

# **School of Business**

## **Commencement 2020 and 2021**

### **Invocation: Chaplain John Walsh**

In the names of all that we call sacred and holy:

This week, we celebrated with all of creation, the earth that gives us life, and the science that enables us to understand our responsibility to live sustainably upon the earth.

We offer our prayers of gratitude and ask for blessings, all who have made this day possible. We give you thanks for these young men and young women who have accomplished so much and worked so hard to make this day, this dream, a reality.

We thank you for their families who have sacrificed and given so much for this moment in the lives of the students and for their future. We thank you for this faculty and for their rich contribution to the learning experience. We thank you for all those who have given so generously of their resources to make this wonderful place of possibility.

And now, we ask for your blessings on this special moment, as we celebrate the classes of 2020 and 2021. Amen.

## Deans Welcoming Remarks

Greetings and welcome to graduation 2020 and 2021!

I would like to start off by first thanking you, our students, for having the dedication and devotion to complete your studies and now to graduate amidst these incredibly turbulent times. I would like to especially thank those students who did this while working on the front-line of healthcare and other essential services that helped us cope throughout this pandemic. You are indeed the real heroes here, and we are all very grateful.

I'd like to thank the families and loved ones of our students—it's hard enough to be working and going to school at the same time—but when you're doing that, and your kids are at home too, or you have to work double shifts or not working as many hours, it is a real workout for all involved. We know that it's been an especially stressful time for you as students and as families, and that makes today's event even more monumental, even if it is virtual!

And just as you have striven to improve yourself during this period by obtaining your degree with us, we at the School of Business have also striven to improve ourselves during this time of crisis. We have done so by adopting new techniques to excel in online teaching and learning. We have done so by starting new programs such as our MS in Business Analytics. And we have done so by finding new ways to honor our students, such as our new student award in Purposeful Leadership, which is in addition to the blossoming Whitehead Leadership Society and Delta Mu Delta leadership programs.

The late Reverend Martin Luther King once said, "We can accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope." For many of us, there has been finite disappointment in not being able to teach and learn in the classroom, not being able to fly and see loved ones, not being in the Greek Theatre today for this graduation. These are indeed finite disappointments.

But, yes, infinite hope triumphs over these finite matters. And we, as a school, have infinite hope in you and the positive impact you will make as you take your education to advance as a person, as a career, and as a responsible citizen of our world. Thank you for believing in us and allowing us to play a positive role in your development as a person and as a professional.

On behalf of the faculty and staff at the School of Business, congratulations, Class of 2020 and 2021!

*I would like to introduce our President, Dr. Ralph Kuncl, and in doing so, express our appreciation for his leadership as President of the university for the last decade. You have left our university in a stronger place, and for that, we thank you.*

## **President's Welcome Remarks**

Good afternoon. I'm Ralph Kuncl, the 11th president of your great University, and it is a privilege to speak to you today at our virtual Commencement Ceremony at the University of Redlands.

I'm here to honor you—our 2020 and 2021 graduates—on this important occasion in your lives and in the life of our University. On behalf of the entire University of Redlands community, we are enormously inspired by your achievements and congratulate you today.

To your families, we salute you as well. In countless ways, your graduates' accomplishments are also yours, for, without you, many of today's graduates would not have arrived at this milestone in their educational journey.

I am standing in front of Memorial Chapel, looking out over the Quad—one of my very favorite places on our historic Redlands campus.

And I feel certain that, as you graduate today, this is precisely the place you would wish you could be: at **YOUR** Redlands—here, being celebrated by all who know just how hard you have worked to earn your degree—your family, your faculty, and your friends. It is not the same without you here, and oh, how we miss you.

It has been a year where so much has been lost—and sacrificed—and demanded. The only constant during this pandemic year has been change, which has been thrust upon you and all of us. Many of these changes have been hard, and some have been extremely hard.

And yet, you are here. You made it to the finish line.

It is a tremendous accomplishment. And it occurs to me that, on such a day as this, we should take stock of our triumphs—like those we celebrate today—and maybe even also our failings along the way, and ask: what will we carry with us to the **NEXT** chapter of our lives?

