

“FOUNDATIONS FOR A CHANGING WORLD”

**Remarks for the University of King’s College Installation
of the 14th Chancellor**

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Chancellor of the University of King’s College
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Eminent former Chancellor Michael Meighen, who served King's so ably for more than a decade; President and Vice-Chancellor George Cooper, a distinguished leader in so many fields; Chair of the Board of Governors, the Honourable Dr. John Hamm, Members of the Board of Governors, Members of the Faculty, Students of this distinguished university, Honoured Guests.

Let me begin by thanking the University of King's College --- Canada's oldest chartered university, two hundred and twenty five years young next year, and still setting the standard for a liberal arts education and why it matters --- for the honour of serving as your 14th Chancellor. It is a privileged position in a wonderful institution that means a great deal to me as a proud Nova Scotian, one who believes deeply in the value of a liberal arts education. And, it is a trust that I take very seriously, given the standards set by my predecessors and the expectations set by our students, alumni and faculty.

Today, we live in a profoundly changing world, a challenging world, a world of opportunity and uncertainty, a world quite unlike the one when I graduated over forty years ago. Today, we are experiencing an unbelievable integration of global markets; a virtual collapse of distance and time; the tumultuous promise of "internet 4.0", the internet of everything; a collective aging of Western countries and societies; the uncertain and unsettling consequences of climate change; and, the tectonic gravity shift towards Asia. Quite simply, change is going to be our constant.

A new multi-polar world is unsteadily emerging, one where economies, societies, politics and power are inexorably shifting towards a future that is anything but preordained. These drivers of change are transformative, creating a new world order. But they are also, by their very nature, disruptive, unsettling. And they can appear to be disrespectful of what was, throwing together people and cultures with different ideas about fundamental things like the sanctity of the individual, sovereignty, due process of law, the role of women, the meaning of human rights, and attitudes toward the environment.

This changing world provides an opportunity for Canadians, particularly our next generation of leaders being moulded today in universities like King's, to shape the future. To create tomorrow's sustainable economy through innovation today. To connect cultures and people, not just continents and markets. To tear down barriers between societies, not accept the divides that separate us. To see the common humanity among nations, not just our historical differences. To help make Canada an even stronger nation, and in a better world.

We are blessed. Our country is a vibrant democracy. Our society is one of the world's most pluralistic and multicultural. Our geography is one of the world's great environmental treasures. Our contributions to knowledge shine from science to medicine to literature to culture. Our people are well educated, and our values are worthy. These are our endowments, not to rest on, but to build upon.

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In all this, our capital is much more than traditional concepts of bricks and mortar. It is anchored in our human capital, our intellectual capital, our innovation capital. It is reflected in our natural resources, whether it's pristine beaches or agriculture or fish or oil and gas in a world that desperately needs them. It includes our institutions of democracy, law and civil society. But its glue is our talent --- the quality of our workforce, the entrepreneurship of our business sector, the dedication of our public servants, the values we embody as Canadians, the wisdom and knowledge of our educators, and the excellence of our educational institutions.

Simply put, educational institutions matter, greatly, to our future. Canada's educational institutions are dear; some like King's have been carefully developed and nurtured for longer than we have been a country, others are much more recent. They all represent our collective capacity to build great talent, to conduct great research, and to develop great ideas.

Make no mistake, in a world of profound technological change, a liberal arts foundation is as important today as it was when Newton was conceptualizing gravity, when Lincoln was writing his extraordinary Second Inaugural address, when Martin Luther King was formulating his dream of what a just and equal society really meant.

A strong liberal arts foundation shapes leaders, and in these changing and uncertain times, leadership is so critical. Leaders must have the capacity to create a sense of urgency to embrace change not the status quo, the courage to reject the tyranny of short-termism and build for the next decade not just the next quarter, and the wisdom gleaned from the past to see the future in a different light.

Reflecting on the nature of leadership, Theodore Sorenson (who authored many of President Kennedy's great speeches) once observed: "those who wish to stand up and stand out and leave something enduring behind must build new institutions, not new images ... they must look to the next generation not merely the next election ... they must talk in terms of fundamental values not merely costs ... they must appeal to our hopes as well as our needs, ... to what we long to be and what we know is right. That's leadership."

How right he was. We need that leadership today, and from all segments of society. King's is part of building that leadership infrastructure. Our unique Foundation Year Programme, our Journalism program for a world where both the medium and the message are changing, our old world traditions and our new world history.

We are in the business of preparing leaders, many for a Canada which has incredible potential in this changing world, but it is just that, potential, not entitlement. To realize it, to prosper economically and socially, we need to be clear about our strengths and weaknesses, and even clearer about our national interests and our collective ambitions. And that is what a King's education should prepare you to think about, to write about, to speak about.

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To help frame our national interests and collective ambitions, government matters, and it needs leaders, both elected and non-elected. Government is not a burden on society, nor a necessary evil. It is essential, a shaping force, a reflection of society's values, aspirations, ambitions and accommodations. While government can always be better, it can only be as good as the strength of our institutions, the leaders who stand for elected office, the quality of our public servants, the depth of our journalists reporting on it, and the engagement of our citizens in civic life. Good government is about making a difference: it should be ambitious for the country, and we should hold it to that account.

To conclude, a good education is about always challenging the status quo in the way we think and in the way we act. In the words of George Bernard Shaw: "You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say 'Why not?'".

Where is progress without such dreams? Where might our future take us with King's graduates at the forefront of asking "why not?"

Thank you again for the honour of being your Chancellor.