

## **Commencement 2012: The Graduate School Ceremony**

Good morning and welcome to this great convocation. I am Peter Weber, Dean of the Graduate School. It is my privilege to preside as we confer advanced degrees for Brown University.

I would like to begin by saluting candidates for the Master's and Doctor of Philosophy degrees.

*Ascendant.*

Today we recognize your dedication and your achievements in research, scholarship, and teaching. I would also like to acknowledge by name those who served as officers of the Graduate Student Council: Michael Patrick Antosh, Anthony M. Evans, Christopher Kenneth Geggie, Alissa Jihane Haddaji, Sumit Kumar Soni, and Craig Joseph Yennie.

I welcome the parents, spouses, partners and children of our graduating students. Please stand.

And finally I want to recognize your faculty advisors and mentors. Will the faculty please stand.

We are delighted to have all of you with us. Please be seated.

Next, allow me to introduce the platform party. First, on your far left, are Christopher Beattie, Associate University Registrar, and two Associate Chaplains of the University, the Rev. Terri Yvette Cissé and R. David Coolidge, from whom we have already heard. Next is Associate Dean Elizabeth Harrington, of the Division of Biology and Medicine, and Jabbar Bennett, who is a dean both at the Graduate School and the Division of Biology and Medicine.

He is followed by Samuel M. Mencoff, a member of the Brown Board of Fellows and an alumnus of the undergraduate class of 1978. Mr. Mencoff will confer degrees on behalf of the University later in the ceremony. He is joined in this official capacity by William H. Twaddell, a Trustee of the Brown Corporation and an alumnus of the undergraduate class of 1963, who is sitting with the faculty.

Also among our esteemed guests is this year's Horace Mann recipient, Chao-Han Liu, PhD '65. Dr. Liu is an international leader in ionospheric research and is the emeritus chancellor of the University System of Taiwan.

To his left, we have John Tyler, Associate Dean of the Graduate School.

Next we have Clyde Briant, Brown's Vice President for Research and the Otis E. Randall University Professor of Engineering. Together, Clyde and John will present the Joukowsky Family Foundation Dissertation Awards.

Now we turn to the students' choice: Our student speaker is Christopher Kenneth Geggie. Chosen by the Graduate Student Council to address today's graduates, he will shortly receive a Master's in Classics. His studies focused on ancient bilingualism and Athenian political propaganda. His thesis explored myths as conceptual metaphors in the 5th century B.C. Athenian funeral orations for the war dead. Mr. Geggie has been an active member of the Graduate Student Council, serving as Vice President for Administration, among other roles. He served on the University's Public Safety Oversight Committee as well as the Campus Life Advisory Board's Subcommittee on Alcohol and Other Drugs. Christopher is from Alhambra, CA. In 2008, he received his bachelor's degree in Latin and Ancient Greek from Wabash College, Crawfordsville, Indiana. Before coming to Brown, he taught high school for a year. His address is titled: "Nothing Without Great Labor."

***Christopher Geggie presents***

Good morning. Thank you Dean Weber and the rest of the platform party for your hard work in making today, and every day at Brown University, possible.

My path to this podium, as arduous as it was walking up the hill in these gowns, was unforeseen until January of this year. Up to that point, I was on the PhD track in Classics and I decided that I wanted something different. While I searched my soul over winter break, thinking back to the good I've accomplished with my colleagues on the Graduate Student Council, thinking back to the young men and women whose lives I've influenced through volunteer work with my Fraternity, the following words kept echoing in my mind:

"Work and struggle and never accept an evil you can change." These words by Andre Gide reflect his experience of the horrors of both World Wars, the Spanish Flu Pandemic, the Stock Market Crash, Apartheid, and the countless other tragedies that plagued the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Now as then, Gide's words ring out not as a mild or meek request, but as a moral imperative that we must work and struggle and never accept any evil we can change. When I think about struggle, what immediately comes to my mind is a line from the satires of Horace, a 1st century BC Roman lyric poet: "Nīl sīnē māgnō | vītā lābōrē dēdīt mōrtālībūs." Life gives nothing to mortals without great labor, which is something we all can relate to, having labored greatly to be here. Nothing in life comes easy, especially things that are truly worthwhile and truly good.

