

CHANCELLOR ALLISON COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS
May 8, 2018

It is my honor to present the class of 2018. Tonight we celebrate. For the graduates, we are celebrating the reason you came to IU South Bend - to earn an Indiana University degree that will benefit you the rest of your lives.

For the parents, families and friends of the graduates we are celebrating your role in helping them in this achievement. You were there through the hard work, sacrifices, and the ups and downs of their college career.

For our platform party, and for the faculty and staff of IU South Bend, we are celebrating because these graduates make us proud of our work and our institution.

This year we are conferring 1,035 degrees consisting of 858 bachelor degrees, 164 master degrees, and 13 associate degrees. The youngest graduate in the class is 20 years old. The oldest graduate is 75 years young.

IU South Bend is a place of many family ties and the Class of 2018 is no exception. I have some examples. Please stand when you hear your names.

Sarah and Michael Louderback are brother and sister. They are both graduating tonight with bachelor's degrees in Nursing. This is the first time we have had a sister and brother go through nursing program together. Their mother is also a nurse. Congratulations, Sarah, Michael and Mom.

Alexandria and Jacob Kramer. Not to be outdone, we have a husband and wife who are the first to be graduating together with bachelor of Fine Arts in Musical Theatre Performance. Congratulations, Alexandria and Jacob.

Adam El-Ammori. Adam is graduating tonight with a degree in Economics. He joins all five of his siblings as graduates of IU South Bend. Congratulations to Adam and to his family of alums!

See if you can figure out our next pairs of graduates. **Lauren Strausborger, Paula Strausborger, Jessica Stewart, and Stephanie Stewart.** They are the two sets of twins who are graduating together tonight. Both Lauren and Paula have earned a bachelor's of degree in Health Sciences. Jessica has earned a bachelor's degree in Education and Stephanie has earned a bachelor's degree in General Studies. Congratulations to our twins!

And to close our family segment tonight I ask **Laagahon Aimee Dominique Abby** to stand. Dominique is from the Ivory Coast. Her mother never had the chance to go to school so she made sure her children did. Dominique learned English in South Bend and is graduating with a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication. Her mother flew here from the Ivory Coast to join in this special moment. Congratulations, Dominique, and to her mother, her inspiration. (Felicitations Dominique est aussi a votre mere qui vous avez donne la force et la volonte a finir vos etudes!)

Let's have a round of applause for all the families here tonight.

The graduates here tonight will make many contributions to their communities, to Indiana, the nation, and the world. Graduates, whether you earned degrees in the arts, business, education, health sciences, or the liberal arts and sciences, you have developed the critical knowledge, skills, and propensity towards lifelong learning that employers want and that our society needs. You are more likely to be involved with your communities, to give back, to lead, and to engage in the first duty of citizens in a democracy, to vote.

This is primary election night in Indiana. Votes are being counted as we speak. As the United States faces divisive and controversial issues and leaders, your voices are critical to our success. It's imperative that you start that engagement earlier than in past generations. IU South Bend helped show you the way. We greatly increased the percentage of students who voted between 2012 and 2016, but we need to do more. Graduates, and current students, we need you to lead our democracy.

One student who fostered many campus conversations, **Andi Trowbridge**, is leading the way. Andi, please stand up and be recognized for your

activism to make our campus a better place. Andi's cap reads "I vote. Do you? Be the change. Be engaged." Thank you.

This past year in the United States has seen an explosion of the voices of young people stepping in to witness their experiences and to try to find new directions. In the #MeToo movement young women courageously stepped forward to join women of all ages reporting their sexual assault and harassment. Thousands of young people no longer implore but demand that we do something to make them safer in their schools without turning them into prisons.

I have read much about the students who have led the movement for more effective gun safety. One recurrent critique was that these students were actors, coached with their lines. Well, those young people were coached alright, coached by effective high school education to think, analyze, speak, and write with clarity and conviction.

These young leaders have formed coalitions to address a number of social concerns beyond gun violence, including equal access to quality education. Vocal young people are stating the obvious, that Black Lives Matter, when in their daily existence they often see evidence to the contrary. Young people are leaders in sustainability, the inclusion of a wider range of their fellow human beings of all races, gender and sexual identities, classes, and abilities.

I have listened to what young people have to say. I've read extensively about your concerns. And I've heard and read about those critical of this generation and your presumption to speak. My message to our graduates today is: Speak up. Speak louder. Speak more often. Speak with evidence and conviction. Speak with a larger variety of individuals with differing opinions. Certainly listen, but then speak until you're tired of repeating yourself, even when you think it can't make a difference. This democracy needs your voices. Speak!

