Utah State University Uintah Basin Celebrates 2019 Graduating Class

USU Uintah Basin

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Uintah Basin, Utah - Utah State University (USU) Uintah Basin held its commencement ceremony on Saturday, April 27, 2019. One hundred and thirty-one students received diplomas ranging from associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees. Students earned degrees in diverse fields, such as economics, elementary education, business, and recreation resource management.

“We are all so proud of this graduating class and are looking forward to seeing where their degrees will take them,” said James Y. Taylor, associate vice president at USU Uintah Basin. “For the past few years, we've developed strong relationships with these students and have seen them overcome all the odds in order to walk across that stage. Whether they stay in the Basin and join our local workforce or leave to pursue their careers, we know they will be successful because of how hard they worked here.”

USU Uintah Basin’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 processional accompanied by White Peaks Centennial Pipe Band. Taylor welcomed the graduates and their families before the Presentation of Colors by the U.S. Air Force Auxiliary, Civil Air Patrol, Vernal Cadet Squadron. Nursing graduate Jaedee Slaugh followed by performing the national anthem.

Student speaker Jaycen Walker spoke about his decision to leave his career as a mechanic to start nursing school, “I assumed that if I could pull a cab on a Powerstroke, install head studs on a diesel, and change injectors in a Cummins and only end up with a few extra bolts, that I could totally figure out how the human body is assembled, right? Wrong… I left that first night of class thinking I had completely made the wrong choice.” Despite feeling overwhelmed and low on confidence, Walker pushed on, studied hard, and passed his first exam with a 104% grade. “That was hands down one of the best and most addictive feelings I've ever had. I carried that drive, achievement, and success through my prerequisite courses and entered Uintah Basin Technical College’s (UBTech) Practical Nursing program in the fall of 2017.”

UBTech and USU Uintah Basin’s partnership allows for students to complete a program at UBTech and then transfer those credits to USU Uintah Basin. After finishing the PN program, Walker entered the Associate of Applied Science in Nursing program at USU Uintah Basin. Walker ended his speech congratulating his fellow classmates, “I know that each and every one of you in a cap and gown have your own unique story of adventure, struggle, and success… It has been an honor to get to know you, and watch and grow with you as we complete this journey together.”

Sylvia Wilkins, Uintah County Economic Development director, addressed the graduates before Francis D. Galey, USU executive vice president and provost, conferred the degrees. The ceremony concluded with Matthew White, USU vice president of advancement, welcoming the graduates to the Aggie alumni family. The Red Spirit Singers sang a recessional song as the graduates and guests departed.

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