



Centurion
UNIVERSITY

*Shaping Lives...
Empowering Communities...*

CENTURION UNIVERSITY

6th
Convocation
2018

Commencement Address

Prof. Barney Glover

Vice-Chancellor and President, Western Sydney University

01 December 2018

CENTURION UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY & MANAGEMENT
PARALAKHEMUNDI, ODISHA.

(Estd. Vide Odisha Act 4 of 2010 & u/s 2(f) of UGC Act, 1956)



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WELCOME

I am delighted to be able to address you on this very special occasion. I would like to extend my gratitude to **Professor Mukti Mishra**, the President of the Centurion University of Technology and Management, for the opportunity to do so.

May I begin by formally acknowledging Professor Mishra and the following dignitaries:

His Excellency, Professor Ganeshi Lal, the Honorable Governor of Odisha; and

Professor Haribandhu Panda, Centurion University's Vice-Chancellor.

May I especially acknowledge the students here today. After all, this event is about you, your hard work, your dedication and your achievements. You have every reason to be proud of the journey you have undertaken and the goal you have reached today.

Last but by no means least, I extend my greetings to your families. Without question, their support and encouragement has been pivotal in realising your potential as student. I am sure, at times, that encouragement needed to be of a vigour far greater than any of you may have anticipated. Nevertheless, these students have much to be grateful for when it comes to your support.

GRADUATION ACHIEVEMENT

At my University, Western Sydney University, almost 65 per cent of our students are the first member of their family to attend a university. I imagine that experience is similar at Centurion. In that sense, much of today is about breaking through barriers – real and perceived – to education. Your achievement is two-fold: not only are you charting new territory as an individual, you are mapping the way for other members of your family who may have felt university study was beyond them.

Graduation is indeed a very important milestone. It is an occasion you will rightly remember throughout the course of your life, for several reasons.

At the fundamental level, it is an affirmation of attainment and proficiency in a distinct field. In the case of this university, and this graduating cohort, the areas of academic foci could not be more relevant to a rapidly changing world, one in which technology plays such a central role. I will talk more about that in a moment.

The other reason this occasion is so life-defining, is one that is less concerned with academic rigour, and more to do with personal resolve. No matter what happens to you during the course of your professional career, or your personal life, nobody can take away the achievement you are being awarded today.

This ceremony is a public confirmation of the fact that you set your mind to a very challenging task and you succeeded. When, throughout your career you face

adversity – and we all do from time to time – you can draw strength from the fact you have what it takes to overcome the greatest challenges. At a deeper level, that is what today signifies. That is why it is so special.

No other factor brings an impetus for positive personal and community change in the way education does. It improves lives through great employment opportunities. It provides better care for communities through optimising essential services. It gives voice to people marginalised by society.

LIKE MINDED UNIVERSITIES

There are other reasons why today is important. As an international visitor, and one from the higher education sector, I am fortunate to be witness to the similarities and differences this occasion embodies.

At Western Sydney University, graduation is without question, one of the most highly anticipated events of the academic calendar. Quite simply, that is because our ceremonies embody all of the same characteristics I have just shared with you. I am struck by the convergence our two institutions have, above and beyond those areas I have spoken of thus far.

We are both young universities. Western Sydney University is just under 30 years old. Like Centurion University, it is already among the most dynamic and innovative institutions in the world.

Our University is ranked in the top 2 per cent of universities globally. We have 5-star facilities and teaching. Our research is among the best in Australia and the world.

We are also ranked in the top 100 young universities in the world under 50 years old.

As universities that can be described as regionally-embedded, the similarities are also apparent in our settings. Western Sydney is the fastest growing region in Australia and the nation's third-largest economy. It is also the country's most culturally diverse region.

That dynamism, scale and diversity are the reasons why so much is possible. There is an energy for change in the Western Sydney region that I see here in Odisha. It is a state with a growth rate above the national average, and I note, a leader in the Indian Government's 'smart cities' project.

Both regions are prominent targets of international investment, and both have large scale infrastructure projects in progress. In fact, energy generation and steel projects account for over 23 billion US dollars in current investment into Odisha.

Similarly, Western Sydney is the target of large-scale investment in infrastructure, including a 5.3 billion dollar airport to be established by 2026.

ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES

What do these projects and these regions have to do with our universities? The short answer is: everything. Gone are the days in which universities were thought of solely as devices for labour market upskilling. Whilst it is still an important function of higher education, it is only a small part of the role universities perform in the broader economy.

Universities can, and should, lead in the creation of innovation ecosystems. That is the role we have taken on in Western Sydney. It is a role that plays to our strengths and our vision for the decades ahead.

Like many Australian and international universities, Western Sydney University is not a centralised institution; rather, it is an interconnected network of campuses that spans multiple cities across a broad region.

This structure enables us to pursue clear lines of research and teaching directly aligned to the distinct industry and community characteristics of particular areas. For example, we concentrate our health and medical expertise in sites co-located with public health infrastructure. Similarly, we situate our business teaching and research within the central business district of our region's largest city. We also focus our agricultural and sustainability work at our peri-urban campus on the region's outer edge.

This spatial logic seems obvious, and it needs to be. In the interests of academic rigour, quality and efficiency, universities need to have structure. However, we must not allow that structure to become so inward facing that it is impenetrable to those beyond our gates. We must ensure we stay relevant, open and relatable to the outside world.

GRADUATES IN THE COMMUNITY

That is where you come in. As graduates, you are the best external-facing assets any university can have. You are translators of the very latest innovations. You are the dynamic enactors of theory that otherwise resides on

bookshelves gathering dust. You make the experience of education relatable to the outside world in a way that both affirms and revitalises the centrality of education to all aspects of life.

The story of Centurion University, like Western Sydney University, is one of a young and vibrant institution that refuses to be limited by outmoded ideas of what a university should be. Importantly, it is a story grounded in quality. I note that Centurion is the youngest private university to be accorded an 'A' grade by India's, National Assessment and Accreditation Council. That is an incredible achievement; one that provides a strong platform from which to address the many challenges that arise in the course of an institution's development.

One such challenge is the devastating impact of Cyclone Titli on Paralakhemundi and across Odisha. On behalf of Western Sydney University, I extend our sympathies and thoughts to those affected by this devastating storm. We will assist in whatever way we can. We stand with you.

These are moments that test the resolve of every community. As civic institutions, universities are a vital force for good in such scenarios. We have, without question, seen that principle in action in the wake of Titli.

At my University, we have heard how the various Centurion campuses have rallied and sent volunteers to the affected region. We have learned how the local campus is being used to accommodate those volunteers, whom along with government officials, number over 100 people.

The priority is clear. The University is here to help the community back onto its feet. Then, and only then, will the campus be repaired. This is when Centurion's world standard engineering, scientific and logistical acumen comes to the fore. This is when you, as graduates, become community builders, and some of you, community leaders.

I am sure much of the recovery work has already been undertaken, such is your efficiency and dedication. That is a credit to you and to your university. Some things, however, take far longer to replace. Some things cannot be replaced.

I am told many grand old trees were lost in the storm. This illustrates that – even in our rapidly changing world – knowledge, maturity and growth takes time. It takes a lifetime.

CLOSING REMARKS

You have shown the perseverance, the commitment and the patience required to grow during the course of your studies. It is my hope that you will continue to grow through education and re-engage with your university – and ideally mine too – in the years ahead. That is the real lesson graduation teaches us: the journey is never over, but we must make the time to celebrate how far we have come.

Thank you.

Prof. Barney Glover

Vice-Chancellor and President,
Western Sydney University

Biography

Professor Barney Glover assumed his position at Western Sydney University in January 2014. Professor Glover is currently the President of the Board of Trustees of the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences Trust and the Australian Government representative on the University of the South Pacific Grants Committee. He is also a Board Member of the Australian American Fulbright Commission, and The Committee for Sydney, and, Member of the NSW Innovation and Productivity Council and the NSW Arts and Culture Advisory Committee.

Professor Glover is a Fellow of the Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE), a Fellow of the Royal Society of NSW (FRSN), and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD). Professor Glover's esteemed career also includes significant expertise and experience at the most senior levels of university management and substantial business leadership credentials. He has also served on the boards of a range of corporate organisations and several state and national centres covering areas such as health and medical research, energy, mineral exploration, and telecommunications.