

A Publication of Connors State College

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4

# CONNECTION



111TH COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

Connors State College  
Warner, Oklahoma

## CONNORS STATE COLLEGE

WARNER CAMPUS  
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Warner, OK 74469

THREE RIVERS PORT CAMPUS  
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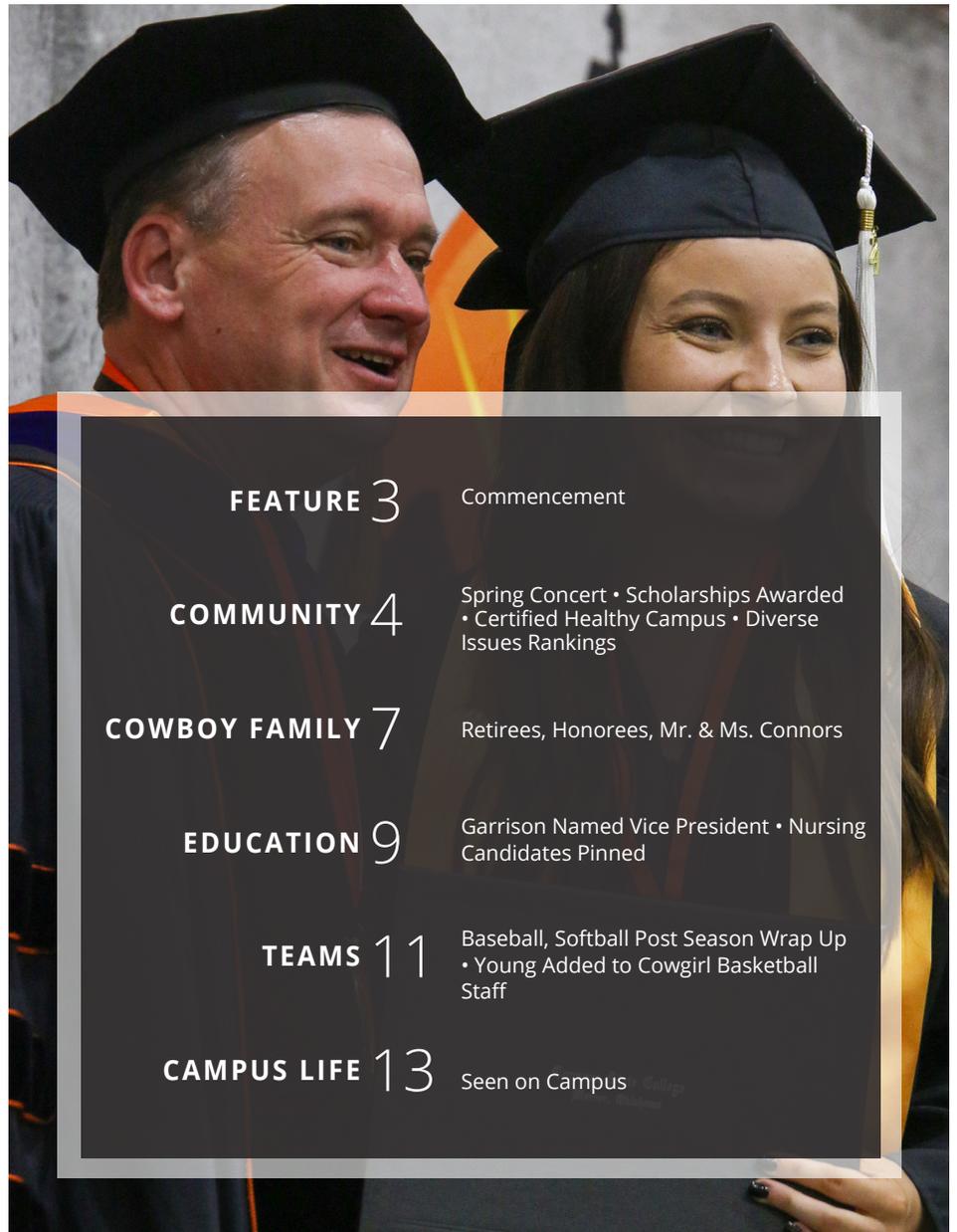
### CONNECTION

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## Students Graduate on Warner Campus

Connors State College recently celebrated its 111th graduating class. Approximately 500 degrees and certificates were awarded on May 7, 2021, at the Melvin Self Fieldhouse on the Connors State College Warner Campus.