While I was thinking in that snowless December (admittedly part of it was in California), I thought about where I am and what I wanted. I see that nearly 1700 college aged students die every year from causes related to alcohol, one is unacceptable. Young men and women live in fear of retaliation for speaking their mind, fearing prejudice and hatred coming from their race, gender identity, and perceived sexual orientation. These are but a few examples of unacceptable evils and I want to work to change them because I believe they can be. Moreover Brown has helped us develop the tools, both intellectually and interpersonally, we need to make those changes. I've learned a lot from

my experiences with every single member of the community, from students to faculty members, undergraduate to graduate, parents, staff, and alumni. Each interaction, in the classroom, during visit weekends, in the dining hall, at events in Providence, and, naturally, at the Graduate Center Bar—each has made me more confident not only in my own abilities, but confident in the good that every one of us can and is achieving.

Commencement, as its roots suggest, marks a beginning—our entrance into the world as masters of our fields and doctors of the mind, body, and soul. And as we enter the world let us not forget that Brown University’s mission calls us to serve the community, the nation, and the world by discovering, communicating, and preserving knowledge and understanding in a spirit of free inquiry, and by educating and preparing students to discharge the offices of life with usefulness and reputation.

Quite daunting, huh? And sometimes all we have is one split second to decide to act.

A relatively recent example happened on January 8th, 2011. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head by Jared Lee Loughner, and in the ensuing chaos three ordinary people acted.

Daniel Hernandez, was an intern who worked for the Congresswoman for just one week. When he heard the shots fired, the 20-year-old’s first instinct was to run toward her—toward the gunfire—he ran to her and held her until the ambulance arrived. He held her to his chest so tight that the doctors said she otherwise would have bled to death. When the paramedics arrived, he stayed with her, holding her hand all the way through.

Bill Badger’s head was grazed by a bullet and in spite of the injury he managed to wrestle the gunman to the ground. The 22-year-old shooter proved to be no match for the 75-year-old retired Army colonel. 61-year-old Patricia Maisch disarmed the gunman and later was asked by an utterly shocked and amazed reporter, “in the terror of the moment how could you do that?” And Mrs. Maisch calmly and simply answered: “because that’s what needed to be done.”

But do we have the mettle to be heroes? I would argue that we are not ordinary men and women—if only for the masochism present in all of us to endure so many years of graduate school. The many hours spent refining our minds in pursuit of our intellectual goals places us in a great position to reflect upon the situations we face, and arrive at creative solutions.

Into a world facing political and economic instability, disease and famine, anger and hate, Brown University confers degrees on more than 700 new bright lights with the knowledge and skills to make the world a better place. As you go forth, I’d like you to remember a poem by Will Allen Dromgoole. It is about an old man who crosses a chasm, vast and wide, by building a bridge to the other side. A stranger comes, passing by and asked the old man, simply, why? This is his man’s reply:

“Good friend, in the path I have come,” he said,  
“There followed after me to-day  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been as naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!”

As we’ve built the cognitive bridges in our minds that brought us to this momentous occasion, so too have others built the very planks we’ve walked upon to make it this far. The problems our world faces today are vast and deep and wide, but each of us has our own plank to help span life’s chasms.

Life gives nothing without great labor, and as we know some of the best things come after the harshest struggles. And so today, as we commence and begin our lives beyond the arms of our nurturing mother, remember that you are called to work and struggle and never accept an evil you can change.

***Peter Weber presents***

Thank you, Christopher.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Clyde Briant and John Tyler who will confer the Joukowsky Family Foundation Dissertation Prizes.

These prizes are named for the Joukowsky family, which has been so generous to the University. Will members of the Joukowsky family please rise? Thank you, Martha. With these prizes, we recognize outstanding achievements in research by Ph.D. recipients in the humanities, and the life, social, and physical sciences. Recipients of the awards were nominated by their departments and final selections were made by the Graduate Council, which includes faculty members, deans, and graduate students.

