

[Modified rendition/excerpt of Gil Scott-Heron's poem, the Revolution will not be Televised; Dr. Slade to read with dramatic effect]

You will not be able to text-message, brother.

You will not be able to plug-in, ¹hot-sync, and upload.

You will not be able to e-mail females on your BlackBerry because the **Revolution will not be "Digitized."**

The Revolution will not hook you up via **Match.com** or manifest itself in the graphics of the latest **Doom3 X-Box** game.

There will be no audio of ²*106 and Park* or video of ³**50 Cent** surrounded by scantily clad women.

¹ The act of pressing the button on the cradle (USB or Serial) to copy data or load new applications on your PDA (personal digital assistant).

² Popular video countdown show on BET Network

There will be no camera phones or ⁴**Mike Jones ring tones** to download because the **Revolution will not be “Digitized.”**

The revolution will not go better with broadband.
The revolution will not shuffle songs in your **iPod.**

It will not give you a sense of comfort and complacency as a 21st century passenger.

Instead ...

The revolution will put you in the diver’s seat
Give you power to meet ...

... the moral challenge of the day as leaders, as humanitarians, and as people of purpose.

³ Famous rapper and hip hop artist

⁴ Rising rapper and hip hop artist

The revolution will not be digitized ...

Will not be **digitized** ...

Not be **digitized** ...

Be **digitized** ...

The revolution will be no ⁵Flash introduction,
ladies and gentlemen,

The revolution will be LIVE.

[Pause for applause]

Good evening, graduates!

On behalf of the Board of Regents, faculty,
administration, and staff, we congratulate you on
your commitment to reach this milestone in your life.

⁵ An authoring application/tool for web developers, enabling the creation of high-impact, fully interactive websites.

It is with pleasure that we welcome you to this informal reception celebrating your academic accomplishments.

I am aware that many of you were not even born when socio-political commentator, **Gil Scott-Heron**'s poem, *The Revolution will not be Televised*, was released in 1974.

Yet, hopefully, many of you may recall or may have read this popular and insightful work.

What I wanted to do is provide an abbreviated, modified version, *if you will*, to underscore the poem's relevance, even after 31 years.

You see, the original poem illustrated *dramatically* the impact the media had on individuals, specifically on ethnic communities, and how subsequently, "television" assisted in giving people a respite amid such considerable need for action to numerous

issues of that era, including the Vietnam War, a new drug culture, domestic abuse, poverty, joblessness, and racism.

Today, as we find ourselves in the course of this digital age accompanied by great luxuries and conveniences ...

Hmmm, could history be repeating itself?

After all, scores of the same challenges some 30 years ago are just as ubiquitous, *if not more widespread*, today, as we seek domestic and global solutions ...

... which brings me to your enthusiastic faces and my questions to you ...

What will be your purpose in this modern world?
Will you consider yourselves ripe to significantly impact the course of historic, social, political,

economic, and educational events that are *currently* happening locally and globally?

Never before has there been such *urgency* to leverage thought leaders, visionaries, activists, scientists, and spiritualists to solve the complex and important issues our nation faces.

With that said, will you be **energized** or will you be **immobilized**?

By energized, I mean, **will you be compelled** to employ your **degree in Public Affairs** to create awareness and design legislative action plans that center on eradicating issues that affect the sustainability of our society such as social conflict, disparate human rights, and ethnic cleansing?

Or will you **be paralyzed** by the reports of the thousands of Africans, for example, dying each month from genocide, complications from AIDS, and malaria?

Will you be energized as **medical scientists** to find viable, sustainable solutions amid an ever-threatening health climate?

Will you be motivated as mass communications specialists and broadcast journalists in educating our communities about the diseases that plague us the most such as HIV, cardiovascular problems, diabetes, breast and prostate cancer, and drug addiction?

Or **will you be paralyzed** by fear or shy away from discussions about these illnesses because they “do not affect you and yours?”

Will you mobilize your degree in **Business Administration, Marketing, or Economics** to introduce corporate America and entrepreneurialship to inner city neighborhoods, affording jobs, economic empowerment, and professional opportunities to community residents?

Or **will you be paralyzed** by the escalating presence of liquor stores, check-cashing sites, and nail shops filled with consumers, not conscious-thinking individuals?

Will you be obligated as **educators and administrators** to mentor and remove the 41 percent of African-American children in special education in this country?

Will you *actively* recruit more—*I said more!*—African-American and Latino male teachers, who *clearly* understand the dynamics of black or brown

male student behavior and learning abilities because these teachers have a *personal* context?

Or **will you be paralyzed** by the status quo?

I could go on, but you didn't get this far without being smart! You know what I'm saying.

Graduation is a physical process and a mental one, too.

Indeed, this has been an academic year filled with great highs and great lows, but through perseverance and a focus on our goal, we have successfully enabled you to move beyond our walls at Texas Southern and branch out into the world, through an emotional and core resolve.

It is imperative that you employ strategic thinking because the tenor of the times calls for it!

You have no choice.

There is more to life than talking nonstop on a cellular phone or endless text-messaging.

Do not allow the digital age to swallow you; instead, leverage such comprehensive technology to further a cause, find a solution, or “do the right thing.”

Given our rich, 58-year legacy, we are confident that you will join the esteemed circle of dynamic TSU Tigers who have made considerable contributions as movers, shakers, and decision makers.

And know this, along your post-graduate journey; if you ever need us for advice or support, we are here, our doors are *always* open.

Students, as our most precious jewels of this University, *be encouraged*, and remember ...

The revolution will not be found *online*; rather, it will be found in what you leave *behind* ...

... an impression of service, compassion, and a better world than how you inherited it.

Now, go out and **revolutionize** ... your dreams.

Again, congratulations, and may God bless your steps.

[End]