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Summary
Annual Report of the Provost for 2002-03

By Richard P. Saller

October 22, 2003

The past year was one of heightened anxiety in higher education across the country, as financial pressures persist and the threat of the United States going to war in Iraq threatened to intrude into their intellectual lives. Happily, although we must remain concerned about the financial condition of the University of Chicago, and the most tangible intrusions came in the form of backhoes and bulldozers.

Let me take the occasion of the annual letter to describe some of the achievements and events of the past year, as well as some of the important works in progress. Among the many major events of 2002-03, the Law School celebrated its great tradition on the occasion of its centennial, marked by the publication of the centennial issue of The University of Chicago Law Review, which included essays by the faculty. The Division of the Biological Sciences has received funding to expand its research in microbiology with two major grants from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, one to form a Regional Center of Excellence for Biodefense and Emerging Infectious Diseases Research and the other to build a Regional Biocontainment Laboratory at Argonne National Laboratory. The RCE and RBL will make the University a leader in research on microbes that cause infectious diseases.


The University of Chicago Press

T he world beyond Hyde Park continues to be in good hands. The world beyond Hyde Park continues to be in good hands. The world beyond Hyde Park continues to be in good hands.
When I was an undergraduate I went, in my first days as a freshman, to my own college's version of the Aims of Education address. The talk was no doubt meant to introduce me to the university and to persuade me to take the right attitude towards my studies. I had read about it in the college newspaper the day after the formal incantation of a glorious celebration of our nation's bicentennial. The fireworks had been particularly splendid that July. Hundreds of tall ships like those used in the revolutionary era sailed up the east coast in a triumphant reenactment of the past. Tea was spilled, and the picture of paradise. Here she describes the end of a village day:

Girls gather flowers to weave into necklaces; children, lusty from their work and bound to no particular task, play circular games in the half-shade of the late afternoon. Finally the sun sets, in a flame which stretches from the mountain behind to the horizon on the sea, the last barrier comes up from the beach, children straggle home, dark little figures that will shine in the houses, and each house- hold gathers for its evening meal... Sometimes sleep will not descend on the village until the first stars shine in the sky; then at last there is only the mellow thunder of the reef and the whisper of lovers, as the village rests until dawn (pp. 18–19).

Some years later, another anthropologist went back to the community and reported that the villagers were outraged by these slanderous tales of easy, untroubled sex among the young people. Mead had spoken to the young women; this new anthropologist spoke to the fathers, and the difference in their accounts was a bit like the difference between what you might tell a friend about a party you've attended and what your parents might say if the University of Chicago admissions counselor had asked them, at the interview, for a description of your after-school activities.

In any event, the conclusions Mead drew still ring true. She pointed out that in a place like Samoa, where social roles are clear and for the most part prescribed by tradition, the emotional challenge of adulthood is very different than in our own. Young men and women in the Samoan village of Mead's fieldwork come to adulthood with a very clear idea of what they will do in the years ahead. They will fish and cultivate taro in the fields; they will live in huts thatched with palm and floored with stone; they will tend the younger children; the men will fish, cultivate, and hunt; older children will tend the younger babies. Men and women have different tasks, and those tasks are well understood. There is very little doubt in the minds of the whole community about what they will do after they graduate. The men will be asked to decide whether and when to have a family, and if so, which children will help raise them, as they age, the right to sit in assembly with community leaders, to drink ceremonial kava with them, and to have status and authority in their village, and the competition to be chosen is fierce and subtle. But all men and women know the religion they will follow, all know the means by which they will gain their living, and all know the people with whom they will pass their lives.

You know none of that. You enter into adulthood—and these four years of college are really your transition into adulthood—with more choice than the world has ever known. Take, for example, what it is to be female. About half of you are female. Some of you see your future selves as defined by your intellectual work. You imagine that work will be the fine thing you do. If so, it happens that you never have children or never even marry, that will be okay in the eyes of your peers. There will be many women like you at your twentieth reunion. Others of you who are female see your future selves as primarily mothers and wives. You imagine your yet-to-be-born children as your first commitment, and if you never have much of a professional career, will be okay in the eyes of your peers. There will also be many women like you at the twentieth reunion. If you are a middle-class woman in our society it's okay to be a stay-at-home mom, or a childless professional, or to balance both career and family. For that matter, it's okay to go to a sperm bank and have a kid on your own, or to raise a child with another woman. I went to college in an era when for the first time it was possible and widely acceptable for women to delay pregnancy so that they could be students. Now, when I have a child and when, again for the first time, deciding to go to graduate school had become a normal and acceptable choice for women. Now, the barriers have fallen even further. There are fewer prejudices about women in traditionally male-dominated fields and fewer presumptions about how and when to raise a family. None of you will be as constrained as previous generations were by gender, by sexual orientation, by skin color, by the class status of your parents, nor even by your accent or the language of your birth. This is not to say that the world is fair or just. It isn't, in spades. But now more than ever it is easier to do whatever you want without as much of the prejudice that held previous generations back. It is also easier to think that because no one is holding you back, if you are not successful in your tasks at the path way you have chosen, there is no one to blame but yourself. So you are anxious. I think a lot about anxiety, as it happens, because I am the sort of professor who teaches developmental psychology, particularly the disturbing ones, which means that I immerse myself in a community and try to figure out what people feel, think, and act. I also teach human sexuality and also what they do about them. One of the things you learn fast in my line of work is that most people don't think of themselves as caught within a fine web of social structure. They think that they feel bad because they are bad, in some cases that are not very good at coping. In other words, you think you are anxious because you're stuck in a situation that you don't understand or strong enough to manage at the University of Chicago. I think you are anxious because of the social role you occupy at the dawn of the twenty-first century, because you have so much apparent freedom to choose and so many apparent opportunities that it can scare you like a startled rabbit in the headlights of an incoming car.

