President Schlesinger's Address

May 16, 2009

It's my great pleasure to welcome you to the 50th Commencement exercises at Babson College. This is the day you've been waiting for—and the entire Babson community shares your excitement.

I must admit that I feel a special connection to your Class. After all, as President, you're my first graduating class—and we've shared many great times together.

I got to know you well over the past year—and it's been an absolute pleasure to have shared 25% of your undergraduate experience with you.

I've had the opportunity to watch you grow and develop as thoughtful and talented individuals—from our time spent together at E-tower or at student government meetings, dinner at your residence halls, small group engagements about strategy for the College, and one-on-one conversations about life.

These encounters confirmed that all the reports and anecdotes about how good you are underplay just how extraordinary you really are. What I keep marveling at is the passion, tenacity, and entrepreneurial spirit with which you approach whatever you do, and on many different fronts. Here are just a few examples of what I mean.

Jamie Kent was a founder of the Green Tower—20 undergraduate students who since last August have been part of one of our most active living and learning communities on campus. Its focus is on sustainability and teaching not only students, but also faculty and staff how they can minimize their carbon footprints.

Jamie also was instrumental in getting the bike sharing program underway on campus, and was active in piloting the Trayless Initiative at Trim, the Lights Out program, and Earth Day. But that's just the beginning of his story. He's a talented musician who performs at many events, a songwriter, vocalist in the jazz ensemble, leader in the Babson Entertainment Initiative, and founder of Friday Night Live.

Last year when the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) announced its partnership with Babson to host the Be the Change Forum right here on campus, Marissa Ferber took action—and assumed sole responsibility for organizing the event.

Students from 23 colleges around the country came to Babson for a conversation around issues of ethics, integrity, and social responsibility—and how to inspire their peers. They came up with action plans that they took back to their schools, and implementation of these ideas is now underway.

Like so many Babson students, Marissa also does a ton of volunteer work at our Bonner Center for Public Service. And, she helped us design the Bonner Scholars Program which, starting next year, will recognize students who link curricular and co-curricular activities around service and community engagement.

Our only regret is that she won't be around to be our first student recipient.

Alejandro Lopez Souza, known as Alex, is a quintessential Babson student—he combines a serious drive for experimenting and living life to its fullest. One of his great passions is extending social entrepreneurship globally. His first entrepreneurial experience came as a first-year student when he served as the CEO for his 30-member student-run business. At the end of FME, he re-launched his business and continues running it today.

Alex has fully embraced the Babson Way by teaching entrepreneurship to middle school students, engaging in a consulting project for peanut farmers in Uganda, and, most recently, with some others, helping a local Rwandan entrepreneur with his dream of starting his country's first English and Business Training Institute. Now that he's a Babson graduate, he's heading back to Rwanda to help grow this social enterprise.

These are just a few examples; if I had the time—or rather, if you had the time—I could tell you about 300 more.

But each of these students couldn't have accomplished what they did alone. Launching the Green Tower, organizing the Be the Change Forum, assisting the Rwanda start-up—all of these took teams working together. One of the things I know you learned at Babson—and that you'll learn again and again throughout your lives—is how important the people around you are to everything you're trying to accomplish. In fact, nothing will affect the quality of your lives more than the people you surround yourself with.

Without realizing it, you've already begun to create a global network of contacts through friendships, classroom projects, and other campus experiences. Some of these relationships will last the rest of your lives.

Speaking of relationships, you could never have accomplished what you have without some very special people. This is a great time for you to thank those who cared—your mothers, fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, brothers and sisters, and all the other family members who are here to celebrate with you.

Members of the Class of 2009: Babson's mission is to educate a generation of leaders who create great economic and social value...everywhere. You are at the vanguard of the new generation of leaders. And, if the world ever needed your special leadership skills and sensibilities, it is now.

These are both exciting and challenging times—and you've been uniquely prepared to lead in an uncertain world. The world seems beset with problems—but to those who think and act entrepreneurially, problems are really opportunities in disguise. That means there's a hostload of opportunities out there waiting for you.

What you need to do is continue what you've been doing throughout your years at Babson—finding and making opportunities all around you. So go do something great!

