigler described the two-hour discussion as exhilarating, with the vote going from twenty to one against Coase at the beginning to twenty-one for Coase at the end. Ronald Coase received the Nobel Prize in 1991.

Standing in this location with Harper Library as my backdrop, I simply must acknowledge the audacious founder of this university, William Rainey Harper, who crafted a vision of a great research university built in a swamp on the Midway, freed faculty to do research, doubled the top salary scale, admitted women and Jews, initiated the quarter system, and created high-quality extension programs outside of Hyde Park. Some labeled the University a veritable monstrosity: “A foreign intrusion into the life of the city.” “Harper’s folly.” Despite the ridicule, this institution surely benefited from entertaining what some “pointers” thought was a silly, fantastic notion.

Now, some final thoughts for *your* bottom line:

First, don’t take things and yourself too seriously. Keep in mind William James’s counsel:

Our errors are surely not such awfully solemn things. In a world where we are so certain to incur them in spite of all our caution, a certain lightness of heart seems healthier than this excessive nervousness on their behalf.*

Second, engage in some actions that others may find silly. Take a train across this great country—you’ll see things that you would never see from an airplane or the interstate. Accept a cut in pay to do work you love. Stroll across the monumental Brooklyn Bridge (it’s the chief engineer John Roebling’s birthday today).

Third, surprise yourself and others by doing something silly every day. Tackle some project with the goal of being inefficient. Argue a side of an issue that’s opposed to what you believe. Plan to be spontaneous tomorrow.

Focus your zoom lens on my silly reason for interviewing here and how it turned out to be an aperture into a life’s work more satisfying than I ever could have imagined. I know that Katharine Graham had the same sense of fulfillment in the College.

Finally, and most genuinely, I want to congratulate you on your accomplishments. We hope you will stay in touch with those of us still in Hyde Park. We will certainly stay in touch with you. Believe me when I say that, on that note, I’m being far more serious than silly.

Notes

* James, William. *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy*. New York: Dover, 1956. (Original work published 1897.)

Harry L. Davis is the Roger L. and Rachel M. Goetz Distinguished Service Professor in the Graduate School of Business.

Remarks

By Brady W. Dougan
June 12, 2005

Why me?

I'll admit that was my first thought when I learned that your class had chosen me to speak at today's convocation. After all, I'm too young to have much wisdom to impart. But then it occurred to me: The fact that you saw me as a potential convocation speaker means that maybe I'm *not* all that young. So I did what any self-respecting Graduate School of Business (GSB) alum would do: some quantitative research.

Imagine my surprise to discover that the average age of a GSB convocation speaker is fifty-six years old. Fifty-six years old? Took me a week to get over that one.

I'm far from fifty-six, and I should warn you now: I am *not* going to give you all the secrets to business success today—because I don't have them. But I do know one twenty-first century reality that can't be found in a textbook or taught in a lecture hall: and that's what it means to be a business leader today.

Since you entered the GSB, you haven't exactly been bombarded by the best role models for good business leadership. Enron and others have unfortunately become the new poster children for senior management behavior. Frankly, it's devaluing our profession and leading to huge new pressures on executives.

The cloud that hangs over many of the top companies in America has dissipated, but it hasn't disappeared. So is it any wonder that a survey last year found that six out of ten senior corporate officers would refuse a promotion to CEO? Or, that more than seven out of ten existing CEOs were considering quitting? But, I'm here to tell you that I have the solution to—the antidote for—the current epidemic of bad business leadership: *It's you!*

I don't mean to put too much pressure on you. But here at the GSB you've learned not only critical skills but also a unique approach to management. Apply both, and you'll do great things for the world, for the GSB, and for yourself. First of all, you've learned the right approach to managing change.

Many commencement speakers say that change is the only true constant. It's happening at an ever-accelerating pace. You're entering a business environment that is full of endless possibility. And this means you need to seize opportunity and embrace innovation. Now, I'd better stop there before the cliché police come and take me away. But remember that even a cliché sometimes contains a large element of truth. When I graduated from the GSB in 1982, my industry—investment banking—was a very different business than it is today.

In fact, 80 percent of the revenues that investment banks make today simply *did not exist*. Mortgage-backed securities,

derivatives, quantitative trading—these essential elements of business, which we take for granted today, were just in their infancy back then. And I'll bet that twenty-five years from now, 80 percent of revenues will come from ideas that are barely a dream in someone's head today. One of my favorite stories in that regard was told to me by David Beim. David was the head of investment banking at Bankers Trust Company, which is where I ended up in 1982 after loading up the U-Haul and driving overnight to get to New York.

In the very early seventies, he was at First Boston when he and another up-and-coming young banker were called into the office of George Shin, who was then CEO. George said, "Look, we've got two big opportunities. Both are brand new and need to be built from the ground up, and I want each of you to choose one." So David chose project finance, and the other fella—a guy named Joe Perella—chose mergers and acquisitions. And, that story is still rewriting itself as we speak. So when you get called into the corner office, take the chance. In fact—better yet—saunter in on your own and say, "I've got this idea, and I just know it's going to be big."

