Trinity Stirling’s Reflection Speech:

Good morning graduates, faculty, family and friends, I don't know half of you half as well as I should like, but I would like to tell you just a little bit about myself.

In an interview recently I was asked “Why do you volunteer, or why do you always say yes?” At the time I did not know how to respond, yet I continued hearing variations of this question over the past few months, and I have dwelled on it.

My choice to speak up and volunteer has always been second nature to me, I literally think it was bred into me (thanks mom and dad). However, my answer to this daunting question, now seems simple.

I try to make choices that I am proud of, and will continue to be proud of in the stories I tell later in life. These proud choices, these are the ones we make with our hearts, because we know it is the right thing to do.

As I reflect on my past five years here at Chico State, I am proud.

I am proud of my choice to come to Chico State because of the opportunities that this school has allowed me to experience. The cascade of choices I have made since choosing Chico has allowed me to go on grand adventures; here in Chico, on a National Student Exchange, as well as traveling internationally. The friendships I have built along the way due to; late nights in the lab, late nights in the field, and of course… late nights downtown, will stand the test of time, and this too makes me proud.

More importantly, I am proud to be receiving my degrees from this school, because this school was built on proud choices… Specifically, the Bidwell’s choice to donate and convert their land into Chico Normal School.

The honorable choices of the Bidwell family have been woven into Chico’s culture, as has the school. This school is the heart and soul of the Chico community. A community whose passion for education
has nurtured its growth into California State University, Chico. A school, which produces confident and motivated graduates. A motivation I believe, to be driven by the freedom the school gave us in finding our niche and passion in one or more of its degrees.

I would like to ask the graduates that have changed their major to please stand.

I too, have changed my major, many times, and I am proud to have have finally found the fields that I am passionate about as I hope you all are as well. This would not have been possible without the passionate and dedicated professors that we have learned from along the way. As well as the continuous love and support of our families and friends. On behalf of the graduates, I would like to thank all of you for the role you have played in shaping our education.

It is this opportunity to change our majors, to gain new experiences, to fail and try again, and to finally choose a path that will continue to define us, that makes us confident, motivated and unique individuals.

Yet today, we gather here on equal ground, dressed equally and about to receive degrees of equal opportunity, because we made it through this undergraduate rite of passage.

Today, it is not our college choices that set us apart, but our choices of tomorrow, let them be proud choices. In the honest words of Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore:

“It is our choices that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities”

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2015, we made it!!!!