

I am John Bartle, Dean of the College of Public Affairs and Community Service. It is my honor to congratulate you for achieving this important milestone. The time, hard work, and sacrifices you made were all significant, but I hope today they all fade away and you feel the pride you deserve. As John Wooden, the famous basketball coach, said: *“Success is peace of mind -- a direct result of knowing you did your best to become what you are capable of.”*

These are challenging times. This semester was disrupted, and the safety and well-being of many were endangered. At times it seemed that the four horsemen of the apocalypse were galloping across the globe. We looked for help: to medicine, to government, and to our neighbors. And we found it. While we are not over this challenge, as has been said, an *idea* travels faster and is more resilient than a virus. Ultimately, **education** will be our vaccine against the threats to humanity.

But ideas and education must not stay on the shelf. They must be put into action, sometimes rapidly. This College is devoted to the application of knowledge to improve the community, the state, and the world. The ideas you have learned are tools that need to be applied. As you use them, you will also learn how to make them better and to teach others to use them. But use them.

We know that knowledge can be used for good or for ill. Many of you have studied social pathologies: crime, abuse, corruption, slavery, and violence. Like other fast-moving ideas, these are as threatening as any virus. Use the tools of knowledge ethically. Your professional legacy will likely be defined by the ethics of your actions. I suspect in most situations you will know the right thing to do. But it can take real courage to do it.

When you are so challenged, I urge you to keep in mind the words of Eleanor Roosevelt: “*You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'* ***You must do the thing you think you cannot do.***”

And so I suggest that you use the tools of your profession ethically. Summon your courage to do what is right. And go out and earn the honor that awaits you.

Or in the words of Sir Winston Churchill, “*success is not final, failure is not fatal. **It is the courage to continue that counts.***”

Thank you.