The risk is not as big as you think. When you get that gut feeling that you can make it work, go for it. That's exactly what happened to me. I was lucky enough to be present at the creation of the derivatives markets. In that market today, the notional amount of all derivative contracts outstanding is about \$200 trillion. We were the market leader when I started, and we did just eight swaps in that first year. Sneeze on our trading floor today, and eight swaps will have been completed before you can say "gesundheit." But you also need the analytical approach that you learned here, and it's more than just basic analysis. Beyond the ability to see the opportunity and the guts to go for it, you need to make sure you know enough to get it right. That's the difference between risk . . . and smart, disciplined, informed risk. That's how, as you stand at the precipice of a new era, you can define the new direction and not just respond to that change—but drive it. I don't know for sure what David Beim and Joe Perella saw that drove their decision making. But in retrospect, the signs were all there: deregulation, the democratization of capital, the focus on shareholder value, the shift in the technology cycle from the developmental stage of innovations to the application stage. Today is no different. The signs of change and opportunity are all around us.

Take China. That market across the horizon has already surpassed the United States in consumption of every food, energy, and industrial commodity—except oil. It will be the world's biggest economy by 2045. Take the aging of the population. By 2050, six out of ten adults in Europe will be over the age of sixty-five. And, of course, the digital communications revolution is obliterating barriers to international competition. For all of the hype around the issue—and there's been a lot over the past few years—I'm convinced that we're still in the Stone Age of the digital revolution. The surface has only been scratched. Thomas Friedman calls it "the flattening of the world." For all of you, it will be business

as usual. But it brings both challenges and opportunities. The obvious challenge, of course, is that you're now competing with people and ideas on nearly every corner of the globe.

Parts of the world that just twenty years ago were principally competing through low-cost manufacturing are now competing in the high-stakes realm of idea generation. They are now home to the software writers, chemists, and research analysts fueling the knowledge economy. The opportunity, for each of you, comes from the fact that you can partner with these people—inspire, motivate, and lead them. Your co-workers are as likely to be in Shanghai or Bangalore as they are to be in the next cubicle. And that makes good management more important than ever. It lets you marshal more intellectual firepower in achieving your business goals than ever before in human history. And that brings me to point number two: No longer can you do it on your own. The era of the all-knowing, all-seeing, autocratic business leader is over. The cult of the individual is out. More and more, success is about managers who can lead, yes, but, just as important, who can harness the strengths of the organizations and the people they're leading. Because in its most noble and effective form, good management is about leading groups of people and helping them to achieve greater heights than they could on their own. That's the ultimate value of our profession. There's no way that a bunch of people over a thirty-year period will spontaneously come together to build the Great Pyramid. There are a lot of things that couldn't exist without somebody making a plan and mobilizing people to accomplish it.

But it's a little different than it was in ancient Egypt. In fact, it's a little harder now because people in today's and tomorrow's workforces are different than they were even just thirty years ago. Command and control structures don't work as they once did. Would you want to slave away for a boss who thinks he or she has all the answers and ends up taking all the credit? Of course not. Think of the military parallel. If an officer's top objective is just to save his own skin, how much loyalty will that engender among his soldiers? I see the kinds of people who sometimes end up in leadership positions. The simple truth is that sometimes they're more focused on their own success than that of the organization. Today, that's a losing proposition. Whenever your career takes you after graduation, you'll need to draw on the diverse expertise of many people to succeed. And finally, you'll need the wisdom of many counselors to navigate the shifting sands of what constitutes ethical behavior in today's business environment. You'll need not just one but a whole company of CEOs—Chief Ethics Officers—on whose values and sense of "doing the right thing" you will rely to keep your company out of trouble.

If you want to be a business leader of tomorrow, go out and do it for the right reasons. Which brings me back full circle. Your degree has prepared you for a business career in ways that you've probably never fully imagined. We're entering an era where the GSB's intense emphasis on thoughtful analysis and collaborative

leadership will create a new generation of tremendously effective leaders. Where the analytical skills and the team-oriented approach you've learned, combined with some old-fashioned guts, will enable you to drive change in the generation to come. Where you can be the leading edge of a new and better style of management and help fix what's wrong with American business. But you're gonna take some lumps along the way. There'll be some setbacks. Just when you're on the right track, something will happen and you'll have the wind knocked out of you. That's when the heart—the passion—will see you through. I've certainly had my share of setbacks, and they can be constructive. But you've got to keep your eye on the prize and have the right motivation. Then it *will* be your passion.

So go out and apply your skills to seek, seize, and squeeze opportunities for all they're worth. Don't just make a difference, but *be* the difference. What I'm saying is that you have an historic opportunity. Leadership has never been as important as it is today. And *that* responsibility falls to you. It's on your watch. You need to go out to motivate, inspire, and lead. Be the courageous but thoughtful and collaborative leaders the GSB has taught us to be. You own the future. The future is *your* time, and I believe *my* time is about up. Thanks very much, and go get 'em. Keep making us proud.

Brady W. Dougan, A.B.'81, M.B.A.'82, is the chief executive officer of Credit Suisse First Boston.

Bachelor's Degree Candidates' Remarks

Remarks

By Franklin Vance McMillan

Before we begin, allow me to thank President Randel, Dean Boyer, Marshal Straus, the faculty, the Class of 2005, and our families and friends. Again, thank you.

Graduation speeches often encourage success. They might offer us the world, tell us we can win Nobel Prizes, or even remind us how absurdly advantaged we already are.

But, in the spirit of the University of Chicago, I thought I would emphasize failure one last time.

Class of 2005, we have started on a long, downward spiral. And it's one from which we will never escape. It is the downward spiral of memory loss.

