200 degrees and certificates were conferred at the 77th commencement at Utah State University Eastern on April 25.

The commencement address was given by Kristen Cox, executive director of the Utah Governor's Office of Management and Budget.

Senator David P. Hinkins was given the Chancellor’s Medallion in recognition of his public service to the Eastern Utah region.

Students addressing the Class of 2015 were Valedictorian Carson Tatton, a graduate of Carbon High School, and Salutatorian Madeline Murphy.

Makayla Chadwick, a graduate of Murray High School, was given the Val J. Halamandaris Caring Award for her service through the Serving Utah Network (SUN) Involvement Center.

Presentation of graduates and conferring of degrees were by USU Eastern Chancellor Joe Peterson and USU President Stan L. Albrecht.

A reception following commencement was in the Jennifer Leavitt Student Center.

Cox performs her day-to-day duties without the ability to see, but has not let the loss of her sight stop her from achieving at work or enjoying the outdoors. She was born in Utah and credits her mother for her work ethic and determination.

Cox earned a bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University in educational psychology. She was appointed to a position with the Department of Education in Washington D.C. by President George W. Bush. She was also secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities and held positions with the National Federation of the Blind.

Hinkins was born and raised in Orangeville, a graduate of Emery County High School, and a former Trustee of the College of Eastern Utah. He has served as a state senator representing District 27 since 2008. A successful businessman by profession, Senator Hinkins brings an entrepreneurial perspective to the economic challenges faced by the region, from rural growth to energy development.

“As a tireless advocate for our district, he embodies the ‘create and sustain’ portion of Utah State University Eastern’s charge to ‘prepare the people’ of our region,” Peterson said. “Yes, that makes the distinguished senator not only a friend of the college, but a true partner in helping us to stimulate economic development, increase quality of life, and create community vitality.”

Tatton, son of John and Carryl Tatton, began his journey at USU Eastern in 2011. After two-years of volunteer service in Thailand with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, he returned to USU Eastern with a newfound drive to study business. He was a member of the school’s Phi Beta Lambda business club and was also a part of USU Eastern’s group of student-volunteer tax preparers. He continues his education at USU in Logan this fall.
Murphy, born in Salt Lake City to Sean Murphy and Heather Sparks, graduated from West High School with an International Baccalaureate diploma as well as advanced placement credits. She played basketball at USU Eastern for the past two years and plans on continuing her athletic career at Missouri Valley College in the fall, where she plans on earning a bachelor’s degree in Computer Information Systems.

Chadwick is the daughter of Paul and Jamelle Chadwich. She is the president of SUN Center where she first began her service at USU Eastern as a freshman when she was selected to work on the presidency. She has 400-documented hours of service through the SUN Center over the past two years. Some of the projects Chadwick has been involved include the Wellington flood clean-up, the Goblin Valley Marathon, Cards for Troops, Bread ‘n Soup Night, Kiwanis Kid’s Day and Just Deserts Fundraiser. She graduates from USU Eastern with a 3.8 institutional grade point average.

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