Remarks given by Dr. Lonnie L. Howard

Clover Park Technical College
2014 Commencement Ceremony
Held at the Tacoma Dome
Wednesday, June 18, 2014, at 6:30 p.m.

Graduating Class of 2014, I want you to stand where you are, turn around, and give a ‘shout-out’ to your family and friends. Wave to those people that helped to get you here tonight. Let them see you; make some noise!!!

Thank you; everyone may be seated.

Before I begin my remarks about the Graduating Class of 2014, I think it is important to let the audience know that ‘the American Dream’ is alive and well at Clover Park Technical College. And in the 72-year history of the College, our doors have been - and will forever remain open as a symbol of Hope, Acceptance, and Opportunity.

Yes, the Class of 2014 personifies our Mission of Hope:

- You represent the 21st graduating class in the history of the College.
- You number 1,018 graduates.
- 10.9% of you are graduating with honors.
- 4% are inductees in the International Honor Society of Phi Theta Kappa.
- Graduates Nichole Kaley and Martin Trinidad were selected for the prestigious All-Washington Academic Team.

In addition to Hope, Clover Park’s Mission is about Acceptance. Despite some of you had challenges in high school, required English as a Second Language, needed developmental Math, are first generation students, or had numerous program starts and stops; these things did not matter.

No, this does not [really] matter…

Others of you are…single-parents, 58% female, or 29% students of color. No, this does not matter at Clover Park Technical College because everyone is welcomed and - everyone is Accepted!

Our Mission…it goes beyond Hope; it goes beyond Acceptance; it is also about providing real Opportunities for student success. And you the Class of 2014 have tremendous Opportunities.

With 54% of you earning an associate degree and your avg. GPA is an impressive 3.38 (by the way, this was better than my GPA at the associate degree level), you can now be competitive at a 4-year college or select university. But the good news is, you might not have to transfer. I am excited to announce this evening that Clover Park will be the first two-year college in Pierce County to offer a Bachelor’s degree (Fall 2014) in Manufacturing Operations.

Yes, this announcement deserves a round of applause!!!
But let’s face it, not everyone needs a bachelor’s degree. Many of today’s employers want a skilled workforce. And 41% of you will graduate with high-demand Certificates putting you on track not just to have jobs but to have careers; including the six (6) graduating from our Roofer’s Apprenticeship program. They could not attend tonight because they are working now [it is roofing season]. And even more of you have told me that you have already gotten job offers or might have them within six (6) months.

Now that deserves a round of applause too!!!

It’s about **Hope, Acceptance, and Opportunity**. This is the Clover Park Way!!!

This night; we celebrate your success. And because 70% of you…the Class of 2014 required some type of financial-aid, in your names and out of my own pocket, I will increase my Presidential Scholarship from $4000 to $6000. I want to help more deserving students just like you.

I believe in you; I believe in our Mission; I believe in the Clover Park Way!!!

Thank you for your time and your attention.