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Commencement Speech Draft

Good morning College of Communication and Education! Today I woke up earlier than I had to for most of my college career, but I didn't dread leaving my comfortable bed. Instead I woke up excited. Excited for this next step in my life. Sure, there are many things about my future that's unknown and that makes me nervous. The same feeling, I am sure many of you have. The dreaded question, "what are you doing after you graduate?" Some of you know and some of you don't, but that's okay.

If Chico has taught us anything it's that we can do anything. I have found more confidence in myself here than I did anywhere else in my life. My college experience shaped me into the person I am today. We've all made friends that will last us a lifetime and made memories that we will look back on in the years to come.

My freshman year I didn't really know anyone here. I was nervous and I didn't know what life was going to be like on my own. I remember lining up to take the 'Big C' photo just days before class started. I saw so many unfamiliar faces, and I definitely felt nervous and shy. Soon enough I made friends that are not only my friends to this day, but also some of them are in this very crowd. To think... if we didn't go to Chico, we never would have met so many incredible people.

My sophomore year, I wasn't at Chico. I studied abroad in Northern Italy, but what do you know a little bit of Chico followed me there. There were numerous students in my program that were from Chico! It was so nice getting to have a reminder of my second home in a foreign place. Even with this reminder though, I would find myself missing my friends here. I would see your Snapchats and Instagram posts and even though I was having the time of my life I found myself missing Chico.

Junior year and I was finally back. This year was a pivotal year for many of us. We were focusing on our major classes, some of us taking minor classes as well. Many of us were involved in student organizations. By doing all of these things we were finding work that we were passionate about. People around me started seeing me as a leader, a role I had never considered for myself. This is the year that would lay down the foundation for a future that would bring me opportunities, happiness, success and too many positive memories to count.

So now we've reached our final year, the illustrious "senior year". We each had to face the many questions that have been leading up to this moment. What do I want to do? What type of place do I want to work at? Will I have a job when I graduate? Safe to say I thought I was in over my head. Those around me were once again, more confident in me than I was in myself.

Steven Loya encouraged me to lead a student organization and helped me fundraise thousands of dollars for this school and all of our students. He always pushed me to be a better leader and to

be a better person. Janell Bauer continued to give me professional opportunities, continuing to help me grow in my field. For those of you who had Debra Johnson as your professor, you know class is starting by her sudden burst of energy. To this day, she is ecstatic about her field and she reflects that in her teaching. She's the professor that you want the criticism from, because you know that she is doing it to help you. Susan Weisinger encourages her students to work together to solve common problems and complete tasks we didn't think we were able to do. She was the one who recommended that I speak here today. Never in my life did I think I would be giving a speech in front of thousands of people.

What all these people have in common is that they have been influential people in my college career. I am sure each and every single one of you have people in your life that have done the same. I can't thank just a single one of my mentors, but I can thank the university that brought me here today. Thank you, friends, and thank you Chico State for providing me with the opportunities and relationships that have changed me forever.

Tonight, we will go to sleep. Excited to start our future, but sad to be leaving behind the place that has become our home.

Congratulations Class of 2019. It's been a long road, but we did it!