

Commencement Speech

June 19, 2009

Ningbo Institute of Technology, Zhejiang University, China

Phylis Lan Lin, PhD

Presidential International Ambassador

University of Indianapolis



President Xu, faculty, parents, friends, and, especially, graduates of University of Indianapolis-Ningbo Institute of Technology Joint Program cohort 5 (class of 2009):

I am honored to bring greetings today on behalf of the president of the University of Indianapolis, Dr. Beverley Pitts, and on behalf of the University's faculty. President Pitts offers her best wishes for a wonderful Commencement ceremony and expresses her eagerness to visit you again soon.

It is with great pride that I participate in this ceremony at NIT on this day of celebration. I am profoundly grateful for the great honor accorded me by President Beverly Pitts to deliver this commencement speech on her behalf. I am here today also for a very special reason: I am a member of the NIT family. I am not only a visiting professor of this institution but also an administrator of the Sino-American Joint Program, and, most importantly of all, I see myself as a parent to all the students in the Sino-American Joint Program. I therefore speak to the graduates today as a faculty member, an administrator, and a parent.

I have worked closely with you graduates in the past few years. I remember the first time I met you on campus four years ago: You all looked so young, uncertain, and skinny. Today, you have grown, built confidence, and gained a little bit of weight.

I remember the day I accompanied you to Shanghai for your visa interviews: Each one of you walked out the door of the American Embassy with joyful tears in your eyes because you knew your visa had been granted and you were about to journey to a new world for a challenging academic endeavor and to venture into an unfamiliar land to launch a new milestone in your lives. Those who decided to stay in Ningbo to finish their degrees also have undertaken new challenges in their academic lives because they have had to take courses taught by both Chinese and American professors at NIT and simultaneously follow two sets of university policies—Chinese and American. The challenges were no less than for those who went to Indianapolis.

I want to applaud both groups today. You have accomplished what many students could not. You have spent many sleepless nights in the library and in the dorms. Your electronic dictionaries are worn out, and your book covers are tattered. There were times when I saw some of you run into an 8 o'clock class with your hair not combed and teeth not brushed because you had stayed up all night to get a paper done. Many of you had difficulties adjusting to the American system of weekly quizzes, because in China, you needed to worry only about the final exams.

At any rate, you have made it. I am proud of you, and you should be proud of yourselves. Remember, there are many people who are behind you and beside you. They work with you and they support you. We must express our deepest gratitude to your parents, teachers, and close friends. Without their assistance, caring, encouragement, and pressure, you would not be sitting here today. Thank you, parents, professors, and close friends of our graduates.

Delivering a commencement address in China is a great responsibility. I pondered for a few weeks as to what message I should deliver. Several themes came into my mind, including a discussion on how to position yourself in the midst of worldwide financial crisis; how to become a change agent in a changing environment; how to become a global citizen now that you have received a global education; how to instill the responsibility we should have as individuals and as members of a collective group; and how we can make the best use of our American experience in a Chinese setting. The list goes on.

But most of all, I want to answer a few interrelated questions that I have asked myself and been asked constantly since the inception of the Sino-American Joint Program. Answers to questions such as “Why do you think this is a good program? What are you trying to accomplish? Who will benefit from this program?” are not simple. Instead of dealing with the complexity of the program, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you the kind of the program we are creating—a model that I call “the VIP model.”

Do we understand what “VIP” stands for? The conventional definition for “VIP” is “very important person.” Yes, we want to make you a very important person in this world. But today, I would like to take the opportunity to put a twist on the acronym and offering a new meaning for “VIP”: “Vision, Integrity, and Passion.”

We have been and will continue building this joint program with a vision of the future. We are training a new breed of work force and intellectuals for tomorrow's China. We want to train a group of young students who can foresee society's needs and who will position themselves well with the skills and knowledge needed for their future careers. Several NIT students were interviewed by the *Reflector* (the UIndy student newspaper) last year,

and by the *Indianapolis Star*, the largest newspaper in Indiana, in April. Here is what you have told the reporters of the *Reflector* and the *Star*:

“Maybe I will run a business by myself and trade between many countries.” “I want to be a financial analyst; the study here helps me to reach that goal.” “My father wanted to send me to study abroad. I like the people here. They are very kind.” “I want to become a banker in China. I want to improve our banking system.” “I am an English major but I want to do things in international relations.” “The American system is so different from the Chinese system. It has been an eye-opening experience for me. I know what I want to do, and I know I will have the opportunity to practice it when I return to China.”

