# Convocation 2015: June 5, 2015 Morning Ceremony part 1

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[BACKGROUND CHATTER]

[BAGPIPES PLAYING]

[BAGPIPES PLAYING]

[BAGPIPES PLAYING]

[BAGPIPES PLAYING AND BACKGROUND CHATTER]

[BAGPIPES PLAYING]

[CHEERING]

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DON TAPSCOTT: Good morning, everyone. Please be seated. I'm Don Tapscott and I'm the Chancellor of Trent University. And I'm also a very proud graduate of this institution. Given the weather today, we'll be moving this ceremony along at a brisk pace.

[LAUGHTER]

[CHEERING]

And this convocation has been quite-- throughout the entire week has been very free of cliches. So I'd like to finally introduce one. That which doesn't kill you will only make you stronger. And given that this is not a thunderstorm, it's not going to kill you. So I would like the graduating class to please give a big shout out to adversity. Bring it on, grad class. OK.

[CHEERING]

Students graduating this week are sharing a special milestone with us. This convocation marks the official end of our 50th anniversary year. It's been a great year and celebrating your graduation is a perfect way to wrap it up. I actually have a graduate degree in education, and so permit me to make an editorial comment on the importance of this class.

You're graduating at a very important time in human history as education goes into a perfect storm. And it's one that's positive overall. We have a knowledge economy. Increasingly we create value by brain rather than by brawn. And there are a number of powerful forces underway to change the model of pedagogy from an industrial age model where teachers communicate knowledge to students to a model that's appropriate for a networked age and for a digital knowledge age.

There are big changes underway in technology as we can now create collaborative learning environments, a technology push. There's a demand pull from the market in the sense that there's no longer a period in your life where you learn and then a period where you work. You learn lifelong and you need to reinvent your knowledge base throughout life.

And we also have a demographic kick from a new generation of learners who've grown up digital, who've grown up interacting and collaborating rather than being the passive recipients of television like their Baby Boomer parents. So your class will be called upon to be more than great teachers and great educators. You will lead in figuring out the new models of education and learning for a new age.

And for 50 years, Trent has been challenging the way we think about the world and about learning itself. And today more than ever Trent graduates are in demand. And I know first hand because it worked for me, that as a Trent grad you're uniquely equipped and prepared for the exciting and challenging future that lies ahead.

In fact, I think you're not only prepared for it, as I alluded to earlier you will shape it. See the future is as not something to be predicted. It's something to be achieved. And with your Trent experience, you'll have the tools to take full advantage of the opportunities around you.

So this is your moment. It's your time to imagine. To sit here and think-- in this lovely day-- about designing a life that leads you not only to prosperity but a life that's purposeful. Perhaps a principled life of consequence and one that's uniquely your own.

So heartfelt congratulations to he each of you on reaching this important milestone. And I now declare the convocation open.

[APPLAUSE]

LEO GROARKE: Good morning. My name is Leo Groarke. I'm the President Vice Chancellor of Trent University. And it's my honor to welcome you all here today to this convocation. I'm looking for the sort of symbolic in the rain today. And I think my take on it is it is a bit symbolic of all the obstacles and hurdles that our students have had to go through in order to be able to graduate. And I think in that context this is a relatively minor obstacle and hurdles. It's a great day to convocate.

Let me extend a special welcome to our visitors today, to the families of our graduates, their friends, to the people who have come from across Canada and maybe especially to people who have come from other countries. I want to say something about our international visitors in a moment, but while I'm there I do want to say that while you're here I hope you will take a little bit of time to enjoy the campus. You might want to take an umbrella or you can continue to wear one of the beautiful ponchos that we've provided for all of you.

But it is really worth looking at this campus. It's a spectacular campus. There's trails on the other side of the river. There's nature trails. And if you're very adventures, perhaps you could go for a canoe ride.