What earthly good can it do to read Weber, Marx, and Durkheim when you are trying to decide whether to be a neuroscientist or a science fiction writer, or when your earliest parents want you to be a doctor and you are trying to drum up the nerve to tell them you are planning a career working in a puppet? A liberal arts education, if you use it wisely, teaches you how to make choices because it shows you how other people have used their minds to sit in the middle of the puddle of their own fretful fears, peering out at the world through protective goggles. We all do that, say Frank called “assumptive worlds,” sets of assumptions we make about the world that seem so natural, so common sense, that their very existence as assumptions fades until they become as real as concrete. I think about these assumptive worlds when I read office hours. When I read everyone in the classroom has exactly the same data about me. They’ve all heard the same lectures and seen me wear the same clothes and make the same gestures. Yet when members of that class come to see me one by one, it turns out that they each have very different ideas about the sort of person I am. You can’t say what kind of person who comes at 3 o’clock assumes that I’m a big sister and the person who comes at 3:15 expects me to be a judge, and for some, who believes I have responsibility based on what they know the world, based on the assumptions they have drawn from their own experience about the way the world proceeds. That’s fine for office hours. It’s not so fine for making life choices, because the world is more complex than you are able to perceive when looking out at it through muddy goggles from your puddle. And you can’t just decide to abandon those assumptions about how the world works because to you they are not assumptions, but iron facts. You no longer realize that you invented them in the first place. As the old saying has it, fish can’t tell you much about the water. They don’t know it’s there. But the courses you take here can give you the tools to clamber out of the puddle, or at least to the edge of it, if you treat the authors you read as people like yourselves, struggling to make sense of the world as you are. We live in an age when the kinds of moral and intellectual commitments are worth making, what kind of life is worth living. Nearly everyone you read about in your courses is a woman in the second half of the twentieth century. Without the help of a woman, as Tanya Luhrmann September 25, 2003

The Aims of Education Address

By Tanya Luhrmann

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how his or her commitments were forged. And that will help you to understand and manage the forging of your own. At the heart of a liberal education stands the oldest human paradox: that the more deeply and intimately you understand other human beings, the stranger and more unique predicates and their idiosyncratic pains—the more clearly you will see yourselves. If you would follow the inscription at Delphi—to know thyself—know others first.

In short, one aim of education is to improve your capacity for empathy. By that I do not mean a feel-good state of squishy oneness. I mean that if you genuinely try to understand—to read with compassion for the difficulty of the problem the winter was trying to solve and respect for the way he or she tried to solve it, to read from the inside out, trying to understand the author from the author’s perspective, located in his or her time and space, struggling with the same existential issues that bother you but struggling with them in a way that is specific, historically particular, unique, you will be in a position to think. And thinking, as the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has pointed out, is a moral act. Anthropology is in the peculiar position of doing with real people what most scholars do with texts. When you read The Grapes of Wrath, you feel the suffocating dust of the baked, cracked ground and the despair of the migrant farmers who traveled west on empty promises and carried string, together with twisted wire, but then you can close the book. When you do fieldwork with homeless women in a drop-in shelter, as I have done, you smell the clothes a woman cannot wash and you feel her terror of having nowhere to go that is safe, and then at the end of the interview the woman sometimes screams at you or you hear strange noises, and you are no way to pretend that you are detached and distant and purely scientific. You react with moral outrage—at the sociopolitical system that has made her that way—and try to understand. This is what great writing does, if you let it; it grabs at our guts and we respond to it, and then we have to step back, to understand. Geertz points out that the impossibility of separating your scholarly work from your life forces you to recognize that thinking well demands that we tolerate the enormous tension between our initial moral reaction and our scientific observation. Thinking is a moral act because it is a commitment to understand first and then to judge. And that tension is what forces us to grow and teaches us to choose and makes us who we become. Somewhere Picasso remarks that if you hope to draw a circle that is uniquely your own, you should try to draw a circle that is as true to geometrical form as you can. You will fail to draw that circle and you will be frustrated and you will want to throw yourself away if you will find the virtue of your own perspective.

This may seem counterintuitive advice, but I believe that if people know themselves they need to find themselves, and they hold the naive belief that if they could just strip off everyday life like layers of an onion they would reach their core, unadulterated by other people’s expectations and the distractions of a fast-paced world. They believe that they have a true core, an essence, and that it sits inside of them waiting to be discovered, and that it is the core that will tell whether they ought to be a doctor or a lawyer or a philosophy professor. Sometimes these people find the core core, and some way through Mediterranean countries picking grapes, confident that their true self will emerge somewhere en route to Italy. But people who believe that the self is like an onion and their true self is its core have not spent much time in the kitchen. Peel an onion down to its core and all you will find is air. You are not an unchored core. You are and will become the sum of your commitments, your choices—moral, intellectual, and practical—they amount to much the same thing in the end. To find yourself, don’t dig under the surface of your life. Look at what you actually do, at what you come to care for, at what you fight to defend. Look at the small choices you make every day in the classroom, in the way that you read and interpret and argue, and the big choices will sort themselves out by themselves.

To help you on your way, I have a few pieces of Wise Advice. I should say that in contemplating this address, I thought perhaps I could bypass my own part in this and simply play the Baz Luhrmann sunscreen song, on the grounds that Baz and I must meet somewhere on the family tree. I’ll content myself with reminding you that the song points out that

[a]dvise is a form of nostalgia. Dispensing it is a way of fishing the past from the disposal, wiping it off, painting over the ugly parts and recycling it for more than it’s worth.

For what it’s worth, here is my advice:

Rule number one: Never answer an important question in the abstract. It’s just not possible to improve your capacities and prejudices and never grasp what the question was really asking.

