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34th Annual African American Commencement, 2016

San Jose State University, Associated Students

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FRIDAY, MAY 27TH, 2016 • 7 O’CLOCK IN THE EVENING
STUDENT UNION BALLROOM • SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY • SAN JOSE, CA

"If you are going to achieve excellence in big things, you develop the habit in little matters. Excellence is not an exception, it is a prevailing attitude."
- Colin Powell
Dear Family, Friends, and Loved Ones,

We would like to thank you for all the love and support you have given us throughout the years. Our academic achievement would not be obtainable without you. As we depart from San Jose State University, we would like to acknowledge the impact you have made in our lives.

During the 34th African American Commencement, we are celebrating the students who have accomplished many goals throughout their educational journey and committed themselves to being important members of the San Jose State University student body.

We would like to show gratitude to our sponsors for their bountiful donations and contributions to the graduates as well as today’s ceremony.

Lastly, let us take a moment to acknowledge all those who assisted on the planning committee to make this ceremony a success.

Congrats 2016 Graduates

Continue to strive and preserve for success in your life!
WE DID IT!

Sincerely,
2016 African American Commencement Board
Order of Ceremony

Processional
Invocation
Negro National Anthem
Co-Chair Welcome
Faculty Welcome
Student Performance
Student Speaker
Student Performance
Alumni Address
Keynote Address
Greek Showcase
Presentation of Graduating Class
Closing Remarks
Turning of Tassels
Recessional
May 2016

To the Class of 2016:

Congratulations on your Graduation! I am proud and honored to celebrate your success with you.

The academic achievement you celebrate today, born of hard work and dedication is the foundation for your future. Your graduation is a milestone: it marks the end of one journey and also the beginning of your life as alumni of San José State University. You have worked tirelessly to earn your degree but still this is only the beginning of our journey.

Each of you has overcome various trials to get here. You’ve come to learn who you are and rose to meet every challenge. You’ve grown personally and academically. That is the true Spartan spirit. You know that your dreams can only be realized through diligence.

Education is a life-long process and I wish you well as you continue your intellectual accomplishments and personal growth. San José State is very proud of you. Today, you can be proud to call yourself Spartan alumni.

Sincerely,

Susan W. Martin, Ph.D.
Interim President
Dr. Reginald Blaylock

Dr. Reginald (Reggie) Blaylock joined San Jose State as the vice president for Student Affairs in June 2015, where he oversees support of 32,000 students. In this division he manages a budget of over $89 million dollars, 340 full-time employees and about 400 student employees. His initial focus has been on finding ways to connect students to the campus and he himself is often engaged with students through open forums, club activities, athletic contests, and other university events.

As a member of the President's cabinet, Blaylock is an integral part of developing a strategic vision for the campus. He works closely with the provost and vice president for Academic Affairs on developing initiatives that support student success, with a specific emphasis on increasing retention and graduation rates. He serves as Co-chair for the President's Commission on Diversity, a group that supports creating a more diverse and inclusive community.

In Student Affairs, Blaylock oversees 31 departments that are focused on student services including Campus Life, Enrollment Services and Student Services. His departments support students at all points of their educational career, from pre-admission through graduation and job search.

Blaylock has worked in the California State University system for the past 28 years, holds a bachelor’s in public administration with a personnel emphasis and a sociology minor, and a master’s in public administration from SDSU. He completed a doctorate in educational leadership with an emphasis on postsecondary education.
Amber Atkinson

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Child and Adolescent Development
Minor: Justice Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):
Peer Health Educator (PHE), Child and Adolescent Development Club, Crisis Lines Telephone Counselor, Residential Counselor - S.T.A.R. Programs

Plans Post-Graduation:
There are so many choices of what to do post-graduation, which makes life so beautiful. Everything is literally at my fingertips to accomplish any goal. I’m going to change the world- one person at a time. I want to continue in the non-profit world and eventually own my own non-profit focusing on homeless children and families. Finishing college was for my daddy- rest in peace Billy Joe Lewis, Jr. I love you!