If you ask yourselves honestly, you can already see the effects. Most of us could not now pass the final exams we took a week ago. Probably even more of us—although for different reasons—cannot remember various parts of Senior Week.

And it's only going to get worse. We will forget friends' names and our old addresses. We will forget parties and the people we should, or shouldn't, have hit on. We will forget a long, long list of books.

To be perfectly honest, we will probably even forget those "priceless life skills" we were supposed to learn in the Core.

So what will we remember?

Certainly—and perhaps it is the only

certain thing—we will remember our graduation. We won't remember who sat next to us; we won't remember the tune to the alma mater; and we most certainly won't remember the speeches. But for some odd reason—forty, sixty years down the line—the experience of receiving a symbolic piece of paper will remain ingrained in our minds.

But if we remember anything else, I hope it is how intellectually engaged this school has forced us to be and how it has inspired us to think critically about almost everything. From the passionate arguments we have had about elections and Plato to that masochistic nostalgia we feel every time summer break drags on too long, the fond memories that defined our quirky existence here at the University of Chicago are the ones that I hope linger the longest.

Last weekend, we had a rare opportunity to see the future. As we tried to escape the stress of school, hundreds of alumni converged on campus to remember it. They went to classes; they partied; they spent time with old friends. They tried, if only for a moment, to be like us.

But you don't come back to your alma mater just to be a poser, and you don't come back to donate money for overpriced food. You come back because deep down you know that something amazing—something worth remembering—happened to you here. You come back because this place changed your life.

And while I don't expect everyone here to come to reunions, I do hope we forever share some of the memories those alumni feared losing. Because over the past few years, our lives *did* change. We spoke differently, and we certainly slept differently. We viewed the world differently, and we lived differently. And even if we never live—or want to live—like this again, I hope we never forget it.

Thank you all for everything, and best of luck.

Franklin Vance McMillan received a bachelor of arts degree during the convocation. His major area of study was Philosophy.

Remarks

By Elliot Benjamin Tapper

Good morning, friends. If you don't recognize me, I'll refresh your memory. Think back, back to Hum class. Yes, I was "that guy." I know you'll always remember that overly enthusiastic guy. You know, the one who always had something "great" to say.

Well, I thought I'd start my speech by proclaiming that I intend to remain "that guy" for the rest of my life. In fact, I'd like to list just a few of the places where I'll parade my "that guyness" in the near future.

I'm waiting for the cocktail party conversation where someone will bring up tax policy and I'll be the first to draw the Laffer curve or the play where I'll turn to my date and comment on the texture and shape of the stage relationships. I'm waiting for the time I walk past a group of kids playing tag and draw a parallel to the state of nature. Essentially, I'm looking forward to a lifetime of sounding erudite and being more well read and well rounded than everyone else in the room . . . but maybe that's just me.

If there is any point to my speech, it's that I hope we won't lose our enthusiasm. For four years we cared about real issues. We questioned our assumptions and formed the most educated and thoughtful opinions. When we leave the University of Chicago and are without peers to push us to challenge our convictions, we could grow indifferent or apathetic. We may find ourselves referring to arguments about our nature or the philosophical implications of our beliefs as "so U of C." But I hope that doesn't mean we will think the fruits of our studies are meant to remain on the quads. We hear that given the breadth of opportunity we face, there is no logical next step, but the lessons of our four years have provided us with sufficient material to chart the right course whatever our choice may be.

We once organized petitions, lobbied our representatives, volunteered throughout the city, stood up for human rights and fought against the evils of the world—like hunger, tyranny, empire, Citibank, and Taco Bell. But I fear that we will find ourselves without the time to commit or, worse, that we'll think our struggles for justice and truth were best left to our youth. I believe we accomplished a lot of good for humanity during our time here. But the nagging suspicion hits me that maybe we were but one more a cappella concert away from ending genocide.

There's a lot left for us to do. Just as long as we remain true to our Chicago roots, we'll continue to do the right things.

Elliot Benjamin Tapper received a bachelor of arts degree during the convocation. His major area of study was Biological Sciences.

Remarks

By Carlee Kathryn Tressel

I grew up with a dad who is a college football coach, so I spent a lot of time around a stadium. I would climb the bleachers, challenge my brother and sister to foot-races on the Astroturf field, and carefully scribe inspirational quotations on pieces of cardboard in an attempt to imitate the motivational signs posted around the football offices. They fascinated me, but there was one particular sign that I didn't quite understand.

A long, granite tunnel connected the field to the locker rooms. It was an echoy, in-between feeling place, and you couldn't miss the massive sign that hung overhead. It read: "What are you going to do now?" My brother, sister, and I would read it and shout things like, "I'm going to eat lunch!" or "I'm going to beat you to the bottom of this tunnel!" As I got older, I understood that the question was meant to remind the players to be responsible for their actions in victory and defeat and to think about how they could improve their performances. Now as I leave the University of Chicago, I find myself in another kind of in-between place, asking myself the same thing: What am I going to do now?

There was an easy answer after high school. For most of us, it was a given that we would go to college. At *this* point, however, there is no given next step. The choice of what to do after college is not necessarily

obvious. For scheduled and driven people like us, the prospect of answering "I don't know" to "What are you going to do now?" is uncomfortable.