Rule number two: Don’t distract preemption. I read an essay some time ago that much improved my enjoyment of certain types of academic discourse. You know E. B. White as the author of Chapter 12: “The Knockdown” in The Elements of Style. But you may not know that he was also perhaps the finest essayist America has produced and co-author of a lovely little book called The Elements of Style. In the conservative 1950s he wrote an essay that was ostensibly about politicians. White was an ardent Democrat and, in the spirit of his time, he felt that he should have sharp, clear views on political issues and on what Democrats were doing about them. The essay I like so much was written—ostensibly—about three Democrats whose writings White was trying to read one afternoon. He called them bedfellows because he was reading when they were in bed. In the essay, White wrote about the way Truman distrusted the press for being too critical and the way Stevenson distrusted the public for not being critical enough. He pointed out that Acheson praised the loyalty and security measures Democrats first set in place in 1947 and that Acheson then went on to show how they undermined the freedoms they had initially set out to protect.

But the essay is really about Fred. Fred was a dachshund who died in 1948, before the essay was written, but for many years White kept a portrait gallantly of Fred where White used to take care of him. Fred was another one of White’s bedfellows. In fact White wrote that he only took the Democrats to bed with him when he wanted a fan of dachshund. And he even missed Fred’s smell, which was evocative to his mind, he said, as a sudden whiff of cereal for breakfast. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss once wrote about what he called the science of the concrete. What he meant by this was that the so-called primitive mind was not dumb for lack of a physics or a higher mathematics. People who live in the New World, for example, the forest-dwelling Amazonian Nambikwara, do not know only what they eat and use; they have an enormous curiosity about the forest, and they can identify hundreds of plants that the poor anthropologist cannot even distinguish. Among people like the Nambikwara, Lévi-Strauss said, “Animals and plants are not known as a result of their usefulness; they are deemed to be useful or interesting because they are first of all known” (The Savage Mind, p. 9). And as they are known so are they ordered, so that from the little details in people’s lives you can come to see the categories and principles they live by. Pay attention to the details of your life and of other lives, and learn from those details the driving passions of those lives. You will understand people more deeply; you will also, in the paradoxical mode I am advocating, come to see the world with utter uniqueness, your own. The great thinking and feeling in the core are first and foremost great observers who paid enormous careful attention to phenomena others had seen before but never noticed. A near fanatical attention to detail brought Darwin to evolution, Freud to the dynamic unconscious, and Sartre to the logical theory of free will. The world hasn’t looked the same since. Find your own source of the concrete.

Rule number three: Distract pretension. These days, when I read a sophisticated book full of high theory with words so abstract and metaphorical I feel I’d need to read a hundred more books to really get a grip, I no longer feel intimidated and vaguely inadequate. I simply settle into my chair, imagine the author as an eighteen-inch squirrel, and ask myself, So what’s his squirrel? This is possible, he implies, is a wonderful thing, and it helps him to feel confident in the face of creeping cynicism. They also remind him of Fred.

It makes me eager to rise and meet the new day, as Fred used to rise to his, with the complete conviction that through vigilance and good work all porcupines, all skunks, all squirrels, all houseflies, all footballs, all evil birds in the sky could successfully be brought to account and the scene made safe and pleasant for the sensible individual—namely, him (p. 198).

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Rule number three: Book Strunk and White’s The Elements of Style. The book is an advocate of clear and precise language. At one point, in a fine moment in the English language and recast it in lugubrious modern prose. Actually, what they do is borrow the recasting from George Orwell, who knew the kind of imperative, and another fine essay similarly aggrieved at the contemporary mangling of the English tongue. Here is the original, from the King James translation of Ecclesiastes:

I returned, and saw under the sun,
that the race is not to the weak, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet to the wise, nor yet to the men of understanding, nor yet to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Here is Orwell, in modern English:

Objective consideration of contemporar"y phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a consider"able element of the unpredictable must inevitably be taken into account.

Read this little book before you write any essays yourself. If you want to give your professors a hard time, read it again when you read anything they have written.

Rule number four: Find a writing partner. Just as it is hard to look at your own assumptions and see them as they are, it is hard to read Strunk and White and see your own sentences as they are. And although you may actually say, free of the shimering prose you wrote in your own imagination, it’s much easier to pick out the pompous phrase and passive voice in someone else’s paper. Choose someone you think you trust among your classmates and edit each other’s papers. You don’t need to be in the same classes together. You don’t even need to know anything about each other’s subjects. Exchange your papers, and mark the spots in your partner’s paper where you got bored or restless or confused, and then look at the places your partner has marked on yours. Refrain from explaining to such loyal friends their many weaknesses as readers of your prose. Just try to figure out what made your best intentions misleading or unclear to someone who was actually trying to help you. It isn’t easy—you will write papers that get better every time. If you can learn to write, you can be bored with what you write but, without effort, well, you can command your destiny.

Rule number five: Know that as you change, the way you understand will also change. Have compassion for the person you are right now. The novelist Mary Gordon wrote that she read George Eliot’s Middlemarch three times. When she was sixteen, she read it for its breathless romance, and she yearned for Eliot’s heroine Dorothea to marry the dazzling young Will Ladislaw. The first summer after college, she read it again and found herself suffused with feminist outrage at Eliot, who as she said, “had nuclear weapons science gotten out of hand in general and into the wrong hands in particular. At one point he interrupted his diatribe and looked at me and said, “You social scientists have a lot about society. You should just take over the government and tell people who to marry and where to live and what to do.” It was a fine, but rare, moment.

