

# Message from President Cook, Kayla Jones and Briana Nguyen

May 1, 2024

Hello, everyone.

We're heading into finals week at North Dakota State University, with commencement taking place right here at the Fargodome on Saturday, May 11th. I've asked two of our student speakers to join me today. They'll be speaking at commencement. Kayla Jones and Briana Nguyen.

So, let's hear a little bit about what they plan to talk about, if that's okay.

So we'll start with Kayla. Yeah.

How long have you been at NDSU?

This will be a year six that I am at NDSU.

Why did you come to NDSU?

I think I came here because I have some family here and I was looking for something new. I'm originally from Saint Louis, Missouri, so I wanted a change of scenery, and I knew I'd have some backup with some family being here.

Okay.

And, what did you study and what are you graduating with on Saturday?

Yeah. So, I'm currently pursuing my master's degree in education, and that's what I'll be graduating with.

Awesome. And Kayla has been super engaged on campus for all these years. And we're going to be sad to see you go.

So, Briana, you're up next. So, tell us a little bit about yourself.

So, I'm from Fargo, North Dakota, and I am graduating with an undergraduate degree in microbiology.

Wow. Exciting. Okay. And did you come to Fargo and NDSU because of the degree or what kind of got you excited to be a Bison?

Yeah.

So NDSU has been in my family for generations. Undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, pharmacy programs.

Everyone has been at NDSU in my family. So, coming here as a kid, it was kind of, I'm going to be here eventually.

Sounds like a very smart family. Yeah.

So that's very cool. So, what's next after graduation?

I will be applying to PA school to become a physician assistant and hopefully get my master's in physician assistant studies.

So. Very good. That's that's very exciting, I love it.

All right, back to you, Kayla. What about what's next for you after graduation?

Well, I plan on staying in higher education. My degree has a focus in higher ed, and that's where I like to be.

So, I'll be at a university.

Do you have any universities in mind? We should talk?

Maybe we should talk. Yeah.

There you go.

So, plans for Saturday? Plans for after the ceremony? You got anything fun going on, Briana?

We're just going to do some some mundane celebrating. Celebrating with my friends, my family, getting dinner, hanging out with each other, stuff like that.

That sounds. That sounds pretty good. Like it. You'll stay out of trouble. Yes. So for sure.

How about for you?

I will do my best to stay out of trouble. I will be with friends and family after commencement, and then we're going to have a little bit of a grad party with some of my closest friends.

Very cool. Okay, so what was the best part about being a Bison these last...this time here?

Oh, I think one of the best things

about being a Bison was the organizations that I was a part of. I was the president of Black Student Association for two years, and that truly changed my life. I found my passions here on this campus and outside of it because of that club.

Very cool.

How about for you? What was the best part about being a Bison?

Mine was kind of the same thing as those organizations, getting involved. Leading Asian Student organization with my team and being a part of the executive team in student government.

It's all been life-changing. I've gained so many good skills that I'll take with me forever.

Awesome degrees, awesome student activities and clubs and all the rest. Student government here is fantastic too. So, you guys kind of live the dream here, and we love it.

So we're going to miss you.

Or maybe not. We gotta talk afterwards. We'll see.

But, so for everybody out there, we'll have almost 2000 eligible students graduating this spring.

And during the morning ceremony, former NDSU professor and current North Dakota Poet Laureate Denise Lajimodiere will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters. She is an enrolled Citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and has been involved in education for 44 years.

Looking forward to honoring Denise and celebrating all the graduates next Saturday.

So here we go, guys. 1-2-3. Go Bison!