***Clyde Briant presents awards***

Thank you, Peter, and congratulations. I’m honored to be a part of today’s ceremony.

The winner of the Joukowsky dissertation prize in the Humanities is Christian George DuComb, who is receiving his PhD in Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. His thesis, “From the Meschianza to the Mummies Parade: Racial Impersonation in Philadelphia,” explores blackface masking and other forms of racial impersonation—as realized in street performance, festivity, theatre, and graphic art—from the late eighteenth century through the present day. This project draws on the cultural history of Philadelphia; the history of blackface minstrelsy; critical race theory; and performance studies. His original research looks at the relation between performances inside and outside theaters, which is sometimes made visible by printed materials. His thesis contributes to work on the theatrical bases of nationhood.

Christian's accomplishments include a Dissertation Research Fellowship from the American Society for Theatre Research in 2010, and a winning entry in The Drama Review's Graduate Student Essay Contest in 2006. On July 1, he begins an appointment as an Assistant Professor of English in the University Theater at Colgate University in Hamilton, New York.

Congratulations, Christian.

The Joukowsky dissertation award in the Life Sciences is awarded to Breann Leigh Brown, who is receiving her PhD in Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology. Her thesis is entitled "The *E. coli mqsRA* Operon Defines a Novel Family of Toxin:Antitoxin Modules." It investigates a toxin-antitoxin, or TA, system to understand how the small proteins MqsR:MqsA regulate bacterial persistence. She demonstrated that the TA system is unique, with structures and functional features that now make it an ideal new drug target for the development of new antibiotics. This work is changing dogma in the field about how TA systems function in microbial communities. Portions of her thesis have been published in four publications, including, for example, in Journal of Biological Chemistry and Nature Chemical Biology. Last year, she presented this research at the XXII Meeting of the International Union of Crystallography in Madrid. Breann is currently weighing offers for post-doctoral research positions in academic laboratories focusing on structural biology of various bacterial signaling pathways.

Congratulations, Breann.

The Joukowsky dissertation award in the Physical Sciences goes to Sirui Tan, Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics. His thesis, "Boundary Conditions and Applications of WENO Finite Difference Schemes for Hyperbolic Problems," considers a class of partial differential equations, or PDEs. These first-order hyperbolic PDEs model, for example, fluid flow, gas dynamics, and highway traffic. His work treats numerical approximations near the boundary -- where fluid and solid touch -- and takes care for negative impact away from the boundary. He approximates solutions in a stable and highly accurate way, while tackling the challenging approximation of solutions to systems for first-order nonlinear hyperbolic problems in several space dimensions. He fitted data with a least squares procedure, and his thesis highlights the advantages of his method.

His results are published in the top journal in his research area, Journal of Computational Physics. He is now a postdoctoral research associate at Los Alamos National Laboratory in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

Congratulations, Sirui.

The Joukowsky dissertation award in the Social Sciences goes to Hussein Banai, Ph.D. in Political Science. His thesis, "Democracy in Context: Between Universal Ideals and Local Values," explores the intersection of political theory and international relations, examining how democratic principles should be applied in Muslim majority societies. He critiques how dominant theories of democracy address universal democratic ideals and

local values, and develops his own account of the role of democratic values in cultural contexts. Drawing on his fluency in Farsi and his close connections with Iranian scholars, he broadens the audience of non-Western theorists while building a case that a “contextualist” approach allows for “iterations” of democracy within a nation such as Iran, meaning the path need not be distinctly Islamic. One recommender said “the result is a comparative political theory that is engaged with the mainstream debates about democracy, but one which also offers to improve them.”

His accomplishments include a post-doctoral fellowship at the Center for International Studies at MIT, and the co-authoring of a book entitled "Becoming Enemies: US-Iran Relations and the Iran-Iraq War," which will come out in days. He begins the position of assistant professor of diplomacy and world affairs at Occidental College in Los Angeles, California this fall.

Congratulations, Hussein.

Thank you, Peter, for inviting me to share this moment with you. It is a privilege to recognize these outstanding young scholars.

