

**PRESIDENT PAPAZIAN:** Thank you.

[PAUSE]

**Now I would like to offer my remarks to the Class of 2019.**

[PAUSE]

Graduates, we are living in **the age of the Superhero.**

Even before my day, we saw **Wonder Woman** battling evil. We watched as **Batman and Robin** fought crime and righted wrongs. We saw the **Incredible Hulk**, with the greenish tint of his skin, his shirt ripping at the seams as his muscles grew before our astonished eyes.

And of course, there was **Superman**, the Man of Steel, flying to and fro to help humankind, his cape flapping in the breeze.

In modern times, we witness the escapades of **Black Panther**, ruler of Wakanda. And how about **Wolverine**, with foot-long claws protruding from his knuckles that can cut through just about anything? We have **Captain Marvel**

herself, with her superhuman strength, flight, and ability to create energy blasts.

One thing all of these superheroes have in common is that they all possess one or more powers. We have the young genius **Amadeus Cho**, considered the Asian Hulk. You may have heard of **Cindy Moon**, also known as **Silk**, who creates organic webbing from her wrist, just like her friend **Spider Man**. And did you know that **Kamala Khan**, the Pakistani-American superhero, can transform into whatever she wants to be?

So whether it is supernatural strength, endurance, agility, speed, resilience, creativity, or keen mental processing, our superheroes possess powers.

In the Marvel Universe alone, some of you might be surprised to learn that there are more than **70** superhero characters.

But you know what, Class of 2019? Seventy is no match for the nearly 7,000 of you being awarded with college degrees this week!

And that, graduates, is precisely my point. Today, as your degrees are conferred, **you** now possess a newfound power: **The power of a college education.**

We know that college graduates have a much better chance of professional success than those who do not.

We know that college graduates will become leaders in their communities, in business, and in civic life.

In short, we know that college graduates possess a certain power in our society.

But like our favorite comic book superheroes, with that power comes responsibility.

Before you begin to deploy your new powers, you have to decide how you are going to use them, and whether they will be used for the greater good.

And remember that it is not the costume that makes someone a superhero. It is what you decide to *do* with your powers that will create your legacy.

The best superheroes are a force for good and use their powers to move the world toward prosperity, towards equity, towards social justice. Though they all have different methods and powers, they all share an overall purpose of helping others and making society a better place. I am confident that you all of you will be the best kind of Superhero.

All of you receiving degrees this week have another thing in common with Superheroes: you are leaders.

We live in an era when effective leaders are not so easy to find. This presents all of you here today with a golden opportunity to emerge as leaders, in your work lives, with your families, your faith communities, your schools, and in a variety of other venues.

After the graduation parties are over and you all have taken a deep breath to reflect on your achievements, your leadership journeys begin. It is now time to ask yourself what kind of Superhero you wish to be.

Your time at San Jose State, and the diploma you receive today, have given you the tools you need to be strong and effective leaders. Now, it is time to start using those tools.

So go forth, graduates! Be our next generation of leaders. Be our next generation of Superheroes.

(PAUSE and lead applause)

Today truly is a day of celebration, a day of fun, a day of pride, and a day of joy.

I know and appreciate how hard all of you have worked to earn your degrees.

Some of you have had obstacles to overcome, and daunting challenges along the way. But you are here! You made it! You are about to hear your name announced as a new graduate. Well done!

(LEAD APPLAUSE)

When you leave us today, when you head out to create your own Superhero story, we hope that you remain connected to San Jose State. Just like Smallville welcomed back Clark Kent, the doors to San Jose State will always be open when you choose to return.

Today also is a time for thanks and appreciation to all of those individuals who helped you during your time at San Jose State. There are classmates, instructors, mentors, friends, advisors, and many others here who played a role in where you are today, and who look forward to your future successes.

Perhaps most of all, we want to acknowledge and thank your families. I have three brothers, and along with my Mom and Dad, I know that I would not have been where I am today without the support of my family.

So how about it, Class of 2019? Let's give a big round of applause for the family members of yours who are with us today! **(LEAD APPLAUSE)**

The diploma you will be receiving is an indicator of incredible achievement.

Congratulations to *all* of you.

(PAUSE)

To the graduates.

(PAUSE)

To their friends and family.

(PAUSE)

To the faculty and staff members who helped make it happen.

(PAUSE)

Congratulations to all of you, to all of our Spartan Superheroes.

(PAUSE)

Job well done ... and now the adventure begins.

Go Spartans!