In any event, back around the time of the Second World war, some people at Harvard decided that they should select the best and brightest undergraduates and follow them for the course of their lives. They interviewed and had them evaluated by an array of doctors, nurses, psychologists, vocational counselors, and psychiatrists. They weighed them and surveyed them and made them fill in innumerable charts and tests. They presented them with a series of ambiguous pictures and asked them for the story each picture brought to their minds. They sat down with their mothers and collected childhood anecdotes. They even recorded their brain waves. After the young men graduated—they were, of course, all young men and for that matter white, middle class, and northeastern seaboard men—they followed them with long questionnaires and more surveys and charts and interviews. They kept track of how much they earned and how often they missed work and whether they got divorced and how many kids they had. They sent questionnaires to their wives. More than twenty-five years later, when the study subjects were forty-seven, a young psychiatrist, George Vaillant, was hired to make sense of the data. He chose one hundred of the men forty-seven years ago and went around the country to meet them one by one.

Not surprisingly, some men had done better than others on conventional measures. These conventional measures reflected the era of the study and included whether the man earned more than his father; whether he liked his job; whether he had been promoted steadily. They included whether he had maintained a marriage for at least ten years and whether he would describe his present marriage as “good”; whether he had children and whether those children were doing well or markedly underperforming whether he had many friends; whether he enjoyed good physical health; and whether he took vacations (just in case you wondered, taking vacations was regarded as a sign of mental health).

One knew that there would be people who did well on the conventional measures. What was more surprising was that this success was associated with a particular psychological pattern, what Vaillant called “a mature defensive style.” Human life is not easy. Bad things happen to people, often at the worst possible time. The men in this study with the best life outcomes, Vaillant said, were not men who had avoided pain, but men who handled great unhappiness with humor, with sublimation, with altruism, and with anticipation. These are called defenses because when bad things happen, we try to defend ourselves from the onslaught on our psyches. Some bad things are sudden and unexpected and big. You will get a phone call. Someone you love has died. Other bad things are slow and subtle, and some are almost embarrassing. Your parents have a distant, failing marriage. You do badly on an exam. The girl you ask out says no. There are many different ways to respond to the insults the world throws out at you. You can deny that it ever happened so it doesn’t bother you. Some people actually forget, for a little while at least, that they ever answered the phone. You can decide that the person who caused the pain is evil, so it doesn’t really matter. You can pretend it doesn’t hurt. You can know it hurts and get in a car and drive really, really fast, as if you could leave it behind forever. You can be angry at your professor but blow up at your roommate instead. All of us have employed one of these defensive habits at different moments. Vaillant used all his surveys and graphs and interviews to argue that the men who reached the age of forty-seven with the most successful careers, the most satisfying marriages, and the best physical health in his study had been more likely to respond to the world’s curve balls with grace, laughing at what they could and channeling their disappointment into productivity. Mental health, he said, is not about the absence of unhappiness, but about the way you manage it. Vaillant knew that his study had limitations. The conventional criteria did not account for the creative artist at all, and he was uneasy about how well they would judge women and how American and middle class and mid-century they were. Still, there is some wisdom in the study. College life can be difficult, and you are anxious. If you can learn to soothe your anxiety by worrying more about Durkheim’s problem than about your own, if you can laugh at the absurdity of the grading system and still work to make your papers more convincing, if you conquer your shyness by learning to dance, your year will be more enjoyable and the journey of discovery more exciting. You have already made more choices than you realize. One of the better ones was choosing the University of Chicago. Welcome to the Class of 2007.
Today’s clear weather brings both good news and bad news. Bad news because it is raining when you get up to speak, cut your talk to fifteen seconds and ask whether these achievements have been had in the United States and internationally.

In closing, speaking on behalf of the university, I congratulate you and your loved ones for graduating from the University of Chicago. I believe these advances in public health and in medical science over the past hundred years have been critical in revolutionizing the treatment of cancer by establishing the relationship between hormones and cancer. Don Steiner discovered proinsulin in 1977, a substance that is now the focus of much research.

In the past hundred years, these public health advances continue and were amplified by a scientific revolution that will certainly accelerate during your lifetime. In my lifetime, this scientific revolution has included the discovery of DNA, which led to the mapping of the human genome; a new understanding of human immunology; and the emergence of modern pharmacology, which has created hundreds of effective medicines. Some of these medicines save or prolong lives—such as antibiotics, protease inhibitors, and vaccines for polio and influenza. Other medicines improve quality of life for people with chronic diseases, such as diabetes, asthma, cancer, arthritis, depression, and heart disease. Our generation is also the first in history that can nearly prevent death from kidney, liver, heart, and lung failure by using technologies such as dialysis, heart surgery, and organ transplantation.

From my perspective, which I hope to pass on to you because, on reflection, I think that these qualities apply not just in medicine but in whatever field you pursue—law, public service, government, business, teaching.

• First, competence: Be really savvy in your chosen field. This is implied by your

samples that highlight our remarkable medical progress.

Three days ago, a colleague of my daughter had a heart attack at work and was brought by ambulance to the University of Chicago’s cardiac catheterization service. When she arrived, she was breathing normally for the first time in five years. She will leave the hospital on Monday. Now she will be able to watch her five-year-old daughter, who was born with cystic fibrosis and for the last two years has been slowly dying of terminal lung disease. She is the mother of a healthy five-year-old daughter. This week, on Wednesday morning at 3 a.m., she received a lung transplant, and six hours later she was breathing normally for the first time in five years. She will leave the hospital on Monday. Now she will be able to watch her daughter grow up.

I believe these advances in public health and in medical science over the past hundred years are among the greatest intellectual achievements in history.

In my view, the core of the relationship between doctor and patient has remained surprisingly constant, from ancient Egypt to Hippocrates to our own time. A person in physical or mental distress asks for help from someone specially trained to respond. Obviously, advances in science mean that the modern doctor has better and more validated treatments to offer than did ancient physicians. But, the doctor’s basic response of caring, compassion, and technical competence has endured and will endure.

