

Good afternoon! And welcome to the commencement celebrating the 2011 Lyman Briggs College graduating class! Four years ago, I received a large white envelope with the Michigan State University emblem garnishing the front. What an exciting day! As I opened the letter granting my acceptance, I was immediately struck by the phrase “Advancing Knowledge. Transforming Lives.” At that moment I did not exactly understand the true meaning of this statement; however, the past four years in the Lyman Briggs community have not only defined the phrase “advancing knowledge” and “transforming lives”, but have bridged the gap between knowledge and the attainment of a fulfilling life. As young scholar within a nationally renowned educational community, we face not only the challenge of acquiring intellectual skills, but also, the necessity of developing social skills in order to provide and care for the global population. And for the past 44 years, I deem that Briggs has been the Bridge between those goals – it has bridged the gap between scientific knowledge and people, and effectively nurtured young scientists and science-oriented humanists to reach their utmost potential.

Using “Briggs” as an acronym, we should have no problem remembering what each of us in the graduating class will be taking away from MSU: a Bachelor’s degree, Responsibility, Inspiration, Global Opportunity, Growth, and Scholarship. **B: BACHELOR’S DEGREE:** Thousands of individuals are receiving Bachelor’s degrees across campus today, yet, our Lyman Briggs diplomas mean so much more than a four year educational certificate; they represent friendship, learning and community. **R: RESPONSIBILITY:** Responsibility incorporates two components: personal responsibility and communal responsibility. Personally, we developed

responsibility by maturing into self-reliant individuals completely accountable for initiating our own endeavors. As members of the Lyman Briggs community, we have also contributed greatly to the university, and we can now become responsible for influencing the lives of those in need through our careers. **I: INSPIRATION:** The faculty, staff, and student community of the Lyman Briggs College all inspire one another not only to advance their knowledge, but also to become more well-rounded individuals who seek to transform the lives of others through scientific advancements. The inspiration channeled during the last four years should ultimately have a cascade effect. We should inspire people throughout the world to become better and live to their full potential. **G: GLOBAL OPPORTUNITY:** Thanks to our enhanced science curriculum incorporating the humanities, we are better prepared to apply our acquired knowledge and innate empathy to international service. With the academic strengths that we have gained from Lyman Briggs, we now have the capacity and skills to affect both our local community, and communities throughout the world, whether it is through general volunteer efforts or international research. **G: GROWTH:** It is undeniable that the Lyman Briggs community fostered our individual development in a small learning environment and promoted inclusivity among a diverse student body. Our exposure to various learning styles and differing viewpoints has created a competitive environment, in which growth was inevitable. **S: SCHOLARSHIP:** As Lyman Briggs students, we are held to a high academic standard; with the degree we receive today, we will be fully prepared for all post-graduate endeavors, in whatever field or industry we desire to pursue, positively impacting all of those around us.

The highly anticipated day of our graduation has finally arrived. Just a few years ago, we entered Holmes Hall as ordinary individuals, and we now depart as extraordinary. These six attributes that Lyman Briggs has provided to us during the past four years will continue to benefit us as we enter the next phase in our lives. However, it remains the obligation of each and every one of us here today to maximize our inherent talents and acquired knowledge. The Lyman Briggs community has nurtured our ability to “advance knowledge” and has given us the links that will let us “transform lives.” Briggs has provided the Bridge, so we now face the challenge of using our expertise in order to make an impact on the lives of others. Congratulations to the Lyman Briggs Class of 2011, we did it!