But at the same time, not knowing exactly what is next can be freeing. It leaves the possibility of finding out what we truly want to do, and there is no deadline for figuring that out. One of our classmates told me that she had spoken to her grandmother recently, reporting that, no, she didn't have a job yet, and she wasn't sure what she was going to do next year. Her grandmother had replied, "That's okay. I don't know what I'm doing next year either."

The question on the sign is also an invitation to enjoy the immediate moment: What am I going to do *now*?

So, *right now*, I am going to be grateful for the people who got us here.

Thank you, Chicago faculty, staff, administrators, and advisers of all kinds.

Thank you, teammates.

Thank you, roommates. You had enough faith to fall asleep that first night of college though everything was unfamiliar and though our beds were only three feet apart. Thank you for being different than me—so much so that I wrote my first roommate a letter to ask her how to pronounce her name, and I spelled mine phonetically just in case it also looked difficult.

Thank you, friends, for making sure ambitious personal agendas didn't always prevail. Thank you just for being around or for talking for hours—despite pressing assignments, caffeine crashes, or the light of dawn.

Thank you, family and parents. Thank you for giving us support and the curiosity to want to find out what we could do. We graduates are not the same people we were when we parted ways with you at 57th and University while the bagpipes played. Thank you for handling the growth and changes in us with grace and an encouraging spirit. You are the reason we made it here.

And finally, thank you to the Class of 2005 because nothing in my experience here at Chicago could replace knowing you. So what are we going to do now? I don't know. But with this group, I am not worried.

Carlee Kathryn Tressel received a bachelor of arts degree during the convocation. Her major area of study was English Language & Literature.

Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching

The University's Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching were presented during the 481st convocation on June 11, 2005.

Upon the recommendation of John W. Boyer, Dean of the College, and Richard P. Saller, Provost, Don Michael Randel, President, designated the following winners.

László Babai

Professor, Departments of Computer Science and Mathematics, and the College

The candidate was presented by David MacQueen, Professor, Department of Computer Science and the College; and Chairman, Department of Computer Science.

László Babai's research straddles mathematics and computer science. His papers on graph isomorphism, communication complexity, combinatorics, computational group theory, lower bounds, and graph theory have had a deep impact on the field. He is particularly noted for developing the highly influential concept of "interactive proof systems," for which he won the international Gödel Prize in 1993. Babai joined the University in 1984, shortly after the creation of the Department of Computer Science, and was instrumental in building a world-class theory group here.

Babai has earned a legendary reputation as a great teacher of theoretical computer science and mathematics. His courses on discrete mathematics, the theory of algorithms, and combinatorics have long formed the core of the computer science curriculum. In keeping with the distinguished tradition of mathematics education in his native Hungary, Babai puts creative problem solving at the center of his teaching philosophy. He feels that mathematics is not something to be memorized; it is something to be discovered—and he inspires his students, even the less motivated, to do just that. He inspires students through his contagious enthusiasm for his subject, his eclectic treatment of topics and methods, and his genuine concern that all his students effectively master both the concepts and the problem-solving techniques of mathematics. His courses are notoriously demanding, but—because of his devotion to the subject, his humor, his patience, and his genuine concern that his students succeed—even students who struggle come away with a rewarding experience that they often see as the highlight of their undergraduate education.

Citation: Throughout the history of computer science at Chicago, you have challenged and inspired students to master and appreciate the rigor and power of mathematical problem solving.

Dr. Dorothy A. Hanck

Professor, Department of Medicine and the College

The candidate was presented by Dr. Joe G. N. Garcia, the Lowell T. Coggeshall Professor and Chairman, Department of Medicine.

Dr. Hanck is one of the leading cellular and molecular cardiac electrophysiologists in the world. She has performed elegant, seminal work that has produced key insights into the basic kinetics and function of the sodium channel. She has developed and utilized cutting-edge tools in molecular biology and electrophysiology to move the field forward. Her discoveries have tremendous importance and relevance to cardiac pharmacology and ultimately to the design of novel, targeted therapeutic agents. Dr. Hanck is also one of the University of Chicago's most visible and respected educators at many levels. One

of her students said, “Dr. Hanck embodies all of the aspects of an ideal professor . . . a sincere love of teaching, professionalism, intelligence, compassion, and a good sense of humor.”

Dr. Hanck’s teaching credentials are superb, reflecting her deep commitment to excellence in education at all levels. In the College, Dr. Hanck served for several years as the Program Director for the Undergraduate Specialization in Neuroscience. Undergraduate biology majors who are interested in the neurosciences turn to her as an adviser and organizer of a specific program of courses. Since 1994, she has been the course director of the highly regarded course in cellular neurobiology. In addition to delivering many of the course lectures, Dr. Hanck has revised the laboratory component of the course to include state-of-the-art molecular biology and electrophysiology techniques, as well as innovative computer models of her own design. She also teaches a popular introductory pharmacology course for undergraduates.

Dr. Hanck teaches extensively at the graduate-student level as well, and has been a respected teacher in the medical school and in the cardiology fellowship program. In many of these activities, she bridges the biological and physical sciences with wisdom and grace. Dr. Hanck has taught a large number of undergraduate, graduate, and medical students in her laboratory. Many of these students have gone on to further graduate work in science or to academic careers.

Dr. Hanck’s devotion to teaching has led to many significant leadership roles in science education at the University of Chicago. In addition, she serves as a role model for women in science, and she has been an active member of the Committee on Women in Medicine in our own Department of Medicine.

