

## **Dr. Meredith's Spring 2009 Address to International Students**

Greetings.

I am pleased to be here with you today.

It is always a pleasure to see you.

Today I want to offer both congratulations and thanks.

Congratulations on completing your goals for your time here at UNI, whether it is graduation or completing your study time here through a study abroad experience.

I want to thank you because by your presence you have enriched our campus community immeasurably and enriched the lives you have touched.

You bring to us not only your knowledge and your commitment to learning but fresh perspectives on living and learning, on joy and sorrow, on the value of relations with others, on thinking and believing.

These perspectives reflect fundamental life forces for all of us and guide us as we negotiate the opportunities and hazards we encounter throughout our lives.

The chair of Coca-Cola Company recognized this truth and the valuable contribution encounters with peoples from around the world can make. He wrote:

“Students with international exposure come to understand the value of dialogue between people from different cultures and between people with different points of view. They also gain an understanding of the importance of relationships. Relationships are the foundation for meaning and success in life. They are also the foundation for strong business, especially businesses that care about creating mutual benefit.”

Of course life is not only about business and career and education is certainly not simply about job acquisition.

It is also about forming life long relations and on that topic I want to say that though you are moving on in life from UNI you will always be part of UNI. Once a UNI panther always a UNI panther.

Please remember you are always welcome here as part of the UNI family.

So this is not a good bye celebration but more of a welcome to your new status as permanent members of the UNI community.

Please stay in touch. My office door is always open to you, as are all the doors of international programs.

As you move on to face new challenges I want to leave you with some thoughts from the philosopher Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.

He wrote:

“Our duty, as men and women, is to proceed as if limits to our ability do not exist. We are collaborators in creation. We are, after all, you and I...together we suffer, together we exist, and forever we will create each other.”

My best wishes to you and again my sincere thanks for all you have contributed to this community.

Dr. Kurt Meredith  
Assistant Provost for International Programs (Interim)