Finally, and most importantly, I want to congratulate all of you on your graduation and all of your accomplishments that have brought you to this day. And, my closing thought is really a life lesson that I hope will stay with you long after you leave campus: Wash, wash, wash. Flush, flush, flush!
CONGRATULATIONS

Jesse Morris - Address to his Senior Class

President Schlesinger, Dean Hanno, Trustees, Faculty, Staff, Parents, Family, Friends, Gerri, and last but surely not least—my fellow classmates:

John Lennon once said, "It was like being in the eye of a hurricane. You'd wake up in a concert and think, Wow, how did I get here?" I'm sure everyone under this tent today has similar feelings, and I can only hope that I can shed some light on how this group of wonderful graduates has finally made today's milestone a reality for all. If Lennon's quote hasn't resonated yet—let it run deeper. All of us have adapted, progressed, and flourished through a hurricane of our own. We were greeted at Babson with Katrina and we're leaving in a financial monsoon—but I think I can speak for the class and say that...we're not worried. Our unique experience at Babson has taught us how to not only overcome these challenges, but create the lives we wish to live—I don't know any other graduating class that can confidently say that. We've gone from FME/IME to OMEM/MCE, Peachtree to Minimah, from the woods across from Trim to that hall we like to call "Map Hill," Old Trim to New Trim, a dirt hill to the Upper Quad, Dean Greene to Dean Hanno, President Barefoot to President Schlesinger, Bush to Obama, and last but not least—perfectly healthy students...to the Norovirus—referred to some as the "Babson Plague." We've suffered and thrived nonetheless.

We've also come together in the most heart wrenching moments. Two springs ago—we were met with the tragic shooting at Virginia Tech and a week later with the loss of two of our classmates—Angad Sawhney and Ishfaq Moinuddin. Today is not the same without you both...I want to take a moment and compliment Babson and our class on the efforts taken to support each other during these tragic times. These unforgettable events have made our connection even stronger.

We couldn't have done any of this without each other. Our diversity as a group makes us extraordinary and unique—something that Babson has taught us from the moment we walked on campus. Not only is our class representing over 40 countries and 30 states, but we are INVOLVED—maybe even excessively so. We have among us, members of BDE, Varsity Athletes, Club Athletes, Intramural Athletes, Multicultural Group members, RA's, Peer Mentors, fraternity brothers, sorority sisters, Women's Leadership scholars, JBoard members, and student business owners—the list is seemingly endless. This diversity and involvement allows us to build a better understanding of the world we're about to dive in head-first. Our new Babson charged perspective is broad and unique—something we'll all value for years to come.

We have harnessed the energy of our hurricane to make national and even global impact. Every spring, Habitat for Humanity sends students to work on homes in New Orleans and Mexico. Dean Hanno has led an amazing trip with students to teach entrepreneurship in Ghana. I am proud of those students, faculty, and staff who work tirelessly to see the larger difference that Babson can make in this country, and in this world. Our tight-knit community continually gives me hope that we can continue to model this behavior in our careers, with our families, and in our lives.

Even Tina Fey felt compelled to let the world know who we are—who knew she was an avid Babson Lacrosse fan?

Many people ask what really makes our experience at Babson different than other colleges. It's quite simple. We want to act. We want to change, for the better. Gandhi once said, you must be the change you wish to see in this world. This is my very challenge to you all—make conscious decisions to do well—and good. Take risks with no regrets, because at the very worst—every set back is a set up for a comeback.

You know this already, because we turn negativity into opportunity. That's the Babson way. That's our way.

I think it's time for our hurricane to blow beyond these Babson walls—it's time for us to leave our mark on this world—it's time to fulfill our dreams, together and forever.

Congratulations!

Messages from Friends to Members of the Class of 2009

I love you Kelly Erin McDonald, you are the best big on the face of the planet.

Love Twinkletoes

Joser!

Ain't no other man can stand up next to you.
Ain't no other man on the planet does what you do.
You're the kind of guy a girl finds in a blue moon.
You got soul, you got class.
You got style with your bad ass.
Ain't no other man it's true...
Ain't no other man but you!

Congrats to my favorite graduate!
Love always,
Jeanie
CONGRATULATIONS BP2!!! YOU GUYS ARE AN INSPIRATION TO US ALL, AND WE WISH YOU THE BEST IN EVERYTHING YOU DO. YOU ARE ALL GOING TO BE DEEPLY MISSED! THANK YOU FOR SETTING THE BAR REALLY HIGH FOR US (lol) BUT WE'LL MAKE YOU PROUD. DON'T FORGET TO COME VISIT.

