

Southern Utah University Alumni President Speech

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Alumna

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Hello Thunderbird Nation! As a graduate of the Communications Department, a former T-bird basketball player, and now a proud member and current president of the National Alumni Council, it is my distinct honor to congratulate and welcome you across the finish line into a group of over 60,000 alumni.

You have already received your alumni card at the Grad Fair. And as we make your enrollment official today, I speak on behalf of all alumni when I say, the pride we

feel for the class of 2022 is profound. Thunderbirds all over the world are eager to have you join us. But today, we just want to make sure you understand a few conditions of membership.

We've all spent years on this campus donning our best Thunderbird red every Friday, encouraging T-bird victories with Grammy worthy renditions of the SUU Fight Song, becoming a true T-bird at midnight during homecoming, and honoring the campus elite at the annual Thunderbird Awards.

And during all these experiences, did you ever wonder what in the world is a Thunderbird? Let me break it down for you quickly. The Thunderbird is a legendary creature who is said to create thunder by flapping its wings and lightning by flashing its eyes. Some cultures glorified the T-bird because it was able to rise above the earth and rule the skies. Others celebrated the bird because of its ability to control the storms. But regardless of which mythology you read, everyone agrees the Thunderbird is a representation of power and strength.

So, for all you Tom Holland fans out there, we all know what Uncle Ben said to Peter Parker, "With great power comes great responsibility."

You are leaving campus today and embarking on a powerful role for SUU and taking on great responsibility. But the leaders of the university and community have taught you well and you are already soaring to the moment.

This summer, when Cedar City fell into a state of emergency from severe flooding, Thunderbirds everywhere rose to the occasion. You filled sandbags, shared your apartments and dorm rooms, donated what you had to those in need. You took on the responsibility to serve the community beautifully because T-Birds ascend! So, thank you.

But the best way that you can rise to the occasion as alumni is to use your Thunder and be a loud voice.

Make sure people know that associating with SUU means being part of a campus that was awarded almost a million dollars to expand the work they are doing to provide pre-employment transition services to students with disabilities.

Tell your network that the Southern Utah Museum of Art brings the work of world renown artists like Andy Warhol right here to C-town.

And speaking of Thunderbirds ruling the sky, share that the Aviation program is the highest altitude university flight school in the country and run the largest university owned helicopter training fleet in the world!

Shout from the mountains that if someone needs a school putting its students mental health first, look no further than the creation of SUU's new on-campus health clinic that will be increasing free access to counseling and psychological services for all students.

Make sure people know you earned a degree that included real world experience and activity in social issues like childcare, animal preservation, and feeding the homeless and food insecure -- That during your time here, this degree demanded you make an impact, a legacy all of us continue.

Become T-bird influencers and post your Tik Toks of SUU's outdoor campus and your adventures. Let people know there is a place where students are empowered to explore, engage, and experience the outdoors in the most beautiful place on earth.....complete with red rocks.

There is so much to be proud of as the alumni of this place. Especially the fact that we all elevate every time SUU calls upon us to do so. Like I said, the alumni are thrilled to have you join the flock! So my most exciting job today is to make it official and tell you that it is about time to get loud and make it thunder in here.

First, everyone double check those tassels are on the right so you can move it to the left and then we'll celebrate. Everybody got it?

Class of 2022, please rise to the occasion and stand. On the count of three, move your tassel over. Ready.....1, 2, 3! Congratulations.