Quote for the Class of 2016:
But the Bible says, even though we may blow it every day, God’s mercy is fresh for us every morning.
- Kathie Lee Gifford

Aniya Baker

Bachelor of Science
Major: Organizational Studies
Minor: Radio, Television and Film

Organization Affiliation(s):
Women’s Basketball

Plans Post-Graduation:
First NCAA Women’s Basketball head coach
Sha’Ronai Bell

Bachelor of Science
Major: Forensic Science w/ a Concentration in Biology
Minor: Chemistry

Organization Affiliation(s):
African American Community, Service Agency, Black Student Union, African American Commencement Committee, African American Society of Mentors, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Plans Post-Graduation:
Job Field: Criminal Justice

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Sacrifice now, for a better life later. Success is a journey, not a destination.

Egiyah Beverly

Bachelor of Science
Major: Nutritional Science with an emphasis in Nutrition Education

Organization Affiliation(s):
Cal-SOAP Academic Coach/Tutor, Nutrition and Food Science Club, Meals on Wheels Volunteer, Sacred Heart Volunteer, Telephone Crisis Line Counselor

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan to become a Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) and work as a health inspector. While in the process, I will work for the WIC program (Women, Infant, and Children) as a nutrition counselor.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Edan we made it!
Riana Janaé Byrd

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Communication Studies

C’Airra Callum

Bachelor of Science
Major: Health Science
Minor: Nutrition

Plans Post-Graduation:
My post graduation plans include finishing up any necessary science courses so that I will be able to apply to a nursing program. I hope to continue my education here at San Jose State, but if not I am open to attending any school that accepts me. Following my completion of my nursing program, I would like to pursue a career in either neonatal nursing or labor and delivery.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
The journey may not be perfect but the purpose is; never doubt the path God is taking you on.
Jade Dozier

Bachelor of Science
Major: Communication Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):
Black Campus Ministries

Plans Post-Graduation:
Graduate school at SJSU

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Put God first....Good answer!

Roza Georgeo

Bachelor of Science
Major: Sociology with a Concentration in Community Change

Organization Affiliation(s):
Habesha Student Association- Vice President, Black Student Union - Director of Outreach, Black Grad- Fundraising CoChair, African American Society of Mentors

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan to pursue a career in the Probation field. I aspire to attend graduate school after one year to achieve my master's in Social Work. Regardless of whichever path life takes me, I plan to continue to uplift my community and be seen as a positive influence for my people.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
What's meant for me will be mine
Joetta Hall

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Psychology
Minor: Communication Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):
Event Director of Black Grad Spring 2015, Manager of Women's Track & Field 2014-2015, STEM student Spring 2015

Plans Post-Graduation:
Be an account executive and then pursue a master's in industrial & organizational psychology. Hopefully open up my own non-profit organization that help young African Americans get a good foundation of education.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
With sheer will you can overcome adversity

Nyre Harris

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Psychology
Elexus James

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Child & Adolescent Development

Plans Post-Graduation:
After graduation I plan to get my master's degree in Social Work and work with at-risk youth in the community.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Never give up on a dream just because of the time it takes to accomplish it. The time will pass anyway.

Kalyn Perthina Johnson

Bachelor of Arts
Major: African American Studies
Minor: Business Management

Organization Affiliation(s):
BARC- Bay Area Retail Leadership Center, BSU- Black Student Union, BASE- The Black Alliance of Scientists and Engineers, Strive For College, Public Relations Student Society of America

Plans Post-Graduation:
I found that nothing in life is worthwhile unless you take risks. After graduation I plan on pursuing my education further in applying to grad school. After I plan on becoming a marriage counselor and reaching my goal as a college professor teaching African American Studies.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
They told me I couldn't, that's why I did.
Habtamu Kebede

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Political Science
Minor: Psychology

Plans Post-Graduation:
Hoping to attend a graduate school of social work.

