

May 15, 2020

RE: A letter to our graduating students

Dear Viterbi Graduates:

On this day of the graduation of the Class of 2020, whether undergraduate, master's or doctoral, I would like to express, on behalf of the entire Viterbi community, my warmest congratulations to all graduates for reaching your glorious destination, after a journey of discovery, accomplishments, creativity and inspiration. I also wanted to tell you how grateful and proud I am on how you adjusted, created, and innovated in the last extraordinary few weeks, amidst uncertainty, apprehension, and unprecedented constraints.

In 2004, the National Academy of Engineering published a seminal report: "The Engineer of 2020." This engineer is you – the Viterbi engineer! I am absolutely certain that, as in the words of that report, you have the ingenuity of Lillian Gilbreth, the problem-solving capabilities of Gordon Moore, the scientific insight of Albert Einstein, the creativity of Pablo Picasso, the determination of the Wright brothers, the leadership abilities of Bill Gates, the conscience of Eleanor Roosevelt, and the vision of Martin Luther King, Jr.

No one could have possibly imagined in 2004 or since then, that the engineer of 2020 would be graduating under the most exceptional circumstances. But you are very special. And I am very confident in stating that you are spectacularly and uniquely equipped among all your peers to not only manage today's unprecedented disruption but more importantly to be the leader of the future rapidly unfolding in front of you, to *engineer a better world for all humanity*, a goal more urgently needed than ever before.

In the years of study that you have spent at Viterbi, I have been awed by your growth, by your ingenuity, by your development – professional, personal and societal. You mastered competence. And you mastered character. And in the process, you earned our and society's unconditional trust.

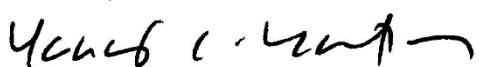
I have followed your progress as you developed enabling, powerful mindsets and competencies: in outstanding scientific, engineering and technological prowess; in interdisciplinary work that has engineering as the quintessential core of problem solving (what we call *Engineering +*); in inventiveness, innovation and creativity; in the understanding of human cultures – locally, nationally and globally; and in your deep commitment to the solution of important societal problems.

We welcomed you when you arrived on campus a few years ago; mentored and admired you as you grew as a Viterbi engineer and as a person; celebrated your many successes and accomplishments; and marveled that you literally reached for the stars, by reaching space and by changing the conversation about engineering: *Who we are, what we do and what we look like*.

You now will go to the next phase of your growth, to shape and create a new world where science and engineering will be most needed than ever before. We will follow your remarkable paths. And we will cheer for you. Follow your education, your heart, your intuition and your passion and you will change the world. And when you reach there, take a moment to look back and you will see a caring and supporting institution that admires you, is proud of you and embraces you for all the wonders you are certain to accomplish!

Good Luck @Engineerof2020. #engineer a better world for all humanity. Congratulations and Fight On!

Sincerely,



Yannis C. Yortsos
Dean