Perhaps most important, of course, is your University of Redlands degree – representing your hard work, your resilience, and the critical thinking and problem-solving skills you honed during your Redlands education. After all, this past year was the most consequential in a century. Your Redlands degree and the knowledge you gained will take you far, and that, in and of itself, is cause for great celebration.

You also carry with you *all that you have learned* here at Redlands—in your coursework—in your activities—in your friendships—and in all of your experiences on your campus and beyond.

You carry with you also *the people* who helped to spark your passions and inspire you to learn, both about the subjects that interested you and about yourself. Here, of course, I speak of your professors, your coaches, your

friends, the outstanding staff who supported you, and the mentors who guided you along the way, helping you overcome hurdles and find your purpose in life.

Mark Twain once said, that “the two most important days in your life are the day you are born, and the day you find out why.”

*Finding out why* is, for many of you, the reason you came to Redlands, and you have become the person you are today in great part because you are now a Redlands graduate, the person *who earned your degree*—step by difficult step—with the guidance of others who invested in you. These realities about yourself are gifts, and ones you will carry to sustain and nourish you as you grow into the next chapter of your life—and for the rest of your life.

*I am reminded of a poem about saying goodbye to friends, by Southern Californian poet Flavia Weedn:*

*Some people come into our lives and quickly go.*

*Some people MOVE OUR SOULS to dance.*

*They awaken us to a new understanding with the passing whisper of their wisdom.*

*Some people make the sky more beautiful to gaze upon.*

*They stay in our lives for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.*

Today, on this momentous day of Commencement, we all cannot be physically together. But I stand here—for you—on our campus in Redlands, while our beloved university community is scattered far and wide, including you, our resilient graduates.

Here, now, I speak to you from our hearts, from your faculty and trustees, your staff, and your community: with time and distance, our bonds have been severely stretched over the past year. But they will **NEVER** break—they **CAN**

never break. You have left a footprint on our hearts, and we, on yours, and none of us will ever be the same.

Congratulations, Class of 2020 and Class of 2021! And Godspeed.

## **Student Speakers**

And now, it is my pleasure to introduce your 2020 class speaker, Carissa Gerry, and your 2021 class speaker, Alex Kyranakis. Please join me in welcoming your class speakers.

## **Greetings from the Class of 2020: Carissa Gerry**

My name is Carissa Gerry, and I am the student commencement speaker for the 2020 graduating class of the University of Redlands School of Business.

I wish I was delivering this speech to you all in person, but I appreciate the University's efforts to recognize and celebrate our commencement in the best way we possibly can at this time. I hope this message finds you all well. My thoughts are with this graduating class and your loved ones, as well as the faculty and staff.

After much deliberation, I decided it's best to leave the speech I originally prepared for this class relatively unchanged because the significance of our accomplishment hasn't diminished because of the ever-changing news around us.

While I cannot deliver this speech to an audience of smiling faces, I hope this virtual delivery can remind you to take immense pride in what you have achieved.

What we have all achieved is far beyond academic excellence. We have managed to balance our personal, professional, and academic lives. At times, life seemed rather imbalanced, especially when we studied late into the night or cancelled plans to finish an assignment. Or when we made the sudden transition to online-based learning in our final courses.

I want to thank all of our family, friends, and loved ones for understanding the sacrifices we as students have had to make in order to complete our respective degree programs. All of the support you offered along the way is sincerely appreciated.

There is no one-size-fits-all success story amongst our graduating class, and that is the true beauty of our commencement.

Two years ago, I would never have thought I would be delivering a speech, especially not one of such significance. Public speaking is not ordinarily something I would pursue. As a child, I was painfully shy; as a young adult, reserved. However, one thing has remained unchanged throughout my life and that has been the pursuit of academic excellence. Earning my Master's degree bears such great personal meaning to me that I wanted to commemorate it by stepping outside of my comfort zone and onto this virtual graduation stage. As the first college graduate in my family and, too, the first to pursue graduate school, my academic journey serves as inspiration for my nieces and all future generations to come.

Two years ago, I never would have selected a seat in the front of a classroom by choice, or confidently participated in class discussions.