I did want to say at the start of the ceremony on behalf of the university that we want to acknowledge that we are located in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas Anishinaabe adjacent to the Haudenosaunee Territory in eastern Ontario. Especially in a week when Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission has presented its findings on the regrettable history of the residential school system, it is important to honor and recognize the traditional occupants of this land. And I do want to say that I'm proud to be at a university where that's very much a part of what this university is.

I feel very fortunate to be able to say a few words to the graduates and visitors. But I've been told to expedite the ceremony. So in that spirit, I'm just going to say a couple things. Let me say something about what I think convocation's about. The short of it is that convocation is about our graduates. It's about our students here who were graduating.

It's our chance to celebrate their successes and their accomplishments. And to our graduates, I want you to take the time and really enjoy the day. Bask in the glory which is duly coming your way. We all have good days in life. We have bad days. Sometimes you have very, very good days. And I'm hoping that this will be one of those days for you.

I would say that once we know the students' role, we know our other roles at convocation. I'm going to say their role is to be honored, to celebrate, to enjoy the moment. It appears that today our role up here is to keep things moving on time and as quickly as possible. I would say your role is to be the fans of the students. OK?

And I want to encourage you at convocation not to be shy. Think of yourself as paparazzi. So when the moment comes, make noise, take photographs. This is a very special day and I want you to enjoy it.

I would also say that as we're celebrating the successes and accomplishments of our students, we're also celebrating your successes and accomplishments because it's your support that has made this possible.

Now I want to very quickly, especially for our visitors, give you a bit of a thumbnail sketch of what Trent is. And I thought I would do this in two ways that relate to convocation. One thing I've been doing during the week-- we've had convocations all week-- is I've been talking to our various visitors and our international students. And one of the things about Trent is it's a very international university. And I just want to share with you the countries that people come from. These are the people that I've talked to this week.

Canada, of course. And I'm tempted to say Alberta too.

[LAUGHTER]

That's because I'm from Alberta. And out there we think that's a different country. So for my Albertan family, Alberta. The United States, of course. Uganda, Australia, Ireland, Ecuador, Vietnam, Nigeria, the Netherlands, the Bahamas, Pakistan, Palestine, the Mauritius, Brazil, Zimbabwe, the Ukraine, Russia, Japan. I've got--

[APPLAUSE]

I think that deserves applause.

[APPLAUSE]

And I have another list. And this is the list I've put together talking to students and asking students what they're going to do now that they have finished their degree. This is this list.

Social work. Teachers College. I'm going to be a graduate student. I'm going to do a master of economics in Australia. Business analyst. And naturopath. A nurse, writer, graduate student at the University of Toronto.

An environmental scientist. Someone who does environmental modeling. Entrepreneur. An apprentice with Justin Chu in Hong Kong. Someone who works to address human trafficking.

I will find a job in the pharmaceutical industry. Going to law school. Already have a job on Bay Street. I try to meet the parents of that particular student, but--

[LAUGHTER]

A journalist. Have a job with the United Nations. Will get a job at Trent. Going to travel around the world for a while. And the last one-- which in a way I maybe enjoyed the most because she was so honest-- I'm not sure. I'm going to go back and live with mom and dad for a few years.

[LAUGHTER]

By the way, I don't think she's at this convocation, just to assure you all.

[LAUGHTER]

I think the lesson that I just want to take from that is that Trent is a remarkably diverse community. And I will say one of the things I've appreciated at Trent is how diverse that is. And that diversity is intellectual as well. And Trent is a place where there are a lot of different people with a lot of different opinions, a lot of disagreement. But it's a lot of respectful disagreement. And that's something I want to--that's the thought I want to leave you with.

One last comment to our graduates. Please remember that when you go, you're still a part of Trent. You're just in a different part of the Trent family. You're part of the Trent alumni, which is 44,000 strong. I should keep numbers. Probably after today it'll be 44,226 people strong.

