

Address to New Students B August 27, 2010
Welcome Week
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I am pleased to greet you this morning.

This is the 41st incoming class to Hofstra that I have had the opportunity to teach and interact with. The reality is that I have been at Hofstra more than double the time that most of you have been alive.

My inspiration for years of service is Albus Dumbledore, the headmaster of Hogwarts. Dumbledore served at Hogwarts for over 50 years. Now, though he is my role model for years of service, I am not looking to end my service, the way his service ended.

The death of Dumbledore occurs in Year 6, in *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, but I'm not here today to talk about that. I'm here to focus on Year 7, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, which will shortly be movies 7 and 8. The book on Year 7 (and the movie which opens in November) begins with the "Dark Lord Ascending." Severus Snape arrives at the Malfoy house to bring Voldemort news regarding Harry Potter. At the end of the conversation Voldemort illuminates a slowly revolving figure that is suspended over the table which they are all sitting around.

"Do you recognize our guest, Severus?" asked Voldemort. Snape raised his eyes to the upside-down face. All of the Death Eaters were looking up at the captive now, as though they had been given permission to show curiosity. As she revolved to face the firelight, the woman said in a cracked and terrified voice, "Severus! Help me!"

"Ah, yes," said Snape as the prisoner turned slowly away again. Voldemort then introduced the woman. "For those of you who do not know, we are joined here tonight by Charity Burbage who, until recently, taught at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry."

There were small noises of comprehension around the table. A broad, hunched woman with pointed teeth cackled.

"Yes...Professor Burbage taught the children of witches and wizards all about Muggles...how they are not so different from us..."

One of the Death Eaters spat on the floor. Charity Burbage revolved to face Snape again.

“Severus...please...please...”

“Silence,” said Voldemort, and with another twitch of his wand, Charity fell silent as if gagged. “Not content with corrupting and polluting the minds of Wizarding children, last week Professor Burbage wrote an impassioned defense of Mudbloods in the *Daily Prophet*. Wizards, she says, must accept these thieves of their knowledge and magic. The dwindling of the purebloods is, says Professor Burbage, a most desirable circumstance...She would have us all mate with Muggles...or, no doubt, werewolves...”

Nobody laughed this time: There was no mistaking the anger and contempt in Voldemort’s voice. For the third time, Charity Burbage revolved to face Snape. Tears were pouring from her eyes into her hair. Snape looked back at her, quite impassive, as she turned slowly away from him again.

“*Avada Kedavra.*”

The flash of green light illuminated every corner of the room. Charity fell, with a resounding crash, onto the table below, which trembled and creaked. Several of the Death Eaters leapt back in their chairs.

“Dinner, Nagini,” said Voldemort softly, and the great snake swayed and slithered from his shoulders onto the polished wood.

In the world of “he who should not be named” and therefore in a significant part of the wizarding world, discrimination against muggles and mudbloods was an everyday occurrence. And if you read all the Harry Potter books or see all the movies you will find that there is also discrimination against elves, giants, goblins, centaurs, squibs, and werewolves. Our world, as we know, also has been no stranger to discrimination. But just as Harry Potter’s world changes at the end of book seven (two more movies) our world has changed as well and most importantly, you have changed (and you are part of the reason the world has changed).

You are different from my generation or your parents’ generation. As a group, you are millennials (born since 1982), also referred to as Generation Y or the Net Generation; your parents and I are Baby Boomers (1943-60) or Generation X types (1961-81). As groups we have very different characteristics (and at the same time there are substantial differences within each of the groups).

What you are, as defined in a recent conference on Generation Shockwaves and the Implications for Higher Education (TIAA-CREF), is a group that believes in 24 hour days, you are team oriented, immediate, overtly confident but with self doubts, fascinated by new technology, continuously integrating technology almost seamlessly into your academic and personal lives

(social media, such as facebook, text messaging, tweeting, and blogging), and you are very much a name and resent being just a number.

You also, according to the conference, like close family relationships.

You are academically better prepared.

You place a premium on job/financial security.

You want the college you attend to have the programs that help achieve job security.

As the last presidential election demonstrated, you are a political powerhouse.

And you are a much more diverse group.

In the world that Harry Potter and Hermione Granger grew up in, and the world that I grew up in and your parents grew up in, not that long ago, diversity was not always appreciated or encouraged. Within that somewhat black or white world, separation and segregation existed in significant parts of the country and discrimination was an everyday occurrence. Even when the laws changed, attitudes took much longer to change.

Our University celebrates and encourages diversity. As indicated in our Diversity Mission Statement:

The University believes that institutions of learning have a responsibility to provide and sustain multiple cultures, to encourage scholarship and knowledge production incorporating multiple perspectives and to demonstrate commitment to fair and equal access to higher education.

Diversity includes the recognition and incorporation of a multiplicity of voices and perspectives in thought and action, in policy and practice, in all spheres of the academic enterprise. It involves recognizing the value of “difference” and the inclusion of members of groups that experience discrimination or under representation.

Join with us in embracing diversity.

