

WELCOME TO 2015 CLACS/DS GRADUATION

Welcome graduates of the great class of 2015! Congratulations on what is and always will be a signal accomplishment of your life.

Welcome parents, brothers, sisters, and other family! Thank you for lending us these brilliant young women and men – and for sharing them with us for these four short years. And while we are appropriately celebrating graduates this weekend, please join me in a sincere thanks and congratulations to the parents whose sacrifices for literally decades have contributed mightily to the successes of their children.

I am an anthropologist and in case any of you forgot to take an Anthro class, it is we anthropologists who guard the secret codes to life (and a few secret handshakes I can teach you later). One of these secret codes to life is the rite of passage that is graduation from Brown. Graduation is a ritual. You began the rite of university studies by walking *into* the sacred Van Wickle Gates. Walking *out* those same gates earlier this morning marks your graduation.

By the end of this ceremony, you will have received the talisman, the symbolic token of graduation, your diploma. You can frame it or can lose it. It won't really matter. What will matter is that you will never be the same. And as you already know because you've already been looking for jobs or maybe getting one, you will leave here today a Brown graduate and *that* will forever be your sign of excellence marking you as exceptional people for the rest of your lives.

This is a big deal!

And I am here to give you your final college assignment, and it's the big one: here at Brown, in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and in Development Studies, you've studied what's wrong with the world. From now on it is your responsibility to tackle these global challenges and make the world a better place than the one you were born into.

Now I would like to introduce a special guest. On behalf of the University, Srihari Naidu, elected to Brown's Board of Trustees in 2013, gets to hand you your diplomas today. After graduating with an ScB in 1993 and an MD in 1997 from Brown, Dr. Naidu trained in internal medicine at Cornell and the University

of Pennsylvania. Today he is a leading cardiologist in New York City's Winthrop University Hospital and associate professor of medicine at SUNY-Stony Brook School of Medicine. Author of over 100 articles on angioplasty, Dr. Naidu regularly lectures throughout the United States and Europe. He is 25th Reunion Chair for the class of 1993 and Immediate Past President of the Brown Medical School Alumni Association Board of Directors. We are delighted to welcome to Dr. Naidu.

Before proceeding, I also want to introduce Prof. Nitsan Chorev who is the Harmon Family Professor of Sociology and International Studies and Director of Development Studies at Brown. Unfortunately because of a family emergency, Prof. Jeremy Mumford, who is Director of the Undergraduate Concentration in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, could not be here today. Please join me in thanking both of them for their tireless efforts to make these concentrations thriving centers of scholarship and activity.

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CLACS distinguished senior thesis prize

Thomas Sullivan for his distinguished senior thesis, "Las aventuras de Chelevaso," a fictional work written about the life of a Salvadoran immigrant in Rhode Island. His advisors write, "one of best creative works I've read as a professor," and "extraordinary." Congratulations, Tom.