It is a comfort and reassurance to see that you have a sense of what is possible for you in the near future. We are building this joint program with a vision that the graduates will be equipped with a sound foundation for them to realize their potential, to be able to find a niche in a most challenging environment. We want to help you to believe that you are part of something bigger than yourselves. Whether you stay in China or return to the U.S. to continue your graduate studies upon graduation, our goal is to help you to grasp the best of two cultures (Chinese and American), to become a global citizen, to become a change agent, and to strengthen the quality not just of your own lives but also of the world that surrounds you.

Trust is one of the most important ingredients of integrity. It is imperative to have mutual trust in the joint program. We have to be trusted by our students, their parents, and our educational institutions. A high-quality program is based on the integrity of leaders and the institutions where the program is delivered. We trust and believe in ourselves and believe that we will be trusted. Academic integrity must be reinforced. Oftentimes, the process requires violators to face painful consequences, which breaks the hearts of the enforcers. Some students might have learned this the hard way, but at the end, you are proud of yourselves because you know you are a graduate of a program that emphasizes the value of integrity.

Integrity refers to values regarding work, productivity, matters of right and wrong, fairness, and relationships. Although integrity is a worthy universal virtue, differences between Chinese and American cultures sometimes make the implementation of certain policies more challenging than others. In the end, we are able to realize that rigidity and flexibility can actually complement each other; we learn that there are times when we have to agree to disagree. This possibility is based on one assumption: namely, that we trust each other and have a common goal. Today, we can proudly say to ourselves that this joint program is a program with quality and integrity.

Finally, we are passionate; we are committed, and we are engaged. We are ready to educate a new breed of Chinese college students. Several students have asked me, “Dr. Lin, why are you so energetic and tireless?” I reply, “I love what I am doing, and I am in love with what I want to do. In fact, I am passionate with the mission I gave myself.”

A senior lecturer at MIT, Jonathan Byrnes, said one of the essential characteristics to lead paradigmatic change is the capacity for passion. He said, “First and foremost, you need a burning drive to make things better. Change management is a grueling process, and passion will see you through it” (Harvard Business School “Working Knowledge” archive,

9-6-2005). Passion provides the motivation, energy, and commitment to do things rigorously. Whether you are planning to reach a specific life goal, reach a certain level of perfection in your work, make good money, fulfill or abide by your parents' wishes, help people in crisis, or make a positive impact on your society, you must, first and foremost, have a clear vision and strong passion and practice your deeds with integrity. Only then will you become an effective leader with the moral character for your endeavor.

A few years ago, one of our students in Applied Sociology, Kristene Ruddle, interviewed me. She asked, "What do you pass on to your students?" My fellow graduates, allow me to repeat to you this morning what I said: "Take pride in yourself. What you do is important. You may affect one person, who then affects more. Be passionate about what you do. See your service, your work, as blessed. You are shaping individuals, and individuals shape society. Be well-rounded, be a lifelong learner, and approach every person as an individual, regardless of his or her socioeconomic status or occupation."

My dear graduates, today's ceremony is a rite of passage in your adult lives. I have high hopes for you. You are a product of the VIP model. I hope you will continue to cultivate it with your traditional Chinese values and practice some of the American values you have cherished since you enrolled in the joint program.

I congratulate your achievements, and I wish you a bright future in the days to come. It has been my privilege to know each one of you, and it is my pride to see your accomplishments. No words can express how happy I am to stand before you today. We have taken a journey together in the past four years; you will always be in my heart. Whatever mountain you try to climb, whatever ocean you try to sail, and whatever organization you try to lead, please remember the spirit of the VIP model. Possess and practice vision, integrity, and passion in your new journeys.

You will be the movers and shakers and the promising leaders for modern China. Lastly, remember, we may be apart, but we uphold the same sky and we stand on similar earth. No ocean will separate us. You are part of the UIndy family, and you are my "adopted" children. Together, we will make the world a better place for all of us.

Best wishes to you all.

Thank you.



05级毕业典礼致辞

2009年6月19日

中国 浙江大学宁波理工学院中美联合班

藍采風博士 (Phyllis Lan Lin, PhD)
印第安纳波利斯大学 校长国际友好大使



尊敬的许院长，各位老师，各位家长，各位朋友，印第安纳波利斯大学与宁波理工学院中美联合班05级的毕业生们，你们好！

今天，我很荣幸的受印第安纳波利斯大学校长碧薇莉·碧慈及全体同仁之托，向各位致以亲切的问候。碧薇莉·碧慈校长表达了她对毕业典礼的美好祝愿，并希望在不久的将来能再次拜访贵校。

