

Student Reflection Commencement Speech

So, we made it! Congratulations to the graduating class of 2017 from the College of Business and the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management!

Like many of my fellow graduates, I didn't start my college experience in this major or even at Chico State. And like many Chico natives, I believed the grass would be greener somewhere else. So, in the fall of 2013, I eagerly started at a top public research university. I had big expectations, both for the school and for myself.

It didn't take long for me to realize things weren't going to work out as I'd planned. I was a genetics major who, quite frankly, had no passion for genetics. My peers were fighting to get the best grades to get into med school, while my professors seemed to be more interested in having the hardest class than actually teaching their students. This left me feeling detached and demoralized, and I realized I was quickly losing my interest in learning.

In an effort to find a better fit, I started reading through lists of majors from different schools. And it was actually another graduate, here today, who suggested the major that would change everything. From the moment I read about Construction Management at Chico State, I knew I'd found where I wanted to be.

From the first time I went in to get advising help from professor Rich Holman I could tell that my Chico State experience would be entirely different. I cannot say enough good things about Chico State and the Construction Management Department.

The value of Chico State is more than just the classroom setting, where teachers with industry experience share their real-world knowledge. Companies know that these programs produce well-rounded employees. Our Chico State education opens doors for us. Many of my peers have earned several internships and are graduating with rewarding job offers because of Chico State's reputation. In the current job climate, this is not something to take for granted.

I think it's important to note that I came into this major with no prior experience or connection to the industry: a fairly uncommon situation in a program where most students have family connections to the construction industry or have previously worked in the field themselves. Despite this, the professors and students have never made me feel like I shouldn't be here.

Even with all of these benefits, the most valuable part of Chico State for me has been the people. Joel Arthur, the Construction Management Department Chair, who has advocated for me on numerous occasions, including nominating me to speak today. And Professor Alan Bond, my mentor and role model, whose involvement and support has been instrumental to my success in this program. The relationships that are built between students and faculty are what has made Chico State an amazing experience for me.

My experience at Chico State would not be complete without highlighting the Concrete Industry Management Department. For the constant support from the students, faculty, and staff and the knowledge I have gained taking CIM classes, I will forever be grateful. My time in the program has left me with a permanent and slightly ridiculous love for concrete.

But while I feel incredibly lucky to have had such a positive experience at Chico State, I know I am just one of countless students who can say the same thing. From stories from other students in my departments, to other students in the college of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management, and even other Chico State students in general, we will all treasure the personalized learning, teamwork, and student comradery that we gained at Chico State.