



responsibilities that come with being a productive member of society are huge.

business people, teachers, pilots, police officers, psychologists, scientists, scholars, and individuals, to make a difference.

As a combined special and elementary education major, I will strive to be a transformative educator and an advocate for social justice for every individual I encounter. Even though I have this strong desire, it scares me. I wish that once you graduated college everything was easy, but, as we all know, it is not. In order to grow and move forward in life, we need to continually push ourselves past what is comfortable.

How often in our life are we willing to step out of our comfort zones though? What does it even mean? Well, for some of us, stepping outside our comfort zone may mean having the courage to take a job that has less pay and tougher demands, but where we know we can make a difference by doing it. For others it may mean accepting a job that takes us to unfamiliar cities or cultures, as strangers far from home. Whether we are graduating as adults established in life, or still young adults, we cannot let these apprehensions stop us from anything.

Dr. Seuss wrote a book called *On Beyond Zebra*. It is about a boy named Conrad who just learned his alphabet, from A is for apple to Z is for Zebra. He is so proud of his accomplishment, but is shocked when another boy tells him that there is more to be found once you go on beyond z. This other boy, not content with the confines of the ordinary alphabet, tells Conrad about the letters beyond z that he

has created. Letters

each of us here today, graduating or not, to think about how we can push beyond z in our own life. We should be proud of our accomplishments like Conrad was for knowing A to Z, but we should also always be searching how we can push past z and go on beyond zebra.

Pushing past our comfort zone, going beyond z, is something personal and very different for each and every one of us. While at Lewis, it was Dr. Laura Sloan who pushed me past z. I kne

May our faith inspire us each day to stretch out to others, to reach beyond the status quo, to help make the world a better place, to accept diversity, to serve the poor, to fight for access to affordable education and for justice, to constantly learn more, to exceed normal expectations as far as our faith, love, and imaginations will allow.

Congratulations and go on beyond z.