

Haigazian University
53rd Commencement Exercises
June 28, 2013

President's Brief Remarks

Dear graduating class, friends, colleagues and guests,

While public attention focuses on wars and fears, crises and disappointments, we gather here to celebrate the value of education. I celebrate with you the freedom to educate, and the freedom of the sensitive heart to learn.

Education is there to simplify things on the one hand, so that people may develop, heal and fix, find solutions and comfort. On the other hand, education is meant to complicate things and move us deeper and higher.

Higher Education, therefore, does not simply mean higher than secondary education.

Higher in education, especially in the American educational liberal arts system, requires us to teach people to go beyond and above the obvious, beyond our immediate opinion. It is meant to help us look outside our window, while also looking into a mirror.

In our sociopolitical and global framework, higher education today faces new manifestations, as the world seems to be in a clash between two opposing poles, and much in between:

1. A world of over-integration in which one is to integrate literally everything, even the irreconcilable into one reality, one method, one frame, one control, be it religious, political, economic, or cultural.
2. A world of disintegration where nothing fits anything. No one tolerates anyone. No one is accountable to anyone. No one sacrifices for anyone. No mind meet another mind. Divisions: divisions on the maps, in the hearts, in the neighborhoods, and in the minds imprint the view of a dangerous futuristic present. There is a feeling that everything is falling apart, with no sense of

authority, respect, or civility. A world where localized terror seems to be the globalized threat.

But educational value is often in the in-between.

Regarding over-integration, it is our educational mission to show that life comes in shades of various colors, realities of various shapes, and that humility regarding our own method and our knowledge is a key to learning and goodness.

Regarding disintegration, it is our educational mission to show that what keeps hope and the promise of life alive is to lovingly and freely connect with each other. For knowledge and work add meaning only when they join the witness, knowledge and experience of all times and all people.

Instead of a mere place to stand, the new world requires that we swim between these two poles while keeping the strength of our muscles, our higher goal, and the perspective and safety of our shores.

Higher education should mean educating for the higher purposes, not for higher information or higher titles. So, may Haigazian University bring a small share in such an educational mission.

Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.
President
Haigazian University