# Convocation 2016: President & Vice-Chancellor Welcome by Dr. Leo Groarke - Trent University Durham

5 minutes and 43 seconds in length

[Trent University Durham logo]

>> LEO GROARKE: Good morning. Please be seated. My name is Leo Groarke. I'm the President and Vice Chancellor of Trent University and I'm very pleased to welcome all of you to a historic convocation.

The ceremony today is a ceremony of many firsts. The first that I want to begin with is in keeping with the Trent tradition where we recognize First Peoples and respect the First Peoples of our land. So let me begin by saying that I want to acknowledge that we are located in the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. Today we honour and recognize the traditional occupants of this land.

This is a very special convocation because it is the first Trent convocation in Durham. I would think that some applause for that-- thank you—

[Applause]

I want to personally thank our Durham students and especially the Trent Durham Student Association for lobbying so hard to have a convocation ceremony in Durham. I think that this ceremony underscores some important developments at Trent and I do want to note them before we begin.

Of course it represents and signifies the growth of Trent Durham and Trent's commitment to the Durham community. But in a deeper way, I think it is a sign of a change in the way that Trent thinks about itself. Trent has been operating in Durham for 41 years, but for most of that time it has seen Durham as a satellite campus of the University, and I will tell you I don't like the word satellite. I worked, I led a second campus of another university at one point and the first thing that I did when I took over leadership of that campus is I banished the word satellite from our vocabulary. I don't like the word satellite because the satellite is something that revolves around something else. So when you describe a campus as a satellite campus, it suggests that it's a campus which revolves around another campus which is more significant and more important. Five years ago Trent decided to stop calling the Durham campus a satellite campus. This was the right thing today-- to do. Today with a Durham convocation, we are again asserting the importance of our Durham campus as a campus with its own interests, in its own community, with its own significance. This doesn't of course stop it from being a key component of Trent. Trent is stronger to have two strong campuses, each with a shared commitment to excellence but with their own unique features, some matching Durham, some matching Peterborough.

For our graduating students, I would like to take the satellite metaphor just a little bit further and suggest that you can think of yourselves as satellites and you've been orbiting around the university and your families and this is an occasion that marks your move away from that as you go forth to establish an orbit of your own. I know your parents love you but I will say, being a parent myself, that some of them may be looking forward to this change.

[Laughter]

Today most of our students, most of our graduates will have one of their own firsts; their first degree. I believe that your Trent education will provide you with the tools you need to take full advantage of the opportunities around you to be successful in this world and whatever career of life path you choose this is a special moment. Please enjoy it. It's time to imagine your future, to begin creating a life of consequence, and a purpose that is uniquely your own.

Now as we begin our ceremony I do want to tell the audience and our students that this is very much a Trent convocation. One of the things that means is it's supposed to be fun. Okay? There is a serious aspect to it. I would ask everybody to respect everybody else, but Trent doesn't try to have a stuffy, quiet, grave, serious convocation. Parents if you want to shout, graduates if you want to shout at your parents, please just go ahead and do so, okay? This is a celebration. I want everybody to join us in celebrating the successes of our students.

I now officially declare convocation open.

[Applause]

[Trent University Durham logo]