Utah State University
Blanding Celebrates 2019
Graduating Class
USU Blanding
04/30/2019

Over 100 students received diplomas at Utah State University Blanding's commencement ceremony on Friday, April 26, 2019.

Blanding, Utah - Utah State University (USU) Blanding celebrated its newest graduates at the commencement ceremonies Friday, April 26. Over 100 students graduated, earning certificates, as well as associate, bachelor’s, and master’s degrees.

Administration and faculty from USU Blanding, along with administrator’s from USU and the state, were in attendance to honor the graduates. Dr. Guy Denton, USU Blanding associate vice president, conducted the ceremony in San Juan High School’s auditorium. Dr. Denton, who recently announced his retirement, was recognized at the end of the ceremony by USU Vice President Dave Woolstenhulme and Vice Provost Rich Etchberger for his nearly 40 years of service to USU.

Dr. Don C. Larson, the commencement speaker, recently retired from USU Blanding and is an emeritus associate professor of sociology, following a distinguished career. Dr. Larson was a tenured sociologist and held adjunct assignments in psychology, human development, and history. Dr. Larson first came to USU Blanding as the dean of instruction for the College of Eastern Utah. Dr. Larson was the director of Continuing Education for Southwest Utah and a research associate for the Research Division of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He has been active in his community through church service, scouting, and civic organizations. He served on the Executive Board of the Utah National Parks Council, Boy Scouts of America, and Regional Advisory Board of Workforce Services.

Student speaker Shannon Raye Tooke was born and raised in Tuba City, Arizona. She is an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation. Tooke began pursuing her degree at USU Blanding in 2014 and earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration in 2018. This year, she will earn her master’s degree in human resources. In her speech, Tooke expressed that her education accomplishments were thanks to her family and extended family’s never-ending support.

This year, 22 students received their bachelor’s degree, continuing the trend of increasing upper-division degrees awarded each year at USU Blanding. Since the merger of CEU and USU in 2010, more options for bachelor’s and graduate degrees have become available to students in Blanding. There are 25 bachelor’s and 23 master’s degrees available at USU Blanding. The campus continues to award a high number of two year associate degrees in addition to bachelor’s and graduate degrees.

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