***Peter Weber presents***

Thank you, Clyde and John. And again, thank you to the Joukowsky family for their generosity.

And to the recipients, I add my congratulations for your outstanding contribution to scholarship.

It is with great pleasure that I call this year’s Horace Mann Award recipient, Chao-Han Liu, to the podium to receive his honor.

Chao-Han Liu received his PhD from Brown in 1965. A radio scientist and an international leader in solar terrestrial physics and global change research, he was nominated for this award by the School of Engineering and was selected by the Graduate Council.

The Horace Mann Medal, established in 2003, is given annually to a Brown Graduate School alumnus or alumna who has made significant contributions in his or her field, inside or outside of academia.

Dr. Liu exemplifies this award. Like Horace Mann, Dr. Liu served as a university president and made significant contributions to education, particularly in Taiwan.

His path from Brown led him to the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he taught electrical engineering for 25 years. In 1990, he returned to Taiwan, where he served as chancellor of the University System of Taiwan for four years, and as president of the National Central University for 12 years. Currently, he is a distinguished scholar and vice president emeritus of Academia Sinica.

His research has had far-ranging impact. In 1988, he and his graduate students pioneered a versatile, inexpensive technology that made it possible to monitor the ionosphere for space weather. Notably, solar terrestrial scientists and engineers around the world participated in this monitoring project, including many from developing countries. He and his students then went on to develop one of most forward-looking techniques for collecting global weather and climate data, including the ionosphere.

This technique was incorporated in Taiwan's FORMOSAT - 3 Constellation mission, also known as COSMIC for Constellation Observing System for Meteorology, Ionosphere, and Climate. It boosted the quantity and quality of the weather and climate data that can be collected on the global scale, and opened up new opportunities for studying the dynamics of the upper atmosphere. Since June 2007, F3 / COSMIC data have been incorporated in the weather forecasting services in most major countries.

Ours is not his first award or accolade. Indeed, he was elected Foreign Associate of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering.

It is our great pleasure that Chao-Han has been named our 2012 Horace Mann Medal winner. Thank you, Chao-Han.

I now turn the podium over to Jennifer T. Eyl, a PhD candidate in Religious Studies who will receive her degree today. On behalf of the Graduate Student Council, she will present this year's Wilson-DeBlois award.

***Jennifer Eyl presents***

This award recognizes Dr. Gail Cohee's service to graduate students at Brown University. As Director of the Sarah Doyle Women's Center, she has transformed and expanded the programming available to graduate students. Course and event topics range from alternative careers to managing dissertation-writing, relationships, and parenting. Graduate students value the breadth and depth of these learning opportunities. Her tireless efforts have helped to transform Brown University into a community in which graduate students can thrive not just intellectually, but as whole people.

***Peter Weber presents***

Many thanks, Jennifer, and congratulations, Gail.

***Samuel M. Menco presents***

<p>Socii honorandi: Homines quos ad gradum Magistri in compluribus disciplinis idoneos comperimus, vobis praesentamus, et eos ad hunc gradum promovere liceat rogamus.</p>	<p>Honored Colleagues: We present to you those men and women whom we have deemed fit to advance to the Master's degree in the various disciplines and we ask that they be allowed to advance to this degree.</p>
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Candidati ad gradum Magistri ASCENDANT.	Let the candidates for the Master's degree come forward.
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Auctoritate mihi commissa vos ad gradum Magistri admitto, omniaque jura ac privilegia ad hunc gradum pertinentia vobis concedo. Quare in testimonium haec diplomata vobis solemniter trado.	By the power entrusted to me I admit you to the rank of those who hold the Master's degree and I grant to you all the rights and privileges pertaining to this degree. In solemn witness whereof I hand over to you this diploma.
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***Peter Weber presents***

Please be seated. I have the honor to present the recipients of the Master of Arts degree of Brown University.

*Reading of the names.*

Laura Snyder, a director of graduate study in the Education Department, will now present the recipients of the Master of Arts in Teaching degree of Brown University.

***Laura Snyder presents***

It is my honor to introduce the recipients.