Rosa Mae Latham White

Bachelor of Science
Major: Justice Studies
Minor: African American Studies and Psychology

Organization Affiliation(s):
2011-2016 SJSU Gospel Choir (Treasurer 2014-2015), Black Student Union, 2011-2012 Bricks Vice President and Royce Hall Second Floor Representative, 2011-2012 Student Elections Comission Representative, SCIENCE 290T Peer Advisor

Plans Post-Graduation:
Use my degree to guide and help the African American community, especially low-income areas by working with youth who are currently incarcerated, on probation, or at-risk.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Don’t let oppression dim your light, for even the Northern Lights shine in the night skies.
Rachel Danielle Lewis

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Child and Adolescent Development

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan to attend San Jose State University's Multiple Subject Credential Program with MA in Education.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
She is clothed with strength and dignity; she shall rejoice in time to come.
- Proverbs 31:25

Megan Lockette

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Sociology

Organization Affiliation(s):
Boys & Girls Clubs of Oakland

Plans Post-Graduation:
Attain my Masters in Social Work to work forward in becoming a Clinical Social Worker for families and disadvantaged youth.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Must come to see that the end we seek is a society at peace with itself, a society that can live with its conscience.
- MLK
Clarence McGhee III

Bachelor of Science
Major: Business Management

Organization Affiliation(s):
Iota Phi Theta Fraternity Incorporated (Treasurer), Black Campus Ministries (Director of Outreach), African American Society of Mentors (Vice President), National Pan-Hellenic Council (Sargent of Arms), Black Student Union (Member)

Plans Post-Graduation:
Internship with Home Depot. ATL here I come!!!!

Quote for the Class of 2016:
I'm Young, Black, and Educated. Y'all done messed up now!

Delight Nwangwu

Bachelor of Science
Major: Public Relations
Minor: Psychology

Organization Affiliation(s):
Lambda Sigma Gamma Sorority, Incorporated, PRSSA (Public Relation Student Society of America)

Plans Post-Graduation:
Owning an event planning service, specializing in parties and weddings.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
"Hold fast to dreams, for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly."
- Langston Hughes
Imose Retina Ogbeiwi

Bachelor of Science
Major: Psychology
Minor: Forensic Science

Organization Affiliation(s):
African American Society of Mentors, BSU, On-campus employee - Frosh Orientation Leader, Student Assistant, Peer Advisor, African American Task force

Plans Post-Graduation:
Wherever my heart desires

Quote for the Class of 2016:
"I can do ALL things through Christ who strengthens me"
- Philippians 4:13

Folasade Ogunbanwo

Bachelor of Science
Major: Public Relations
Minor: Communications

Organization Affiliation(s):
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Plans Post-Graduation:
Join a Public Relations agency, soon to have my own PR firm.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
"You know you got it together if you can turn up and still end up on top."
Anthonia N. Okowi

Bachelor of Science
Major: Public Relations
Minor: Radio, Television, Video, and Film, Second Minor: Communication

Organization Affiliation(s):
Lambda Sigma Gamma Sorority, Incorporated, Educational Opportunity Program, Black Student Union, Public Relations Student Society of America: Pearce Davies Alpha Chapter

Plans Post-Graduation:
Short term goal would be teaching abroad in London, New York, or L.A. Long term goal is to be working in Entertainment PR or Fashion PR.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
You can have it all, just not all at once
- Oprah Winfrey
Think like a queen, A queen is not afraid to fail. Failure is another steppingstone to greatness.
- Oprah Winfrey
And though she be but little, she is fierce
- Shakespeare

Ciara Louise Perkins

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Social Work

Organization Affiliation(s):
Emmanuel Baptist Church

Plans Post-Graduation:
After graduation, I plan on working in Mental Health within my community, servicing those with whose voice is not heard.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men.
- Colossians 3:23
Aaron Sharpe

Bachelor of Science
Major: General Business

Organization Affiliation(s):
Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc

Plans Post-Graduation:
Go to grad school as a psychology major.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Work hard for what you want because it won't come without a fight. You have to be strong and courageous and know that you can do anything you put your mind to. If somebody puts you down or criticizes you, just keep on believing in yourself and turn it into something positive.
- Leah LaBelle

