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Winthrop University

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Kuh Tells Students to Keep Learning to Improve Their Lives

Quick Facts

- George Kuh is director of the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University-Bloomington.
- Kuh also serves as director of the National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE).



George Kuh

ROCK HILL, S.C. - Students graduating from college should be prepared to spend the rest of their lives learning, or they won't have much of a life, according to **George Kuh**, the speaker for Winthrop University's **commencement** on May 5.

"The reality is that you must continually add to what you know because new information is doubling every 18 months or so," said **Kuh**, who is director of the Center for Postsecondary Research at Indiana University-Bloomington. "And get this: Only one percent of everything that is known – all available information – is in print. The rest is floating around out there on the Internet and ensconced in other forms of technology."

He said the longshoreman-philosopher, Eric Hoffer, predicted that in this century, the most important skill would be learning, unlearning, and new learning – over and over. Hoffer said that in a time of drastic change, it is the learners who inherit the future. The learned usually find themselves equipped to live in a world that no longer exists.

Acquiring knowledge and skills and creatively solving practical problems are good habits to have because the world today insists on flexibility and adaptability, **Kuh** said. The average worker in coming decades will make 10 different career shifts.

"You can book on this," **Kuh** told the more than 580 graduates at Winthrop Coliseum. "You will have to reinvent your job and yourself many times. Keep learning. And get better at it."

He also urged students to be truth tellers and to practice sustainability, for the environment and themselves.

"Take care of your body, mind and spirit. This is easier said than done; it takes disciplined effort to develop and maintain routines that balance these aspects of our lives. When one is out of whack, performance in other areas suffers," **Kuh** said.

His final advice was to leave footprints. "People who think and act like transients unknowingly impoverish the quality of their lives as well as their workplace and the community in which they live. They hedge on making commitments, they invest less of their best selves, and they take little or no responsibility for the well-being of their neighbors," **Kuh** said. "This is no way to build caring, respectful communities or to sustain a democracy. Transients do not experience rich, fulfilling, meaningful relationships and they rarely leave their community better than they found it."

Leave some footprints, **Kuh** told the students, on friends, neighbors, coworkers. "Imprints that improve the lot of others and make the world a better place," he said.

Kuh is director of the **National Survey of Student Engagement**, which asks first-year and senior students about their experiences at more than 600 colleges and universities around the nation, including Winthrop.

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