And here I am today, standing before you, both humbled and honored, having done all of these things. The University of Redlands provided me with an education that challenged me to my very core; thanks to the faculty and my *amazing* peers, I have built up the confidence and courage to pursue

opportunities, both inside and outside of the classroom, regardless of how out of reach they seem. I am no longer afraid of hearing the word “No”—I am afraid of the disappointment I will feel if I do not try. I learned to embrace my appetite for learning here and to be *proud* of it. And I have nothing but pride in myself and my fellow peers for completing the rigorous curriculums here at this university.

I started the MBA program the day after I got married. Little did I know the late nights of being a newlywed would actually be spent with my nose buried in textbooks and assignments. I want to thank my dear husband, Damian. It is only fitting that my degree bear the name I took when we married – it is as much a reflection of my accomplishment as it is his unwavering support. Thank you, mom, for teaching me the strength and determination I need to be a successful professional woman. And thank you to my friends, colleagues, and peers for offering encouragement along the way.

Whether we enrolled at this university to carry on family tradition or started a new tradition by being the first in our families to graduate college; whether we took out student loans to pay for this education or paid for our education by honorably serving our country; whether we finished our programs in two or four years, or returned to this campus to continue education we had previously started; whether you are a graduate of a Bachelors or of a Masters program; our different journeys led us all to the same destination: graduation.

Now, more than ever, the graduation stage is symbolic of how far each of us has come in our pursuit of higher education. Whatever curveballs life threw at us as students, today, we are graduates.

Perhaps I am not the only one confused why the bulldog, of all animals, was selected as our school mascot. Well, after some research, I can share with you that, historically, bulldogs are bred for their strength and tenacity—but also for their decorum. This is truly what each and every graduate in this class embodies.



No degree will be simply “handed out”—no, every degree has been duly earned as a result of hard work and dedication. And above all, resilience.

So, my fellow bulldogs: as you add your degree to your resume and explore the doors that will now open to you as a University of Redlands graduate, I want to offer a few simple reminders. Continue to set your sights on the future but grant yourself a moment to reflect on how far you have come. Remember the eagerness and anxiousness you may have felt on your first day of class, and know you transformed those feelings into an extraordinarily impressive academic achievement.

While we cannot be together in person to clap and cheer for one another until our hands are sore and our voices are hoarse, take pride in knowing that you are amongst an incredible group of graduates. A group that has faced—and overcome—some of the most difficult and unprecedented challenges in modern times. We are unified by our mutual success and enriched by our individual accolades.

I am proud to be a part of the graduating class of 2020!

Thank you.

## **Greetings from the Class of 2021: Alex Kyranakis**

To the graduating class of 2021, faculty, and guests, it is an honor to be among your company as we celebrate this important day. A day like today is very welcomed in times such as this. The journey we all have been on through this pandemic has challenged us and our families. The whole world is going through an event that has made life so very different. Illness, death, disappointment, financial loss, job loss, and much more struck our University of Redlands family. But together, we persevered. We remained strong and resilient. Together, we kept hope alive. That perseverance and resilience have

brought this day! A day that should serve as a symbol to you and me as well as those around us. The symbol of this graduation ignites inspiration, faith in great things to come, and a reassurance a bright future lies ahead. The tireless nights, the long days, and the many months of studying have paid off, all the while our world goes through uncertain times; that is a statement of the true accomplishment we have made. I am sure this day brings a bit of personal reflection for you all. Reflection upon the journey that brought you to this very day. You may reflect upon the last few years or maybe your entire life.

Nonetheless, we all have been on a path to get here. For me, it was only a few short years ago I found myself driving a semi-truck across the country. I drove nearly half a million miles during the five years of that job. All I had to my name was a cell phone bill. The experience was freeing and a bit of an adventure, but I still yearned for something bigger. It was because of something very important during that time which led me to this day. In fact, it is an important part of all our journeys, which is the presence of people who influence, give trusted advice, and walk along with us in life. Those influential people are our mentors. Fortunately, it was because of several mentors in my life that encouraged me to come here to the University of Redlands. As I began here, one of those important influences gave me this piece of wisdom. He said, "You won't be so much surprised at what you learn, but rather how much this experience will change you." Little did I know an experience certainly was coming. But that word of wisdom inspired me and intrigued me.

