

President Pribbenow, Provost Kaivola, Regents, Faculty, Staff, Family, Friends, and my fellow Graduates...

When was the moment when you chose to become an Auggie? When did you decide to continue your education while juggling work, family, volunteering? Think back for a moment.

Likely you inquired a program you thought would be interesting, or thought would advance your career, or maybe you spoke to someone connected to the university whose values aligned with those you hold dear.

Whatever the path, your walk led you here. We all chose to join this safe and welcoming urban community, built on striving to lead while serving our local neighbor as thoughtful stewards of truth and trust. Perhaps you, like me, wondered how an Augsburg education might change you. But what you might not have anticipated is how an Augsburg education could change your family, your neighborhood, and your community.

My personal experience came from a woman whom I did not know, except seeing her at church. She was part of a leadership team I led. After leading a challenging meeting that ended on a good note, I noticed this "church lady" waited until everyone left so we could have a private conversation. As she was rearranging materials in her bag, this "church lady" simply asked, "So Carole, what do you would like to do

for the rest of your life?" Her question that day was transforming. My faith in hearing this woman led me to the Leadership program.

I imagine that for you, like me, faith and values were part of this discernment process. You placed trust in your decision that you chose well. Interfacing with colleagues of various professions, experiences, and beliefs more than likely reshaped your opinions on leadership, followership, collaboration, stewardship, and servitude propelling what we thought we would learn, shifted into a trajectory towards being critical thinkers, and humble listeners while forging thought-provoking actions towards improving people's lives. Our values expanded, our faith deepened, our humanity condensed as our lives are touched by a small campus in the middle of an urban island renowned for being globally aware, challenging us to step into our truth with courage, grace, and determination to right wrongs, teach, and challenge in love and peace.

Each course I chose continuously adjusted the flow of my voice driving me to stand up, step out and move forward towards self-care with intentional inquiry and strength. Unknowingly, my faith and values guided me to deepen my understanding of Leadership in its humility of being present with a strong recognition of how we impact others. Our passions and values may provide clarity offering supportive efforts guiding our purpose, towards the light as responsible leaders teaching others how to fish intended on empowering our global community one person at a time.

Like you, my self-growth began to stir, creating a new toolbox, with new tools. We learned how to improve and correct plagued or antiquated systems through various forms of critical thinking designs. Nobel Prize laureate Malala Yousafza states, "Education is education. We should learn everything and then choose which path to follow. Education is neither Eastern nor Western; it is human."

Through the practice of concentrated study, we anticipate a purposeful outlook of this chosen path we are trailblazing encouraging us to answer two simple questions. What am I to do now? What is my challenge? Thanks to Augsburg's nurturing environment; we equipped ourselves with future-forward thoughts. We are contributing to our workplaces and communities intended to sustain viability in ever-changing environments where we lead and thrive. Placing our faith and trust in place, we are changing. Our charge strengthens our values and convictions of our truth. We understand we will do the very best we can. When we don't, we take responsibility knowing we are an extension of Augsburg's educational excellence. We understand the power of lifelong learning. Regardless of our environment or circumstances, with humility, and grace, we provide an opportunity to empower ourselves, as we enact an architectural design achieving intended outcomes.

We should be proud of what we've learned and experienced at Augsburg, but we should also not forget about the responsibility to apply what we've learned in service to our neighbors.

Fifty years ago this month, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., traveled to Memphis, TN to support a strike by sanitation workers. His words, which he delivered the night before he was assassinated, are a reminder about where our focus should be, and serve as a challenge to us, the class of 2018:

The question is not, "If I stop to help this man in need, what will happen to me?" The question is, "If I do not stop to help the sanitation workers, what will happen to them?" That's the question.

Congratulations to the class of 2018.

Thank you.

-----