

Lewis & Clark Community Colleges bids farewell to graduates at jam-packed commencement

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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GODFREY – For some of the graduates at **Lewis and Clark Community College's** commencement exercises this **Wednesday**, this ceremony was just another stepping stone in their educational careers.

For others, decades in the work force and a struggling job market has transformed the average joe into a degree-holding and marketable worker.

Regardless of the circumstances, the graduates at the Spring 2016 commencement exercises were pleased to take the next step in their own journeys.

Welcomed into the **Hatheway Cultural Center's Ann Whitney Olin Theatre**, over 200 graduates poured into the at-capacity theatre, where their loved ones looked on as the **Alton Muny Band** performed the necessary processional tune.



After the National Anthem was sung beautifully by **Charles Glenn** and the invocation courtesy of **Reverend David Crowley** of **First Presbyterian Church of Alton**, **Dr. Dale Chapman**, President of Lewis and Clark Community College, welcomed the graduates to the ceremony and congratulated them on a job well done.

In his commencement address, **Dr Christopher P. Lu**, Deputy Secretary of Labor of the **U.S. Department of Labor**, mentioned his experiences in the Alton and Godfrey areas while traveling to Jacksonville, Ill. to visit his in-laws.

“On my frequent trips to visit my in-laws, I have driven by Lewis and Clark several times every year,” Dr. Lu said, “I’ve always marveled at its beautiful campus and its

proximity to a beloved Midwestern institution—Of course, I’m talking about Fast Eddie’s.”

Jokes aside, Dr. Lu’s address was nothing but rich in hope and inspiring examples of triumph and perseverance:

“Today is about family, our most important American value. But that’s not the only American value on display. Today is also about opportunity. Lewis and Clark stands for the principle that everyone has the potential to succeed and contribute to this remarkable country. This idea is at the heart of the basic bargain in America: if you get an education, work hard and play by the rules, you can share in the limitless opportunities offered by this country. That’s the American Dream. There’s no better representation of the American Dream than at community colleges. At Lewis and Clark, a school where one-quarter of the students are the first in their families to attend college, I see the unbridled optimism that drew my parents to this country sixty years ago.”



Dr. Chapman returned to the podium after Dr. Lu’s inspiring address to recognize the student’s awards in their various studies, including excellence in nursing, welding technologies and more.

And for the moment the graduates had all been waiting for, **Dr. Linda Chapman**, Vice President of Academic Affairs, **Elizabeth Grant**, Professor and Coordinator of Speech and **DeAnna Masse**, Professor of Communications, went on to present the candidates with their degrees and certificates.

After the conferring of degrees by Board of Trustees member **George Milnor** and a benediction by Reverend Crowley, the graduates could now celebrate their accomplishments themselves as the recessional music began, making their way out of the theatre for a reception in The Commons.

Congratulations to all of the graduates of Lewis and Clark Community College!