Good morning past, present, and future Aztecs. I would like to thank everyone for sharing their Sunday morning with us as we celebrate this pivotal point in our lives. For anyone not here for the graduation: just a friendly reminder that the basketball season does not start for another six months.

It is quite the honor to be selected as valedictorian of this amazing class. It was only a few of these GPA points that allowed me to be up here as opposed to any of the other graduating students today. All of our stories are as unique as they are varied, each worthy of being told in front of an audience such as this.

As we complete our education today at San Diego State University, we must all be grateful to those who have helped create our story; the supporting characters who have allowed us to be the successful protagonist. I would like to take a moment to acknowledge and thank those who have helped me to this point:

My life would be starkly different if it were not for the unquestioning support of my father. I shudder to think where I would be had he not made the sacrifices in his life to afford me the opportunities I now enjoy. Remember to tell your family you love them; I know I love my father.

My brother, Dillon. He has been an amazing part of my life. Very few people know our background story, and that story has made one of the most supportive bonds a brother could ask for.

My step mom, Judy, and my new family. Their amazingness, and sometimes craziness, has provided much needed normality to my college life.

For most of us, our family has been the most important aspect of our success. I hope you have the opportunity as I did, to thank them for their role in your life. Additionally, we must not forget those professors who helped to write the chapters of our college lives. I am sure that I can speak for the class when I say that every professor has impacted us in a measurable way through college; I hope that you thank each and every one of them. I would, but I believe I only am allowed to speak for 7 minutes.

My most influential professor was Dr. Impelluso who has been extremely instrumental in encouraging me through my years at SDSU, even when he was overseas in Norway. Had he not pushed me, I would not have taken the risks to make my story unique.

Dr. Miller’s love for thermodynamics and heat transfer has provided the much needed direction to my career. Working in his lab honed my love for the engineering sciences.

I would like to thank Dr. Mehrabadi for making the undergraduate experience what it is today for mechanical engineers. I cant imagine what it would be like without his guidance.

Likewise, everyone can thank Dean Hayhurst for making the College of Engineering one of the most successful schools on this amazing campus.

All these professors provide the stage for these most cherished chapters in our lives. Remember to thank them today and in the future by being faithful alumni.

A group that we often forget to thank is those around us. Our undergraduate experience would have been starkly different had we not had the interactions with fellow engineering students or the students outside of the college of engineering. During a class discussion that I had in one of my humanities courses, a professor told me that we have beasts of burden because they readily accept blinders. Much the same is the story of the engineer: we are the designers and producers that power this world and make forward progress not only possible, but inevitable. If we take too narrow of a view of our profession, we can have blinders preventing us from seeing the larger picture. To phrase it another way, it wasn’t only a mechanical engineer who put us on the moon; an electrical engineer didn’t design the hoover dam. As we move forward in life to professions or grad school I hope that you remember the foundations that this amazing institution has taught you. Actively resist the blinder of life by having an appreciation of people from all professions. The sooner we lose an appreciation of the arts or the other disciplines of engineering, the sooner we will lose sight of the bigger picture.

Thank you for your time and Go Aztecs!