

An education that makes us all proud

Leo I. Higdon, Jr.

› ALWAYS HAVE MIXED EMOTIONS

at Commencement. I am incredibly proud of our graduating seniors who have worked hard, learned well and are ready to begin the next stage in their lives. I also am a bit sad, knowing that these talented young people will no longer be part of daily life on campus.

There are two things I try to keep in mind when I think about our seniors leaving the College. One is that in our close-knit community, I know I will see them — or hear from them — frequently. The second is that I know our incoming freshman class will be extraordinary, as were the classes that preceded them.

This year, applications for admission to the Class of 2013 were near record levels. Prospective students apply to Connecticut College because they know a liberal arts education is the best preparation for life and career. They also know that at Connecticut College, their liberal arts education will be distinctive, personal and far-reaching.

I wrote to the parents of all admitted high school seniors in the weeks before their decision was due. I thought that as they were helping their sons and daughters make choices about which college to attend, they might also have been thinking further into the future — well beyond the next four years.

Imagine how proud I was to share with them some information about our recent graduates. This year, among our graduating seniors, we have a paralegal, professional dancer, teacher, Web developer, marketing associate, medical

researcher, financial analyst and magazine writer.

Several of our graduates will travel abroad to teach languages to children in Japan, Spain, France and South Korea. Another is moving to Eastern Europe as part of the Peace Corps. Many are heading to New York, Boston and Washington, D.C., and we also have one who will be based in Alaska, one in Vienna and one in Lexington, Ky.

Our surveys show that within a year of graduation, 75 percent of our alumni are working full time. The rest are enrolled in graduate or professional school, either full time or part time. Our graduates applying to law school have an 80-percent success rate; the acceptance rate to programs for aspiring doctors and other medical professionals is also 80 percent.

Within 15 years of graduation, more than half of alumni have earned an additional degree such as a Ph.D., medical degree, law degree, master's degree or M.B.A. We are also one of the top producers of Fulbright fellowships among liberal arts colleges.

Some of our graduates choose jobs and professions directly related to their

undergraduate majors. Others end up very far afield — and happy with the twists and turns that got them there. In alumni surveys, they report a high degree of satisfaction with their Connecticut College education.

We know our students graduate with critical thinking skills, a broad view of the world and the invaluable experience of citizenship in a small community. A Connecticut College education is an investment in the future, preparation for personal and professional success in any arena.

This year, as I shook hands with our graduating seniors and gave them their well-deserved diplomas, I experienced the feelings of deep pride mixed with some sadness I had anticipated. I also felt a tremendous sense of hopefulness.

This graduating class — like the alumni who came before them and the many classes that will follow — will go on to make their own mark in the world. They have impressed me with their intelligence and their talents. They have shown me their compassion and their integrity. And they leave Connecticut College with an education that makes us all proud.

A conversation with President Higdon

A conversation on the state of the College with President Lee Higdon. View the video at:

www.conncoll.edu/news/conversation

