

Haigazian University
55th Commencement Exercises
July 3, 2015

President's Word

The sound of an anniversary is amplified when the focus is not only on the past, but on the beauty of the present and the promise of the future.

The Centenary of the Genocide moved us all and will inspire us still to take history seriously. Armenag Haigazian, whose name we carry, himself was one of the martyrs of the Genocide. The founders of this university, the Philibosians and the Mehagians, the UAECNE and the AMAA were church entities that had built themselves on the ashes of tragedy. That is inspiring, but not sufficient.

The beauty of the whole story is that as a people, and in spite of our heavy consciousness of the past, we are indeed people and children of life, abundant life, who are called to bring the ignorance and limitations of the world closer to the enlightened horizons of the skies.

We celebrate our 60th anniversary, we treasure our educational mission, and to value our motto of Truth, Freedom, and Service, in a world and in which we risk reducing the truth to self-serving partisan information, in a world in which we blur freedom with disorganized living, and we confuse our mission to serve with shortsighted wishes for material reciprocity.

Dear class of 2015, these shortcomings of our countries, and indeed the world, should not mean that we cannot make a difference. You will be influenced by the matters around you. But our focus is on what you can do. Haigazian University has existed to change the world through whatever numbers of students we serve. Today, 227 young people will go out into the Lebanese society, into other countries, including a graduate from our beloved Karabagh, to work and think in a way that reflects the depth of what was taught to them. Let me be as simple as I can.

Basically, in whatever you do, do not lie. If you are given the choice of more money or more productivity, choose the second. If you get to the top, still look up. If you fast from food, focus also on the fasting of the heart. If you want to protect the cause of your religious or political group, show the highest of ethical standards. If you earn degrees, own and promote the knowledge you have received. If you work in a company, show loyalty to its goals.

Our 60th anniversary commencement is taking place on the shores of the Mediterranean. Be inspired by the creativity of the Phoenicians. Build boats that do good, but do not invade. Ride the boats to meet people and exchange experiences, not to promote your status. Develop your skills to grow and help others live better. “Pride in Merit” is written all over the place. That means, your pride should be based on hard-work, ethics, and vision, and not connections, majority pressure, religious, social or family privileges as we see in our societies. So now, go shine and brighten up your world wherever you may be.