We have many great examples among our graduates today of students who have used their voices effectively. I have heard many moving testimonies of DACA students brought into the United States as children, seeking their

American dream. These dreamers continue to work and contribute to American society. Their stories have led many to act on their behalf and for the good of the United States.

One of our graduates here tonight, **Salvador Perez Lopez**, was featured in a *New York Times* article called “American Dreamers.” Salvador, please stand. In the article he says, “I use my music to spread love and strive to add tranquility to the ugly world of politics.” Salvador is graduating tonight with a Bachelor of Music in Clarinet and he has been accepted to the Master of Music program at the Jacobs School of Music at IU Bloomington. Like his fellow dreamers, he has much to contribute. We can’t afford to lose his voice... or his music. Thank you and congratulations, Salvador.

There are other students I would like to recognize tonight who reflect the outstanding caliber of the class of 2018. Please stand when you hear your name.

Christine Hutchinson. Christine was a double major and graduates tonight with a degree in Marketing and Advertising. She recently landed a job at Panasonic in Chicago as a marketing and events coordinator. She is also doing a takeover of the IU South Bend Instagram account tonight for commencement. Check her out on Instagram at @IU South Bend. Congratulations, Christine.

Khai Pham. Khai is graduating tonight with a bachelor’s degree in Biochemistry. She has been active in research from day one. She has helped develop a biosensor for detection of E. coli contamination in water and worked with researchers at Notre Dame on understanding malaria parasites. Khai is the first in her family to graduate from college and is applying to medical school. Congratulations, Khai.

Sergio Ortiz. Sergio is graduating tonight with a degree in Marketing. He had three job offers and is taking the highly selective Business Leadership Summer Internship program at Leo Burnett, a global advertising agency based in Chicago. He will be trained as an account executive. Congratulations, Sergio.

Desmond Atem. Desmond graduates tonight with a bachelor's degree in Nursing. He wanted to become a nurse after witnessing the critical need for healthcare workers in his home country of Cameroon, including the death of his father. During his time at IU South Bend he was a Senator in the Student Government Association, a member of the IU South Bend Honors Program, received the Newman Civic Fellow Award, and became a U.S. citizen. Desmond has a job as a clinical associate at Elkhart General Hospital. Congratulations, Desmond.

Paige Avery. Paige is graduating tonight with a bachelor's degree in Social Work. She leaves IU South Bend as one of the highest scorers in the history of the women's basketball team, while maintaining a 3.4 grade point average. She will be pursuing her master's degree in Social Work at IU South Bend. Congratulations, Paige, and Go Titans.

Mackenzie Bontrager. Mackenzie is graduating tonight a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Both of her parents are IU South Bend grads from the teacher education program. She has a job teaching first grade at Beardsley Elementary School in Elkhart. Congratulations, Mackenzie.

Michele Costantino. Michele is graduating tonight with a bachelor's degree in Biochemistry. At IU South Bend she became involved in research and received an Honorable Mention from the prestigious national Goldwater Scholarship Foundation. Michele will pursue her PhD in biochemistry at Arizona State University this fall. Congratulations, Michele.

Susan Ward. Susan graduates tonight with a bachelor's of Fine Arts degree and a 3.967 grade point average. Susan received the Arts Excellence Award twice. At the age of 67, she is receiving her college degree 50 years to the day of her graduation from high school. Congratulations, Susan.

There are many more students who deserve recognition and I'm sorry that time doesn't allow us to celebrate more of this class's outstanding accomplishments. I would like to acknowledge groups of students, though.

Would all students who are first in their immediate family to graduate from college please stand and remain standing?

Would all other students graduating please join them?

Each one of you who walks across the stage this evening has reached a significant goal. You have earned an Indiana University degree, something you can be proud of for the rest of your lives. The faculty and staff of IU South Bend and the people on this platform salute you.

This is my last commencement at IU South Bend. I can't think of a better way to end my time than by celebrating with you tonight. To those who remain to lead Indiana University South Bend, I urge you to maintain the highest aspirations for this campus as it continues to build the economy and increase the quality of life in the area of Indiana that we serve. Our students and this region are worthy of our highest aspirations.

President McRobbie, I have presented a brief profile of the 2018 IU South Bend graduating class. They each have a desire to make a difference in a changing and challenging world. These graduates have met Indiana University's expectations and aspire to achieve excellence in their lives. I present them to you with pride. Graduates, you may be seated.