

Commencement 2020 – Video Message Script for Provost Jersky

Hello to our 2020 graduates! Let me start with a hearty congratulations from all of us at CSULB. My name is Brian Jersky, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs here at the Beach. I want to welcome all the family, friends and supporters that are honoring a graduate today. And I want to welcome all of you virtually to the Beach. By extension from our graduates, you are also part of our family now. If you haven't had the pleasure of walking through our beautiful campus, I recommend that you do.

This year's graduating class is very personally meaningful for me. I have had the privilege of watching many of our graduates start and finish during my tenure on campus. Looking back at that time, I never would have imagined that this was how we were going to finish your big year.

The class of 2020 will forever be remembered as the class that survived and thrived during the pandemic. You have been told that you will accomplish much since you endured this world-changing historic event. This is absolutely true.

However, I know that my words fall short because of the disappointment we all face at this virtual graduation. This alternate graduation is not what any of us ever wished or wanted for you. I understand this. I wanted so much more for you and me...to be shaking your hand...congratulating your achievements....and participating in the many photos that would represent cherished memories for years to come.

Every year I especially look forward to congratulating the graduates who are first-generation college students. I join the joy your whole family has as we celebrate your accomplishments.

So today we want to honor this occasion, and our campus is doing everything we can to make this graduation special for you. Always remember that even if this ceremony is diminished, it does not decrease your accomplishment, in fact it increases it.

But what is standing in stark contrast to our diminished ceremony is you. Here you are, ready to define the future that is to come. Today as always, I place my hope on you, the class of 2020. From you, I see such bright hope that holds the power to change our road ahead.

This time I believe it has allowed your mind to reach for and achieve what seemed not possible. What has shined brighter than any pandemic has been your determination to make the world a better place. I believe that many of you in your time of quarantine have developed plans beyond your prior capabilities and dreams beyond your current reach. I already see it.

And from this, change is bound to happen. When this quarantine is over, your phoenix will rise above the ashes, and show the world what you are capable of.

Your spirit to endure has shown up simply in this accomplishment. I know that there were many more bumps, curves, and pitfalls during this time for you. But the one thing you can hold onto is your diploma. It is all yours and no one can ever take that away from you!

You did it despite all those barriers. And I am so proud of you and I echo all the virtual cheering that your family and loved ones are doing today.

You did it! You now stand as proud alumni of Cal State Long Beach.

So lastly, don't be a stranger. You are part of the family and I hope to see and hear about all the wonderful things you will do as you enter back into the world. I can't wait.

Congratulations to the class of 2020. And go Beach!