Congratulations on making it through MIT (or finding your way to its commencement)! As your commencement assignment, please answer these short questions about our speaker, Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick (answers at bottom).

1. Multiple Choice

(a) Before he was a governor, Deval worked as Executive Vice President, General Counsel, and Corporate Secretary of what company?
   (a) Hewlett-Packard
   (b) Coca-Cola
   (c) NAMBLA
   (d) Procter & Gamble
   (e) Booz Allen Hamilton

(b) Deval has a unique middle name. What is it?
   (a) Laurdine
   (b) Amandine
   (c) Pyridine
   (d) Devonshire
   (e) Hussein

(c) Everyone knows Deval is a huge fan of lolcats. Which lolcat is his favorite?
   (a) Critical Mass Kitten
   (b) You Eated My Cookie
   (c) Invisible Legislature
   (d) I Has a Flavor
   (e) I Haz $11,000 Drapes

2. Deval Patrick Speech Bingo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>illusions</th>
<th>economy in crisis</th>
<th>Obama</th>
<th>travel</th>
<th>public school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>welfare</td>
<td>graduation</td>
<td>electricity</td>
<td>planet</td>
<td>platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tenacity</td>
<td>American story</td>
<td>hard work</td>
<td>governor</td>
<td>milestone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>commencement</td>
<td>enthusiasm</td>
<td>road ahead</td>
<td>journey</td>
<td>dreams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>extraordinary</td>
<td>pragmatic</td>
<td>change</td>
<td>nuclear holocaust</td>
<td>opportunity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Deval bought some expensive drapes.
2 LATEX tables are annoying. Criticism of the tabular environment will not be tolerated.
Think being a governor is easy? You try writing your own commencement speech!3

The previous (noun pl.) with President Bush and (person) were no less (adj.) – but we tended to be back in our (noun pl.) by about 9:15. This (time), there was a certain (noun) about the occasion. This year, after (noun), when we (-ed verb) into the (location), there was (name of a band). When the (event) started – which we all know is the universal (noun) that the end of the (noun) is at hand – the President (-ed verb) over to me, while holding the (noun), and said, “Deval, this is when we (verb phrase).” That’s when I knew things had (-ed verb)!

... I grew up on welfare on the South Side of (city)—in my grandparents’ two-bedroom tenement. I shared a (noun) and a set of (noun pl.) with my mother and sister, so we would rotate from the top (noun) to the bottom (noun) to the (noun), every third night on the floor. I went to overcrowded, sometimes violent public schools. I can’t think of a time when I didn’t enjoy (verb)ing, but I don’t remember actually ever owning a (noun) as a child. I got my break in 1970 when I came to Massachusetts on a scholarship to (verb)ing school. To me, that was like (verb)ing on a different planet.

... Well, that (noun) is at risk today. More and more (noun pl.) are (verb)ing harder and losing (noun pl.). Some 5.7 million (noun pl.) have (past tense verb) their (noun pl.) in the last two years, and many of those their way and their (feeling). Every individual, family, business and not-for-profit in nearly every (location) of the country is (adj.) or (verb)ing that soon they will be. From mighty (noun pl.) like (noun) and (noun) to small (noun pl.), plans are disrupted. Dreams are (past tense verb).

... Here at MIT you have been intentionally (-ed verb) to differences in thought and (noun); to new ideas and new ways of (verb)ing at old ones; to wise and maybe sometimes (adj.) professors and classmates alike whose (noun) and (noun pl.) you may only come to appreciate on the eve of this graduation. You have been trained to value (random phrase about MIT). You have been encouraged to imagine better tomorrows and then to (verb) for them to become what I call pragmatic ([political philosophy]-ists).

... And by the way, we’ve done (pronoun) before. An earlier generation, facing dangers (location) and widespread suffering at home, summoned American aspirations and answered a call to serve and to sacrifice. And that generation, what we now call the (catchphrase) fought and won the War; rebuilt (country) and (country); built the (thing with cars on it), great public universities and other institutions; expanded the (noun); and ignited the civil rights revolution. That generation – through their (actions) – made it possible for many of the rest of us to live the (noun).

... I sat with about a dozen of them in the (location), surrounded by members of the (organization) who had come to (verb). At first we (-ed verb) about programs and policies and information, but the conversation got (adj.), when one parent looked up and said, “I wonder if you can imagine what it is like to (fill in this depressing quote).”

... God (verb) you all and good luck. (Verb) you very much.

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3So, turns out Deval has given four commencement speeches this spring. They’ve all been nearly identical. Deval went to the inauguration. Barack is awesome. Deval’s daughter loves the Four Seasons Hotel. That’s the American Dream. Oh, but the economy sucks. Perhaps you should be a “pragmatic idealist.” Then, you should win World War II, because Brockton, Mass. high schools can be depressing.