

Engineering Graduation Luncheon Speech

April 21, 2011

For those of you who don't know me, I'm Jeffrey Miller, a professor in the Computer Systems Engineering program and the Chair of the BSE department, which includes Computer, Electrical, and Mechanical Engineering. For the BSE students who are graduating, they have seen tremendous growth in the department over the past 4 years. As I have also been here for 4 years, I have experienced the same growth, coming into a department with 2 full-time ME faculty, 2 full-time EE faculty, no CSE faculty, and very little lab facilities. We now have 7 full-time ME faculty, 4 full-time EE faculty, and 2 full-time CSE faculty (with 2 of the EE faculty teaching half-time in the CSE program), and many labs dedicated to all three fields. This growth is not only attributed to the dedicated faculty and administration, but is more importantly attributed to the students who persevered through the growing pains. Those of you graduating have endured two accreditation visits (which were definitely painful for faculty and students). Because of the dedication that all of you have committed to the department, you are all graduating from ABET accredited programs. In addition, for those of you who took the Fundamental of Engineering exam, you performed well above the national average.

Many of you have had experiences as undergraduate students that many others will never have. Some of you have made trips to Juneau to speak with legislators and lobby on behalf of the School of Engineering. Some of you have worked directly with professors on cutting-edge research. Some of you have published papers in collaboration with professors and presented work at international conferences. And many of you have made connections with faculty that will hopefully persist long after graduation.

In whatever direction your life now takes you, you will always have a connection to the UAA School of Engineering. Most of you will practice engineering for many years, and some of you may use the skills you have learned at UAA to pursue a completely different field. Plato said, "The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life." I hope that the education you were provided at UAA leads you to a successful career. But above career, don't forget to enjoy life outside of work every once in awhile. Congratulations!