

KEYNOTE ADDRESS  
INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM  
MAY 15, 2009

Thank you, Amy. I'm delighted that all of you could join us today for what we hope will be an interesting and entertaining afternoon.

When we started thinking about this spring's commencement, and made the decision to combine my inauguration as president of the Institute with it, we saw it as a great opportunity. Commencement is one of a handful of times each year when a true and complete cross section of the MIIS community gathers here on campus – students, families, alumni, board members, faculty, staff, distinguished guests and local residents. It's a time when our campus becomes a community in the truest sense of the word, a mosaic of individuals with varied backgrounds and perspectives, but one vital point of commonality – a deep personal interest in the work being done by the Institute, both here in Monterey and around the world.

The purpose of today's symposium is to offer you a brief but hopefully compelling look at just a few of the myriad projects and activities undertaken on a regular basis by the Institute's students and faculty in locations spanning the

globe, from Monterey to Mumbai. We wanted to do this not just because we are proud of the work being done by our students and faculty in places like El Salvador and Kazakhstan – and of course, we are VERY proud of it – but because it is so interesting and important, and so central to the mission of the Monterey Institute.

This afternoon, Institute students and faculty will present three sessions. In each session we hope to leave enough time for questions and answers so that this symposium can be as interactive as possible.

The first session will demonstrate why language is a central theme of everything the Institute does, while highlighting the practical applications of our world-renowned translation and interpretation program.

Our second session will illustrate the Institute's close relationship with the Monterey Peninsula community by examining the Carmel Revitalization Project, an effort undertaken by students and faculty in our Fisher Program in International Business at the request of the mayor and city council of Carmel.

And our third session will test our mastery of the Internet technology that is increasingly breaking down borders across the globe, as we interact live in real time with students in our International Professional Service Semester Program who are at work right now in South America, Southeast Asia and other locations around the world.

In addition to these three sessions, a variety of Institute programs and initiatives are represented at the tables set up in the atrium area upstairs. We hope you'll take a few minutes between sessions or at the end to explore more of the tremendous range of internationally flavored activities underway at the Institute, from intensive language training programs to our Peace Corps master's international degree to the sustainability efforts underway right here on campus.

The common thread running through all of our activities this afternoon is the global reach and impact of the Institute's work.

The Institute was founded in 1955 by three language teachers who believed that the most important contribution they could make to society was to train professionals to work across cultural and linguistic boundaries. They sought to shrink the differences between people around the world by building bridges of

linguistic and cultural and historical understanding. They knew that viewing issues in single dimensions, whether political or economic or geographic, could not deliver a complete picture of the problems, or lead to lasting, meaningful solutions.

Today, 54 years later, the focus of the Monterey Institute remains the same: solutions. We provide an international graduate education to professionals seeking to make a difference in the world – people whose goal is to quite literally be the solution to the world’s most pressing problems.

“Be the solution” is much more than a slogan, though. It is a statement of purpose for every MIIS student and, I think it’s safe to say, every member of the Institute community. We are all here because we recognize the difference that overcoming intercultural barriers can make in solving so many of the problems we see in the world today.

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The phrase “be the solution” grew out of a concept that is central to both our mission and the way we approach teaching and learning at the Monterey

Institute, a concept we call pragmatic idealism, first introduced by Mahatma Gandhi.

Some might consider that phrase an odd juxtaposition of words...

In fact, the word idealism has often been used disparagingly, to imply people's views or beliefs or goals are unworkable or not grounded in reality. That might be true at times when you're speaking of idealism in its purest form, and in isolation. But pragmatic idealism is by definition grounded in the real, in a practical approach to problems that involves systematic analysis, planning and implementation of solutions.

Pragmatic idealism takes right-brain intuition and creativity and balances it with left-brain sequencing and logic. It takes big, bold concepts and initiatives, and breaks them down into a series of practical steps designed to make a tangible difference in the world.

Pragmatic idealism lies at the very core of the Institute's academic philosophy and can be seen clearly in our focus on experiential, immersive learning and the

real-world issues that we ask our students to analyze, strategize and attempt to solve.

Pragmatic idealism is the driving force behind any number of recent initiatives undertaken by the Institute, from our students' J-term practicums in Cambodia, Chile and Palestine to our continuing discussions with the government of Afghanistan about providing special training for government officials through our Development Project Management Institute.

Pragmatic idealism is central to the mission and focus of the Institute's James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the world's only research and policy center devoted exclusively to halting the spread of nuclear weapons.

Pragmatic idealism fuels the continuing discussions among our faculty about combining the disciplines represented in our International Environmental Policy program and our International MBA to create an International Environmental Business degree.

And finally, pragmatic idealism without a doubt helps to explain why the Institute was able to attract no less than 21 Fulbright scholars from 13 different

countries this past academic year, a figure we believe may give us the highest per capita population of Fulbright winners of any graduate program in the United States.

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The Institute makes a difference. Not just in the lives of the students we train every day, but in the world we all inhabit. Monterey Institute alumni around the world – the Monterey mafia, as they’re sometimes called -- are catalysts for change, wherever their professional paths may take them. They don’t just tinker around the edges; that’s not why people come here. People come here to gain the skills – language, cultural, business and policy skills – that will allow them to become leaders in whatever field they go into, whether they end up interpreting for heads of state or promoting sustainable international fishing policies while operating a successful sushi business.

And yes, those are both real-life examples of MIIS graduates!

