

Advanced Degree Students, Class remarks

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Kimiya Shams, LL.M. 2016

Dean Magill, distinguished faculty and staff, friends and family, graduating JD's and fellow LLM's, SPILS and JSD's, welcome and good morning.

It is my distinct pleasure and true honor to have the opportunity to address you all on behalf of the Advanced Degree Students today.

Class of 2016, wow, we made it! Today we are officially graduates — and alumni — of Stanford Law School, congratulations to us! Every one of us here today has traveled a remarkable journey to reach this moment. For the advanced degree students this journey started ten months ago, in which we in full excitement arrived at Stanford to meet our future colleagues and to be part of the Stanford student body. Little did we know that we would soon be spending one of the best years in our lives with some of the greatest minds in the country. We have throughout these months persevered, debated, learned and soared, all alongside our fellow JD classmates. We have turned into comparative thinking lawyers who expressed our views, shared insights of our respective countries' legal systems and vigorously got involved in class discussions, student journals and associations.

However, we owe this day not only to ourselves but also to the ones who stood by us throughout this journey. Many of us have crossed land and sea, thousands of miles away from comfort and familiar faces, and yet we could always feel their presence. Thank you to our friends and family members for your unconditional support and your encouragement from across the world, we have been incredibly lucky to have you throughout these months.

The 2016 graduating class of advanced degree students consists of 67 individuals hailing from 31 countries with a total of 22 spoken languages. This is diversity per definition which also shines through in our professional backgrounds. Among us we have law clerks from the Supreme Court of Korea and the Court of Appeal of New Zealand; we have prosecutors from Korea, legislators from China and former employees of the United Nations, the World Trade Organization and the World Bank as well as law firm associates, partners and in-house counsels from some of the most prominent firms and companies in the world. We are an ambitious group of individuals who courageously embarked on the Stanford journey and who can today proudly call ourselves Stanford Law School alumni. Stanford, thank you, we are incredibly lucky to have been part of this amazing school and its student body, and incredibly lucky to have had the opportunity to meet and learn from the law faculty and our JD classmates.

And luck is actually something that I will be focusing my speech on today, more specifically the concept of luck. I know that it sounds all a bit too abstract for us lawyers to understand but I am confident that you can all identify with this theory.

I am certain that upon announcing our admission to Stanford Law School, all of our friends and family members overwhelmingly congratulated us and said “you are so lucky”. This has been a red thread throughout our time here at Stanford. I recall my first week of autumn quarter where I took a class with a guest lecturer who would end every class session by saying “you are all lucky to be here at Stanford”. This continued as the weeks passed by, with professors, lunch speakers and students from other schools saying “you are lucky to be at Stanford”. And I agree, we are indeed truly lucky to have had the opportunity of attending Stanford Law School but our admission and our achievements was never pure luck.

Chip Denman, a statistician and co-founder of the National Capital Area Skeptics coined the term “Luck is probability taken personally”. We have all worked hard for our admission at Stanford, some of us have planned our advanced degree studies for years; saving for our tuition fee, studying abroad, publishing articles and making a name for ourselves. Luck probably played a small role in our admission decision but we all know that at the end of the day the probability of us being admitted was all dependent on the amount of hard work that we had put down, and hard work does not equal luck. It is no secret that we are all amazingly ambitious and hardworking individuals, and that is something that we should all remember as we go forward with our professional lives.

To the LLM and SPILS students, I am so proud and honored to be graduating with you. Our common accomplishments, the extraordinary fun times that we have had while living on the Farm and the little bit of luck that brought us here has now left us united and part of the Stanford Family, and part of the advanced degree network that covers all corners of the world. As we today end this chapter of our lives and leave Stanford we must remember that it was never pure luck that brought us here but our commitment to hard work and our mission to be our best selves, and these two factors are key components that we will carry with us while serving clients worldwide.

Thank you Stanford Law School for this year, thank you for the knowledge that you have given us and thank you for the opportunity of a lifetime, we are forever grateful.