

Jonathan Gurrola
Student Reflection Speech
May 19, 2018

Good morning. I have to say, I love hearing the clapping and celebration, so let's give it up to the graduates from the College of Engineering, Computer Science, and Construction Management - and - the graduates from, my very own, College of Natural Sciences.

For those who don't know me, my name is Jonathan Gurrola and I am a first-generation student, hijo de padres Mexicanos (son of Mexican parents), and I will be entering America's most trusted profession - nursing.

Now - I want you to close your eyes - let's take a moment down memory lane:

- Remember your first walk through campus. Or the first time you laid out in front of Kendall Hall.
- The first time you hiked up to Monkey Face with your roommates.
- Or that Friday night when you made your way down Warner, headed toward Ivy Street, and ending up at the bear for a night of dancing with your best friends.
- Picture your favorite moments here at Chico.

You can open your eyes now. I can promise you - no matter how long ago these memories become, your Chico experience and the beautiful people you have met here, will always be with you.

My message to you is this - Chico has been a community for us, encouraging and providing each of us with support.

Now I challenge you, wherever you go, wherever you work, and wherever you live - create a similar community.

I believe that community is the path for success in career, life, and well-being. I want you to close your eyes again.

Think of the people who have put you first, who have invested in you, and encouraged you to become who you are today. Ask yourself, who has helped you love yourself and what you are capable of.

You can open your eyes.

Now - no matter where those people are - either here or in spirit - let's give them a big, loud, thank you. In 1...2...3!

We didn't make it here alone. A community is only strong when there is mentorship, empowerment, and real relationships. We are the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) scholars of tomorrow. We will be leading scientific breakthroughs, creating technology that changes lives,

engineering the world of the future, and mathematically solving future problems. But we can't be great leaders if we forget to create community.

Wherever you may go, you have the power to create community. Be the mentor. Believe in and empower others. Show appreciation for the accomplishments others make. Value the unique differences of each person in your community.

Now that I am older, I understand why a great man would always ask, "Won't you be my neighbor?". Mr. Rogers appreciated his "neighbor", and by neighbor, he meant whomever he happen to be with at the moment. Mr. Rogers role modeled the appreciation of inherent individual worthiness.

I will now leave you with a quote by Mr. Rogers: "As different as we are from one another, as unique as each one of us is, we are much more the same than we are different. That may be the most essential message of all".

Thank you all very much, and to my Wildcats and the Class of 2018! Congratulations.