

Howdy,

I was actually shocked and flattered to be asked to speak here today. I want to **first start off by thanking my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ**, for without him none of this would be possible. **I also want to thank my beautiful wife Sue and my awesome kids** - Alicia and Cameron - for supporting me throughout my degree. Maintaining a full time career and studies have been challenging, but I know **I couldn't have done this without the support of my family**. I love you and know the reason I am here is because of the support and confidence you gave me.

Since the summer of 2018, I have had the **privilege of attending Texas A&M** and as someone who was not born and raised in Texas, **I was surprised at the level of Texas Pride and traditions here at Texas A&M.....** I remember thinking how odd it was to say "Howdy" and while **I never did an Elephant Walk or placed pennies on Sully**, I can say that last October - after 29 years of marriage, **Sue and I made sure to walk under the Century tree** - just to seal the deal.

Like the rest of you, it didn't take long and **I immediately felt at home here** and even though **I was a remote student attending via the web**, I can tell you **I feel no less an Aggie than those attending here** on campus.

Looking at what is now a life-long adventure in **Public Service**, I began as a **junior firefighter at the age of 13**. As a volunteer, I was a fourth-generation firefighter. By my mid-20's, I began **working at the local 911 center** as a dispatcher and moved through the ranks into the operations manager role. After years working in the public sector, I **made the switch to the private sector**, where I am still **able to be involved in emergency services**. **For the last 18 years**, I have been working for Hexagon, throughout **North America providing Emergency Service software** to many of our countries largest police, fire, EMS, and emergency management agencies to enhance their response to emergency events. **New York, Boston, Milwaukee, Arlington TX, Dallas, El Paso, San Angelo, and Corpus Christi** to name a few. Being part of emergency services was part of my upbringing and something **I'm blessed to be a part of** and proud of **the lives and property my family, and I have helped to protect**.

In 2001, per the **Gallop poll**, **firefighters were voted the most honest and ethical career in the U.S**. The reason I bring this up, is that **every year before and every year**

since **Nursing has held this spot. Congratulations** to the nursing graduates here today – **being married to a nurse**, I know the **pain and sacrifice it has taken to earn your degree** – being in public service, I also understand **the key role you have in patient care**. Good luck and **God bless**, as you all go out and make a difference... And **to the Architecture Graduates**, your **role in public service ensures buildings are designed in the safest** manor which **make the jobs of emergency service workers easier**, congratulations and good luck as you **design the next generation of infrastructure**.

As I looked at masters programs throughout the U.S., **I was intrigued with what the Bush School had to offer**. I've said to others, "**most Masters programs barely kept my attention while reading the description**"; however, from my **first look at this program** and the **personal reviews from two of my co-workers** that were enrolled, I knew it was the **right choice to further my Emergency Service focus**. With an undergrad in Business Management and an Associates in Public Safety Communications, I felt ready to concentrate my education on Public Service and Administration and **take on the challenge A&M would give**.

My **quest for a master's degree**, began at the Bush School with a **Certificate in Homeland Security** completed the Summer of 2019. I'm proud to say I've now **completed my master's degree as a 4.0 student** and feel I'm ready to continue my career and **walk proudly off this stage with the knowledge and experience A&M has provided**.

I'll **end my presentation the same way I started**, with a word of thanks. Thank you to the staff at the **Bush School**, for helping me navigate my path through this program. **Thank you professors** and faculty, especially **Dr Davis, Dr Nakamura, Dr Gamache, and Dr Bullock**, who continued to challenge us all, pushing us to be better... I want to thank my **co-worker Scott Fisher** and my **Executive Mentor Bill Campbell** - both Aggies with their EMPSA degree - for the push and motivation to start this program and last but not least, **thank you to my fellow EMPSA classmates and Capstone team**. It was an honor to work with you all and spending endless hours in DQ's and Zoom sessions with true professionals - **I am confident each and every one of you will continue to do great things and represent the Aggie Nation throughout your careers**.

Thanks and Gig em!