POSSE LUV, BP5

We love you girls!!! Jessie, Courtney, Vicki, Monika, Jazz, and Sulisa thank you for everything you did for Chi Omega and we will never forget you! And don't forget to "be womanly always and discouraged never".

LICO,
Your Sisters in Chi Omega

Congratulations
Leigh and LB!
We will miss you!
Love,
The Women's Basketball Team

You girls have forever changed the cheerleading team and we expect you to come to Nationals and cheer us on! We love you!!

I love you both! Congratulations!
See you at Beaver bowl next year.
(and of course before that too) - Love, Nicole
We've come a long way from freshmen year, and while we may have lost some friendships, others were solidified in ways we could never describe. Amanda and Liz, I love you both and do not know what I will do without your sass!

CONGRATULATIONS JB, JESSIE, TORI AND ANNE MARIE! I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST IN EVERYTHING YOU DO, AND YOU BETTER COME VISIT EXCESSIVELY! J

YOU GUYS ARE AWESOME AND MADE RUGBY THAT MUCH MORE FUN!

LOTS OF LOVE,
Filanza (Hype) ;)

Tom Kowalski
Love,
Nick Kovaleski
Patrick Baird
Sam Sulliman

Congratulations Andre Roman!

Love, Nicole

Congratulations Zach, Jill, Dan, Alex, Tarini, Yianni, Manasi, Chris, Merri, Leigh, Sulisa, Sandra, Paul Lindsay, Justina, Jesse and Emily,

With Love and Fond Memories, Dean Hanno
To all of my ladies:
Alexa, Karina, Kate, Zoe, Dee, Elissa, Nicole C., Anya, Pags, Karin, Nicole N., and Sylvia...
Whether you were my posse in Forest freshman year OR my beloved senior suite in Pitz 24, college would not have been the same without you. Although I'm excited to graduate the only thing holding me back is not being able to roll out of bed and walk down the hall to see each of your lovely faces. Here is to all of the memories we have already created, and the memories soon to come!! Can't you see baby this is perfection?

Love Jillian
Thank you girls for making this year so much fun and so memorable. You mean the world to me and I will miss you intensely. Know you always have a place to crash on Alumni Weekend.

Love,
Shanna
Hey Seniors, do you remember when...

* Pub was only open Monday-Thursday
* Map Hill didn’t exist
* The Upper Quad was a hill with trees and a weird ballerina statue
* Trim was not air conditioned, and the back room was designed like a 50’s Diner
* Stir Fry was 1 guy with 4 pans
* Chi Omega came to Babson
* OB-TOM was a two-semester course, and all of the classes fell under the IME umbrella
* FYE was called FYE (and it was optional…)
* There was no flag fountain in front of the library
* The black Northface email, and the subsequent “B.A.L.L.S”
* Upperclassmen lived in Park Manor Central
* Brian Barefoot was President
* Brad and Cameron from the Real World, and the guys of Human Giant came to Babson
* There was no Portal, only Blackboard and B-Link
* There was no shuttle (drunk bus)
* People lived in the Forest Annex. And it flooded
* The library wasn’t set up like a social space
* Reynolds wasn’t open late nights
* The Reynolds resource room was upstairs and the serenity room was downstairs
* We first heard the “It’s Possible at Babson” speech
* You made awkward friends at Orientation that you haven’t talked to since
* There was a DVD rental machine in Reynolds
* The “gym” consisted of about 5 ancient exercise machines
* They replaced all the sod on campus. It then froze two months later and they had to redo it.
* They had poppyseed salad dressing at Trim
* CAB hired a hummer limo to drive everyone from their dorms to the Halloween Pepsico party
* The songs of the year were: Miss New Booty, My Humps, You’re Beautiful, and Bad Day.
* Everyone gathered to watch the O.C, American Idol, and Grey’s Anatomy
* There was a wild turkey living near Trim
* There was a giant snowstorm over finals Freshmen year
* There was a fire drill during an FME exam
* Speaking of fire drills, remember all the ones we had in Forest? Because of hair dryers, burnt popcorn, and even a smoke machine…
* Keith with the ponytail worked at Trim
* The Foam Party…
* We all had four years to go and it seemed like forever…

Class of 2009
Congratulations on this day of days.
Thank you for letting me be a part of your life’s journey these last four years. And no matter where your path may lead
- remember there is always a road that will bring you back to Babson.
All my love and best wishes for a lifetime of joy!
Gerri