

**James M. Krueger  
UMSL Commencement Speech  
December 19, 2015**

**Chancellor George, thank you so much for your kind words of introduction.**

**Including three today, I have attended more than 170 commencements in my 41 years at UMSL. I have done so to show support for our students. These events are always joyous occasions for the graduates, their families and their friends.**

**This commencement ceremony is special for me because it will be the last one where I am a member of the platform party, but even more so because I am honored and humbled to be your commencement speaker.**

**I was told that my remarks are supposed to be 8-10 minutes, but I am accustomed to teaching summer classes of 2 and ½ hours, so I make no promises.**

**I am going to ask the graduates to consider tonight's ceremony as your last UMSL class of the Fall 2015 semester.**

**Looking ahead, I would encourage you to consider taking more classes or pursuing additional UMSL degrees.**

**We need the revenue.**

**In my classes, I expect class participation.  
Tonight is no exception.**

**I am going to ask you graduates a number of questions.  
The answers to these questions will help show that UMSL  
students are unique and more diverse than students at many  
other higher education institutions.**

**Undergraduate students: Please stand if you are 23 or older,  
not the typical 18-22 old undergrads.  
Please be seated.**

**Undergraduate students: Please stand if you worked full-  
time or part-time to help pay for your UMSL education, as  
opposed to having your parents pay for it.  
Please be seated.**

**Undergraduate students: Please stand if you are the first  
person in your family to earn a four-year college degree.  
So was I, many years ago.  
Please be seated.**

**I imagine that a number of you hit the trifecta of answers to  
those three questions.**

**Graduate students: Please stand if you worked full-time or part-time while attending UMSL.  
Please be seated.**

**Graduate students: Please stand if you are the first person in your family to earn a graduate degree.  
So was I, many years ago.  
Please be seated.**

**All students: Please stand if you are an international student.  
Please be seated.**

**Finally, all students: Please stand if you are proud of your academic achievements at UMSL.  
I certainly hope all of you are standing.  
Please be seated.**

**In every class, I also lecture.**

**My lecture tonight has only three relatively short parts: The Golden Rule, Do the Right Thing and What Will Matter.**

**The Golden Rule is simple to state: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.  
I believe that sometimes we fail to follow the Golden Rule in our personal and professional lives.  
I know that I have.  
Still, try to use this simple rule as a guide for your actions.**

**Do the Right Thing is also a simple concept that can be difficult to put into practice.**

**I guarantee that each of you will be challenged to do the right thing at some point in your career.**

**One recent, major example where doing the right thing did not happen is the Volkswagen diesel emissions scandal. The CEO resigned, although he may never have known about the cheating.**

**A recent newspaper article that I read provided information about the ongoing investigation.**

**VW still believes that only a comparatively few employees were actually involved in the manipulations.**

**However, so far, data has been analyzed from the laptops, phones and other devices of 400 employees.**

**Also, more than 2,000 employees have been informed in writing that they cannot delete any data in case it becomes relevant to the investigation.**

**Finally, external auditors have already gone through 102 terabytes of data, which is the equivalent of 50 million books.**

**That is big data.**

**As this case shows, it matters to you, to your employer and to society that you do the right thing.**

**Graduates, think to yourself “What would I have done in this situation had I been a VW employee?”**

**I will now quote excerpts from the poem What Will Matter by Michael Josephson.**

**“So what will matter? How will the value of your days be measured?**

**What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave.**

**What will matter is every act of integrity, compassion, courage or sacrifice that enriched, empowered, or encouraged others to emulate your example.**

**What will matter is not your competence, but your character.**

**Choose to live a life that matters.”**

**Congratulations and best wishes.**

**Always be proud that you chose UMSL. We are.**