“We are very proud of our students,” said CSC President Dr. Ron Ramming. “They have worked hard and have met all of the requirements for graduation.”

Regent Jarold Callahan was the keynote speaker and imparted excellent words of wisdom to the graduates. Regent Callahan spoke of family and his education, encouraging students to continue to learn and to never give in when times are tough.

Chris McBeath, the 2021 Faculty of the Year, proudly led the procession

carrying the college mace, which is embedded with CSC history. Exiting the ceremony, Dr. Tabitha Hibbs, 2020 Faculty of the Year, led the procession out. Dr. Ramming was Master of Ceremonies for the evening, while Regent Callahan and Regent Rick Davis both welcomed the crowd and offered congratulations to graduates.

To watch the commencement ceremony in its entirety, or to learn about the many degree options at Connors State College, please visit [www.connorsstate.edu](http://www.connorsstate.edu).

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*Photos: Students enjoy the on-campus commencement ceremonies, and pose for photos with Dr. Ramming. ✨*

# COMMUNITY



## Music Program Hosts Spring Concert

Connors State College's Music Program hosted the 2021 Spring Concert. Students, faculty and staff performed a number of varying musical acts. Staff and faculty members Jake Lawson, Lori Palmer and Rebecca Hill coordinated the concert for the night.

"I am so thankful for the opportunities that I have been given at Connors through the music program," said Freshman Madison McElyea. "I have grown, not only as a performer, but also as a person through the program."

McElyea was one of the many

students who performed during the Spring Concert. Along with musical numbers, some of the staff performed skits to make the audience laugh. Students and guests were welcome to attend in socially distanced seating.

For more information about the program, visit [connorsstate.edu](http://connorsstate.edu).

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*Above: Jake Lawson, Asst. Dean of Students and Rodeo Team Coach, playing the guitar.*

*Below, L-R: Lori Palmer, Division Chair for Communications and Arts, playing in the spring concert. Kylea Terrell, freshman, singing a solo. Chandler*

*Young, Assistant Director of Recruitment, and Jesse Lopez, IT Administrator performing a skit.*



## Connors Earns No. 1 and Top 100 Rankings

Connors State College was recently recognized by *Diverse: Issues in Higher Education* for being a Top 100 Producer for Associate Degrees.

Connors State is recognized as the No. 1 producer of Associate Degrees for Native American Students majoring in Education, Registered Nursing, Nursing Administration, Nursing Research and Clinical Nursing.

Connors was also ranked No. 2 in Agriculture, Agriculture Operations and Related Sciences.

The Connors State College Warner campus is more agriculturally based, while CSC Muskogee is where the Nursing and Allied Health programs are housed.

To learn more about the opportunities available for students at Connors State, visit [connorsstate.edu](http://connorsstate.edu). 🌿



## CSC Named Certified Healthy Campus

Connors State College was certified as a Healthy Oklahoma campus, which is a free, voluntary statewide certification.

The certification showcases businesses, campuses, communities, congregations, early childhood programs, restaurants, and schools that are committed to supporting healthy choices through environmental and policy change. These entities work to improve the health of Oklahomans by implementing elements, policies, and programs that will help Oklahomans to eat better,

move more, and be tobacco free.

During the summer, Connors State staff and faculty have the option for a 30-minute Healthy Lifestyle Break during lunch hours. The goal is to help Connors staff maintain healthy minds and healthy hearts.

Connors State has been a certified healthy campus in the past and looks forward to continuing this program throughout the college and extend it to students. 🌿

## Connors Awards \$50K in Scholarships

Connors State College recently awarded over \$50,000 in scholarships to 27 students at Warner High School. Some students received specific team scholarships, while others were awarded academic or other scholarship dollars. Team scholarships included Baseball, President's Leadership Class, and Rodeo, while

multiple students were selected for scholarships for 12 credit hours.