Plato understood this. You didn’t really think you would get through a University of Chicago graduation without hearing about Plato, did you? In a remarkable passage in The Laws, Plato contrasted bad and good doctor-patient relationships. In the bad relationship, according to Plato, “The physician never asks the patient for an account of his complaints. The physician prescribes treatment with an air of knowledge in the brusque fashion of a dictator and then rushes off in haste to the next patient.” By contrast, Plato describes the good physician as one who “treats the disease thoroughly, in a scientific way, learning from the patient and gaining the trust of the patient and family.” It is remarkable that 2,500 years ago, Plato recognized that good medical practice required integrating scientific thinking with personal care in order to gain patient trust.

After thirty-five years of practice, I have identified four qualities that today’s patients expect in a good doctor-patient relationship. Each of these helps build trust between patient and doctor. I pass this list on to you because, on reflection, I think that these qualities apply not just in medicine but in whatever field you pursue—law, social service, government, business, teaching.

• First, competence: Be really savvy in your chosen field. This is implied by your
It is the graduates to whom I am speaking today. I am honored you have asked me to speak to you, though I must say that a commencement speech is a tough assignment. At most universities, a good commencement speech must merely be inspiring, thoughtful, wise, funny, and, most importantly, brief. Here at the University of Chicago, speeches by faculty members are supposed to be all of those things plus “substantive”—about research. So, all you parents out there in the cheap seats, please get out a notebook.

Before we get to that substance, I would like to share with you a television interview I saw with the world-famous cellist Yo-Yo Ma. In the interview, Ma was asked about his start in music. When did he begin taking music lessons? How did he come to play the cello? What inspired his years of study on the violin at age three. According to him, he was no better than average as a violinist. To just escape the well of struggles, around age six someone gave him a cello that he enjoyed playing much more, and soon he discovered that he had true talent on this instrument. He also found his life’s calling.

While watching this interview, I was taken by several aspects of the story. First, it is surprising, at least to a non-musician, that talent is so specialized. The idea that he was able to grasp this at age six. Even more remarkable is the fact that he enjoyed playing much more, and soon he discovered that he had true talent on this instrument. He also found his life’s calling.

Since I am standing here before you in my role as a professor, let me try to explain what meaning I have found in this story and then try to explain what implications you might take from it in planning your own careers and lives.

I set out to become an academic economist not because I thought that I was particularly intellectual, but by a process of elimination. Early on, I ruled out a career in business because of a self-diagnosed weakness, a weakness that will come as no surprise to the deans: I am a really lousy business student. And economists are getting harder to find, and the idea that organizations such as firms, universities, or governments can design policies that make sensible choices easier to adopt, and you can do so while leaving everyone free to choose. I think my choice was rational for two reasons.

First, my opportunity costs were not all that high. As I said, the only an academic economist with rather modest prospects. And second, I found this new enterprise to be great fun. Indeed, what can possibly be more fun than pointing out the warts on the naked emperor while other members of your profession are busy describing the buttons on an imaginary three-piece suit? Now, you might ask, what is rational about choosing a career based on fun? I say that nothing could be more rational. I think of fun as the ultimate hedge. If you enjoy what you are doing, you establish a pretty good floor on how life turns out. In contrast, if you suffer through every stage of the process, can becoming rich or famous really be worth it?

For most of us, even if we work really hard we will never become as successful as Yo-Yo Ma, Bill Gates, Michael Jordan, or even Gene Fama. But we can all find something we enjoy doing. Start with that.

Well, it is now more than twenty-five years since I went off to Stanford to meet my idols, and one of them—Daniel Kahneman, who has since become my best friend—won the Nobel Prize in Economics. (Alas, Tversky died in 1996, or he would have shared the prize.) I guess you can say that behavioral economics has become legitimate. And economists are getting richer every year.

So I have been looking for new ways to have fun and different tunes to play on my cello. In collaboration with my good friend in the Law School, Cass Sunstein, I have found another calling: annoying law professors.

In my remaining time, let me give you a glimpse into this new specialty and provide the required substantive component of this speech. I have a paper coming out on the topic of libertarian paternalism. Now, you are probably thinking, isn’t “libertarian paternalism” an oxymoron—you know, like “behavioral economics,” “rap music,” or “compassionate conservative”? We argue that libertarian paternalism is not an oxymoron, and in fact we claim that it is a logical and attractive approach to public policy.

The idea behind libertarian paternalism is that organizations such as firms, universities, or governments can design policies that make it easier for people to do what is in their own best interest (the paternalistic part) and still leave everyone the option to choose for themselves (the libertarian part).

One simple application of this idea is the selection of default options. A default option is simply the choice that people get if they do nothing. Lots of research shows that designating a default option makes it much more likely to be chosen. There are a host of behavioral reasons for this, including laziness, absentmindedness, anchoring, a magical thinking idea that the defaults have been chosen carefully.

But the bottom line is that defaults matter. Take one example. In some countries, RSA, the United Kingdom’s national bank, makes your organs available to someone else if you happen to die in an accident, but have to take some action, such as signing the back of your driver’s license. In many European countries, they have the opposite default option. You are automatically entitled to your consent unless you sign some form. The difference arising from this seemingly minor change is quite striking. In the United States, fewer than 20 percent of drivers agree to make their organs available, whereas in the presumed consent countries, more than 90 percent do. Thousans of lives are saved as a result, and no one’s freedom to choose has been usurped.

I have used libertarian paternalism in my own attempt to contribute something to society beyond ulcers for economists. The problem I attacked was how to get people to save more in their 401(k) plans.

In many companies the 401(k) is the only pension plan, and many employees (especially those in the lower pay ranks) either fail to join or contribute a small portion of their salary. Simple calculations reveal that these workers will not have saved enough to enjoy a comfortable retirement.

