

2004 SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

*Cyrus Ameri**

Executive Vice Chancellor Gottfredson, Vice Chancellor Parker, Vice Chancellor Gomez, Dean Doshier, My fellow commencement speaker Yesenia Ortiz, Faculty, Friends, Family, and members of the Class of 2004:

We gather here today to celebrate a most distinguished accomplishment; the completion of a degree from the School of Social Sciences at the University of California, Irvine. Before I begin, I would like to thank my family for the unbelievable amount of support they have given me over the course of my education. Without them, I would not be standing here right now.

Today, I hope to make a few remarks about our role in a global society. When I started at UCI four years ago, one of the first things I noticed was the incredibly diverse group of faces. Everywhere on campus, I would constantly interact with students who represented a number of ethnicities, religions and viewpoints -- each bringing a unique perspective to the table. I myself was born to first-generation Iranian-American immigrants and was exposed to the customs and practices of an entirely different way of life. And now, looking back, with degrees in Political Science and Sociology, I have come to the realization that the student body at UCI is simply a reflection of the phenomenon that is globalization.

Because of globalization, we are no longer constrained by physical boundaries. Communication with individuals across the world is but a mouse click away. The rapid international exchange of goods and services is now a daily reality.

* We close this edition with a copy of the 2004 School of Social Sciences Commencement speech delivered by the Journal's own Cyrus Ameri. Cyrus double majored in Political Science and Sociology, graduating with honors from UCI in the spring of 2004. While at UCI, he was a founding board member and valuable source of energy behind the Journal. Cyrus is currently continuing his education at Harvard Law School.

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Many of you came from all parts of the world. As I look out into the crowd today, I can't help but to think that we are all products of globalization. From Latin America, to Southeast Asia, to the Middle East, the UCI community is a stunning example of the benefits of cultural interaction. The effects of globalization give rise to an exciting, yet volatile, new set of challenges. We must come to the realization that our actions now have consequences on a global scale.

Thankfully, we are well equipped to confront the new realities of a changing world. We have obtained an education that has exposed us to a variety of perspectives and viewpoints. Most importantly, we were given the chance to move beyond the classroom. From taking part in the creation of the University's first undergraduate law journal, to working in classrooms with students from first generation immigrant families, the moments I've cherished the most are those where I've had the chance to apply the skills I learned in the classroom towards the public good. For many of you, moving beyond the classroom meant taking advantage of internship opportunities, or receiving a research fellowship from the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

We've all spent the past years fighting for our lives in the parking structure and waiting in endless lines at the registrar's office. But in the end, all the hard work has paid off. The Social Sciences have given us a toolkit for a globalized world that allows us to analyze the impact of our actions on an international level. Our undergraduate years have provided us with the leadership opportunities, study abroad programs, and research experience necessary to make a difference in the global community.

We now have a responsibility on our shoulders to use our resources and skills to benefit the public good. We live in a fascinating, yet complicated world -- a nation at war -- an uncertain economy -- upcoming presidential elections. The world is changing at a rapid pace, which ultimately gives rise to an entirely new set of challenges. Whether you are attending graduate school, or entering the workforce, you are going to be presented with countless opportunities that will allow you to engage in activities that will benefit our globalized society. Always remember your greater responsibility to your community.

In conclusion, no matter what career you may choose, remain committed to the concept of public service. Thank you and congratulations to all of my fellow graduates in the Class of 2004!