You're part of that family. You'll meet Trent people everywhere. Keep in touch. I'm trying to remind all the graduates at convocation this week-- this has been a very special year. It's the 50th anniversary. I'm trying to remind you all that there's another anniversary coming up. In 50 years, Trent will be 100 years old.

And I'm expecting you all to come back for the big party that will be held at that time. I don't think I will make it. But I want to see you back here. With that said, I want now, Mr. Chancellor, to ask Professor Jackie Muldoon, the Dean of our School of Educational and Professional Learning, to introduce today's convocation speaker. Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]

JACKIE MULDOON: Thank you. Professor Cathy Bruce was one of the founding faculty members of the School of Education and Professional Learning when the school was first established in 2003. She is a Social Science and Humanities Research Council researcher who has been studying teaching since 2003 and is particularly interested in teacher and student efficacy. Professor Bruce was awarded the 2013 Ontario Colleges and University Faculty Association Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching and just this May won the Eduardo Flores International Award for Leadership in Action Research.

She is the inaugural director of the new Center for Teaching and Learning, which is a Trent-wide effort to support high quality teaching and teacher scholarship at the university. I now call upon Professor Cathy Bruce, Director, Center of Teaching and Learning, to address convocation.

[APPLAUSE]

CATHY BRUCE: Mr. Chancellor, Mr. President, members of the graduating class, faculty, family, and friends, who among us today would like an excellent education for our children and our children's children? Who among us today would like to be well cared for as we age? Who among us today see that there's major work ahead of us in the areas of equity, social justice, and honoring ways of knowing? Who among us today understands that there are enormous environmental challenges that need attention, now and in the future?

If you answered, yes, I do, to any of those questions, then you're in the right place. Because today we celebrate the teacher education graduates here before us, people who are equipped to help us, to guide us through these complex challenges. Before us here today are educators who are capable, thoughtful, creative, and eager to make change.

Yes, our graduating class can contribute positively to our world's health because not only are they educated activists in their own right, but they are also invested in activating future generations of collaborative problem solvers.

These are critical times in education and you graduates are going to help us navigate these turbulent waters. But no pressure.

[LAUGHTER]

The 2015 Trent Bachelor of Education graduates are a privileged cohort. You are not only the last one year of education cohort to graduate from Trent University, but you have been a most fortunate to receive your education here in Ontario, Canada, and at Trent, a place known internationally for the quality of teacher education you have received.

And while the United Kingdom moves to a system where teacher education training will take place solely in elementary and secondary classrooms with very limited university-based coursework, and while the beginning salary of a teacher in the United States is barely above the poverty threshold in some states, we here in Ontario, Canada, have an intensive and deeply valued education program. International agencies seek out Canadian-trained teachers, especially those from Ontario, because the curriculum knowledge, the pedagogical understanding, and the deeply reflective practices of our graduates are second to none.

Some people believe that graduates of the Bachelor of Education program will all become classroom teachers. This is simply not true. In our research on graduate activity, we have learned that many different pathways lie ahead. Our graduates become environmental activists. They educate in gardens and at outdoor centers. Our graduates train employees. They continue their studies. They become researchers.

Our graduates become curriculum developers. They are social activists. They are authors and parents. They advocate for under-resourced youth in community agencies. They work with children and with adults with special needs.

Our graduates direct camping programs. They join the Math Circus in Germany. And I did not make that up. And education and how to educate is indeed a lifelong asset. We are all teachers in the broadest sense, but you graduates are a specialized breed of educators who have taken this extra step to study what it means to teach and to learn.

Today I would like to share three important facts about what it is to be a teacher. I learned about these important facts from working with teachers and from personal experience over the past 27 years. And if you're wondering, that means I started teaching when I was five.

[LAUGHTER]

And after this year at Trent in the education program, I suspect our graduates here today have learned these important facts about teachers as well. Important fact number one. Teachers learn from their students. They bring students along and help them find their way. But they also learn from their students. This is the long pursuit of the educator, to study learning and to understand deeply how to nurture and support students so that they become resourceful, thoughtful, and knowledgeable people and so that they learn to contribute positively to this world and to society. As such, the learning teacher is on a pathway toward wisdom laden with hard work.