As another of her students has said, “Whenever I mention her name to students who have taken her classes in the past, they immediately exclaim ‘Dottie Hanck? She is amazing!’” She is amazing. Dr. Hanck is an extraordinary teacher and scientist.

Citation: Your passion and deep commitment to excellence in education at all levels exemplifies the qualities of an ideal professor. The beneficiaries of your superb talents are deeply grateful.

Dr. Stephen C. Meredith

Associate Professor, Departments of Pathology and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Committee on Immunology, and the College

The candidate was presented by Dr. Vinay Kumar, the Alice Hogge and Arthur A. Baer Professor, Department of Pathology and the College; and Chairman, Department of Pathology.

The word “unique” comes to mind when thinking of Steve Meredith and his career as a physician-scientist and teacher. The uniqueness started with his own education. As a future physician-scientist, Steve chose to major not only in biology but also in English literature. He graduated cum laude from Brandeis University. After completing

his M.D. degree at Washington University in St. Louis, Steve joined the pathology residency program and Ph.D. program in biochemistry at the University of Chicago. After receiving his Ph.D. in 1982, he was appointed Assistant Professor of Pathology in the Division of the Biological Sciences.

As a pathologist, Steve Meredith is unique in that in the morning he may be supervising an autopsy to determine the cause of death of a patient and in the afternoon he may be conducting experiments utilizing solid state NMR to unravel the structure of amyloid, widely believed to underlie the causation of Alzheimer’s disease. His landmark studies on amyloid fibrillogenesis in 1998 led initially to skepticism because this work was “well before its time.” In the ensuing years, it has been replicated in many other laboratories and has led to a paradigm shift in the understanding of how amyloid fibrils are organized. The implications of these studies are immense since they may lead to the development of agents that inhibit the formation of amyloid fibrils.

Over the past two decades, Steve has also distinguished himself as a master teacher. That he carries a very heavy load of teaching in the Division of the Biological Sciences is not surprising since Steve is a physician-scientist and an investigative pathologist. Of the more than a dozen courses that he teaches in the medical school and in the biomedical graduate programs, several were created by him. The crown jewel amongst these, called Cellular Pathology and Immunology, is taught almost entirely by Steve Meredith, and it drills into aspiring physicians the fundamental mechanisms of human diseases. His excellence in teaching medical students has been recognized many times with teaching awards.

What is unique about Steve Meredith is his love and dedication to teaching humanities within the College’s Fundamentals: Issues and Texts program. In this program, Steve has taught courses on James Joyce (*Ulysses*), St. Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*), St. Augustine (*The City of God*), Thomas Mann (*The Magic Mountain*), and Dostoevsky (*The Brothers Karamazov*). While the teaching of humanities may be seen as a diversion by other scientists, Steve views it quite differently. He has had a lifelong interest in philosophical questions and literature, and to him these questions are at the heart of why he is a scientist. As he has said, “Science as we know it now was once called ‘natural philosophy,’ for good reason.”

Impressed by the intensity and passion with which Steve teaches humanities, a student wrote, “He was able to present *The Brothers Karamazov* with the knowledge and insight of a professor of Russian literature and the excitement of someone reading it for the first time.” The student added, “I still today wonder how a man who does research in pathology, which I believe to be at a very advanced level, finds the time not only to read as much as he does but also to share his interests in literature with undergraduates. Speaking with him, I begin to realize that is all done out of love.”

Citation: Steve Meredith, your dedication to intellectual inquiry that transcends nar-

row academic boundaries and your passion for sharing knowledge with colleagues and students gives definition to the word “professor.”

Holly Marie Swyers

Katharine Graham Fellow and Collegiate Assistant Professor, Social Sciences Collegiate Division.

The candidate was presented by Bertram J. Cobler, William Rainey Harper Professor, the College; Departments of Comparative Human Development, Psychology, and Psychiatry; Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, and the Divinity School.

Holly Swyers is an accomplished scholar in the field of cultural anthropology. Anthropology today has moved beyond earlier study of cultures other than our own and begun to focus on those practices and meanings that shape our own understanding of self and others. Swyers’s work exemplifies this new emphasis in anthropology. Her dissertation research was founded on ethnographic observations of a large, urban high school and a reading of the literature on educational reform across the past century. Swyers’s results highlighted the contradictions between preservation of national traditions and the changing educational practices presented in a liberal democracy confronting the problems of globalization. She showed how the ideology of school reform becomes entangled in a set of contradictions regarding our place in the larger world. In a more recent study of the “bleacher bums” in a major league baseball park, Swyers deepens her study of the beliefs and practices people use to make a place for themselves in a community within a liberal democracy confronting globalization.

In her teaching as in her scholarly study, Holly Swyers is the very ideal of the teacher-scholar. She brings her enthusiasm and appreciation for the paradox presented by culture into the classroom. Her dedication to the process of teaching extends through class discussions, individual meetings with her students, and close work with students on writing. Her essay topics have become collector’s items, and there is always a long line of students waiting to talk to her during office hours. Swyers encourages critical discussion tempered by an understanding of ourselves as members of contemporary society. She is a teacher who helps students to realize an appreciation for the complexity of contemporary urban society.

