



PimaCommunityCollege

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Pima Community College Graduation Ceremony 2015 May 21, 2015

[Pomp and Circumstance plays]

>> Please rise for the presentations of the colors and the singing of the national anthem.

'O say can you see

by the dawn's early light,

what so proudly we hailed

at the twilight's last gleaming.

Whose broad stripes and bright stars

through the perilous fight

o'er the ramparts we watched

were so gallantly streaming.

And the rockets' red glare -- rockets' red glare --

the bombs bursting in air -- bursting in air --

gave proof through the night

that our flag was still there.

'O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave

o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

>> Good evening and welcome.

I am Dr. Erica Holmes, Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor at Pima Community College, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as your host for this evening's activities.

You may be seated.

I want to extend a warm welcome to the families and guests who have joined us and a special welcome to the Class of 2015!

[cheers and applause]

Commencement marks an important milestone in the lives of our students and those gathered here today.

Commencement also provides an opportunity to recognize our outstanding faculty and staff who are dedicated to providing the highest quality education and to making a positive difference in the lives of our students.

We are thankful for the wisdom of our faculty who guided the students and the dedication of the staff who provided countless hours of support. Will the faculty and staff please stand and be recognized?

[applause]

Now, I would like to introduce to you the persons joining me on the stage tonight. Please hold your applause until everyone has been introduced. Starting with our board of governors: Mr. Mark Hanna, District One; Mr. David Longoria, District Two; Dr. Sylvia Lee, Chair of the Board of Governors, District Three; Mr. Scott Stewart, District Four; Ms. Marty Cortez, District Five;

Our Chancellor Lee Lambert; Executive Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Dr. David Bea; our commencement speaker, Mr. Kenneth Lee; our six campus presidents: Dr. Lorraine Morales, Community Campus; Dr. Morgan Phillips, Desert Vista Campus; Dr. Gwendolyn Joseph, Downtown Campus; Dr. Darla Zirbes, East Campus; Dr. David Dore, Northwest Campus; Dr. Lou Albert, West Campus.

Our faculty representative tonight, is Dr. Mays Imad.

Let's welcome them.

[applause]

This is going to be such a special event for everyone and we want you all to enjoy every minute of it. We certainly understand the excitement of the occasion and your desire to share your joy with the world. Class of 2015, in just a few minutes you will cross the stage to receive your degrees and certificates. Everyone else should get their cameras and phones ready to Tweet, post, Instagram, stream, Facebook, Linkin or however you share with the world. We want the world to know about your success at Pima Community College. We are proud of your accomplishments. Also, please remember to share your success stories on Pima's social media outlets.

Students, after you leave the stage, please return to your seats and be sure to cheer on your other classmates. Once everyone has received their credentials, Chancellor Lambert, will formally confer your degrees and you will move your tassels from right to left.

At this time I am very happy to present to you, our Chancellor, Lee Lambert.

[applause]

>> Good evening, everybody! Congratulations to the class of 2015. Let's give them a hand, please!

[applause]

This is -- you representative our future of this great country and of this great State of Arizona. Thank you for your accomplishments and achievements.

This is my second commencement address here at Pima. Some would say today is the first day of the rest of your life. I respectfully disagree. I believe the first day of the rest of your life occurred when you embarked on your Pima journey.

For me, and for some of you, that was two years ago. For others of you that was maybe ten years ago. But whenever it was, you decided it was time to make a commitment to your future, and by doing so, you also made a commitment to your families, to your community, and to our society. You are an astonishing, diverse group of graduates.

There are 3,732 of you, just slightly fewer than last year's group -- which set an all-time record for Pima. You range in age from 17 to our oldest graduate who is 76 years young --

[applause]

-- and 5.5% of the graduating class have grade points of 3.9 or higher and are graduating with Pima's highest honors. That's an incredible achievement. Please give them a hand.

[applause]

52% of you are female; 48% are male. You represent 21 different degree programs ranging from liberal arts and business to hotel and restaurant management, nursing and fire science -- and the list goes on.

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor said, "Until we get equality in education, we won't have an equal society." Here at Pima we have made a renewed commitment to respecting and honoring diversity. We are working to foster an appreciation of all students, and we are making a commitment that we will leave no one behind.

It probably goes without saying that this graduating class is ethnically diverse as well. I like the image that President Jimmy Carter painted of America, and it applies to us here tonight. He said, "We become, not a melting pot, but a beautiful mosaic -- different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams." I see those dreams beginning to be realized here tonight.

As you all know, Pima is one of the most affordable higher learning institutions in Arizona and, for that matter, throughout the United States of America, but I know that many of you had to struggle to find the resources to attend. So I applaud you for setting your sights high and making that commitment to pursue your education.

[applause]

As you go forward, I hope you will be open to new possibilities. When you finish your journey in higher education, find work about which you can be passionate -- truly passionate. Work to help people who have had a harder time than yourselves.

Many of your contributions in life will not come from your core discipline. National Institutes of Health Director Elias Zerhouni once told the graduates of MIT that "You should have big dreams; you can't put a large box in a small box." Well, you cannot put a full life in a small dream.

I know this is true for many of you. You are role models for your children, holding down jobs, or participating in student leadership organizations. You are volunteering in nursing homes and tutoring fellow students. Another adage wisely tells us, the world is run by those who show up. and I urge you to always remember to show up.

Before we go on to the rest of our celebration, I want to thank our faculty and our staff, our administrators and our board of governors for their work to help provide the support so that all of you can be successful in your future endeavors. Also, we should thank your families and your friends and loved ones. Please give them a hand as well.

[applause]

I'm sure all of you would agree that you would not be here without their support and guidance and love.

