

Convocation Remarks
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Graduates: You soon will be facing the challenge and responsibility of leadership. You will face the challenge and responsibility every day, and increasingly over time. You will face them at home, at work, and in the community.

What is leadership? To help me answer this question, I shall refer to a recent survey conducted by a national survey research firm. One hundred CEO's and one hundred Senior Vice Presidents – the next generation of CEO's – were interviewed.

Are raw intelligence and talent necessary for successful leadership? Certainly. Are they the most important attributes? According to the survey, they are not. Five other attributes are more important. I agree.

In order of importance, these five attributes are:

- First, **character**. That is the ability to overcome obstacles, determination, drive, willingness to risk being wrong, ability to follow, loyalty, and integrity. I shall return to integrity later.
- Second, **communication skills**. That is the ability to orally express yourself one-on-one, in small groups, and formally before large groups. A high level of writing ability is essential.
- Third, **vision and action**. That is the ability to motivate and inspire others, to take independent action, to think strategically, to set the tone, to get people to work in teams, and to contemplate doing what has never been done before.
- Fourth, **Creativity**. That is to be able to solve problems by being innovative and inventive.
- Fifth, **personality**. That is the ability to get along with others, to be diplomatic, to find win-win situations.

Why do intelligence and talent follow in importance these five attributes as we discuss leadership? Because all of you here today are intelligent and talented; otherwise, you would not be here. What will define your success as a leader will depend more on the five attributes just described: character, communication skills, vision and action, creativity, and personality.

Among these five attributes, one stands out. It is character, especially as character is described by integrity. Integrity leads you to do what is good, what is right, and what is fair.

How do you know what is good, right and fair in every situation? The answer to this question is hard to find. Listen to the teachings of your parents, your church, and your

professors. The Ten Commandments are described in every religion in one form or another – follow them.

Integrity is something you do every day in little ways. It is being open and honest in every encounter. It becomes a habit that reflects your essence as an individual. When you have integrity, it shows without your thinking about it. The people who work with you will know it and respect it. They will trust you. They will follow your lead. You will be a successful leader.

Graduates: you clearly will make your mark and make a difference in your community and around the world. You will discover many opportunities, and you will face major challenges.

Are you prepared for these awesome yet wonderful endeavors? The RIT trustees, administrators, faculty, and staff know you are ready.

Let integrity be your guide. If you do, we believe you will travel the paths ahead swiftly, competitively, and with confidence. You are tomorrow's leaders and we are proud of you.

Congratulations. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to know and work with you.