

Congratulations graduates of the College of Agriculture, Natural Sciences and the College of Engineering, Computer Science & Construction Management!

How amazing it is that we are all here on this day, after years of hard work we achieved our goals to graduate from this wonderful university. I'll make this short so we can move onto more important things like the Bear.

Before coming to Chico, I had pictured myself with a career in politics. I thought I would play a key role on a campaign for the leaders of tomorrow, working in a government building, and help shape public policy for our country. However, after getting beat up in the rat race that is political campaigning, I found myself looking for a different major.

While helping a friend's Dad landscape his yard, he mentioned the construction management programs at both Cal Poly and Chico State and how that major might be a good fit for me. It seemed interesting. So, I asked him what's the difference between these schools, is one better than the other? He told me, "Cal Poly graduates are smart and can tell you every part and every detail to a problem or a jobsite." I then asked, what about Chico. He said, "Pretty much the same thing but what takes a Cal Poly grad to say in 10 paragraphs, a Chico grad can tell you in one sentence."

I think this story really embodies the core idea of a Chico State student and what separates us apart from other universities. The people that graduate from this school are well rounded, work hard and get to the point of what exactly they are trying to say. Chico State also has a place for charity and kindness in their hearts as well. None of us could have predicted the devastating fire that hit Paradise in November of last year. We can remember waking up on that dark Thursday morning, not even able to see the sun because the smoke was so thick, and we heard throughout

the day what this disaster was doing to that beautiful city that so many of us took for granted. But from so much sadness and desperation came the people of Chico. The people I'm looking at right now. Students, staff and faculty all came together and gave to those who were in need, creating Wildcat Rise, and of course the heart-warming stories of the individuals who rushed up to Paradise to make sure that they're loved ones were safe. We all should be proud of what this community did and be proud that we graduated from a University that took action when it was most needed!

A big reason for this type of culture can be explained by the faculty that teaches us everyday. They are highly experienced in their field, know what they are talking about and demonstrate a strong sense of ethics and responsibility.

As a major in both Construction Management and Concrete Industry Management, I had the opportunity to learn from faculty members in two departments. Just to name a few of the instructors that have helped shape the culture we have here on campus; first, Mohammed Albahtiti, from the CIM Department, who was always willing to meet with me at a coffee shop and go over plans for the American Concrete Institute club, Alan Bond from the CM department, whose management and teaching styles are unparalleled with any other, John Schwarz, an amazing construction law professor that let everyone understand that what we needed to know was "on the board" and Rich Holman, whose classes were instrumental to our success as students and who always had enough time to describe a story about the Shasta Dam.

Having now finished these courses from our respective majors, stayed late in the library studying for all those final exams, gained on-the-job experience with internships, I think I can speak for everyone here and say that we have the tools necessary to go out in the world and show them what Chico State Grads are made of!

I have mixed emotions about today. Part of me is sad that this chapter of my life is over; that I won't be able to go to Bella's on a Wednesday afternoon with my friends or even get another chance to compete at the ASC competition in Reno. I'm going to miss these kinds of experiences. However, the other part of me is too excited and optimistic about the future. Now that this part of all of our lives are over, we can take what we have learned here at Chico, make a difference in whatever we do and make an impact on this world!

Go get em class of 2019! And go Chico State!