"We are so happy these students are joining us at Connors in the Fall," said Chandler Young, Assistant Director of Recruitment. "All of these students have a lot of potential to be successful in the coming years."

The scholarships were presented by

CSC Recruiting Department Director Logan Nero and Young, along with Director of the Foundation, Dr. Krystle Lane.

To learn more about becoming a student at Connors State or how to apply for scholarships, visit [connorsstate.edu](http://connorsstate.edu). 🌿

# COWBOY FAMILY



Gwen Rodgers

2021 PROFESSIONAL STAFF EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR • RETIREE

Gwen Rodgers is retiring from Connors State in 2021. Rodgers' current position is Title III NASNTI Director and Assessment Coordinator. Rodgers has been a tremendous help to CSC, specifically with setting up technology to make learning more accessible to students. Rodgers is married to Kevin, with children Stephanie Rodgers, and Michael and Shelby Rodgers, and granddaughter Olivia. Rodgers was also recognized as the 2021 Professional Staff Employee of the Year.



Stuart "Doc" Woods

2021 RETIREE

Doc Woods is retiring this year from Connors State College, being gainfully employed at CSC since 1983. Woods taught Biology and was well known around campus for always being a friendly face. Woods has two children, London and Gabriel.



Ken Tyrell

2021 RETIREE

Mr. Tyrell is retiring from Connors State this year. Tyrell has worked at CSC since 2009, in the science department. Tyrell taught Chemistry and was very helpful to all the students. Tyrell plans on spending his retirement with his wife, Kenie.

*Retirees*



JoAnn McClain

2021 RETIREE

Ms. JoAnn McClain is retiring from Sodexo, an extended piece of our Cowboy family. McClain came to us in 2019 and has been a great asset to Connors State. McClain and her team at Sodexo feed all the CSC students, guests, and friends all year long. CSC would like to extend our congratulations on retirement to Ms. JoAnn McClain.

# Mr. & Mrs. Connors



Garrett Slagell

2021 MR. CONNORS

For the 2020-2021 school year, Garrett Slagell of Hydro, Okla., was selected as Mr. Connors, and Jacey Dyer, of Gore, Okla., was named Ms. Connors.

Slagell is a sophomore on the shooting sports team and graduated from Connors with an agricultural degree. Slagell said that the first time he stepped foot on the Connors State campus, he knew it would be home. While at Connors State, Slagell was named a national champion FFA Proficiency Winner, along with having great success in the classroom and on the shooting sports range. While on campus, Slagell was president of Aggie Club his sophomore year.



Jacey Dyer

2021 MS. CONNORS

Jacey Dyer of Gore, Okla., is also a member of the shooting sports team, with plans of attending nursing school in the fall. Dyer was also selected as the 2021 Aggie Club Homecoming queen, representing Aggie Club in the All School Homecoming, and served as Aggie Club Secretary. Dyer has had tremendous success in and out of the classroom, as well.

"I am so proud of these students for all the success they have had at Connors," said Sierra Walker, Shooting Team Coach. "I cannot wait to see what both Garrett and Jacey accomplish in their lives. It is not a matter of 'if', but 'when' we will hear great accomplishments from them."



Chris McBeath

2021 FACULTY OF THE YEAR

Chris McBeath was voted on and recognized by his peers as the 2021 Faculty of the Year. McBeath currently serves as the Division Chair for Social Sciences, teaches classes, and will be a sponsor for the Student Government Association for the upcoming year. McBeath and his wife Trisha have two children, Matthew and Ella.



Jana Rowe

2021 SUPPORT STAFF OF THE YEAR

Jana Rowe has been with Connors State since 2013. Rowe currently serves as the Assistant Director of Financial Aid. Rowe is a great asset to students and their families. Rowe and her husband, Jonathan, who is also employed at CSC, have one daughter, Fallyn.



Sharriell McHenry

2021 STUDENT IMPACT AWARD

Sharriell worked in the Campus Life office on campus where she assisted with event planning and marketing of events that happened in Student Life. McHenry also served as the 2020-2021 President's Leadership Class President.

# Honorees



## Dr. Makenna Garrison Named Academic Vice President

Connors State College has named Dr. Makenna Garrison as Vice President for Academic Affairs. Garrison brings to Connors State a passion for community colleges and their commitment to students and their success.