As our statement says, we are all better off recognizing the value of differences and the value of inclusiveness. And we work hard to do this. But Hofstra is much more than diversity. Our campus life, the education we provide, everything we do is designed to be a best fit with, and meet the needs of you - our students. Our education recognizes and values your millennial identity and it is a different education than we provided to boomers and Gen X.

The Hofstra you are entering is the strongest in our history, and as a person who goes back further than half the buildings on campus and half the trees on campus, I know that first hand.

In terms of credentials and national reputations of faculty, in terms of national accreditations

(which are third-party expert verifications of how well we are doing), in terms of facilities, in terms of student life, in terms of technology and most importantly in terms of teaching excellence, we have always been a good University but never better than now. You are more knowledgeable than previous generations and we, as a University, are also more knowledgeable. Together this helps facilitate the best education possible. And in terms of the choices we provide you with, the 140 majors and many options within those majors, and the quality of our faculty, our administration and our staff, we have also never been better than today.

Because you have chosen us, you have all the rights that are granted to a student at Hofstra and you also have all the responsibilities inherent in that designation. Those responsibilities include accepting the standards we operate under as a university. These standards impact you, they impact all our students, and they also protect you as they protect all our students.

In setting these standards, our premise was clear. You are adults, not kids; we are treating you that way and holding you fully accountable. You are accountable for your decisions and if there are consequences to those decisions, those consequences will be yours.

We applaud your success; we salute your accomplishments; we grant credits to students when courses are successfully completed and a degree when all requirements are met. But, to truly salute your accomplishments, they must be YOUR accomplishments.

Go back to Year 6, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*. Harry, you may remember, gets the okay to take an advanced Potions class because there has been a change in teacher from Professor Snape to Professor Slughorn. Because he gets into the class late, he doesn't have time to purchase the textbook; however Professor Slughorn gives him an extra copy that just happened to be in the cupboard of the classroom the course was taught in. The textbook was *Advanced Potion-Making by Liliatius Borage*. Now it turns out the previous owner of the book "the Half-Blood Prince" had scribbled all over the pages, which Harry found, at first, very annoying. Professor Slughorn next gives the class an assignment to prepare the Draught of Living Death sleeping potion, a very difficult and complex potion composed of wormwood, asphodel, valerian roots, sloth brains, and one sopohorous bean. Wouldn't you be surprised if we gave the same assignment in our introductory chemistry course? Slughorn was very clear that he didn't expect perfection from anybody in the class but. the scribbles in the book gave Harry the insider information and the tricks, some of which were totally different than what was spelled out in the book, to successfully construct this very powerful potion. Once Slughorn noticed what Harry had created (and he never noticed the scribbles in the book) he exclaimed "The clear winner. Excellent, excellent Harry!" At dinner, Harry told Hermione and Ron Weasley what really happened. "Hermione's face became stonier and stonier with every word he uttered. Harry, aggravated by her expression, then says "I suppose you think I cheated?" and Hermione responds very directly "Well it wasn't your own work was it?"

Plagiarism and other forms of cheating do not represent your quest for knowledge. Instead plagiarism is simply cheating and constitutes presenting someone else's work as your own.

Other forms of cheating include purchasing papers, copying another student's exam, taking an exam for another student, falsifying data, using technology (e.g., cell phones, iPods) in ways that are not permitted, paraphrasing someone else's words or work without citing the source, submitting work produced with unauthorized collaboration or assistance, letting another student copy from you, inventing an illness or an accident to get out of taking a test and the list goes on and on.

One of my favorite stories regarding cheating features two students in a history course who contacted a faculty member a few hours after an exam was given in class indicating they had a flat tire on the way to campus, and therefore could not take the exam at that time. The faculty member asked them both to come in to take a make-up; placed each of them in a separate room and gave them their make-up exams. First question on each of their multiple choice exams was "The location of the tire that went flat was a) driver's side front, b) driver's side rear, c) passenger side front; d) passenger side rear." The results of the exam and the rest of this story really are history: each of the students came up with a different answer to that question.

Now, what if you let another student copy from you? Is that really cheating? The bottom line is that you are responsible for making sure that your work is not copied or used in any inappropriate manner. It is your work that we are using to judge you, and by helping another person in this way, you are enabling, facilitating and collaborating on academic dishonesty.

As diverse as we are, and regardless of whether you are a millennial, a Gen X or a boomer, a muggle, or a wizard, we must all unite in stating it is simply unacceptable to plagiarize and cheat. Let me make it very clear: respect for diversity and integrity are inextricably interwoven and both are essential prerequisites to your success as a Hofstra student and to the continued success of the United States as a country.

The bottom line is that Hofstra provides you (and we know **you** represents a diverse population) with a best fit education. But for the equation to work, you need to be fully involved, engaged, inclusive, and responsible.

At one point in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Dumbledore says to Harry that "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, more than our abilities." Class of 2014, your ability is great; make the right choices, stand up for honesty, integrity, and diversity.

Welcome, again, to Hofstra. I look forward to seeing you on campus. And please stay in touch. You can reach me at Provost@Hofstra.edu and my office is on the second floor, west wing of the Library. Thanks and continued success.

