

College of Communication and Education
Student Reflections Speaker
Commencement Speech

Presented by: Becca Chanes

Good evening distinguished guests, faculty, staff, family, friends and most importantly graduates! Congratulations guys, we did it!

When I pictured my college graduation I can guarantee you it did not include me wearing all black in this hot of weather. Nor did it include me being the student reflections speaker. Having to reflect on the past four years is not an easy task, nor does my time limit give Chico State all the credit it deserves, but I'll still give it my best shot.

Located an hour and a half north of Sacramento... my SoCal self was reluctant to see what Chico had to offer but little did I know that that eight hour car ride to Choose Chico would be one of many drives I would be taking returning to campus over the next four years.

While touring the university, it was the beautiful landscape that reeled me in. From the brick buildings, the rose garden and the creek running through the middle of campus, Chico State gives a beautiful atmosphere for anyone willing to learn and to grow.

But there is more to Chico than just the scenery. Attending Chico State meant getting lost in Holt Hall because let's face it, that building makes absolutely no sense at all. Attending Chico State had you thinking your best friends with a girl named Meriam because that's who you spend most of your time with, Meriam library. Attending Chico State means that Hooch The Cat has more Instagram followers than you. Literally a cat made it onto the Chico State page and I didn't... I'm still clearly upset.

Chico State may have other reputations but this university has done more for me than I could have ever hoped. It has given me the opportunity to become a leader, to step out of my comfort zone and meet friends that have now become my second family.

So next time someone tells you that Chico State is just a party school, I have come up with the perfect rebuttal. Tell them that you graduated from one of the top regional public universities in the West (ranked by US News and World Report). Tell them about CAVE, the largest organization on campus that has over 2,000 students volunteer each year providing over 50,000 hours of service throughout the community. Tell them about

how we have the strongest student government out of all 23 CSU's and it's the students that are in charge of the multimillion dollar corporation.

We all had different paths to getting to this moment. Whether we started here as freshman or transferred, whether we completed our studies in 4 years or took a victory lap, or we came back to school after taking years off or after serving our country, we all are now graduates, and that is something to forever be proud of yourself for.

We all started here a little lost and confused but look at us now, we found our path, our passion and we finished our respective degrees.

After all the word commencement means to begin or to start. Today may mark the end of your time here at Chico State but today's commencement ceremony welcomes you to the start of the next chapter in your life, whatever that may be.

As we leave here this evening ready to turn our hard work and dreams into reality, I can only hope you never lose the desire to learn. You have reached one goal here this evening when you earned your degree but always remember this is just an intermediate goal that has prepared you to take another step forward.

And on behalf of all the graduates I would like to thank all the faculty as well as Google, Wikipedia, citation machine and Red Bull for making this moment possible.

So lastly, as you seek to make your difference in life, I would like to leave you to ponder this poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

*To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch, or a
redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived;
That is to have succeeded.*

Congratulations to the graduating Class of 2018 for completing the last 4 years, let's go make the next 40 and beyond even that much better!