"As soon as I walked onto the college campus for the first time, I fell in love with the mission of the college and the many opportunities that a community college can provide for students," states Garrison.

At Oklahoma City Community College, she worked in Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, holding various positions, including Admissions Advisor, Coordinator of Cooperative Alliances, Adjunct Instructor of English, Professor of English, Director of Curriculum and Assessment, Interim Dean of Social Sciences, and Interim Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs. During her doctoral program, she also held the position of Graduate Teaching Assistant of English at the University of Oklahoma.

Among many academic accolades, Garrison was presented the Outstanding Professional Employee Award from the Oklahoma

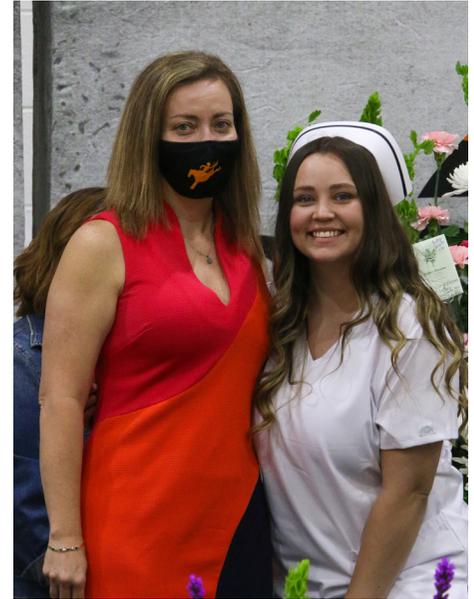
Association of Community Colleges, the Outstanding Faculty Award from Oklahoma City Community College, and the Provost's Certificate of Distinction for Outstanding Graduate Assistant Teaching at the University of Oklahoma.

"Dr. Garrison's experience and background will be very valuable as we strive to provide the best possible educational opportunities for the students we serve," said Dr. Ron Ramming, Connors State President.

She will begin her new role as Vice President for Academic Affairs at Connors State on July 1, 2021.

Garrison believes that a community college is a special place for students.

"I was excited to join CSC when I saw its mission about being committed to 'building futures'. In meeting with CSC staff and faculty, I could see the institution's engagement with students and their learning. It seems like everyone at CSC works together as a family for the good of students and the community. The passion for community college education runs deep in my veins, and I am excited to be a part of CSC's commitment to student success." ✍️



## 2021 Spring Nursing Candidates Pinned

Connors State College celebrated the graduation of 31 new nurses in a pinning ceremony held May 7 at the Melvin Self Fieldhouse on the Warner Campus.

The pinning ceremony signifies the nursing students' official initiation into the brotherhood and sisterhood of nurses. The modern ceremony is rich with symbolism: it is the rite of passage which can be traced all the way back to the 1860s when Florence Nightingale was awarded the Red Cross of St. George in recognition for her diligent service to the injured during the Crimean War. By 1916, the practice of pinning new graduates was standard throughout the United States, and Connors follows this practice.

The Nursing Program at Connors State College has a high success rate of students placed after graduating.

Sandra Watson, the Connors' Division Chair for Nursing and Allied Health, said, "Recently, it has been said that nurses are the lifeblood of the hospital. In today's pandemic, this makes our graduates the lifeblood of our communities."

"The pinning ceremony is a rite of

passage into a noble trusted profession. It is always a very special time. Today's graduates are stepping into the unknown and will become part of our nation's history. These graduates are coming out into our communities at a most needed time. Bedside nurses are displaying incredible courage and dedication to our profession like Florence Nightingale during the 1800s," said Watson.

"We are very proud of these students who have completed a very rigorous academic program," said Dr. Ron Ramming, CSC President. "We are happy that our students are going to make a difference in a work force that so desperately needs help."

The class nominated two graduates who spoke to their fellow classmates, family and friends about the classes' journey together. Kristi Sheeder represented the Muskogee Campus, and Tatum Seaton represented the Tahlequah Campus.