*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

Stephen Berenson, Clinical Professor of Theatre, Speech and Dance, will now present the recipients of the Master of Fine Arts degree of Brown University.

***Stephen Berenson presents***

It is my honor to present the recipients.

*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

John Tyler will present the recipients of the Master of Public Affairs degree of Brown University, followed by the recipients of the Master of Public Policy of Brown University.

***John Tyler presents***

It is an honor to present the recipients of the Master of Public Affairs.

*Reading of the names.*

It is an honor to present the recipients of the Master of Public Policy.



*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

Terrie Fox Wetle, Associate Dean of Medicine for Public Health and Public Policy, will now present the recipients of the Master of Public Health degree of Brown University.

***Terrie Fox Wetle presents***

It is my honor to present the recipients.

*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

John Tyler will now present the recipients of the Master of Science degree of Brown University.

***John Tyler presents***

It is my honor to present the recipients.

*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

Eric Suuberg, Associate Dean of Engineering, will now present the recipients of the Master of Science in Innovation Management and Entrepreneurship Engineering of Brown University.

***Eric Suuberg presents***

It is my honor to present the recipients.

*Reading of the names.*

***Peter Weber presents***

I wish to report that 196 students have completed the requirements for their master's degrees and have permission to receive their degrees in absentia.

Will all master's degree candidates please rise?

***Samuel M. Menco presents***

Congratulations on receiving your master's degree! Sedete.

<p>Socii honorandi: Homines quos ad gradum in Philosophia Doctoris idoneos comperimus, vobis praesentamus, et eos ad hunc gradum promovere liceat rogamus.</p>	<p>Honored Colleagues: We present to you those men and women whom we have deemed fit to advance to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and we ask that they be allowed to advance to this degree.</p>
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Candidati ad gradum in Philosophia Doctoris ASCENDANT.	Let the candidates for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy come forward.
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Auctoritate mihi commissa vos ad gradum in Philosophia Doctoris admitto, omniaque jura ac privilegia ad hunc gradum pertinentia vobis concedo. Quare in testimonium haec diplomata vobis solemniter trado.	By the power entrusted to me I admit you to the rank of those who hold the Doctor of Philosophy degree and I grant to you all the rights and privileges pertaining to this degree. In solemn witness whereof I hand over to you this diploma.
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***Peter Weber presents***

Please be seated.

I have the honor to present the recipients of the Doctor of Philosophy degree of Brown University.

*Reading of the names.*

I wish to report that 45 students have completed their degree requirements and have permission to receive their degrees in absentia.

Will all doctoral degree candidates please rise?

***Samuel M. Mencoff presents***

Videte, igitur, ut probe integreque, in emolumentum rei publicae et in Dei honorem, ut decet eos hoc gradu honoratos vos geratis. Sedete, Doctores in Philosophia.	See to it, therefore, that you conduct yourselves properly and with integrity, redounding to the advantage of country and the honor of God, as befits those honored with this degree. Sit, those holding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.
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Congratulations on receiving your Doctor of Philosophy Degree!

***Peter Weber presents***

Congratulations. You may now be seated.

I'd like to thank my fellow deans and the Graduate School's staff for helping to make this event a success. These are the people who received your applications, greeted you when you came to Orientation, and processed aid and appointments. They join you today to celebrate your accomplishments. It is my pleasure to share this celebration with you and your families, as well.

As you go out into the world to serve—in the words of Brown’s charter, “with usefulness and reputation”—as post-doctoral fellows, to work in government, the private sector, non-profit organizations, and as faculty in colleges and universities all over the United States and abroad, I ask you to remain connected to Brown as loyal alumni. You are now, and will remain, an integral part of the University and its traditions.

I now proclaim: *Auctoritate mihi commissa declaro ceremonia terminata.*

Congratulations. The Graduate School Convocation has concluded and only the benediction remains. Would the entire audience please stand? After the benediction, we ask that graduates, family and guests remain in their places until the platform party and faculty have left the tent. We ask interested graduates to join us at the University Ceremony on Main Green. There are seats reserved for you there in Section 3. Thank you.

*Benediction by Rev. Terri Yvette Cissé.*