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Nothing is Constant But Change

Steven C. Bahls
Augustana College

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Nothing is constant but change

Augustana College Commencement, May 24, 2009

Welcoming comments by President Steven Bahls: *Nothing is Constant but Change*

Good afternoon. And welcome to Augustana College's 149th Annual Commencement. On behalf of the faculty, staff and board of trustees, I am very pleased to congratulate the Augustana Class of 2009.



College President Steve Bahls addresses the graduates at commencement on May 24, 2009. (See a [graduation photo gallery](#).)

Thank you, again, to our Choir and Band for their wonderful music.

Parents and families, we thank you for your role in making this day possible. And we share in your immense pride over this class and its long list of achievements. Parents and students, we recognize that the economic uncertainties of the past year have, in many cases, required a special sacrifice to pay for your education. We are grateful to you all for seeing the enduring value of a top-flight education at a nationally-ranked school, even when times are tough.

And speaking of tough times, jobs are harder to find than they were just a year ago. Though our statistics show that a majority of you have jobs or are going to graduate school, for those of you whose plans are uncertain, please know that our Career Office has decided to remain open all summer to help students who are continuing their job search. And I should tell you, both as President of Augustana and Chair of the Board of the Illinois Quad City Chamber of Commerce, we hope you look at jobs here. The Quad Cities needs your talent. And of the 12 regional economies in Illinois, ours is one of the strongest.

The Greek philosopher Heraclitus is believed to have said, "Nothing is constant but change." You've seen ample evidence in your four years at Augustana that this is true: That indeed nothing is constant but change.

Consider what's happened on the world front:

- Most of you started at Augustana in September 2005 (yes, 94% of you who are walking across the stage today will have graduated in four years). Could you have imagined then that we would have elected our first African-American President?
- Could you have imagined four years ago that the nation would suffer its worst recession since the Great Depression, which would include the bankruptcy of Chrysler and possibly of General Motors?

On the Augustana College front, I could not have imagined the many changes we've seen over the last four years, most of them because of you.

- Four years ago, the college had only a tepid inclination to reducing our environment impact. Thanks to your advocacy, Augustana now has an award-winning commitment to the environment, which we celebrate even as we recognize that more needs to be done. And I never would have thought four years ago that I would be eating with compostable forks made from potatoes, nor that our grab-and-go containers would be made from switchgrass!
- And, for those of you who attended our baccalaureate service this morning, you witnessed a first at this Lutheran college. For the past 149 years, the readings and prayers at this service have been from the Christian tradition only. But this year, to better honor our Augustana tradition of interfaith dialogue and partnership, members of your class read and prayed, not only from the Christian tradition but also the Jewish and Muslim traditions. Faithful to our heritage, the service firmly remains a Christian service. But the [interfaith aspect of the service](#) acknowledges there are areas, such as charity to the poor, where the Christian tradition and other religious traditions enjoy similar understandings. This change is a symbol of Augustana's understanding that our calling is to strengthen the faith of all peoples by helping students of all faith traditions grow in mind, spirit and body. It also recognizes that faith is often deepened by a greater understanding of religions other than our own. Imagine how this world might be a little more peaceful if individuals of differing faiths were to celebrate their traditions together, as we did at Augustana this morning.

But, for today, the most important changes on our minds are not changes in the world or changes at Augustana. They are the changes that have taken place inside of you. You have grown in mind, spirit and body over the past four years, and that makes us very proud of you.

- You have come to realize that wisdom is as important as knowledge – and that critical, creative thinking is the bridge from knowledge to wisdom. You have learned to “turn the crystal” to look at problems from many different angles.
- You have come to realize that wisdom, without a commitment to ethics and integrity, can be hollow. Through your interaction both in and outside the classroom, you have explored your core values and have committed to hold those values dear.
- And you have shown your commitment to make this world a better place by engaging in the community as volunteers and as advocates for a more just society. Your class, we estimate, has given over 200,000 hours of service to the college, this community, and indeed communities around the world.

Class of 2009, you have demonstrated that *nothing* is constant but change. As you have changed and grown, so have you changed this college and helped it grow. And now as you leave here you must never doubt that

you have the tools to change the world.

So, today, savor this moment in which we celebrate your accomplishments, and the remarkable impact you have made on Augustana College. But also resolve to make the same positive impact on your family, your community, your nation and the world.

And as you leave Augustana, remember the biblical injunction of the Prophet Micah: What does the Lord require of you – but to do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

May God bless and keep the Augustana College Class of 2009!



Accounting	Communication Studies	Geography	Music	Pre-Optometry
Africana Studies	Computer Science	Geology	Music Education	Pre-Pharmacy
Anthropology	Creative Writing	German Studies	Music Performance	Pre-Physical Therapy
Art	Economics	Greek	Neuroscience	Pre-Physician Assistant
Art History	Elementary Education	Graphic Design	Non-Profit Leadership	Pre-Seminary
Asian Studies	Engineering	History	Development	Pre-Veterinary Medicine
Biochemistry	Engineering Physics	International Business	Philosophy	Psychology
Biology	English (Literature)	Japanese	Physics	Religion
Business Administration	English (Writing)	Landscape Architecture	Political Science	Scandinavian Studies
Chemistry	Environmental Management	Latin	Pre-Dentistry	Secondary Education
Chinese	& Forestry	Library and Information	Pre-Law	Sociology
Classics	Environmental Studies	Science	Pre-Medicine	Sociology (Social Welfare)
Communication Sciences	Ethics	Mathematics	Pre-Music Therapy	Spanish
& Disorders	French	Multimedia Journalism	Pre-Nursing	Theatre
		& Mass Communication	Pre-Occupational Therapy	Women's & Gender Studies