

Sunday, May 22, 2016

Reflections Speaker

Antonia Christa Lubben-Exercise Physiology

Good morning students, parents, alumni and all the incredible staff and faculty of Chico State. Thank you to all of you...because without our families, friends, and this incredible University none of us would be here today. I want to give a shout out to the College of Natural Sciences and College of Communication and Education! WE DID IT!!!

I am BEYOND honored to be given this amazing opportunity to speak to you today!! My name is Antonia Lubben and today I am a graduate of CHICO STATE!!!! Tomorrow I leave to begin my PHD in Physical Therapy at Long Beach State!!! It's crazy I know!! I am afraid and excited but ready for challenge! I am ready because of all of you here supporting me today.

So to all my fellow students thank you. I offer you a special congratulations and big cry from my heart of YOLO!!

For some more experienced members of our audience you may not know what YOLO means!! Many of our graduates here today spent four years studying in YOLO HALL. So I thought I better clear up what YOLO means, and what it means to my generation.

YOLO stands for You Only Live Once! It's the cry of our hearts:
YOLO!

For many people in my generation it means to live selfishly.

But to me, and many of my fellow students who have made it to graduation today, YOLO means something very different. To me, YOLO means you only get one chance to live your dreams. You only get one chance to reach out to someone and touch their heart. You only get one chance to live, and you better live it with all your heart!!! To me YOLO means life is precious and special, and we should all live up to our potential and let

nothing get in our way. If you're scared of writing that novel and becoming a writer, do it! If you're worried that you can't be a successful firefighter because you're a woman, do it! If you think you're not smart enough, strong enough, talented enough, or capable enough, do it!

At 23 I feel like I have lived a lot of life but I know I have just begun, and so have all the students that are graduating today. We have just completed one leg of our life journey! My goal for today is to encourage you live up to your potential as you take on the next part of your journey.

I think it might help inspire you to learn of my own journey here at Chico. It has been beyond amazing. When I think of my time here at Chico I think of the beautiful campus we have and the river that runs thru it. My time here at Chico is much like that river... incredibly breathtaking. My time at Chico State has been like a winding river, at times flowing steadily, sometimes roughly. I have been full of hope like a river full of water after a rainstorm, but also low and empty like a river in its drought years. I faced difficult challenges. I am blind in my right eye,

had math anxiety, and suffered a terrible case of mono while I was a student here at Chico State. There were times when I didn't know if I could make it, whether it was worth it to go on here. But there are so many resources at Chico that touched my heart and helped me to believe in myself when I did not. When I needed help with my visual disability, I was given all the tools I needed at the Accessibility Resource Center. To help with my academic difficulties, I had the ultimate privilege of outstanding professors who spent so much time helping me in office hours. Especially the Student Learning Center that was so supportive with open doors and open arms. It gave me free tutoring since my first week of my Freshman year. Finally, the medical staff at the Student Health Center and the Counseling service was the only reason I could continue with my education despite suffering from chronic illnesses and depression. I can't thank you all enough!! All your caring and help paid off -- today I am privileged to graduate summa cum laude with a 3.9! That's right, summa cum laude! I am deeply grateful to you for helping

me. It was truly a group effort. I kept going, and with your help, I succeeded.

All my struggles and all my joy have taught me an important lesson. In this crazy technological world (which I love, by the way), people need other people to succeed and to make life good. We all thrive off of each other's caring. And with other people's support, there's nothing we can't achieve. I made it through here, and I'm standing here giving this speech. If I could do that, you can do what you put your minds to, too. So guess what, YOLO!!! So live, be, and dream. When the river seems to dry up, or a twist seems to sharp, reach out for support and love: you will make it. Never give up! Sometimes the most beautiful days come after a struggle!

In closing, I want to share the most private moment I experienced this year. Even though it is very personal, it's important to me to share it. I was privileged this year to be present as my grandpa took his last breath and I had my hand on his heart as it beat one last time.

I was absolutely devastated, and it's still hard for me to talk about it. And yet, in that moment, my understanding of YOLO deepened. I realized that 84 years was a very short time and each one of us has one chance and one life to live our dreams. So go get it!! Don't be afraid to make every moment count and live your dream.

Whenever you are struggling to reach those dreams, think back about your time on campus. Think about our beautiful river and the bridges that cross it. Use them as a symbol to remind yourself of what you're capable of. You can cross those other bridges in life, too, if you just hold onto the lessons we've learned here. Reach out for support, and don't just do it on your own. I know we can all make it, each and every one.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak. I will miss you all, and I wish everyone here the best from the bottom of my heart. Someday YOLO will be old slang -- but the truths it expresses will remain as valid then as they do today.

Remember, YOLO, and thank you all!

Today decides tomorrow!