

Trinity College
Angel B. Pérez, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Success
Convocation Speech
August 31, 2017

Welcome. Today is absolutely my favorite day of the year! It's full of excitement and new beginnings and we get to celebrate with you after what I know has been a tough and emotional college application process.

I know how hard all of you have worked to get to this moment today – not just the students, but also the parents.

First and foremost, I want to say congratulations to each and every one of you. You have officially survived the college admissions process.

Students: Just think you will never have to log into the Common Application ever again. For those of you who went to high schools with Naviance, you will never see another college scattergram in your life. No more checking the College Board's website for test score updates either! And parents – you will no longer have to nag your children about whether they finished writing their college essays.

The hard work was worth it, though, because guess what? You have arrived exactly where you are meant to be. I'd like to officially welcome you to your new EXTRAORDINARY extended family – Trinity College.

You should be proud of the fact that you have made it here today. This is one of the most extraordinary classes entering Trinity. Today we have:

586 First Year Students, 18 Transfers, eight IDP (adult), and five exchange students – from France and Hungary. You were hand-picked during one of the College's most selective years in our history.

I want you to think about it this way – 67 percent of the people who applied to be sitting where you are today were turned away. But instead, we chose YOU.

We have a really rigorous and detail-oriented admissions process. We focus not just on your academic and co-curricular success, but also on your personal character. By the time we actually send you an admissions letter, we have read your file two to three times, and discussed your application in admissions committee.... sometimes up to five times.

So please do not take this honor lightly. You have a duty and a responsibility to live up to the extraordinary potential Trinity saw in you. I know that you will all do amazing things in the classroom, on the fields, in your social groups, and of course, in the city of Hartford. Today – you are coming from all over the country and all over the world. And there are so many things you should be proud of – because you are a record-breaking class!

The Class of 2021 has the greatest amount of geographic diversity in Trinity's history. The majority of you are from outside of New England – with students coming from as far as California, Hawaii, Iowa, Washington, Oregon, Texas, Florida, Georgia, DC, Alabama, Kansas, Indiana, Utah, and the commonwealth of Puerto Rico and so much more!

And even though we have students coming from all over the country, you should also know that we love our backyard – and your class has a record number of students from the city of Hartford as well. My suggestion would be to find them this week and become their new best friends because they know where the best spots are in Hartford!

You should also know, that the world has come to Hartford today. Sitting here today, is the largest International Student Class to ever attend the College. Because of you, Class of 2021, we now have 70 different countries represented at Trinity. You come from as far as: Rwanda, India, China, Burundi, Trinidad, Barbados, South Korea, Canada, Syria, Tanzania, Japan, Germany, the UK, and Brazil.

I should also mention that our domestic diversity is also historic. You are part of the class with the highest number of students of color and the highest number of students who are first in their family to go to college.

Of course, I don't want to forget to mention that, for the second year in a row, Trinity has more women than men in the first-year class. This is significant because in the year 2019 we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of women being admitted to the College. I think the Trinity leaders who made that decision almost 50 years ago, would be SO proud of the Class of 2021.

Most impressive are not the statistics, but what you've done and what REALLY inspired the admissions and financial aid committee. Sitting in the audience today, we have:

- The founder of Jordan's Model Parliament
- A scuba diver who worked to prevent coral reefs from being contaminated by algae
- The founder of a robotics competition that now competes internationally
- A semi-finalist on "America's Got Talent"
- A student recognized by the Korean Embassy for her work in advancing Korean culture in California
- A member of Great Britain's National Ice Hockey Team
- A student who founded an orphanage in Ethiopia
- One of our students from Iowa is a Certified EMT
- Another is a circus performer: apparently very good on aerial and trapeze
- One is extremely talented on the drums and has played for President Jimmy Carter and the President of Burundi
- One filmed a documentary to raise awareness about teen depression
- One of you was co-founder and anchor of your school's virtual broadcasting network

- Another reads more than 100 books a year & is editor-in-chief of a political magazine

And there are so many more...

Simply put, you are an extraordinary group and we are proud to have you at Trinity. In your applications, you told us that you want to use your education to have an impact on the world and I know you will spend the next four years learning how to do just that.

President Berger-Sweeney, I present to you, the EXTRAORDINARY Trinity College Class of 2021.