

Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, Members of the University Council and Senior Management, UniSA staff, graduands, families and friends.

I'm delighted to add my congratulations -

– not just to today's graduands and but also to the families, friends and employers who have provided support through years of challenging university study.

To the graduands, I say well done! And, while I have a little bias in saying this, well done in having chosen UniSA from the many options available to you.

As the Vice Chancellor Professor David Lloyd has recently said; "UniSA is an exciting example of how a modern and enterprising university should be – how it should be forever young in spirit.

As someone who has known and worked in the university in its younger years, I'm proud to see that at just 24 years of age, it has risen to 35th place in the Times 'top 100 under 50' world ranking and is Australia's youngest university to feature. This ranking highlights the 'new breed' of universities making their mark on the international stage. And, its new breed of graduates – **you** – exemplify its spirit.

UniSA has been well led and managed for a long time. I feel a little bit qualified to make that statement having worked with both Chancellor Gould and his predecessor David Klingberg. I also had the privilege of working with Professor Denise Bradley, former Vice Chancellor and author of the landmark Bradley review of Higher Education. She laid important foundations and always asked what a new university should be and most importantly what should be the qualities of its graduates.

These aspirations were built upon by Professor Peter Hoj and are now being further realised under the creative leadership of Professor David Lloyd. UniSA has created for itself an agile and responsive culture; establishing a challenger brand that has not only risen in the estimation of South Australia but also regionally and globally; an institution that is respected for its commitment to equity and excellence in teaching and research. It is an organisation with a culture that I think many could well emulate not only in higher education but in any commercial or business sector.

As you can tell, I have very fond memories of working for more than 12 years in a collegial and challenging environment. Clearly, then as now, the University does not rest on its laurels but is constantly reviewing and renewing its relevance; - to the professions in educating graduates such as yourselves; to industry by focusing on being enterprising; to society through relevant research and innovation.

It is my belief of course that universities play a role in building our society in fundamental ways. As a community we would do well to remind ourselves of the power of education to change our world.

This is because all of us – no matter where in the world we work – need to believe that our futures are not statistically pre-determined. Education can and does break intergenerational life cycles and rewrites the life scripts of individuals of all races, ages, cultures and religions.

Every story, every life script can have a different ending from that which might first be imagined or expected. Reminding us of the importance and value of education when you can't have it is the youngest Nobel Peace Prize recipient Malala Yousafzai, now just 18.

She has said : "My goal is not to get a Nobel Peace Prize. My goal is to get peace and my goal is to see the education of every child." "One child, one teacher, one book, and one pen, can change the world."

Let's be honest, most of us here in SA face far lesser life challenges than Malala but we do know that success in higher education can be a tough ask, especially if family, friends and community have not had the experience to give advice and moral support.

Like many students today, I was the first in my immigrant family and community to go to University. As a teenager in the Adelaide hills, my then goal was to just finish high school, little dreaming that I would spend most of my career in Universities. I am now so proud to see that for the next generations of my wider family and those I talk to, a university degree is the new normal.

Education remains the most effective means of improving socio-economic mobility and I am proud to have contributed to a university like UniSA that is renown for providing access to disadvantaged groups and coupling that with the pursuit of excellence.

Along with entrepreneurship, the University is striving to perpetuate a tradition of leadership by encouraging students to develop personal, professional qualities such as integrity, social awareness, and a capacity to communicate and work across language, cultural, geopolitical and professional divides.

These qualities in professionals working here in Adelaide, or in Singapore, Jakarta or London have never been more important.

As J.K. Rowling, said in her Harvard commencement speech in 2008: "We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better."

So that brings me back to you, today's graduates. As graduates and professionals, you are empowered to not only imagine 'better' but hopefully to translate imagination into action. And there are life stories before you that chart a course for you to follow.

Take Alumnus Mike Worsman (Bachelor of Arts Journalism) the 2015 Premier's Channel 9 Young Achiever of the Year; or, Trevor Ritchie who made history last year when he graduated as the first Indigenous occupational therapist in South Australia. I understand he's also tutored the Vice Chancellor in the Kaurna language.

Better still, revisit the 2014 list of talented South Australians under 30 who are thinking outside square. It's impressive and illustrates the calibre of UniSA's graduates who once sat where you sit today.

Society has never been in greater need of your talent and of your contribution. So, I look forward in years to come to someone similarly standing where I stand today recounting your name, your contribution and impact upon the society in which we live.

In closing, I thank the University for the great honour bestowed upon me today. I congratulate the University and families for a job well done and wish you graduands the absolute best for all your futures.