

I would like to thank the committee for allowing me to have the opportunity to speak in front of you today. There are two things I'm good at 1 is making great sandwiches and 2 motivating people.

I have some statistics that I would like to read.

41% of Latinos earned an associate's degree.

14% of Latinos earned a bachelor's degree.

7% of Latino males have an associate degree.

12% of Latino males have a bachelor's degree.

44% of Latinos are first-generation college students.

Utah colleges have less than 25% of Latinos enrolled in their colleges.

About 16% of Latinos majored in a STEM field.

66% of Hispanics who got a job or entered the military directly after high school cited the need to help support their family as a reason for not enrolling in college.

We all come from different backgrounds but one thing we do have in common. Are all of these obstacles that prevented us from not being here today. If I went around this room right now and asked for your story. I will almost bet we have a similar upbringing in one way or another.

You have made it here and now, you have made the impossible possible. Growing up with my mom being a widower raising 4 kids, English not being primary spoken in my home, my age, being the oldest, and my family income in the low-income range. The chances of me standing here as a college graduate were almost nonexistent.

But I overcame my fear and intimidation of education and succeeded. Another hurdle we faced is the support of family. My mom doesn't understand what I'm going to school for and what my career is. As far as she knows, I work on computers, and I can fix her iPhone whenever she has issues.

So the drive and motivation had to come from me. I'm sure it would have been nice to hear "you're doing great", "great job acing that Math test". Unfortunately I can't have expectations for what parents don't understand.

I would like to stay with the bottom of my heart to you personally. Please pat yourself on the back on your accomplishment here. All the hard work, all the late nights, missing friend gatherings, having to walk upstairs to do homework while your family was over. This journey for you took so many hardships and sacrifices that I can only imagine. But you made it and did it!

Gracias Madres, padres, esposos, esposas, abuelitos, abuelitas, primos, amigos y mas for being here and showing your support for these wonderful graduates, and this major accomplishment for their future.

— Martin Luther King Jr said and I quote:

“If you can't fly then run if you can't run then walk if you can't walk then crawl, but whatever you do, you have to keep moving forward.”

Thank you