More than 350 students received diplomas at Utah State University Brigham City’s commencement ceremony on Friday, April 19, 2019.

Brigham City, Utah - Utah State University (USU) Brigham City held its commencement ceremony on Friday, April 19, 2019. More than 350 students received diplomas ranging from associate, bachelor’s, master’s, and doctorate degrees. Student’s completed degrees in diverse fields, such as economics, elementary education, philosophy, and horticulture.

“In the short time I’ve been here, I’ve been blown away by the sacrifice and hard work of these students to earn their degrees,” said Dan Black, USU Brigham City’s associate vice president. “As they walked across the stage to receive their diplomas, I could see in their eyes that everything they went through to get to that moment was worth it. I have no doubt that they will all go on to do great things for their families and communities.”

USU Brigham City’s class of 2019 is composed of students from USU Brigham City, Kaysville, and Tremonton. The ceremony kicked off with the presentation of colors by Veterans of Foreign Wars – Post 1695. The Box Elder High School Madrigals performed the National Anthem, led by Director Casey Wood.

Student speaker Denise Wright spoke on the trials she and her family had to overcome, and the long journey she took in order to earn her degree. With her husband in the Air Force taking multiple temporary duty assignments and deployments, Wright had to figure out a different way to make things work. “I was a single parent for months on end. I ran a household while working a full-time job and keeping up with the kids, with no immediate family around for support. Plus, my dad has a rare blood cancer. This is my journey. It is one I can be proud of. It is one I sacrificed for, and at times, asked my family to sacrifice for. And I was worth doing it for.”

After Wright, fellow student speaker Tiffany Burnhope talked about the people who influenced her to pursue a degree and career in social work. “As a teenager, I got myself into a relationship that was very hard on my self-esteem and self-worth. I began working with a social worker, June Loveless, who helped me to a better path. Several years ago, my oldest daughter faced some significant health challenges. A friend of mine asked if she could become her ‘secret admirer’, and she would anonymously drop off notes and treats. Last year as my undergrad was coming to an end and I was preparing to graduate, I was overwhelmed and crying about finding a job and starting graduate school. I texted professor Vonda Jump-Norman. She immediately called me and we talked until I calmed down.”

“I tell you about these three women because they have made a big impact in my life and in helping me,” continued Burnhope. “It didn’t cost them money, just time and kindness. It is my hope that we can go out there and change the world, or at least change the world for one person.”

Troy Christensen, vice president of Bridgerland Technical College’s Brigham City campus, addressed the graduates before Noelle Cockett, USU president, conferred the degrees. The ceremony concluded with Kim Larson, USU associate vice president of alumni engagement, welcoming the graduates to the Aggie alumni family. After commencement, family and friends congregated to celebrate their graduates, take pictures, and enjoy Aggie Ice Cream.

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