Holly has taken on important leadership positions in the College. She presently serves as the Co-Chair of the Society of Fellows, where her activism has fostered the vitality of the Society. In the Core course Self, Culture, and Society, Holly has been critical in both the management and the pedagogy of the course. In our weekly staff meetings, her contributions to our discussions reflect her love of both teaching and learning. She inspires and educates her colleagues just as she does her students.

Citation: Enthusiastic and committed teacher and careful observer of the culture of the classroom, your joy in learning and

teaching inspires your students to read critically and to appreciate the complexity of contemporary society.

Kenneth W. Warren

The William J. Friedman and Alicia Townsend Friedman Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committees on African & African-American Studies and the History of Culture, and the College

The candidate was presented by Bill Brown, the Edward Carson Waller Distinguished Service Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committee on the History of Culture, and the College.

Since Kenneth Warren’s arrival at the University of Chicago in the early 1990s, he has transformed the field of American studies and the field of African-American studies, both on our campus and far beyond it.

He is an award-winning scholar who never fails to make literary analysis difficult, respecting the epistemological and political challenge of engaging literary texts to produce new knowledge about our society, past and present. Moreover, he does not hesitate to show how our apparently progressive aspirations can threaten to perpetuate the very racial ideologies we seek to combat. It is this challenge that our College students have responded to so powerfully. One student wrote of the “force that will push me to continue the discussion begun in Professor Warren’s class even after I breathe that sigh of relief after I hand in my final. In short, Professor Warren’s teaching transcends the ten-week quarter.” Very few professors indeed can lay claim to such transcendence.

Kenneth Warren’s impact as an intellectual—publishing not just scholarly articles but also pieces for the *Nation*, the *Miami Herald*, and the *Chicago Tribune*—has had everything to do with his willingness to tackle some of the most difficult questions facing black leaders and black intellectuals today. He has argued, “the academic hubris that leads us to think that we know something about the minds of people whose lives and expressions we study is best tempered by a society in which other voices have the power to counter our own.” In an effort to bring such a society into being, he has perennially extended his pedagogical vocation beyond the walls of the academy, for instance, working as a leader within the Mellon Minority Project, working for Chicago’s Neighborhood Writing Alliance, and serving as one of the directors of the *Journal of Ordinary Thought*, a publication committed to the idea that “taking control of life requires people to think about the world and to communicate their thoughts to others.”

Kenneth Warren’s commitment to literature and to teaching has been a commitment to change the world in which we live.

Citation: As a professor committed to bringing more minority students to our campus and to showing all students what literature can tell us about the problems and possibilities of the world in which we live, you have provided us all with a model

of just how powerful the act of teaching can be.

Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching

Four Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching were presented during the 481st convocation on June 10, 2005. These awards, established in 1986, recognize and honor faculty members for their effective graduate teaching, including leadership in the development of programs and a special ability to encourage, influence, and work with graduate students.

Nominations and recommendations for the Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching are made by faculty and graduate students; selection is by a faculty committee appointed by the Provost.

Andrew Abbott

The Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Sociology and the College

The candidate was presented by William Parish, Professor, Department of Sociology and the College; and Chairman, Department of Sociology.

Andrew Abbott mentors more graduate students than just about anyone in the Department of Sociology. This is not because he has large research grants and hires a horde of research assistants. It is not because, pied piper-like, he has a trendy topic that many want to imbibe. His students are typically not his research assistants, and they work on a diversity of topics that fit under no single rubric. Drawing from letters on his behalf, he draws diverse students because he “checks in, congratulates, encourages, shares of himself, and provides practical information.” His congratulations to students include noting some milestone that they achieved in the previous quarter.

He draws students because of his willingness to provide quick feedback and suggestions for enlarging a project, often requiring additional reading on his part that is not part of his own research agenda. He “provides research opportunities, and helps with funding and career placement.” He “helps bring out the best in his students, rather than dictating what they should do or be.” “He takes students and student work seriously, and understands the sometimes fragile egos that can come with being a graduate student.” His high standards of mentorship and the successes they bring in the quality of dissertations and subsequent job placements show what graduate education can be at its best.

Citation: Andrew Abbott helps bring out the best in his students, rather than dictating what they should do or be. His high standards of mentorship and the successes they bring in the quality of dissertations and subsequent job placements show what graduate education can be at its best.

Lauren Berlant

The George M. Pullman Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committee on African & African-American Studies, and the College

The candidate was presented by Elizabeth Helsinger, the John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of English Language & Literature and Art History, and the College; and Chairman, Department of English Language & Literature.

Lauren Berlant is an extraordinary graduate teacher and mentor. An innovative scholar with ready wit and contagious energies, she is also an unfailing advocate for students, committed to the collaborative pursuit of knowledge in the classroom, who mentors graduate students even in fields far from her own. She treats her students as adult professionals and colleagues, inspiring them to live up to her high expectations and showing them by inclusion what it is like to be a professor. Her classroom is a stimulating space of surprise and challenge where students experience the “live” quality of her intelligence and are motivated to join the conversation. Out of class these conversations go on for hours, as she guides and goads them to push their thinking even further, to be more critical, to demand more of themselves. Her wit leavens the razor-sharpness of her intellect: by getting students to laugh, she helps them to sustain sanity through humor even in the face of personal and political depression.

Citation: A brilliant, innovative scholar and keen critic of American culture, Lauren Berlant inspires and challenges students, guiding and goading them to demand more of themselves. She is an unfailing advocate for students for whom she provides not only intellectual but practical guidance along the rocky path of personal, professional, and political maturity.