Students received pins from their instructors, participated in the Candle Lighting Ceremony, and gave the Nightingale Pledge. Students graduating from the Traditional Nurse program were: Kinzy Armstrong,

Megan Bailey, Valerie Baker, Kylie Budd, Emma Eaton, Trace Kizzia, Kira Lucas, Brittany McNeer, Eryn Maplethorpe, Lacey Ogren, Art Paden, Valerie Pearce, Caitlin Ramey, Kendra Reasnor, Baylee Sadler, Kristi Sheeder, Connor Sterling, Amanda Taylor, Krystal Walker, Rachel Ballard, Heather Jackson, and Tatum Seaton.

Students graduating from the Career Ladder program were: Aubrey Clark, Patrick Frits, Jenny Homan, Whitney McCollum, Kelby Riede, Andrea Simon, Sheri Blankenship, Erin Williams, and Autumn Imhoff.

For more information about the nursing program at Connors State College, visit our website at [www.connorsstate.edu/nursing](http://www.connorsstate.edu/nursing), or contact our Division Chair for Nursing and Allied Health, Sandra Watson at (918) 684-5436.

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*Pictured, L-R: Tatum Seaton addresses the group of Nurses. Professor Bishop poses with a nursing student. ✨*



## Cowboy Baseball Wraps Up Season

On May 14, Connors State's hopes of extending its baseball season past the weekend were dealt a big blow in a 12-2 loss to Eastern Oklahoma in the Region II tournament in Woodward.

Prior to being defeated by Eastern, Connors took down Seminole State College. Connors State produced 13 hits and limited Seminole State to seven in routing the Trojans 10-2 in six innings in the Region II baseball playoff action.

Back-to-back five-run innings (third and fourth) by the Cowboys proved to be big.

Jonathan Pena homered in a 3-for-5 effort for Connors State. Grant Randall and Kaleb Glass were each 2-for-4. Randall doubled twice, drove in four runs and scored once. Glass had one RBI and scored twice.

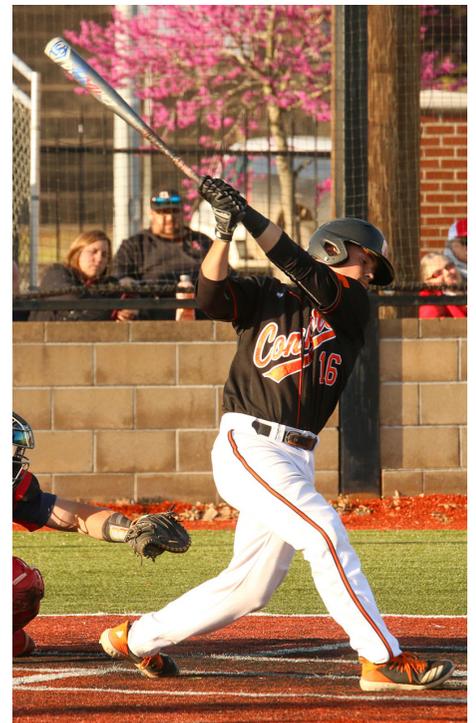
Peyton McDowall finished 2-for-5 with two doubles and a run scored and Dawson Estep was 1-for-2, picked up three RBIs and scored once for the Cowboys.

Aaron Hosak got the pitching victory for Connors State. He allowed just two walks and struck out eight.

Upon defeating Seminole, Connors fell to Eastern. Jonathan Pena scored on a passed ball in the second for Connors' lead of the game at 1-0. Eastern plated 10 unanswered runs off Mozart Duarte, Brennan Berdon and Kaden Alexander.

Grant Randall had a solo home run in the seventh for the Cowboys.

Tyson Fourkiller finished the game 2-for-4. Connors (37-17) was outthit 15-6. 🐾



*Nollan Koon at bat.*



# Diamond Cowgirls End 2021 Season Play

On May 12, Connors State Softball hosted the Region II NJCAA Softball Tournament in Muskogee at the Muskogee High School Softball Fields. Connors State (16-28, 11-19) came in as the sixth seed, ending the tournament in the fourth seed, while not being able to practice on their home field all spring season due to weather conditions. The Cowgirls are coached by Bryan Howard and assisted by Cory Pitts and Hunter Strickland. In the first game, the Cowgirls defeated the Rose State Raiders 3-2. Hulbert ex Katy Medlin doubled in the first run and Makenna Murdock slammed a two-run home run, all in the first inning, and the former Lady Rider held Rose State to five hits and got out of a one-out jam in the seventh with

