Utah State University Tooele Celebrates 2019 Graduating Class

USU Tooele
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One hundred and fourteen students received diplomas at Utah State University Tooele’s commencement ceremony on Saturday, April 20, 2019.

Tooele, Utah - Utah State University (USU) Tooele held its commencement ceremony on Saturday, April 20, 2019. One hundred and fourteen students received diplomas ranging from associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees. Student’s earned degrees in diverse fields, such as economics, elementary education, psychology, and recreation resource management.

“One of the great things about Tooele is seeing how the community rallies behind each year’s graduating class,” said Jennifer Van Cott, USU Tooele associate vice president. “Our graduates have been through a lot to get where they are now, and they did it with the help and support of their families and loved ones. Their hard work has paid off, and with a degree in hand, they will be able to impact the lives of many.”

USU Tooele’s class of 2019 is composed of students just out of high school going on to earn a college degree to parents with children going back to school to advance their career. The ceremony kicked off with the Presentation of Colors by the National Guard Junior Leaders Training Course. Marin Legge and Lily Gebs then performed the National Anthem.

Student speaker Michaela Price spoke of her experience fighting for her dreams. Five years ago, she was diagnosed with a genetic disorder called Ehlers Dan Los that attacks her joints, ligaments, and organs. As a result, she has had 24 surgeries. Then, in 2015, she had a severe concussing that wiped away 10 years of her life. She had to relearn how to read, hold a conversation, and more. “When I was diagnosed, my doctor told me my body would not be physically able to support me in my dreams and goals… No matter what your dreams are you will run into people that criticize you and tell you that you will fail. Five years ago, some of the dreams I had were getting my bachelor’s degree, go skydiving, travel the world, and more. I am turning those dreams into a reality, and I don’t regret any of it.”

After Price, fellow student speaker Brett Call addressed the crowd, continuing to speak on overcoming trials as non-traditional students. Call reflected on lessons he learned about the lessons he learned from studying the people of China and their traditions with their 5,000-year-old calendar. “According to their beliefs, 2019 is the year of the boar. It is the year for people who have struggled mightily with seemingly insurmountable obstacles, to finally square their shoulders, plant their feet, charge forward, and break forth onto new ground.” He then explained how those “whose names will be read here today” have all overcome their own challenges and have completed “a journey long in the making.”

Shawn Milne, Tooele County commissioner, addressed the graduates before Francis D. Galey, USU executive vice president and provost, conferred the degrees. The ceremony concluded with Kim Larson, USU associate vice president of alumni engagement, welcoming the graduates to the Aggie alumni family.

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