Alan L. Kolata

The Neukom Family Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Anthropology and the College; and Chairman, Department of Anthropology

The candidate was presented by Michael Dietler, Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Committee on the Ancient Mediterranean World, and the College.

Alan Kolata's reputation as scintillating classroom teacher grows out of his own exemplary practice as scholar. His intense commitment to archaeological fieldwork and to the data sets it generates has led to a style of teaching that, while fully grounded in the material record, also situates such data in the wider social world. The energy with which he creates this close dialogue between material records and social processes has proved extremely compelling to students. Alan Kolata's commitment to a living, active archaeology allows the classroom to become a forum for critical analysis of the world, seen through the refracted lens of the archaeological imagination.

A member of the Department of Anthropology since 1987, Alan Kolata's mode of teaching came to shape the core of the department's emerging curriculum centered on a historically-engaged archaeology, a vision he has pursued through institutional service, research, teaching, and advising. Furthermore, his strong emphasis of issues

of development and human-environment interactions taps into key concerns among our student body and permits the lessons of archaeology to be directed toward critical issues in the contemporary world. His approach has drawn a steady stream of excellent young scholars who attest to the care and insightfulness with which they were mentored, the kindness with which they were treated, and the attention paid to supporting their efforts to secure funding and employment. Alan Kolata embodies the role of exemplary scholar-pedagogue, inspiring his students and providing an excellent model for his younger colleagues.

Citation: Through his dynamic engagement as a scholar-pedagogue linking the concerns of the present with the lessons of the past, Alan Kolata has energized a generation of students and made a truly outstanding contribution to graduate education at this university.

Amy Dru Stanley

Associate Professor, Department of History, Committee on the History of Culture, and the College

The candidate was presented by Prasenjit Duara, Professor, Departments of History and East Asian Languages & Civilizations, and the College; and Chairman, Department of History.

Amy Dru Stanley is a prize-winning scholar of U.S. history who brings together the diverse fields of legal, gender, economic, and intellectual history. On this occasion, we recognize her for making this prismatic intellectual perspective come alive for her many students, past and present, in the Department of History. Amy Stanley commands enormous respect from the students. It is almost as if, working with her, they go through a cathartic experience that enables them to emerge purer and stronger. They are also deeply appreciative of her dedication to the needs and interests of students. Amy's courses are designed with the needs of the students uppermost in her mind.

Amy has also shown her dedication to the teaching program in the department as a whole. During her tenure as chair of the undergraduate committee of the Department of History she reorganized the entire program. She succeeded in securing better facilities and remuneration for the graduate student preceptors, increased the enrollment in our major, and made it a model undergraduate program in the social sciences. Amy Dru Stanley demands high intellectual standards from students and, in turn, attends to their most basic intellectual and livelihood requirements. The students and the department appreciate her efforts with deep gratitude.

Citation: Amy Dru Stanley's intellectual generosity, her accessibility, and her challenging, provocative courses guide and inspire her students to discover their own voices and to reach their full academic and professional potential.

Honorary Degrees

Doctor of Humane Letters

Roy Goodwin D'Andrade

Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut; Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego

The candidate was presented by Tanya Lubrman, the Max Palevsky Professor, Department of Comparative Human Development and the College.

Roy D'Andrade is a cultural anthropologist whose work transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. He is one of the few scholars who can legitimately claim to have initiated an entire field of research. His major contribution has been to pioneer the schema theory of culture, a corpus of work that has established that cultural knowledge is not transmitted from one generation to another whole and simple, but instead that transmissible knowledge consists of unspecified and implicit schemas that are learned slowly, in the context of social engagement and constrained by ordinary psychological mechanisms.

What makes him so unusual is that he works between the scientific and the humanistic approaches. He has done more to create a bridge between anthropology and psychology than almost any other scholar, and in the process he has initiated research programs in linguistics and cognitive science as well as in anthropology and psychology. Even now he is working to understand in detail the way social context enters the cognitive process. He is a masterful teacher and inspiring interlocutor.

Citation: Interdisciplinary scholar and anthropological scientist, Roy D'Andrade has expanded our understanding of the cultural influences on the human psyche. With boundless curiosity, enthusiasm, and intellectual verve, he has fundamentally reshaped our understanding of culture by creating a new model of the transmission of cultural knowledge.

Doctor of Science

Carlos J. Bustamante

Howard Hughes Investigator, Luis Alvarez Professor of Physics, and Professor of Molecular & Cell Biology and Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley

The candidate was presented by Stephen Kent, Professor, Departments of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology and Chemistry, and the College; and Director, Institute for Biophysical Dynamics.

Carlos Bustamante is a pioneer of one of the most exciting fields of modern science: namely, “single molecule” studies of nucleic acids and proteins. This revolutionary approach makes use of novel physical methods to perform mechanical measurements on individual biological macromolecules.

Bustamante has applied the single molecule approach to the investigation of systems as diverse as the action of enzymes that bind DNA (e.g., polymerases

and topoisomerases), the forces underlying the folding of RNA molecules, the energy-driven and conformational movements of cytoskeletal motor proteins, and the elasticity of cytoskeletal elements. In the process, Bustamante has provided fundamental insights into the chemical and physical principles underlying many important biological phenomena. His contributions are extensive, rigorous, and breathtakingly elegant.