I see now that we could have earned our degrees, learned the materials, and achieved the grades anywhere. But we came to The University of Redlands for a larger reason of growth and the building of life-long relationships in addition to the academics it offers. This University has equipped us to make a difference in our lives. This difference has built integrity, reliability, influence, values, and character all upon a foundation of pristine education. Once again, that did not come without the very important tool for us, mentors, in fact, for

me, several. Those mentors have helped foster new understanding, achieve academic success, and complete many projects. But most of all, they changed us, this University changed us, this journey changed us. I am sure many of you can share in the same sentiments. Many of you have grown so much, grown to be an influence on the world, a pioneer of something new, and to be a leader of our future.

Just think of the thousands of graduates before our class who walked in the footsteps we have now taken. The thousands of stories they have now made because of their accomplishment right here at The University. Many alums are even here with us today. Now,

WE become a part of that body of graduates changing the world. Though we are virtually having commencement, the meaning of this day is not lost. The meaning of the accomplishments we have all made personally, for our families, and the world around us means a great deal. I know for me, resilience was a big part of this last year during this pandemic. The transition was not just online learning. It was a transition to virtual living in many ways. I found that through the discouragement and unknown of what the year may bring, resilience would see me through. For us all, the capacity to overcome difficulty is so very important, and we have done just that, overcome. The journey was tough. It was challenging. It brought highs and lows; it brought so much. But WE made it through, and WE did it together. We had mentors, friends, coworkers, business managers, and most importantly, family members who believed in and helped us to persevere. This university believes in us. This university shaped us. Let us now go and do much with it. My fellow class, we know what tough times can bring, but we obviously know how to overcome and pioneer change for a better future. This day is a symbol of what humanity needs... perseverance, resilience, and the ability to make a difference in the lives of others. WE have achieved the success, the education, and the values this university so generously gives. Now WE are the mentors, the mentors to

whatever good we want it to be. I am honored to be this year's student commencement speaker. But even more, I am proud to be a member of this class, when circumstances required a new way of learning, you were resilient. You rose to the challenge and gave others hope. To the University of Redlands School of Business Class of 2021, congratulations on your high accomplishment, and thank you so very much.

## **Recognition of Awards of Excellence and Retiring Faculty: Provost Ogren**

Good afternoon and congratulations to the class of 2021. Your successful conclusion to this extraordinary journey to reach this Commencement in a year of pandemic disrupted expectations is commendable. It's my privilege to acknowledge faculty colleagues who aided and guided you on that journey. They, too, are proud of your success.

Please join me in recognizing faculty members who have received awards for excellence:

- For **Research**: Dr. Neena Gopalan

Three faculty members will retire at the end of this academic year. Please join me in thanking them for their dedicated service to the College and University:

- Peter Bergevin, Kimberly Cass, and Charng Yi Chen.

## **Recognition of Outstanding Faculty: Dean Horan**

I would like to announce the 2020–2021 Outstanding Faculty Award recipients.

### **Excellence in Teaching**

- Christina Walker
- John Ramirez

### **Excellence in Service**

- Avijit Sarkar

### **Teaching Innovation**

- Allison Fraiberg

### **Special Appreciation & Recognition Award**

- Michael MacQueen

## **Recognition of Student Groups: Dean Horan**

I am happy to recognize the members of the Whitehead Leadership Society. These individuals are being recognized today for their outstanding leadership qualities, as well as their academic standing. You will recognize them by their bronze medallions. Students who are members of the Society will have it stated on their slide that will be shown.

I am also happy to recognize the members of Delta Mu Delta. These individuals are being recognized today for their outstanding academic achievement of graduating in the top 10% of their class. You will recognize them by their gold and purple medallions. Students who are members of the Honor Society will have it stated on their slide that will be shown.

I am happy to recognize the veterans of our Armed Forces. These individuals are being recognized for their outstanding service to our country.

I am also pleased to recognize the numerous members of this community who have contributed through other types of service. The University of Redlands

has been ranked fourth among small schools on the Peace Corps' 2019 Top Volunteer-Producing Colleges and Universities list. Before the pandemic hit, there were 15 Bulldogs volunteering worldwide, and more than 280 alumni have served in this global organization. Closer to home, every year, our students and alumni serve communities in professions such as teaching, social work, nonprofit organizational leadership, and much more. Let's hear it for Bulldogs making a difference!