My solution to this problem is called Save More Tomorrow. Briefly, employees are invited to join a plan in which their contributions to the 401(k) plan are automatically increased later—specifically, every time they get a raise. The increases in contributions are linked to raises because we know that people are particularly sensitive to cuts in their take-home pay.

This plan has now been implemented in several companies. In the first company that tried it, saving rates have more than tripled. The company is happy and so are the workers who joined the plan, very few of whom dropped out. This is both behavioral economics and libertarian paternalism in action.

Back to my students, I end each lecture with some rules to live by. In that tradition, let me offer three more “rules,” ones I hope you might remember for a while.

1. You can help people and society by designing policies that make sensible choices easier to adopt, and you can do so while leaving everyone free to choose.

2. Having fun in life is the best hedge against the inevitable downturns that will occur, and, unlike most hedgers, this one comes without the need to pay a commissio to an investment banker.

3. It is never too late to find your own cello.

Richard H. Thaler is the Robert P. Gwinn Professor in the Graduate School of Business.
did he do? In true University of Chicago tradition, he was bold, provocative, and obscure.

"Was it the worst sin possible?" he asked the unsuspecting class. Nothing... silence. "Yes, what is the worst sin possible to a medieval Catholic? What is the worst thing you can possibly do in the eyes of God?" After a few seconds' pause, a student chimed in with the answer, "Blasphemy?" "No," was the immediate answer. "Atavism" was a second guess. "No," was again the response. "You are being much too postmodern," Kirshner's response (he said this phrase often in the two quarters of Western Civilization he taught). "Think sexual sins... sins of the flesh." A few illicit guesses were attempted, to which Kirshner chided. "There is no such thing as damnatus coitus: sex with a damned soul." After another round of increasingly perverse speculation, the class gave up. Dejected at our academic failure, Professor Kirshner enlightened the class with the true meaning of damnatus coitus: sex with a soul! Now this may sound like an unnecessary and provocative way to motivate a class, but in true University of Chicago fashion this developed into an academic discussion about mortality in the Middle Ages and the all-too-human problems faced by the Catholic Church. Only at the University of Chicago! Although this may appear an extreme (but true) example of how the University of Chicago provokes thought from its students, I mention it because it is a microcosm of my entire University of Chicago experience. This university has opened my eyes and redefined my life. Now I am not going to play the "poor country boy who has gone to the big city to get some book learning" trump card (prerogative). However, I do want to admit that the University of Chicago has changed my life.

So in conclusion, I just want to thank you and all the faculty, but especially to you—the Class of 2003—for helping me discover and live the life of a professor, Departments of History and Art History, the Committee on Geographical Studies, and the College.

Edward M. Cook, Jr., an American historian whose special interests focus upon American politics, culture, and government. He has written extensively by research and writing, Ted Cook has sustained his regional commitment despite the thousand miles separating it from the Midwest, and he has transmitted his enthusiasm to generations of students. Besides his courses on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century America, Ted Cook's teaching also embraces eighteenth-century England, a happy acknowledgement of the Atlantic civilization so influential in shaping American laws and values. On all of this he brings to bear both his immense erudition and a cheerful, open approach to instruction. Students admire both, one describing his courses as "the happiest classes I've ever enrolled in" at Chicago. But as he says—"I have not met another professor who is visited as frequently, and by a large a variety of students" declares one of them—Ted Cook always finds time to answer still another question or provide one more citation from his voluminous knowledge.

Ted Cook's concern for students has been reflected, as well, by his masterships of Broadway Hall and Woodward Court, by his work as the University's Dean of Students, by chairmanship of innumerable committees, and by membership in both the College Council and the Committee of the Council. Throughout all his activities, humane, sensible, and informed values have dominated both his demeanor and his judgments.

Citation: Historian, teacher, and adminis-
and communication and in the core course Mind. Through her scholarly work and her teaching, Professor Goldin-Meadow shows her students the most current work in the field and inspires them to think about the most important issues in developmental psychology.

Citation: Inspired scholar and teacher of the development of mind and communication in childhood, your enthusiasm for developmental psychology and your commitment to your students in classroom and laboratory embody the very highest ideal of a faculty member in our College.

Munir Humayun
Assistant Professor, Department of Geophysical Sciences and the College

The candidate was presented by Lawrence Grossman, Professor, Department of Geophysical Sciences, Enrico Fermi Institute, and the College.

Munir Humayun develops and uses very sensitive measurement techniques to determine minute concentrations of rare elements in terrestrial rocks and meteorites. With these exquisite analyses, he investigates the early evolution of asteroids, the timing of the formation of the earth’s core, the chemical differentiation of the earth, and the nature of the interaction between the earth’s core and mantle.

Munir brings an infectious enthusiasm about the chemical aspects of the origin and evolution of the earth to his students through lectures, which are described by them as incredible, engaging, funny, and, oh yes, informative. Two standing ovations during his Winter Quarter Natural Sciences 101 class are clear testimony of this.

Citation: Dedicated geochemist and enthusiastic lecturer, you have not only captivated students of the humanities and social sciences with the excitement of the physical sciences but have also inspired a new generation of graduate students of the geophysical sciences.

Bernard Roizman
The Joseph Regenstein Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, and Committees on Genetics and Microbiology

The candidate was presented by Olaf Schneewind, Professor, Department of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology, Committee on Microbiology, and the College; and Chairman, Committee on Microbiology.

Bernard Roizman, the Joseph Regenstein Distinguished Service Professor of molecular genetics and cell biology, is also head of the Marius and Maria Kornberg Viral Oncology Laboratories at the University of Chicago. Using human herpes viruses as model systems, Professor Roizman has studied the elements of the virus and their interactions with the infected host and viruses that lead to productive infection and viral replication or viral persistence in human tissues as a microbial survival strategy. In particular, Bernard Roizman’s work is concerned with the mechanisms by which a virus ensures a cell, evades host responses, and compels the cell to produce thousands of virus particles, a process he calls viral oncogenesis.

