

Keely Martin Bosler

College of Agriculture – Commencement Speech – 2016

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Good afternoon graduates and congratulations! This is your big day – you have accomplished a great deal to wear those caps and gowns. We all know why you are here today, but why am I speaking to you? 23 years ago I was a farm girl from the small town of Fort Jones, California beginning my freshman year at Chico State. Like many of you I spent my years at Chico State helping out at events at the University Farm, judging livestock, spending countless hours in Plumas Hall, marveling at the sheer energy that Dave Daley and many other professors on this campus brought to their teaching, and building friendships across this great campus.

Four years later, I remember sitting in your seats distinctly thinking, now what? I am graduating but I still don't know what my career path looks like. Some of you sit here today with a plan, some of you may be thinking, like I did, that more college might be the easiest path to take, and many of you may not have any concrete plans at all. Well I am happy to report that this ceremony is called commencement – which literally means – a beginning or start - and you do not need to have it all figured out today.

I took a leap of faith on a public policy job at the Legislative Analyst's Office in Sacramento. I had never really thought about working in state government or any government, mind you, but I took the chance. Sixteen years later I continue to work on public policy issues as the Cabinet Secretary for Governor Jerry Brown. I am fortunate to have a career where I get to learn something new every day and that I find both meaningful and challenging.

I did not get here just by chance – As Thomas Jefferson said, "I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it." Graduates, there will be many years of hard work ahead – don't be afraid of it, don't loath it – embrace it – you are already on your way. The diploma you will receive today already proves that you can set a goal, work hard and accomplish it and these are the skills that are the most valued in any career you choose.

What an exciting time to be graduating from the College of Agriculture. The agricultural sector, in California, continues to evolve, diversify, and change with both technology and ingenuity. There is great strength in its diversity –with 400 commodities produced in the state - many that are only grown in California. Our State's agricultural sector dwarfs other states and many countries with cash receipts of nearly \$54 billion, which is \$20 billion more than the next largest state. Even in the remote rural part of Northern California where I grew up I see the next generation of farmers and ranchers rethinking practices and how they market their product.

I want to congratulate all of the family, friends, professors, coaches, and counselors of the graduates that are here today. This day is for you too. You let them fail and learn from their mistakes. You encouraged their dreams. Thank you for that. Graduates – you have not done this alone – and you will not build a successful future without many helping hands along the way. Always remember that, be humbled by that, and measure your success not only by what you achieve but what you also help others achieve.

Getting back to why I am here tonight – I am here to tell you that you can do it! Work hard, help others along the way, and keep on taking risks. Now go and make it happen. Congratulations graduates!