今天在宁波理工参加毕业典礼令我倍感荣幸。受碧薇莉·碧慈校长之托代表她在毕业典礼上致辞的这份荣誉更使我充满感激之情。今天，我站在这里，还有一个特殊的原因：我是理工这个大家庭的一员。我不仅是这个学院的客座教授，也是中美联合项目的负责人。更为重要的是，我还自认为是中美班学生的一家之长。所以，今天我是作为宁波理工的一员，一个项目的负责人，一位家长站在这里与各位共庆今天的毕业大典的。

在过去的几年里，我和大家密切合作。还记得四年前，我第一次在校园里见到你们。你们是那么的年轻，对未来有点迷茫，看起来有点瘦弱。今天，你们已经长大成人，充满了自信，而且变高又变胖。

还记得去上海陪你们去签证的那一天：你们走出美国大使馆的大门的那一瞬间，个个眼含激动与欣喜的泪水。因为你们知道签证已顺利通过，接下来将会步入另一个崭新的世界，去接受学业上的挑战；将要跨入一个不熟悉的国度，在自己的人生旅途中，向另一个里程碑

迈进。选择留在理工完成学业的同学们，同样经历了来自学业上的极大挑战，他们不仅要选学由中美两校教授们各自开设的课程，还要同时符合中美两国的学业要求。他们的挑战一点也不比去印第安纳波利斯大学求学的同学来得轻松。

不论选择出国留学还是留在理工，我都想为你们击掌叫好。你们完成了其他诸多学生无法完成的任务。这两年多的日子里，你们经历了多少个不眠之夜，你们在图书馆用功，在寝室挑灯夜战；你们的电子词典已用烂，书皮也磨损；多少次，我看见你们急急忙忙赶到教室上早8点的课，看来好像头也没梳，牙也没刷，因为前一个晚上你们通宵达旦都在准备论文。还有许多同学很难适应美国教学体制中一周一次的小考，因为在国内，你们只有一个期末考试为之焦虑而已。

不管代价如何，你们都已顺利通过。我为你们感到骄傲，你们更应该为自己感到自豪。要切记：有多少人在背后支持你，在旁边鼓励你。他们与你一起奋战，作你强大的后盾。在此，让我们首先一同表达对他们——你的父母，你的老师，你的挚友的感激之情。没有他们的支持、关爱、鼓励以及压力，今天你们不可能坐在这里。谢谢你们！各位毕业生的家长、教授以及挚友。

在中国，一份毕业典礼致辞背负多大的责任之托呀。多少个日日夜夜，我都在想，我该说什么呢？脑海中曾飘过这样几个主题：讲一讲在全球金融危机下如何定位自我？还是讲一讲在日益多变的环境中如何成为顺势而上的强者？亦或讲一讲既然大家接受了国际教育，那如何成为一个放眼全球的世界公民？还有讲一讲作为个体与集体成员，自己应担负什么样的责任与义务？以及如何使自己的美国经历在中国环境下发挥极大的效用？如此等等。

但是，首先，我想先回答几个相关的问题。这些问题自中美合作这个项目开办以来，我就经常自问，也经常被问及。例如：“你为什么认为这是个有前途的项目？”“你想达到什么样的效果？”“谁能从这个项目中获益？”，可是，要回答诸如此类的问题并非易事。与其谈论这个项目的复杂性，我不如趁此机会与大家分享一下我们开创这个项目的理念——一个我称其为VIP模式的理念。

大家都知道VIP表示的是什么？传统的定义是“重要人士”。是的，我们希望将你们打造成这个世界的重要人士。但是，今天，我愿借此机会赋予这三个首字母以新的含义。即：“Vision”表示远见卓识、“Integrity”表示诚实笃信、“Passion”表示热爱工作及众生。

第一个理念：远见卓识。从一开始，我们这个联合办学的项目就充满了远见与愿景。我们立足为明天的中国培养一支新型的劳动大军与知识分子。我们要培养一批年轻有为的学生，他们能预见到社会的需要，从而用自己的技术与学识将自己定位于未来之需。去年与今年四月，印第安纳波利斯学生校报《思》以及印第安纳州最大的日报《印第安纳之星》曾分别采访几位理工的学生。请听他们是如何对记者们说的：

“或许我会自己开公司，做国际贸易。”“我想成为金融分析师；这里的学习助我实现我的梦想。”“我爸爸送我出国学习。我喜欢这里的人。他们人都很好。”“我想成为一位银行家，希望能使中国的银行体系更为完善。”“我是英语专业的，但我想从事国际关系方面的工作。”“美国的体制和中国的体制有很大的不同。我来这里开阔了眼界。我现在清楚了我想要做什么，我相信回国以后我会有机会把我的想法付诸实施。”