Roizman’s work has helped define the field of molecular virology and viral pathogenesis, has provided the intellectual coordinates for progress, and has educated the scientists and faculty that now populate this field. For founding this school of thought and for his many influential contributions to virology, exemplified by the more than four hundred publications that he has authored or co-authored, Professor Roizman has been recognized and awarded many honors and honorary degrees, including elections to the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Academy of Microbiology. By teaching a comprehensive class on animal viruses, Professor Roizman has educated undergraduate and graduate students at the University of Chicago in virology for nearly forty years. He has also responded to the challenge of science education for the brightest undergraduate students at the best American universities as a tool for recruitment and nurturing of future researchers. Expanding on a recently proposed teaching strategy of the National Academy of Sciences, Professor Roizman used his expertise and leadership to teach an upper-level laboratory class on molecular virology to students at the University of Chicago. He is a teacher among teachers, and his wisdom transcends the physical truths that inspire him.

Citation: Your discerning research and instructional expertise about viruses at the molecular level, between microbes and their human hosts and ways whereby infection and disease can be prevented. We find in your work an elegant unraveling of the mysteries of life and death.

Maria Christina von Nolcken
Associate Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committee on Medieval Studies, and the College; Chair, Committee on Medieval Studies

The candidate was presented by Rachel Gutman, Associate Professor, Department of History and the College.

Christina von Nolcken believes in the importance of learning to read. For the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century followers of John Wycliff, alias Lollards, to whom she has dedicated her scholarship, this was one of the most dangerous claims that one could make: that the faithful should be afforded access to the words of God through reading, because it was through reading above all that they might come to the Truth. Christina would doubtless insist that the goal of her own work has been some- thing of a modern-day Wycliffite mission: an essential or archetypal Truth in the texts of the Wycliffites but rather to allow the Wycliffsites at long last the opportunity to perform that role. Instead, she has responded to the challenges of teaching medieval languages and literatures, and religious studies. Christina’s Church is an inclusive one, open to all who would learn how truly to read.

Citation: Champion of lost voices and recorder of balance to the past, you create new worlds for your students and your colleagues out of old languages and stories, inspiring them to discover for themselves how rich and complex the many truths of long-silent texts can be.

Bruce Cumings
The Norman and Edna Greenberg Professor, Department of History and the College

The candidate was presented by Prasenjit Duara, Professor, Departments of History and East Asian Languages & Civilizations, Committee on the History of Culture, and the College.

Bruce Cumings combines the roles of principal investigator, a generous mentor in exemplary fashion. The influence of his prizewinning scholarship on modern Korean history has extended beyond the academy into public policy. Through both his own pathbreaking work and that of the well-placed graduate students whom he has trained, he has given decisive shape to the field of Korean history on both sides of the Pacific.

Citation: Provocative, stimulating, and nurturing classroom teacher and graduate adviser, who has decisively shaped understandings of modern Korean history and international relationships through his own prizewinning scholarship and the students he has mentored.

Benjamin Glick
Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology

The candidate was presented by Laurens Mets, Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology, Committee on Genetics, and the College.

The hallmark of Ben Glick’s teaching is clarity, both of thought and of expression. He has a way of structuring lectures and discussions that has enabled students easily grasp the logic of difficult subjects. Many memorable similes highlight a down-to-earth approach that makes the complexities of cellular and molecular biology accessible without oversimplification. Ben’s former students inevitably turn to him as a model for their own teaching efforts. That’s when they discover how much work Ben puts into developing the context, detail, and logic of his teaching exercises.

Ben has very high academic standards, and yet there is nothing intimidating about his impact on students. Instead, his calm and supportive manner gets them to expect more of themselves and in that way to achieve more than they might have thought possible. His transparent enthusiasm for science and also for the success of his students is infectious. For Ben, teaching is not something different from conducting research but is an integral part of his intellectual life. Ben is an outstanding educator—an inspiration for students and colleagues alike.

Citation: Clarity of thought and of expression are the hallmarks of Ben Glick’s scholarship and teaching, making complex topics accessible to his students and providing them with an outstanding, inspirational model for their own teaching efforts.

W. J. T. Mitchell
The Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of English Lan-
The candidate was presented by Elizabeth Helsinger, the John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of English Language & Literature and Art History, and the College.

There is something fundamentally democratic about Tom Mitchell’s approach to the world of ideas and those who contribute to it. His classes bring together famous guest lecturers with students from a multitude of disciplines, allowing all to feel that they merit inclusion in the communities of scholarship and questioning that he organizes. Less concerned with the delivery of information than with fostering continuing discussions that spill over from the classroom, Tom demonstrates to his students what it is like to live the life of the mind in the most productive and social sense.

In his own work as a provocative and original student of images and texts and their contentious relation, Tom brings to the classroom the same continuing curiosity, inventiveness, and speculative playfulness that he has exercised in his scholarship and as the guiding force behind Critical Inquiry, the journal he has edited for more than twenty years. He demands from students as from authors and co-editors that they remain open to the new but subject it to searching analysis. He insists that they question not only received ideas but the shorthand through which they are often uncomprehendingly and inaccurately invoked in contemporary academic discussion. Imparting of obfuscation or pretension, his classes model a creative and democratic pedagogy. It is no wonder that former students comment, again and again, that what they most miss about reaching by participating in his classrooms.

