

Dr. Andrew Briggs, accompanied by **Diane Carter** and **Tracey Bradshaw**. Please enjoy the choir.

***BRING UP CHOIR MICS**

***BRING UP CHOIR LIGHTING**

***ALL OTHER LIGHTING TO BLACK**

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

“The Promise of living”

{After performance ends}

***FADE CHOIR LIGHTING TO BLACK**

***BRING UP LIGHTS ON THE PODIUM ONLY**

PRESIDENT BENSON: The Class of 2024 will be represented by two of their peers: **Holly Biesinger (BEE-SING-ER)** and **Nick Stein**.

Holly Biesinger is from West Valley City, Utah. She is graduating with degrees in Art education and History with minors in Art History, Illustration, Painting, Drawing, Printmaking and History Teaching. Holly is also the Valedictorian for the College of Performing and Visual Arts.

Nick Stein is from right here in Cedar City. Nick is graduating with a bachelor's degree in Communication with an emphasis in messaging and human interaction. Please welcome Holly.

***FADE STAGE LIGHTS TO 80%**

Holly Biesinger Speech:

Dear graduates, esteemed faculty, family, and friends,

As we stand on the precipice of a new chapter, I'm honored and humbled to address you today. Congratulations on reaching this milestone, a testament to your hard work, determination, and unwavering commitment. Today, we celebrate not just the culmination of academic achievements but the beginning of a journey into the vast unknown. Throughout your time here, you've tackled challenges head-on, burned the midnight oil, and pushed your limits to acquire knowledge and skills. You've shown resilience in the face of adversity, and your presence here today is proof of your ability to overcome obstacles. So, let's take a moment to acknowledge the grit and determination that brought you to this pivotal moment.

As we embark on this collective journey into the future, I'd like to share a perspective that has guided my own path—the idea that it is more important to BE something than it is to DO something. In a world often fixated on achievements, accolades, and a never-ending to-do list, the essence of who we are can sometimes get lost in the shuffle. We're told to pursue careers, accumulate possessions, and check off societal expectations, often neglecting the core of our being. Today, I want to remind you that your worth is not solely defined by your accomplishments but by the person you choose to be. While obtaining our degrees, we have been on a journey of self-discovery, as individuals

trying to navigate experiences like choosing majors and discovering new interests, AND as a graduating class working to build a professional portfolio and complete our education requirements. However, the truth is, most of us are still navigating the labyrinth of our personal dreams and aspirations. But what if, instead of focusing solely on what you want to do, you shift your focus to who you want to be?

Being someone encompasses qualities like kindness, resilience, empathy, and authenticity. It's about the impact you have on the world and the lives of those around you. The beauty of focusing on who you want to be is that it transcends the constraints of a predefined life plan. It allows for flexibility, growth, and the embracing of unexpected opportunities. In the tapestry of life, our impact on others is not solely woven through the threads of our chosen careers and life paths, but rather through the intricate patterns of how we treat people.

As we navigate the uncharted waters beyond graduation, let's dispel the notion that our worth is exclusively measured by the titles we hold or the professions we pursue. Consider this: the warmth of a genuine smile from a stranger as you walked across campus on a challenging day; the empathy extended by a professor during your moment of vulnerability; and the kindness shown by a peer in your times of adversity—these are the brushstrokes that paint a lasting portrait in the hearts of those we encounter. It's the relationships we nurture, the shoulders we offer for support, and the understanding we extend that truly define our impact on

the world. If your journey leads you to a life of business, for example, remember this: If you're going to be a businessperson, first be a person. Parallel the principles of business with the principles of humanity. Embrace ethical practices, prioritize the well-being of your team, and recognize that success in business is not just about profit margins but also about making a positive impact on the lives of others. And if your journey leads you to a noble career in education, remember that if you want to teach, you must first embrace the human side of your role. Empathize with your students' individual stories, struggles, and triumphs. Learn to understand the diverse needs of your students and create a compassionate learning environment where every voice is heard and every heart is valued. It's not just about disseminating information; it's about fostering curiosity, sparking inspiration, and creating a space where every student feels seen. Humanity is what makes life, and a life's work, meaningful. Whether you find yourself in a boardroom, a classroom, or any other corner of the world, embrace the human connections that lie at the heart of every endeavor. The impact you make on the lives of others is a legacy that transcends mere accomplishments. As you step into the world beyond these walls, remember that success isn't just about climbing the career ladder or amassing material wealth. It's about becoming the best version of yourself and contributing positively to the lives of those around you. The impact you make as a person is what truly matters. As we leave SUU, above all else, it's the

people we will remember and the experiences that drew us together that we will carry in our hearts.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt congratulations once again. Today marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, filled with endless possibilities. As you embark on this journey, remember that it's not just about what you do but, more importantly, about who you are. May you continue to embrace the challenges, cherish the moments of joy, and above all, be the incredible individuals and compassionate humans you are destined to become. Congratulations, graduates. The world eagerly awaits the remarkable people and principled leaders you will be, as well as the inspiring stories you will leave behind.

-End of speech-

{Applause}

Nick Stein Speech:

Hello everyone, and congratulations on making it to commencement! Between the last four years of classes and having grown up right here in Cedar City, SUU campus feels like a second home to me — except it's harder to find parking. This event is a celebration of all of our hard work, and I am extremely proud to be standing here among my peers today.

I never pictured myself speaking in front of this many people, especially not wearing a wizard robe and a hat shaped like a cheez-it. It is