同学们对未来的这种憧憬让我们倍感欣慰，也让我们信心大增。我们推行这个合作项目的宗旨就是要让我们的学生在就读时打下坚实的基础以使他们在毕业后能够在竞争激烈的环

境中发挥自己的潜能，找到适合自己的立足点。我们想培养你们相信自己的能力，有一天你们必将超越自我。无论你们毕业后是在中国发展，还是到美国继续读研，我们的目标是帮助你们把握中美两种文化的精髓，成为国际化的人，成为促进和谐社会的有用之才，不断完善自己，提升大家的生活品质。

第二个理念：诚实笃信

信任是诚信的重要因素之一。运行这个合作项目需要我们相互信任。我们必须得到学生、学生家长以及国家教育机构的信任。对于一个高品质的项目的实施，项目领导和机构间的诚信是不可或缺的。我们相信自己的品格，也期待他人对我们的肯定。我们还必须更加强调在求学过程中要守规，在学术上要诚实。有时候，违背诚信者会有痛苦的结局，这常常使我们这些项目负责人痛心不已。有的学生可能已经从教训中成长。同学们，这四年的求学经历是极具挑战性的，但是最终，你们应该为自己骄傲，因为你们已经在这么一个注重诚信的项目中完成了学业。

诚信是指在工作岗位上或处理人际关系时判断是非、坚守公平应持有的价值观。虽然诚信是公认的美德，但是由于中美文化的差异，有时候一些政策的实行会变得更加挑战性。但最终，我们意识到刻板和灵活可以相辅相成；我们也意识到有时候可以求同存异、殊途同归。这都是基于一个设想：我们相互信任，目标一致。今天，我们可以骄傲地对自己说，在推行这个合作项目的过程中，我们一直奉行高品质、诚实笃信的理念。

第三个理念：热爱工作及众生。

我们要热爱工作，关爱学生。我们一直恪守承诺，坚持不懈。我们旨在培养新一代的中国大学生。有不少同学曾问我：“蓝教授，你为何总是那么精力充沛，不知疲倦呢？”我的回答是“我热爱我所从事的工作，工作是我的生命。事实上，我热衷于自己所选择的使命。”麻省理工学院的一位高级讲师，乔纳森·伯恩斯曾说过热情是产生变革的必备因素之一。他说：“首先，你要有一种热情，要把事情做得更好。实施变革是一个繁重而累人的过程，热情会助你坚持到底。”（哈佛商学院“Working Knowledge”期刊，9-6-2005）。热情使人充满动力，干劲十足，全身心地投入到工作中。无论你是要实现哪一个特定的人生目标：在工作中达到某一层面的完美；赚大钱；实现你父母的期望；帮助他人摆脱困境；或为社会做出积极的贡献，你首先必须要有清晰的愿景和强烈的热情，并且以诚信处之。只有这样，你才会成为一个拥有高尚品德的、具有影响力的领导者。

几年前，一个叫克莉斯汀·拉得尔的应用社会学系的学生采访过我。她问：“您给您的学生传递的是什么理念？”亲爱的同学们，在此请允许我重复一下我对克莉斯汀所说过的话：“以自己为荣。你所从事的都是重要的。你的所为可能影响某一人，而他可以影响更多的其他人。要热衷于你的所为。珍爱你的工作，全心投入。你塑造个人，而个人继而影响社会。成为一个全面发展的人，活到老，学到老。不论个人的社会经济地位如何，不论个人从事何种职业，我们都应客观平等待之。”

各位同学，今天的典礼是你们成年后的一件大事。我对你们寄予厚望。你们是VIP模式的结晶。我希望你们会继续运用中国传统价值观把VIP模式发扬光大，并且珍惜你们参加了中美合作项目之后所体会到的一些美国价值观。

我祝贺你们的成就，也祝你们前程似锦。我熟悉你们中的每一位，我为你们的成就感到骄傲。今天，我站在这里，喜悦之情难以言表。过去的四年，我们携手走过；以后我也会常常惦记着你们。无论你们将翻越什么高山，跨越什么大洋；无论你们将领导什么团队，请铭记VIP精神。在你新的人生旅途中明确愿景，恪守诚信，投入热情。

你们将会是中国未来的掌舵者、改革者和领导者。最后，请牢记，我们可能天各一方，但是我们顶的是同样的天，踏的是类似的地。大洋不能将我们阻隔。你们是Uindy大家庭中的成员，我将你们“视如己出”。让我们一起努力将这个世界建设得更加美好！

最后，谨祝各位身体健康、人生如意！

谢谢大家！

(张振梅、欧琛译)

