Most Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues, Students and Parents,  First of all my
warmest and sincerest greetings and congratulations to our graduates  You truly deserve
this high quality degree with your valiant and admirable efforts and almost all of your
leisure time dedicated to meeting the high academic standard set by the Macau
Millennium College in the past couple of years. You should indeed be very proud of your
well-earned success.  I salute you too parents of our students for the undying support
given to our students and such support is certainly instrumental in inspiring them to
achieve their success.

The Macau Millennium College was founded in August 2001 by Dr. Ambrose So
and other well-known educators and businessmen in Hong Kong and Macau and soon
recognized by the Macau SAR government as a private institution of tertiary education in
Macau.  However, the College could never have been founded if it had not been with
the most generous support of Dr. Stanley Ho, one of the greatest contributors to the
development of tertiary education in the region.  On behalf of MMC, I would like to
take this opportunity to extend our deepest gratitude to Dr. Ho.  There are of course
other people and institutions which have made valiant efforts to help bring along the
successful operations of MMC, such as STDM, SJM and our prestigious professors
coming from Hong Kong, U.S.A. and Mainland China and we all owe our heart-felt
gratitude to them

The mission of MMC is to provide education of the highest quality to our students
in selected academic, research and professional fields at affordable rates. These fields are
closely related to Macau’s most important industry, namely, the Tourism and Gaming
Industry.  MMC’s motto is to introduce innovative academic programs to nurture talents
to meet the urgent needs of Macau’s society. Under the drive of a well-defined vision and,
therefore, with an insightful direction, MMC started as early as 2002 to research and
develop a tailored-made degree program for the Gaming Industry workforce and other
full-time workers in all kinds of professions, who wish to attain a good university degree.
It is well-known that frontline workers in Macau’s casinos have to adjust to changing
their work shifts every three days. It is, therefore, impossible for them to go to any
conventional university with its conventional system of class schedules. To accommodate their particular needs MMC introduces a most costly but flexible and unique system of scheduling classes for the two degree programs (Associate and Bachelor) in Hospitality Management and Business Management (Commerce). Under this system, the professor lectures two times for the same topic, that is, in both the morning and evening sessions. For the same tuition fees, MMC students can choose to attend either the morning or evening sessions for every lecture topic. This is particularly beneficial to students who are casino and other full-time workers because all MMC students must attend at least 80% lecture hours for each course or else they would have to terminate their studies. MMC also introduces the quarter system to make sure that students need to enroll in no more than a maximum of three courses each semester. This is to ensure that the students, who are full-time workers, find sufficient time to meet the high standard requirements of MMC’s professors. Other supportive measures, such as free tutorials, free remedial courses, are also brought into being to help weaker students master what is taught in class. In the absence of a public school-leaving examination, Macau’s secondary school graduates come into institutions of tertiary education with a wide range of backgrounds and attainments. Students of all backgrounds, therefore, find our supportive measures extremely useful to achieve the high academic standards set by MMC. It is necessary to point out that while our government calls for the enhancement of academic standards in the tertiary education of Macau and has done relatively little to realize it, MMC has gone a long and tenuous way, through intensive research and brainstorming amongst professionals and costly means to help students achieve a higher standard.

Like famous universities in the world, the academic programs offered by MMC combine theory with practice. For example MMC can offer its students in the Hospitality Management Degree program with practical training in the institutions under the auspices of STDM (Sociedade de Turismo e Diversoes de Macau) and SJM (Sociedade de Jogos de Macau, S.A.). These STDM institutions include five-star hotels, entertainment centers, convention and exhibition centers, banks, casinos, as well as travel agencies.

Academic research and teaching are inextricably related, and MMC has an Institute of Hong Kong and Macau Studies which not only carries out in-depth research on selected issues of Hong Kong and Macau but also organizes regular international academic conferences and seminars. At present, the Institute is having a joint research project with professors from the Psychiatry Department of the University of Hong Kong on pathological gamblers of Hong Kong and Macau and also jointly runs a certificate training program on sex education with the same Department. MMC also is carrying out research with researchers of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences on current economic and social issues of Macau. The two institutions are planning to mount a joint program of MBA in the near future. It is internationally well-known that the CASS is
profusely resourceful in first-rate academic professionals some of whom will be coming to teach in MMC and hence profoundly enhancing the standard of tertiary education in Macau.

MMC has always been actively involved in academic interchange and works closely with highly-selected institutions overseas to widen students’ international exposure and perspectives. For example, MMC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the largest community college in the United States, the Montgomery College, to work together to provide further education for both American and Chinese students. MMC also signed a Memorandum of Co-operation with the Hong Kong Financial Services Institute, the only institute that has been approved and recognized by the State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs Office of PRC to set up training programs in Hong Kong.

Besides the above-mentioned particulars, MMC has a team of first-rate scholars as faculty and the most advanced and modern equipments. For example, it has spent a fortune in setting up the “Behavior Laboratory” which is the first of its kind in the Asia region and allows students to learn techniques in conflict management, interviews and business negotiations in a simulated environment. In a relatively short period of less than five years, MMC has already trained about 400 graduates in the associate level and over 100 graduates in the bachelor level in Hospitality Management as well as several thousands of graduates in certificate training programs for the Gaming Industry workforce.

In a timely manner, MMC has indeed proven to be effective in turning out well-trained human resources in Hospitality Management to ease Macao’s acute shortage of local professionals in the field. But the government is still facing an acute shortage of local professionals in many fields. In order that a multi-facet but harmonious society can be truly in sight we need Macao’s own professionals to take charge in various sectors of our society especially in the Gaming Industry. In this respect the government should welcome the emergence of private universities with a worthy mission and an internationally recognized academic standing. The government must set up a better mechanism to appropriate funds to assist such private universities on a regular basis. But the government has to increase its transparency and limits on the authority of some individuals in making decisions on the appropriation of public funds to subsidize private universities. The government must make such decisions accountable to public scrutiny. The Macao community should, on the other hand, see to it that this can be done as soon as possible to ensure a bright future for tertiary education in Macao.