**14309, Oliver Wendt - graduation**

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen,

I want to welcome everyone to this graduation of our Fulbright Scholarship recipients who began their journey here in 2013. When you arrived at Purdue you already knew that this was the opportunity of a lifetime. You knew the history and the reputation of Purdue as a research university and about the Fulbright Scholarship. We told you about William Fulbright, who he was and why he began this scholarship program.

Now that you have completed the program you have a fuller understanding of the opportunity you have experienced. You have lived out the words that we spoke to you when you first came. You have worked hard in the classroom and earned your grades from that hard work. But, you’ve also taken to heart our recommendation to go out and learn about and experience the people of this country. You have experienced our culture and learned what Mr. Fulbright meant when he said that he wanted you to discover your convictions and be willing to shout them to the world.

I want to encourage you to continue the Fulbright mission wherever you go in life. You need to realize you are joining an international community of great leaders and scholars and these contacts will last a life time. You are also joining the large family of Purdue graduates around the world.

Please remember the lessons you learned here at Purdue University and continue to carry out the Fulbright mission of cultural exchange and always keep those values at your heart. You have had a unique experience here regarding cultural exchange and it is our hope that you will carry that with you and spread those values and experiences with you no matter where you go or what you do in life.

You have all accomplished much in your time with us and we will miss you and your unique gifts and talents. Each and every one of you has a bright future ahead. But, just as you leave us today having accomplished so much you also leave with a responsibility to pass on and take responsibility in a global society. We have faith that you have learned that lesson well and embrace the desire to pass on the lessons you have learned and will indeed take responsibility for helping society to become a better place by your contributions to society.

Each of you is a leader in your own way. Your leadership style may vary by your personality and your gifts and talents. But, your heart is the heart of a leader. Your desire is for the world around you, to make it a better place and each of you will find a way to use your unique blend of gifts, talents and goals to help those around you guide them to be the best they can be in their circumstances.

I want to thank our outgoing board of officers of the Purdue Fulbright Association for their work over the last year. I also want to thank the members of the Purdue Alumni Association and the many Purdue Fulbright alumni who graciously assisted and supported the Fulbright program and the student’s experience on the PU campus over the last years. Your hard work and commitment to the Fulbright mission is greatly appreciated.

Good luck to all our graduates and thank you