The students are effusive in their praise of his unusual skills as a classroom teacher, his infectious enthusiasm for his subject, his clarity of thought and expression, and his broad learning. He draws unusually large classes and is notable for the broad range of courses that he teaches (he rarely repeats a course). He is also extraordinarily effective as a graduate of student’s preliminary essays and dissertations and accordingly attracts such tasks in unusual large quantities. Students uniformly praise the thoroughness and acuity of his feedback, the respectful and friendly manner in which he delivers it, and his general professionalism (for example, his readiness availability, its punctuality at meetings, and his promptness in returning work). In short, Robert Pippin is a model educator of graduate students.

The Raymond W. and Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor, Department of Philosophy, and the College; Chairman, Committee on Social Thought

The candidate was presented by Michael Forster, Professor, Department of Philosophy and the College; and Chairman, Department of Philosophy.

Since coming to the University of Chicago about ten years ago, Robert Pippin has distinguished himself not only in his teaching but also in the research he has published widely respected works on a broad range of subjects, including Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Henry James) and as a dynamic chair of the Committee on Social Thought (into which he has instilled new vitality, among other things instituting and developing a highly successful joint program with the Department of Philosophy), but also as a teacher, especially of graduate students.

The students are effusive in their praise of his unusual skills as a classroom teacher, his infectious enthusiasm for his subject, his clarity of thought and expression, and his broad learning. He draws unusually large classes and is notable for the broad range of courses that he teaches (he rarely repeats a course). He is also extraordinarily effective as a graduate of student’s preliminary essays and dissertations and accordingly attracts such tasks in unusual large quantities. Students uniformly praise the thoroughness and acuity of his feedback, the respectful and friendly manner in which he delivers it, and his general professionalism (for example, his readiness availability, its punctuality at meetings, and his promptness in returning work). In short, Robert Pippin is a model educator of graduate students.

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conducted laboratory spectroscopy to aid the detection and identification of many molecules that were unknown to chemists.

His second contribution was his creation of a new atlas of our galaxy using molecular clouds, that is, embryos of stars. Here he boldly went against the trend of large telescopes and built his own “Mini,” which together with its identical twin in the southern hemisphere produced the first map of our galaxy and demonstrated surprising ubiquity and abundance of molecules.

This is breathtakingly original work.

Summary

The 473rd convocation was held on Friday, June 13, Saturday June 14, and Sunday, June 15, 2003, in the Harper Quadrangle. Don Michael Randel, President of the University, presided.

A total of 2,662 degrees were awarded: 849 Bachelor of Arts in the College, 64 Bachelor of Science in the College and the Division of the Physical Sciences, 7 Master of Science in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 129 Master of Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 104 Master of Science in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 100 Master of Arts in the Division of the Social Sciences, 8 Master of Fine Arts in the Division of the Humanities, 618 Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 49 International Master of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, 24 Master of Arts in the Divinity School, 12 Master of Divinity in the Divinity School, 4 Master of Liberal Arts in the William B. and Catherine V. Graham School of General Studies, 148 Master of Arts in the School of Social Service Administration, 7 Master of Arts in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 92 Master of Public Policy in the Irving B. Harris Graduate School of Public Policy Studies, 48 Master of Laws in the Law School, 90 Doctor of Medicine in the Pritzker School of Medicine, 15 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Biological Sciences and the Pritzker School of Medicine, 21 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Humanities, 15 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Physical Sciences, 36 Doctor of Philosophy in the Division of the Social Sciences, 6 Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of Business, 2 Doctor of Philosophy in the Divinity School, 211 Doctor of Law in the Law School, 2 Doctor of Jurisprudence in the Law School, and 1 Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Social Service Administration.

Three honorary degrees were conferred during the 473rd convocation. The recipients of the Doctor of Science were Persi Diaconis, Mary V. Sunseri Professor and Professor of Mathematics, Stanford University; Iyviq Neyssor, Professor, Department of Chemistry, Graduate School of Science, and Director, Research Center for Materials Science, Nagoya University, Japan; and Nick Thaddeus, Robert Wheeler Wilson Professor of Applied Astronomy and Applied Physics, Harvard University. Five Llewellyn John and Harriet Manchester Quaintrell Awards for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching were given, to Edward M. Cook, Jr., Associate Professor, Department of History and the College; Susan Goldin-Meadow, the Irving B. Harris Professor, Department of Psychology, Committee on Human Development, and the College; Munir Humayun, Assistant Professor, Department of Geophysical Sciences and the College; Bernard Rouzman, the Joseph Regenstein Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology and Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, and Committees on Genetics and Microbiology; and Maria Christina von Nolcken, Associate Professor, Department of English Language & Literature, Committee on Medieval Studies, and the College, and Chair, Committee on Medieval Studies.

Four Faculty Awards for Excellence in Graduate Teaching were given, to Bruce Cumings, the Norman and Edna Freehling Professor, Department of History and the College, Benjamin Glick, Associate Professor, Department of Molecular Genetics & Cell Biology; W. J. T. Mitchell, the Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor, Departments of English Language & Literature and Art History, Committee on the Visual Arts, and the College; and Robert B. Pepin, the Raymond W. and Martha Hilpert Gruner Distinguished Service Professor, Committee on Social Thought, Department of Philosophy, and the College, and Chairman, Committee on Social Thought.

Mark Stegler, the Lindy Bergman Distinguished Service Professor in the Department of Medicine, Committee on Clinical Pharmacology & Pharmacogenomics, Committee on Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, and Cancer Research Center, and Director of the MacLean Center for Clinical Medical Ethics, delivered the principal convocation address at the first, second, and third sessions, “Medical Progress and the Doctor-Patient Relationship.”

Richard H. Thaler, the Robert P. Gwinn Professor in the Graduate School of Business, delivered the principal convocation address at the fourth session, “Finding Your Cell.”

Andrew Alper, A.B. ’80, M.B.A. ’81, president of the New York City Economic Development Corporation and a Trustee of the University, delivered remarks at the University Record.”

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