Citation: Carlos Bustamante is a scholar of unusual breadth. He is a remarkable teacher and lecturer who captivates his audiences with his brilliant expositions, in understandable language, of the complex studies and methodologies in which he is engaged. As a chemist, using innovative physics to do fundamental new biology, Bustamante's work perfectly exemplifies the power of interdisciplinary research at the interface of the physical and biological sciences.

Lila R. Gleitman

Professor, Departments of Psychology and Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania

The candidate was presented by Susan Goldin-Meadow, the Irving B. Harris Professor, Departments of Psychology and Comparative Human Development, and the College.

Lila Gleitman is an intellectual leader in not just one field but two—psychology and linguistics. Her research, remarkable for its originality and clarity, has literally set the agenda for the entire field of language-learning. As a student of the renowned linguist Zellig Harris, Gleitman became acutely aware of the magnitude of the problem facing the language-learning child—children must learn an intricate system of linguistic rules just by listening to whatever sentences people utter. Her fellow student, Noam Chomsky, solved the problem by documenting the principles underlying the linguistic systems that children have to learn and by assuming those principles are innate.

Gleitman took a different approach. She chose to observe carefully the language-learning process itself. While not denying that children are innately predisposed to learn language—indeed, she is the most significant and influential proponent of this position—Gleitman bases her claims on innovative empirical investigations of how the endowments children bring to language-learning interact with the input they receive to create language. She is one of those rare people who alter the course of intellectual inquiry—and clearly for the better.

Citation: For her ground-breaking program of research that has come to define the field of language-learning, through theoretically motivated and empirically elegant investigations, Lila Gleitman has documented how the inherent endowments children bring to language-learning interact with the input they receive to create language. The interface between language and psychology would look very different were it not for Lila Gleitman.

Summary

The 481st convocation was held on Friday, June 10; Saturday, June 11; and Sunday, June 12, 2005, in the Harper Quadrangle. Don Michael Randel, President of the University, presided.

A total of 2,854 degrees were awarded: 905 Bachelor of Arts in the College, 57 Bachelor of Science in the College and the Division of the Physical Sciences, 3 Master of Science in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 128 Master of Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 10 Master of Fine Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 87 Master of Science in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 122 Master of Arts in the Division of the Social Sciences, 704 Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 3 International Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 33 Master of Arts in the Divinity School, 6 Master of Divinity in the Divinity School, 10 Master of Liberal Arts in the William B. and Catherine V. Graham School of General Studies, 193 Master of Arts in the School of Social Service Administration, 7 Master of Arts in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 1 Master of Science in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 111 Master of Public Policy in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 53 Master of Law in the Law School, 102 Doctor of Medicine in the Pritzker School of Medicine, 23 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 21 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Humanities, 23 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 32 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Social Sciences, 9 Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Business, 3 Doctor of Philosophy in the Divinity School, 1 Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Service Administration, 1 Doctor of Jurisprudence in the Law School, and 204 Doctor of Law in the Law School.

Three honorary degrees were conferred during the 481st convocation. The recipients of the Doctor of Science were Carlos J. Bustamante, Howard Hughes Investigator, Luis Alvarez Professor of Physics, and Professor of Molecular & Cell Biology and Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley; and Lila R. Gleitman, Professor, Departments of Psychology and Linguistics, University of Pennsylvania. The recipient of the Doctor of Humane Letters was Roy Goodwin D'Andrade, Professor, Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut; and Professor Emeritus, Department of Anthropology, University of California, San Diego.

Five Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quantrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching were given, to László Babai, Professor, Departments of Computer Science and Mathematics, and the College; Dr. Dorothy A. Hanck, Professor, Department of Medicine and the College; Dr. Stephen C. Meredith, Associate Professor, Departments of Pathology and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Committee on Immunology, and the College; Holly Marie Swyers, Katharine

Graham Fellow and Collegiate Assistant Professor, Social Sciences Collegiate Division; and Kenneth W. Warren, the William J. Friedman and Alicia Townsend Friedman Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committees on African & African-American Studies and the History of Culture, and the College.

Four Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching were given, to Andrew Abbott, the Gustavus F. and Ann M. Swift Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Sociology and the College; Lauren Berlant, the George M. Pullman Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committee on African & African-American Studies, and the College; Alan L. Kolata, the Neukom Family Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Anthropology and the College, and Chairman, Department of Anthropology; and Amy Dru Stanley, Associate Professor, Department of History, Committee on the History of Culture, and the College.

Cathy Cohen, Professor, Department of Political Science and the College, and past Director of the Center for the Study of Race, Politics & Culture, delivered the principal convocation address at the first, second, and third sessions, "Race, Politics, and the Costs of Compromise."

Harry L. Davis, the Roger L. and Rachel M. Goetz Distinguished Service Professor, Graduate School of Business, delivered the principal convocation address at the fourth session, "Being Silly, Seriously."

Brady W. Dougan, A.B.'81, M.B.A.'82, chief executive officer of Credit Suisse First Boston, delivered remarks at the fourth session.

Bachelor's degree candidates Franklin Vance McMillan, Elliot Benjamin Tapper, and Carlee Kathryn Tressel delivered remarks at the third session.

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ISSN 0362-4706

The University of Chicago Record
5710 South Woodlawn Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637
773/702-8352

www.uchicago.edu/docs/education/record/