

NEW MEXICO TECH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY MAY 13, 2017

[Dr. Steve Wells]

Students and soon-to-be graduates, proud parents, family members, close friends, dedicated faculty and alumni, steadfast staff, and devoted regents, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you to New Mexico Tech's 2017 Commencement.

As the university's 17th President, it my pleasure to say congratulations to the New Mexico Tech Class of 2017. This class will have a special standing in my heart, as your last year here at Tech was my first year as president. You, the Class of 2017, have made my first year at Tech a warm and welcoming time. Thank you! In return, I have planned a very special ending to the 2017 commencement! In addition, we are adding two new elements of our commencement that I hope will become a tradition of New Mexico Tech: a Student Speaker and a Keynote Speaker.

We gather here today to celebrate your steadfast endeavors that have brought to this point in time. This is also a time to reflect and give thanks to your parents and friends who have provided unwavering support, emotional and perhaps financial, and to those who have helped bring you to this threshold. You will pass over this threshold with the knowledge, experience, insight, and courage to excel and contribute in ways you have yet to discover.

To quote Sir Isaac Newton: "I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me." I urge all of you to explore the great ocean that lies undiscovered before each one of you.

So before we go any further, I want to acknowledge the families and friends who have joined us to honor your daughters and sons who are graduating from New Mexico Tech ...you deserve all of our thanks for supporting these young men and women as they pursued their educational careers at Tech and as the most recent graduating "Techies."

As a Techie you have been grounded in a history and ethos of intellect, resilience, dedication and potential that have been part of the character of New Mexico Tech since it was founded in 1889. You are about to pass through a threshold, becoming an alumnus of a proud institution of higher education that has decades of profoundly impactful endeavors and extraordinary innovation, all of which have contributed to advancement and well being of communities from here in New Mexico to those around the world.

As you move forward in pursuing graduate studies, following professional opportunities, or pursuing a life-long dream, we hope you return upon occasion to visit Tech, fondly remembering the time you spent here and those who helped you arrive at this threshold.

I would like for all of us to recognize New Mexico Tech's outstanding faculty and staff with a round of applause.

It is now my pleasure to briefly introduce the members of the Platform. Will you please stand when I call your name. Members of the New Mexico Tech Board of Regents:

Regent and Board Chair Deborah Peacock

Regent Donald Monette

Regent Myissa Weiss

Regent Designee Emily Silva

From all of us on the Platform, and our faculty, staff, and alumni in the audience, to you, the Class of 2017, you have both inspired and challenged us, you have left an indelible mark on Tech.

As budding scientists and engineers, you understand the importance of data. So with the standing tradition, I will provide you with some vital data about the Class of 2017.

- The average GPA of today's bachelor's recipients is 3.31.
- 74 percent of you have GPAs of 3.0 or greater.
- 39 percent have received at least one F in a course at NMT.
- Four of you are graduating with a perfect 4.0 GPA
- The youngest bachelor's recipients are 21 years old and there are five of them.

Once we are done here today, New Mexico Tech will have awarded 8,677 bachelor's degrees in the history of the Institute. We have awarded 3,277 master's degrees and 459 Ph.D.s

The most well-represented department this year is Mechanical Engineering, with 57 Bachelor's degrees being awarded today. The most well-represented department at the Master's Degree level is also Mechanical Engineering, with 21 Master's degrees being awarded today, while Materials Engineering is the most well-represented department at the Ph.D. level, with four degrees

Here are a few other interesting facts about our smart and overachieving students:

The Class of 2017 is a diverse group. Just over 72 percent of the undergraduates hail from New Mexico, including students from Waterflow to Carlsbad, from Deming to Costilla – and all points in between.

From out-of-state, the Class of 2017 includes students from Alpharetta, Georgia — Mechanicsville, Maryland — Chicago, Illinois — El Paso, Texas — Monroe, Washington — Bakersfield, California — and many other places in 19 states.

This year, our international students earning degrees hail from China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Ghana, India, Iran, Libya, Nepal, the Philippines, and Turkey.

Congratulations to you all!

Today's ceremonies clearly are focused on you the graduating class of 2017 with the conferral of your degrees but it also includes time to recognize those individuals ... students, faculty, and alumni ... who have gone above and beyond in their teaching, research, mentoring, and service to New Mexico Tech.

Please note as the awards are presented here on the platform, your programs contain more details about the awards and award recipients.