

Entrepreneur, Award Winner, and Alumnus Speaks at Graduation Ceremony

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On May 26th, the Charles W. Davidson College of Engineering hosted the Spring 2017 Graduation Recognition Ceremony. The event took place at San Jose State University's Event Center, which quickly filled to capacity with students, family, and faculty. This year's graduating class consisted of 1,305 students, a class so large it required two ceremonies. Even so, the day ran smoothly and the excitement was palpable.



"Graduates, you have successfully completed, not only one of the most challenging programs on campus, but also the most sought after degrees in Silicon Valley!" Interim Dean Ping Hsu exclaimed to the crowd. The response was loud applause from the graduates and guests alike.

The event featured distinguished alumnus Roger Thornton as keynote speaker. Thornton earned both his Bachelor's and Master's Degrees at San Jose State and currently serves as the Chief Technology Officer of Alienvault (in Austin, TX). He founded Fortify Software in 2002, which was named one of Silicon Valley's "Smartest Start-Ups" by Business 2.0 Magazine. Additionally, he has worked with several other Valley-based companies, including Apple, Sun Microsystems, and Cypress Semiconductor.

"These early stages of my career were not always easy or fun. But I had developed technical skills and the confidence to lead a team. It's where I learned a lot about engineering and the 'making of things'. It's where I found a passion."

Just a month earlier, Thornton was asked to stand at another podium, receiving the Charles W. Davidson College of Engineering Award of Distinction. Interim Dean Hsu presented him with this honor at the College's Engineering Awards

Banquet, an annual celebration of the college's valued supporters and contributors. Thornton delivered a heartfelt acceptance speech awash with thankfulness for the role San Jose State has played in shaping him.

During the Graduation Ceremony, he took the time to express his gratitude once more, and encouraged the newly-minted alumni to share the sentiment. "It is a great honor to say, from all of us here today, 'thank you' to this amazing institution—its dedicated educators, staff, and administrators—for the enormous difference you made in our lives. And to our graduates, from all of us who have gone before: be true to yourself, follow your passion, and make us proud!"