I would like to close by recognizing a group of folks who have taken that ultimate challenge of showing up. I would like to recognize this important part of Pima's family. This group of people who have showed up by serving our country. If you are a Pima employee, student, or graduate and you are a U.S. military veteran or reserve member or currently in the armed forces, would you please stand up so we can show you our appreciation.

[applause]

Thank you.

Please.

I would like to close with the famous words of Will Rogers: Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there. So please remember to get out there, graduates, show up and keep moving forward.

Congratulations!

[applause]

>> Thank you, Chancellor, for those remarks.

Pima Community College is full of many stories that any one of you can share on how you persevered to earn your degree. We are also anxious to see where you go from here with the degrees and certificates that you earned at Pima. Tonight one of your classmates is going to share his story, and it is my pleasure to introduce him at this time. Kenneth Lee is receiving his associate of applied science from the Clinical Research Coordinator Program. Although he has traveled all over the world, he has called Tucson his home since 1986. Kenneth speaks four languages, has worked in the education field, and recently discovered his love for helping people in the medical field. He hopes to use his skills and new degree in clinical research to help people who suffer all over the world. Please help me welcome your student speaker, Kenneth Lee.

[applause]

>> Good evening, everybody. Let me start by saying a very sincere thank-you to our Board of Governors, Chancellor Lambert, members of administration, faculty, and staff. And to all of those friend and family members in our lives who empowered each and every graduate to make it here tonight. To you, we say welcome and thank you.

You know, in South Africa we have a philosophy called "ubuntu." Ubuntu tells us that we discover who we are as individuals by seeing who we are not. In other words, by seeing the differences among ourselves, we find out who we are. This is the root of diversity. It is a word found in several disciplines we have studied here at Pima Community College. For example, in biology, it creates sustainable life. History teaches us the greatest empires were built on a diverse populace bringing ideas from all around the globe. The arts are reliant on a full spectrum of thought, of color, and of medium.

In my field, clinical research, we may only be confident of results if a treatment was tested on a diverse enough population. In fact, it may be said that we are nothing without diversity in any aspect of our knowledge, skills or society. Without cultural diversity, there is no sense of self, no culture, no community, and no future.

Without diversity, we would also have economic stagnation. Historically, preindustrial revolution countries that were geographically isolated have not fared well in modern world markets. Communities which chose to isolate themselves have less economic growth and remain resistant to progress; however, the flip side is also true. Communities which have embraced diversity, they see economic growth, improvements in education and health care, and are more capable of withstanding external stress since they have a much broader base of knowledge and experience on which to draw.

In other words, the more diverse our community becomes, the better prepared we are as a community to adapt to new economic situations in the future. Now as students of Pima Community College, you have been given a varied background of knowledge, techniques, and even culture. In my own life, I remember speaking French at Pima to a girl from Japan who had lived most of her life in Germany. Where else could we experience this but at Pima?

This sort of cultural diversity and opportunity takes place on a daily basis in our lives as Pima students. You see, what we have been given is an education, of course, but it is much more than that. We have been handed a legacy of cultural and political diversity that is priceless. The question is: What will we do with our legacy? will we keep it to ourselves? Or will we raise it up like a standard, take joy and pride in it, and give it freely to everyone we meet?

As citizens of this great country, we have a duty to help others and enrich this community. We cannot be selfish with our own uniqueness and diversity. So how do we share our uniqueness with others?

We do this by following a few simple rules: One, welcome everyone to our community. Whether someone is Japanese-American, Arab-American, Christian, Hindi, disabled, speaks with an accent, is old, rich, or poor, the goals of diversity may not be achieved without each member of the community feeling welcome.

Two, lay no blame on others. Shaming or blaming people for being privileged or for being homeless does nothing to promote understanding. Only when individuals feel appreciated can they help the community.

Three, build a foundation of hope. When addressing challenges, show the potential in overcoming them with diversity. Let the community know that although we are different in religion, beliefs, and culture, we are one in purpose and together we will accomplish anything.

And four, never stop learning and never stop teaching. We must leave our minds open to let new, strange ideas in. We must also observe the community around us and be willing to step in when necessary to insure that our diversity is available for all to partake in.

Now, my fellow graduates, you are each unique. You are educated and inspiring people who have conquered many difficulties to get here tonight. We all know that's true. That is why you are at the right place and the right time to become examples of acceptance in this very violent and intolerant world. The fact is this world really needs you. Let us show that it is our differences that make us strong.

Thank you so much, and congratulations, Class of 2015.

[applause]

>> Thank you, Kenneth for those wonderful words. Now I think your family is sitting in section 105. Let's take a moment to acknowledge them.

[applause]

Kenneth, on behalf of Pima Community College, we want to present to you this plaque and gift to remind you of your presentation tonight and to thank you for your leadership at Pima.

[applause]

Now, what you have all been waiting for.

Members of the Board, Chancellor Lambert, on behalf of the faculty I am pleased to present for graduation and to certify that each has satisfied their requirements for 5,856 degrees and certificates at Pima Community College. Graduates, please come forward for the presentation of degrees and certificates.

[applause]

[graduate names being read]

[cheers and applause]

>> Good job!

Chancellor Lambert, Board of Governors, faculty, staff, students, faculty, alumni, friends, I am honored to present the class of 2015!

[cheers and applause]

>> All right!

So I would like to thank Provost Holmes for officiating tonight. Also would like to thank the readers and interpreters for the work they have done to make this graduation ceremony special for all of you, the Class of 2015.

[applause]

So by the authority and power vested in me by the Pima Community College District Board of Governors and by the State of Arizona, I now declare you Pima Community College graduates with all of the earned rights, responsibilities, and privileges.

Yay!

[cheers and applause]

You may now move your tassels from the right to the left. This symbolizes the fact that you are now graduates. Congratulations!

[cheers and applause]

All right! So please turn your attention to the screen.

(celebratory music)

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