

Commencement Remarks for President

Final Draft - December 2019

Joe Cockrell, Executive Director of Communications and Media Relations

It is my distinct pleasure to say to all the graduates today: CONGRATULATIONS! Certainly, sitting here today in cap and gown as you wait to walk across the stage to receive your graduate degree is a dream come true for you and your families. Dreams, however, do not come true just because you dream them. It takes hard work, dedication, and perseverance. The motivation and drive to keep going, even when you felt overwhelmed. Today is the culmination of your passion for achieving goals and your persistence in successfully maneuvering and completing a challenging curriculum. Despite rigorous academic programs, you focused on being the very best you can be and reached out to support each other through the daily struggles of complicated courses and clinical experiences.

Today is also a dream come true for those of us faculty and staff at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences. We have dedicated ourselves to nurturing the potential in each of you to fulfill our mission as a university and your vision for a future as a health care practitioner. We take enormous pride in your accomplishment. We know, however, that you were not on this journey alone. Will our exemplary, knowledgeable, and engaging faculty and staff please stand to be recognized. Thank you all for your drive towards excellence for our students.

[Pause for Applause]

Every single graduate on display today also arrived at this moment because of influences in their lives who believed in them, guided them, consoled them, and inspired them. Each of you in attendance today in your unique way contributed to the success of our graduates. It is wonderful that you share in their accomplishment as they begin—or take the next step in—their health professional careers. It is most appropriate that we demonstrate profound gratitude to each of you.

Graduates, please join me in thanking those who helped you reach this special day.

If you are a parent, grandparent, aunt or uncle of a graduate, please stand and be recognized.

If you are a spouse, partner or significant other of a graduate, please stand and be recognized.

If you are a sibling or a friend of a graduate, please stand and be recognized.

If you are a son, daughter, niece or nephew of a graduate, please stand and be recognized.

Will anyone in attendance feels that they should be recognized and has not yet been called, or feels they should be recognized again, please stand up!

Thank you for all you have done to support our graduates and congratulations for your success.

[Pause for Applause]

Graduates, each of you has answered a calling. A calling to care for your community. You brought your special gifts to this University which were evident to us from the day we met.

The University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences was founded 40 years ago with a vision to transform physical therapy. That initial vision extended beyond this very narrow focus to become a national movement. A movement that currently spans the entire country, playing a pivotal role in addressing critical health care needs and practitioner shortages. Today, the University of St. Augustine's movement has a network of over 8,000 exceptional alumni – and we welcome you today to that network of fellow graduates.

Today, YOU become part of this exciting national movement in the transformation of our society. Commencements are held over the next 24 hours in the University's other four campuses in Florida, Texas and California when graduates become a captivating force for good. BE THAT FORCE FOR GOOD.

In closing, I would like to quote Vala Afshar, the Chief Digital Evangelist at Salesforce, who said, "Wisdom is knowing that every single person that you meet knows more about something than you. Adopt a beginner's mindset, stay teachable, and seek random collisions."

From all of us at the University of St. Augustine for Health Sciences, thank you for trusting us with your future. The investment that each of you have made will be valuable for the rest of your life. Congratulations Class of 2019.