Important fact number two. Teachers are brave. Teaching is not particularly relaxing.

[LAUGHTER]

We stand exposed in front of motivated and reluctant learners alike. Learners assess our words, our facial expressions, our posture and body language. They assess our moods and our laughter or lack thereof. And they test us. Oh, yes. They do.

In my first two years as a teacher, I wore a sweater vest almost every day with a little rainbow pattern. It wasn't cold. It was just a little protective layer between my churning stomach and the students I was aiming to educate.

Brave teachers ask questions for which they do not have answers. Brave teachers have the courage to challenge students. They figure out what a student understands and can do and then gently push that student just outside the comfort zone, knowing that it is in these moments of discomfort where learning takes place. It is the grain of sand, that somewhat irritating substance, that pushes us all learn and causes the formation of a pearl of understanding.

So now to important fact three. Teachers have power. We have power over our students. And it is naive to deny this. So the question is, what can the teacher do to not overuse that power? And better yet, to share that power? And then, ultimately, to empower their students?

In 1897, well over 100 years ago, John Dewey published a forward-thinking text he called "My Pedagogic Creed." In this creed he stated, "I believe it is impossible to foretell definitely just what civilization will be 20 years from now. Hence, it is impossible to prepare the child for any precise set of conditions."

He goes on to say, "I believe the teacher is not in the school to impose certain ideas or to form certain habits in the child but is there as a member of the community." Teachers have power and Dewey is describing the teacher's responsibility to recognize this and find ways to empower students in a learning community.

I expect this graduating class has other important facts about teaching. They're funny and shocking and humbling. And I am sure you'll share these with colleagues in the years to come. In closing, I would like to turn my attention to this graduating class directly.

To the education leaders of our future, I offer some particular suggestions for your consideration. Say yes. And I know that you have already said yes. That's why you're sitting here today. So now keep saying yes.

Keep your eye on the horizon for these opportunities. And when they are just a glimmer at the corner of your vision, go there. Learn to apologize. Because as teachers, you will make mistakes every day. Ask for forgiveness from those you teach, but most importantly forgive yourself.

And to paraphrase a well known saying, if you are choosing between being kind or being clever, choose kindness. Although kindness often takes more effort, if you are caring you will have lived a life of consequence.

Make a practice of thanking your students for bringing you joy and frustration. And thank them for their contributions to the learning community. And in that spirit to you, the graduating class of 2015, we all thank you for leading us forward and for helping to build a story of hope and belonging. Thank you.

[APPLAUSE]

LEO GROARKE: Thank you for those inspirational words, Cathy. I am moved to share a personal anecdote. And that is I would tell the parents and I would tell the graduates that one of my children, my daughter, has a degree in education. And I just want to pick up on the thought that a degree in education prepares you for so many other things.

She's working for a fundraising agency and got a great job. But what I want you to know is that what she told me is she does not regret the degree in education at all. She's educating people all the time making presentations.

We're going to move now to the presentation of candidates for degrees. And graduates, and I just want to-- and visitors-- note how this works. The students will start on my right-hand side. They will be announced by the Dean of Education, Doctor Muldoon. They'll come across, you'll meet the Chancellor. This is your moment of glory.

Take your time. Do the photos there. After that, you'll come and I'll be here to shake your hand. And there are faculty, staff, and the registrar Tracy Al-idrissi is here to congratulate you. So Dean Muldoon, I would ask you to present the candidates for degree.

JACKIE MULDOON: Thank you. Mr. Chancellor, I'm pleased to present for the degree of Bachelor of Education candidates whose names will be read whom the Senate has duly declared worthy of the honor that they may receive the degree at your hands.

[READING NAMES]