

Congratulations to the Civil Engineering Class of 2020, for finishing a difficult program in unusual circumstances and beginning a new journey. Less than 2 months ago when we were told that BYU hosting the NCAA Men's Volleyball Tournament meant we would graduate with the mechanical engineers in a stake center, I thought, "Why the mechanical engineers, and anywhere except a church building!" Well, hind sight is 20/20 and how I wish that was our reality.

Who would have imagined that graduation would be during a pandemic, when toilet paper and masks were a hot commodity, or when our last senior memories would be spent over Zoom? We can say our graduation experience will be interesting and memorable. The thing about graduating with a degree in civil engineering in times of uncertainty is that we have been prepared for this. We have spent semesters studying stress and strain, so we can handle the stress and strain of what this situation is throwing at us. Hey, we can even fix any damage if there's more earthquakes!

Joking aside, BYU has helped prepare us for these times. Besides our engineering skills, we have learned how to build our faith and rely on the Lord and His plan for us. Reflecting on my BYU experience, I remember dreaming of being a Cougar as kid. Coming from a long legacy of proud alumni, I knew a lot about BYU and even woke up early on the weekends to my parents singing "Rise and Shout." But the thing that struck me most about BYU was seeing the lives of service that different alumni led, such as my parents and grandparents.

When I was accepted into BYU, I knew that for me, part of receiving an exceptional education would involve service. This became more obvious to me when I chose to study civil engineering. As you know, civil engineers are some of the greatest public servants our communities have. The infrastructure we enjoy, from clean water coming out of our faucets, to the roads we drive on, to the buildings we live in, are all made possible by the work of civil engineers. As students, we had the opportunity to begin to contribute to that. During my undergrad, my personal motto was "enter[ed] to learn, go forth to serve."

As I have been in this program, I have seen you live this motto. I have seen the hours you've spent studying, dedicated to becoming the best civil engineers you could be. I have seen you take extra time to help someone in your class understand the homework. I have seen you go out into the community to serve in so many capacities. I have seen the passion and dedication you have put into capstone projects used to help others, both here and in less developed countries.

Our time here has been busy learning skills to become civil engineers, so we can go about doing good. Now, today, as graduates of the BYU Civil Engineering Class of 2020, let's commit to this mission of service throughout our lives. Let's use the skills we have learned to not only do our professions, but also to serve others. Let us internalize BYU's Motto: "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve." We have been blessed to have received a BYU education, so let us use it to create some good.

But today, fellow graduates, take a moment, reflect, and celebrate. And know even though we are apart, we can all cheer this together one more time: rise and shout, because these Cougars, the Class of 2020, are out!

Congratulations, and thank you.