runners in scoring position. During the second game, Connors got defeated by NEO, 11-3. Connors committed a costly seven errors and had just three hits, knocking them to the losers bracket, where the Cowgirls fought their way back. The following day, the Cowgirls fought their way back into the bracket, defeating Eastern 3-2. Connors outhit Eastern 7-6 and got a run on a groundout in the top of the seventh for the deciding run. Kyzia Whisenhunt led the Connors attack going 3-for-4 Sequoyah ex Ryleigh Clinton had two hits for Eastern and Oktaha ex Karli Ashing one. Although the Cowgirls fought back hard, they fell to NOC Tonkawa after Tonkawa student Shea Moreno scored two runs breaking the Cowgirls tie. 🐮



*Freshman Lily White, Utah, catches at the game.*

## Young Added to Cowgirl Basketball Staff

Head Cowgirl Coach Jamie Fisher announced on Thursday morning the addition of new assistant Cowgirl Basketball Coach Porsche Young.

Young comes to Warner from Oklahoma City, where she served as assistant basketball coach for her alma mater Putnam City High School. Young has been an assistant at PCO for the last six seasons and has turned into one of the bright young coaches in the Oklahoma City area.

Young was a four-year letter winner for PCO in high and garnished All-City and All State honors her senior season. Young furthered her basketball playing career at Howard College in Big Spring, Texas, where current Cowgirl Head Coach Jamie Fisher was the assistant coach. Porsche was a two-year starter at Howard on a team that won over 45 games in two years and reached a top 10 ranking and qualified for the Region V Tournament.

"When going through the interview process, Porsche was the logical candidate in a pool of 20 applicants for me to pick," said Coach Fisher. "Porsche is a former player, who is loyal, has a high basketball IQ, energetic, and most importantly very relatable for the players,"

"It was a no brainer for me on this

decision," said Fisher.

Young is excited to start this new adventure in her coaching life and is very eager to hit the ground running when she starts on July 1.

"I chose coaching to help the young ladies develop into the best basketball players their heart desires, as well as building character off the court, and my ultimate goal is to build up players in order for them to overcome every obstacle that comes their way on and off the court," said Young. "Coaching is my passion and changing lives is my daily goal."

Coaches Young and Fisher are excited to start work for the upcoming ball season in early July.

"I personally want to thank Coach Fisher and the hiring committee for selecting me; this is truly a great honor," said Young.

In closing, Coach Fisher couldn't be more excited for this season to start with the addition of Coach Young to the staff and is looking forward to many successful years ahead of working with his new assistant coach.

"I couldn't be more excited and re-energized to start the year with this new addition. Coach P is going be a breath of fresh air and a burst of energy for the Cowgirl Program," said Fisher. ✨



# CAMPUS LIFE



**COMMENCEMENT** This page, clockwise from top: Dr. Ron Ramming addresses the group of graduating students. Sophomore Sarah Armitage is all smiles as she crosses the stage for graduation. Kassie Adams smiles for the camera as she walks in at graduation. Cooper Younkin listens to the graduation speakers. Lance Leaf stands in line to check in at graduation. Ms. Connors Jacey Dyer, Mr. Connors Garrett Slagell, and SGA President Mesa Ware stand for a photo before graduation.

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Dawson Mitchell and Anthony Craig excited as they exit the stage. Freshman PLC Students Kylea Terrell and Madison McEylea sing the National Anthem before graduation. SGA President Mesa Ware addresses her fellow classmates. Director of Recruitment Logan Nero helps direct students were to go at check in. Quan Laskey and Cooper Younkin pose for a picture. Livestock Judging Team Freshman Riley Scott sells flowers outside of graduation for the CSC Cowboy Store on campus. Kila Dalton smiling before she walks across stage.





**CONNORS STATE COLLEGE**  
700 College Road | Warner, OK 74469



*During Commencement on the Warner Campus, OSU A&M Regent Jarold Callahan speaks to the students as they begin a new path in life.*