

Welcome 2014 Graduates, Parents, Family and Friends!

Although my name is Professor John Kubiawicz, most people just call me Professor Kubi or just Kubi. It is my pleasure to give the faculty address tonight. I'll try to make it short.

But first, the accolades: Today is an amazing, exciting day for all. Today, you receive recognition for all your hard work. You get to put away the calculators, books and computers and sit back in the glow of recognition. Congratulations! Today you graduate from the top public university in the world. Parents take note – you should be proud of your sons and daughters! In fact, in a tag-team of ratings with other universities – including MIT and Stanford—we at Berkeley often come out on top!

It is an exciting time to be going into the world, even as the world is recovering from the worst recession since the great depression. The economy is improving and the tech industry appears to be thriving. Some of you will be heading on to graduate school. Others will be going into industry for research or development. Still others will be starting new companies. Many of you will work your way into leadership positions, since you have the skills to lead. Whatever you choose to do—be the best. And, don't let anyone pigeon-hole you; you are allowed to reinvent yourself whenever it makes sense.

As I was thinking about what to say today, I was struck with the march of technology. This is the age of embedded and pervasive systems. Nearly everyone has a smart phone. Google glasses are all the rage. Many of us tweet our every move and post selfies from campsites to facebook. Our cars practically drive themselves and report our location when we get into accidents. Researchers in this very department are using the cloud to help cure diseases through genetic matching and manipulation. It is truly the best of times.

And yet. The dangers of technology are clear. Let me mention two.

First, Edward Snowden revealed last year the extent to which technology was being used by the NSA to violate our privacy and collect metadata about our actions and interactions. Perhaps you are so embedded in social networking world that you do not see the harm. But it is our freedom and individuality that we must always treasure. You are unique and your privacy is important. I might submit that some things should just be forgotten. We are all human and as such have a variety of indiscretions under our belts. Until recently, society has functioned under the assumption that it could choose what was private and what was not. Let us not be too quick to change that. In converse, do not trust technology to protect your privacy: be careful what you post to your Facebook page, because it can come back to haunt you. Further, as you begin to invent, do not assume every new technology should collect information unless you are very clear how this information will be protected.

Second, the world is now seeing clear signs of climate change. The evidence is all around us. Technology has gotten us into this mess, and perhaps technology can get us out of it. I like to hope that this is true. But we need the will to fight to save our planet. We need to act quickly, since the world is in a very unfortunate positive feedback loop from which we may not recover. When you develop new technologies, think of their global consequences; do they help or hinder?

But I said I would be short, so here is what I really wanted to say:

First, you are the best of the best. You hail from Berkeley EECS. You have technical knowledge and perspective to *understand* technology rather than just *create* technology. So, as you develop new technologies and new uses for technology, do not just go for the coolness factor. Think of consequences. Is this thing that you are doing a good idea? Rarely can technology be suppressed, but those with knowledge and a firm hand, like yourselves, can guide, restrict, or control its use. Always think of *what* you are doing and *why* you are doing it rather than stopping at *how* you are going to do it.

Second, find time for life. Take time for non-technical pursuits. Play music, read fiction, pay attention to the world at large. Ironically, the time you give yourselves *away* from your work will *enhance* your work. Humans do not function well under continuous stress—despite what you may believe from the last four years.

Yes, we may be playing a tag-team game of ratings with MIT and Stanford, but we are different, you are different. Berkeley is the land of tie-dye t-shirts and counter-culture. You have the capacity to think beyond conventional wisdom and accepted practice. Take the time to do so! Don't just bury yourself in work.

So, I leave you with this final charge: Be the best that you can at life; be mindful of every morsel that you eat and action that you do. Never drink bad wine, especially when good wine is available. Of course, in your spare time, change the world and make us proud!

Farewell but never goodbye!