## **Recognition of Retiring Associate Dean Keith Roberts**

Finally, on behalf of the faculty, staff, and students at the School of Business, I would like to recognize Keith Roberts for his dedicated service to the school and the university.

During his 27-year tenure, Keith has served in a variety of leadership positions, including Director of the MBA Program, Associate Dean of Academics, Interim Dean of the School of Business, and even a stint as the Interim University Registrar.

Keith has earned many honors during his time here at Redlands, including the University of Redlands Presidential Award for Outstanding Service in 2014, two Excellence in Teaching Awards, and selection as a Fellow of Whitehead Leadership Society.

Most recently, Keith led the charge for the school to receive our ACBSP accreditation, as well as lead the establishment of ACBSP Delta Mu Delta Student Honor Society. We wish Keith well and his wife, Karen, well in his upcoming retirement. He is irreplaceable, and we will miss him. Again, thank you, Keith.

## **Presentation of Undergraduate Candidates**

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Bachelor of Science in Business.

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Bachelor of Science in Management.

The candidates whose names are featured in this program have satisfactorily completed all requirements for graduation, or soon will do so, and are recommended by the faculty for their degrees.

## **Conferring of Undergraduate Degrees: President Kuncil**

Here is the moment you've been waiting for: *By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of the University of Redlands and the laws of the State of California, I confer upon you the respective bachelors' degrees with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.*

## **Presentation of Graduate Candidates: Dean Horan**

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Master of Arts in Management.

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Master of Business Administration.

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Master of Science in Information Technology.

It is my honor to present the graduating class for the degree Master of Science in Organizational Leadership.

The candidates whose names are featured in this program have satisfactorily completed all requirements for graduation, or soon will do so, and are recommended by the faculty for their degrees.

## Conferring of Graduate Degrees

Here is the moment you've been waiting for: *By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees of the University of Redlands and the laws of the State of California, I confer upon you the respective masters' degrees with all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities appertaining thereto.*

## Benediction by John Walsh

As is my tradition, I want to paraphrase an ancient blessing:

*Good-bye...*

*which is short for 'God be with you.'*

*God be with you as you say goodbye to this place to venture out into an unknown experience.*

*God be with you as you seek to bring wisdom and compassion with you into this new world.*

*God be with you as you work to enable lasting peace and true justice to be a part of everyone's experience--not just yours.*

*God be with you as you endeavor to save this planet and preserve the beauty of our common universe for generations to come.*

*God be with you in all your endeavors...personal and professional.*

*God be with you...*

*Good-bye.*



## Och Tamale Chant:

*Och Tamale Gazolly Gazump  
Deyump Deyatty Yahoo  
Ink Damink Deyatty Gazink  
Deyump Deray Yahoo  
Wing Wang Tricky Trackey  
Poo Foo Joozy Woozy  
Skizzle Wazzle Wang Tang  
Orky Porky Dominorky  
Redlands!  
Rah, Rah Redlands!*

## Alma Mater (SONG)

*O, that dear old U of R,  
Thy children near and far  
Will sing to thee and all thy glories tell;  
Where the orange blossoms grow  
And the waters gently flow,  
That dear old U of R we love so well.*

*O, that dear old U of R,  
Whose emblem shines afar,  
Eternal as the hills we love so well;  
Where the mountains tall and grand  
Like an inspiration stand  
That dear old U of R we love so well.*

*O, that dear old U of R,*

*The years can never mar  
The memories of thee we love so well;  
Where the friendships are so dear  
That we leave them with a tear,  
That dear old U of R we love so well.*

## **Closing Remarks: Dean Horan**

On behalf of the faculty and staff at the School of Business, I'd like to express our appreciation for being a part of this graduation of the Class of 2020 and 2021. It has been a different graduation ceremony, for sure. But what is not different is how proud we are of you for having persevered through the pandemic to complete your studies and be here today. You should be proud. You should be happy. You should celebrate with your families and friends today. Let me give you one last congratulations. Congratulations! And with that, I declare the graduation ceremony to be closed. Take care.

**END OF CEREMONY**