Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. We’ve invited you here this evening to offer our congratulations to our daughter Christina, who graduated on May 20th, 2011 summa cum laude at Amherst College, with Bachelor of Arts degrees in both Neuroscience and Computer Science. Congratulations, Christina!

It is hard to believe that a mere three years and nine months ago, Christina was a sniveling freshman, knowing nobody at Amherst, and having no idea about what she intended to with her future, nor even how to get decent food out of the dining hall. Her journey since then has been remarkable. I am happy to report that there has been no significant dorm-room damage, and only one uneventful trip to the emergency room. And, while Christina never did figure out how to get decent food out of the Amherst dining hall, she clearly learned a great deal about how to navigate the academic and social landscape of college. Reports have it that her colleagues were in awe of her ability to manage on so little sleep. Maybe this explains why her professors have whispered confidentially to me, “she’s a natural scientist.”

Christina has also built a strong group of friends, most of whom could not be here this evening. Some of them begin their medical training in only a couple of weeks. Others are at this moment traveling across the country, or preparing for their new jobs. Her friends include musicians, economics majors, mathematicians, psychology majors, and other future scientists. More importantly, they are strong, supportive, and fiercely loyal.

About the only group of students Christina never figured out how to relate to were the jocks. Christina apparently did not understand the philosophy of saving the world one beer bash at a time. But I know she did attend at least one football game. I know this because she asked me to help her study football in advance of the game, so she would not sound like a complete fool.

So, Christina, this is our way of letting you know that we are all happy for you, and proud of your accomplishments. And we’d also like you to know how relieved we are that you survived this first test of adulthood, and how relieved we are that we no longer have tuition payments to make. I am sure everyone here wishes you a bright future. Congratulations, again!