Briana Izegbe Smith

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Sociology
Minor: Justice Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):

Plans Post-Graduation:
To study law and become a successful attorney.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style
- Maya Angelou
Raven Dawn Swayne

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Broadcast journalism
Minor: Communications

Organization Affiliation(s):
Black Student Union

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan on taking one year off to start a job in the media department and see how much I enjoy my field in a real life setting. Then, after my year of working I am going to apply to graduate school in the film department, somewhere in Southern California or New York. I hope to one day mix my love of journalism and filmmaking to start a career I will truly enjoy.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
God has a bigger plan for me than I have for myself

Briauna Akilah Thigpen

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Communication Studies

Quote for the Class of 2016:
When you educate a man, you educate an individual but when you educate a woman, you educate a generation.
-African Proverb
Alicia Tyson

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Child and Adolescent Development

Organization Affiliation(s):
Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., Treasurer of the ChAD Club

Plans Post-Graduation:
I aspire to become a maternity nurse.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
A goal without a plan is just a wish!

Brittany Yvette Wallace

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Liberal Studies
Drew Brianna Kalaia Warmsley

Bachelor of Science
Major: Business Admin with a Concentration in Management

Organization Affiliation(s):
Black Student Union - President, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. - President, National Pan Hellenic Council, African American Society of Mentors

Plans Post-Graduation:
Plans to get a masters degree in Educational Leadership in hopes to one day work in student affairs.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Success is failure turned inside out

Brandon Terell Warren

Bachelor of Science
Major: Industrial Technology Manufacturing Systems
Minor: Business Management

Organization Affiliation(s):
SME

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan to be area manager at Amazon right when I graduate. During this time I plan to go back to school and obtain my MBA.
Timnit Berhane Woldeyesus

Bachelor of Science
Major: Nutritional Science Emphasis in Sports Nutrition
Minor: Radio-Television-Film

Organization Affiliation(s):
Habesha Student Association, Success as Spartans, Nutrition and Food Science Club, Black Student Union

Plans Post-Graduation:
To earn a doctorate in Physical Therapy and become a Physical Therapist.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Don't compare yourself to others, your success is your own.
- Timnit Woldeyesus

Taneisha Woodard

Bachelor of Science
Major: Psychology
Minor: Business

Organization Affiliation(s):
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, Zeta Psi Chapter, Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology, Minority Access to Research Careers

Plans Post-Graduation:
My goals consist of obtaining a leadership position within a technology company as an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist. As a woman of color, I want to represent underrepresented minorities as a symbol of success. I want to encourage other women of color that they too can reach their pinnacle of achievement. As a member of the Psi Chi, International Honor Society in Psychology, a scholar of the MARC program, and a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, I believe it is highly important to create diversity in the workforce. With few students from minority backgrounds represented in the technological workforce, I want to work to instill people of color into these leadership positions.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Appreciate where you are in your journey, even if it's not where you want to be. Every season serves its purpose.
Marquis Yarber

Bachelor of Arts
Major: Sociology
Minor: Concentration in Community Change

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Be the change
Amber Monique Christian
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Psychology
Minor: Kinesiology

Plans Post-Graduation:
Grad school for clinical psychology

Quote for the Class of 2016:
My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.
- Maya Angelou

Julian Clark
Bachelor of Science
Major: Business Administration- Management

Organization Affiliation(s):
EOYDC

Plans Post-Graduation:
Graduate school- Cal Berkeley

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Wooo!
- Ric Flair

Adrianna Dickson
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Sociology

Alexander Xavier Donald
Bachelor of Science
Major: Political Science
Minor: African American Studies

Organization Affiliation(s):
Black Student Union, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc., 100 Black Men, AASOM, Black Unity Group, SJSU Gospel Choir

Plans Post-Graduation:
Begin career in the music industry. Own my own record label.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
It's Your World.
- Common
Michael Evien
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Communication
Minor: Psychology

Organization Affiliation(s): Alpha Tau Omega Organization, San Jose State Men's Basketball


Quote for the Class of 2016: Love the life you live, live the life you love.

