Thank you to President Eisler, Board of Trustees, and Dean Durst for this tremendous honor. I would like to take a moment to recognize my wonderful husband and most ardent supporter, Paul Draugalis, and my sisters and their families for joining me tonight. Thank you.

I am pleased to share some thoughts with the Class of 2012. In order to prepare my remarks, I did a search to seek guidance for graduation speakers. One source provided the top ten tips for graduation speakers with #1 being Brevity. Tips 2-10, See #1. Good recommendation.

When President Eisler called me in February to inform me of this honor, I thought back to my fantastic experiences at Ferris. Living in Vandercook Hall, the macaroni and cheese in the cafeteria, studying in the library (a lot), rooming with my pharmacy school classmate Barb Sovey at Hillcrest Apartments (she is here tonight), the hot spots – the Creek Club and the Alibi, euchre tournaments into the wee hours with our friend Ed F. Keating (who is here tonight), being proposed to by a fellow pharmacy student – Paul Draugalis, and of course my graduation day marching on the football field – the memory of my father’s plaid (and I do mean PLAID) pants indelibly etched on my brain, after all it was 1976.

Because of what the Ferris time meant to us, and how our pharmacy degrees enabled us to pursue wonderful careers, my husband and I became members of the Ferris President’s Club by endowing a scholarship in the College of Pharmacy in 1994. I was able to present the scholarship the first time it was awarded in 1999 and my mother was able to join me, but enough with memory lane--

Graduates – it is your day. I hope you reflect on where you came from, how you got here, and celebrate your accomplishments to this point and think about where your professional journey will take you. You have been the recipients of unparalleled instruction, hands-on experiences, faculty support, and many opportunities to inspire you in building a successful foundation for a promising career.

Why did you choose Ferris State University? You may not have known it at the time, but I would guess that you have experienced a number of consumption benefits (and I’m not referring to beverages at the Sawmill Saloon or Schuberg’s) rather, what satisfaction you derived from the educational process, from those AHA! moments during study sessions, learning and growing with roommates, or the thrill of a Ferris hockey game and perhaps the future satisfaction you’ll derive by virtue of having an education such as the ability to appreciate literature, art, or music.
And then, there are the investment benefits such as where a Ferris degree will take you—and I’m here to tell you it can take you far—(hold up degree cover) where many studies have been conducted to compute the earnings differential between college and high school graduates and the effects over a lifetime AND, many of the Ferris degree programs have a particularly good return on investment!

But all the countless hours of lectures, discussions, practical experiences, and exams and what you learned from those encounters are not all you need to be successful in the workplace or in life. Just as the Ferris tagline says—“Imagine More.”

My challenge to you is to develop or hone the ability to self-manage as it is an essential first step in managing others. In a 2009 article, Holdford provided a literature review and synthesis in order to suggest common steps toward this goal. Embedded in these steps are a critical set of inter-personal capabilities labeled in the management literature by Goleman, as Emotional Intelligence. It is argued that these non-cognitive skills can matter as much as intelligence for workplace success.

The steps include:

1) **Taking responsibility for your life** – that is, take control and avoid being a victim and assigning blame. You must be able to admit to, and learn from, mistakes. Or as Albert Ellis said, “the best years of your life are the ones in which you decide your problems are your own. You do not blame them on your mother, the ecology, or the president. You realize that you control your own destiny.”

2) **Knowing yourself** – self-awareness is an important part of leading and managing which requires one to truly understand his or her emotions, strengths, weaknesses, needs, and drives. This ability to self-assess is important, to play to one’s strengths as well as to work on areas for improvement that could inhibit one’s ability to succeed. I routinely ask faculty and staff applicants during an interview to tell me about 3 of their strengths and 3 of their areas for development. It is very telling, especially if one can come up with no weaknesses—now that’s some lack of self-awareness.

3) **Deciding what you want to do and be** – although there are many intervening variables and influence from significant others, one must establish their own personal priorities. Some even suggest a personal mission statement. What are your motivations? Do you have the drive, commitment, initiative, courage, and optimism required to complete your mission? There will need to be a balance between personal and professional fulfillment. How will you manage the inevitable setbacks or roadblocks?

4) **Establishing goals to achieve the life you want to live** – in order to achieve one’s life mission, it will be necessary to identify and articulate the ways of getting there. Focusing on long-term major goals (for example - 5 or 10 years) will require you to identify subset objectives enumerating precise, measurable outcomes over a defined time period.
Do you have the ability to understand and respond to the emotional needs of others in order to build personal and professional relationships? Also important are social skills to manage relationships, build networks, and be politically astute.

5) Taking action – Start immediately! Whatever your personal/professional aspirations you need to start taking action. And, although perhaps overwhelming, take incremental steps.

In order to increase your emotional intelligence Holdford has several recommendations:

* Take self-assessment tests. This will lead to a better understanding of oneself and identify areas for improvement.
* Ask for formal feedback in performance appraisal meetings and take the information to heart.
* Seek out mentors for advice and guidance.
* Read self-improvement books, there are a vast variety of leadership development texts.

And finally, Take the time for reflection on life and work. Analyze what went well, and ask - what can I learn, what would I do differently?

Make every interaction count by adding some amount of value, and as American businessman James Ling says, “Don’t tell me how hard you work. Tell me how much you get done.”

Heartiest congratulations to each of you, the Class of 2012. Go Bulldogs!