Thirty-five percent of our students are international students, who have gathered in Monterey from more than fifty countries. Of our American students, ninety-

five percent have already lived or worked in another country by the time they come here. It is one of the most diverse, international student bodies in the world, located in one of the most globally aware communities in the world.

When you add it all up – the focus on not just creating but being the solution, the way pragmatic idealism permeates every aspect of the Institute’s work, and the special relationship the Institute enjoys with the truly exceptional Monterey Peninsula community – you have the ingredients for a unique and special place.

You have an institution which is every day quite literally building leadership both locally and around the world, from Monterey to Mumbai, Beijing to Buenos Aires, Johannesburg to Jerusalem. Our alums walk the halls of the U.N., the coastal villages of Banda Aceh and the alleyways of Cairo, and themselves teach new generations of global citizens in Seoul and Rwanda, Santiago and Budapest.

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Our challenge as stewards of this institution, then, is to keep it vital and relevant and constantly evolving into a new and even better version of itself.



In 2005, the Institute took a major step forward through our affiliation with Middlebury College, one of the nation's preeminent liberal arts colleges.

Middlebury is renowned for its leadership in undergraduate language instruction and international studies and features both summer language immersion programs and Schools Abroad in 12 countries and 33 different cities around the globe. Middlebury is also home to the oldest environmental studies program in the nation.

Monterey and Middlebury share much more than a common interest in cross-cultural communication and the environment, though – we share a commitment to making a difference in the world. New degree paths, team-taught classes, joint research efforts, and new special programs such as the Middlebury-Monterey Language Academy for junior high schoolers are the building blocks for a new vision of a truly global network of programs for future leaders in areas from translation to diplomacy to international policy to language education to sustainable business.

As the Institute moves closer to full integration with Middlebury, we are also pursuing a major academic reorganization. The central purpose of this reorganization -- which on June 1 will draw the Institute's current four-school structure

together into two new schools -- is to re-imagine the Institute in a way that maximizes faculty collaboration and innovation and produces new student learning opportunities. The objective of the reorganization is not simply streamlining, but a true rebirth that creates new schools that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Aristotle originated the idea of a “whole that is more than the sum of the parts,” but complex systems science takes this realization further. As physicist P.W. Anderson wrote in a seminal paper in 1972 in *Science*, in a complex system, “The whole becomes not only more than, but creates an environment to be different from the sum of its parts.” That is what we hope to get from this reorganization!

These two new schools – the Graduate School of International Policy and Management -- GSIPM -- and the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation, and Language Education -- GSTILE – offer continuity by retaining all existing Institute degree programs, while creating exciting new opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching, learning, and research for both faculty and students.

Academic leaders in both Monterey and Middlebury are also working earnestly to develop some of the exciting concepts that have been brought forward – five-year integrated Bachelors & Masters degree programs in several disciplines, a joint faculty lecture series, creation of new degree programs that would not have been possible by either Middlebury or MIIS alone – for just two examples -- into a series of full-blown program proposals for fast-tracked implementation.

This continuing innovation and evolution of the Monterey Institute is essential to our ability to remain a vital and relevant training ground for future leaders.

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The kinds of opportunities and challenges posed by the global system, especially recently, is precisely what interests educators like us at this Institute. Our students are living through an experience in which time and consciousness take on new dimensions (paraphrasing McPherson). Such shifts require what noted Civil War historian David McPherson calls “adaptive versatility.” MIIS has been at the forefront before, and I am confident that we will continue to remain so.

As president, I look forward to working with members of this community and beyond – faculty, staff, students, trustees and community friends – for I believe

that “real change usually requires consensus, learning, and accommodation to make any vision come to reality.” It is also equally important to note, that “Vision, however idealistic, or grand -- without resources -- remains a hallucination.” The key is to do everything we can to make the Institute financially sound, remain academically excellent, innovative and nimble, and last but not least, professionally relevant. It is important to make things better, but it is equally important to make them matter.

The three sessions which follow are intended to illustrate in very concrete terms what we mean by building leadership around the world. They offer the same sort of practical examples and real-life dilemmas our faculty present to our students every day. They illustrate real problems that require a significant measure of pragmatic idealism to develop real solutions to them.

I want to thank each of the panelists and participants in today’s sessions and at the tables out in the atrium for your commitment, both to our Monterey Institute community and to the world beyond it. You and your commitment exemplify the reasons why, after 54 years, the Institute continues to be a leader in international graduate education.

I also want to express appreciation for all of you in the audience who have traveled from far away to be here today. Whether you did so to celebrate a family member's achievement, or to express your loyalty for and support of the Institute, we welcome you and thank you for being here today.

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Before we move into our question and answer session, I'd like to close out these opening remarks on a personal note. This inaugural symposium is about building leadership from Monterey to Mumbai. For me personally, my inauguration represents the a journey that has taken me from Madras to New Delhi to Middlebury, back to Madras, and now to Monterey.

The path I have traveled illustrates the truth of Thomas Friedman's declaration that "the world is flat." "We live in a world in which our relations of sociability — our commerce, culture, ideas, manners — are increasingly shared, coordinated by newly global conversations in these domains," said David Singh Grewal. As you'll witness later this afternoon, we can now communicate with each other around the globe in real time, using text, audio and video to build connections and break down barriers of time and distance and culture. We are all citizens of

the world today, and that's why I look forward to my time here at the helm of  
this institute

Working together, we can indeed *be the solution*.

Thank you.

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