Aaliyah Gadsden
Bachelor of Arts

Kristina Michelle Garrett
Bachelor of Science
Major: Public Relations
Minor: Dance

Organization Affiliation(s): EDP, SJSU Spartan Spectrums Dance Team

Plans Post-Graduation: I will pursue my dreams as a professional dancer and also start a non-profit organization emphasizing the importance of keeping arts in education.

Quote for the Class of 2016: I am a product of my past but I will determine future.

Kalkidan Teferi Kitaw
Bachelor of Science
Major: Recreation Management

Organization Affiliation(s): EOP student, Part of Ethiopian and Eritrean Students Association

Plans Post-Graduation: Planning on going to graduate program for occupational therapy.

Quote for the Class of 2016: You will never have this day again, so make it count :)}
Bryce Lewis

Bachelor of Science  
Major: Business Finance  
Minor: Theater Arts, Film Concentration  

Organization Affiliation(s):  
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc., Black Men's Collegiate 100, Financial Management Association, Student Ambassador of San Jose State University, African American Community Service Agency Student Ambassador  

Plans Post-Graduation:  
Be the best in whatever the road or pathway I take. I hope to work for Buzzfeed, or go for my master's in health science or finance.  

Quote for the Class of 2016:  
It is our choices... that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.  
-Albus Dumbledore  

Shautavia M. Mayers

Master of Arts  
Major: Masters of Social Work (MSW)  

Plans Post-Graduation:  
I plan to continue to use the knowledge I’ve gained to provide culturally competent mental health service to communities that need caring and compassionate support and guidance. I also plan to support those communities in advocating for self in a way that their voices are more inclined to be heard such as by role modeling respectful ways to ask for help and how to be consistent in working to attain personal goals.  

Quote for the Class of 2016:  
Be diligent, be compassionate, be a strong force and be great!  

Lynnea Afanador Reynolds  

Bachelor of Science  
Major: Health Science  

Plans Post-Graduation:  
Obtain a postgraduate degree.  

Quote for the Class of 2016:  
Make a change... Be the change
Lauren Andrea Roseman
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Sociology
Minor: Justice Studies

Plans Post-Graduation:
I plan to attend Law School and work for the Innocence Project based here in Santa Clara.

Candice A. Thomas
Master of Public Administration
Major: Public Administration

Plans Post-Graduation:
To grow in a career that allows me to impact lives and facilitate change, in a manner that honors my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Quote for the Class of 2016:
My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.
- Maya Angelou

Samrawit Tsegai
Bachelor of Arts

Marguerite D White
Bachelor of Arts
Major: Earth Science
Minor: Education

Organization Affiliation(s):

Quote for the Class of 2016:
Look where you are going, Not where you have been.
- Rachel Vimont, DPT, SJSU 2016
Congratulations Sisters Folasade Ogunbanwo, Iyona Copeland, Taneisha Woodard and Alicia Tyson

We are so proud of the phenomenal Alpha Kappa Alpha women you have become!

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
Eta Rho Omega Chapter
Graduate Advisor Council
Congratulations to the Black Spartan Class of 2016!

The African American/Black Student Success Task Force is so proud of you!
CONGRATULATIONS 2016 GRADUATES!

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Lift every voice and sing
Till earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us,
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun
Let us march on till victory is won.

Stony the road we trod,
Bitter the chastening rod,
Felt in the days when hope unborn had died;
Yet with a steady beat,
Have not our weary feet
Come to the place for which our fathers sighed?

We have come over a way that with tears have been watered,
We have come, treading our path through the blood of the slaughtered,
Out from the gloomy past,
Till now we stand at last
Where the white gleam of our bright star is cast.

God of our weary years,
God of our silent tears,
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;
Thou who has by Thy might
Led us into the light,
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, Our God, where we met Thee;
Lest, our hearts drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,
May we forever stand.
True to our GOD,
True to our native land

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