

*The Chief Justice Brian Clifford's Prepared Remarks for 2006
Indiana University Student Association's Farewell Ceremony /
Inauguration*

I want to first apologize for being unable to attend this ceremony tonight due to a prior commitment for the law journal for which I am an editor. I would also like to thank Justice Waddell for delivering this statement. And I would like to thank all of the distinguished guests at this event for giving me an opportunity to make a brief statement.

To each of the outgoing executives and congressional members, I want to say it has been a pleasure to work with you throughout this past year. Though the Court is largely independent, each time I had a need to interact with a member of either the executive or legislative branches of our student government, the situation was handled with courtesy and professionalism. I know that the student body has benefited from your term in office, and I am equally sure that the skills you each mastered and the experiences you each had will serve you well in all of your future endeavors. As you now go on to join the ranks of hundreds of other successful student leader-alumni, always remember the joy you received from faithful service to the members of your local community. To each of you I wish the best of luck in your coming pursuits.

To the leaders of the student body of Indiana University for the 2006-2007 academic year, welcome! I regret that I will not have the opportunity to work with you. After five-and-a-half years on the Student Body Supreme Court, I will soon be resigning and leaving the university that has given me so much. Upon my departure, though, I would like to give you three tips – advice from my experience working with six different groups of executives and legislative representatives:

First, be a leader. The key to a successful stint in student government is to have energized and passionate people around you. Do everything you can to create an atmosphere where these traits can shine through.

Consensus is good – it projects a unified front of the student body to groups that may have differing interests, such as faculty, administrators, or state citizens. But conflict can be better – it shows that issues are being debated, that all points of view are being heard, and that whatever decision is ultimately made will be more powerful from having endured the struggle. Congressional members – do not be a rubber stamp on executive proposals. Executive members – do not be a conduit for administration desires.

All IUSA members: Be independent – be a leader.

Second, be a representative. Each of you was elected to student government because the students of Indiana University thought you had vision and commitment. Be true to this view – investigate complaints and issues, draft proposals, and speak up at meetings, both in IUSA and in other campus groups.

But also remember that you *represent* the student body. Your views and positions must always be subservient to theirs. Congressional representatives – talk to your constituents. Send e-mails, have meetings, host a webpage and solicit comments. Keep

your members informed of the events that can shape their student experience at I.U. and be receptive to their complaints, concerns, and recommendations. Executive members – you must make an extra effort to hear the voice of the student body. Campaign promises are fine, and certainly should be followed up on. But student initiatives are great – they show that IUSA not only does *something*, but it does what they want and it addresses what they need.

All IUSA members: remember you were chosen to be one voice from thousands – be a representative.

Finally, be a legacy. Students spend just a few years at Indiana University. But in this short time, their views and positions on hundreds of issues are molded, shaped, and solidified. Be a part of this process. Find out what issues are important to the student body and what problems they face in their role as the life-blood of our academic endeavor.

Many years ago, student government here at I.U. had what I termed a “crisis of legitimacy.” Students saw IUSA as a waste of time and money; they saw seemingly endless election disputes; they saw failed campaign promises; they saw university proposals drafted, discussed, and approved without significant input from the student body on issues that intimately affected them. In some areas they saw seas of change, with their elected representatives awash in the wake.

The tide has begun to change, in no small part to your departing predecessors. Each member of IUSA for the 2006-2007 academic year has an obligation, not just to themselves, but also to the students they represent and to the IUSA alumni who have come before them, to continue this view of student government. Be remembered as the student leaders who reaffirmed what student government is all about: energetic and passionate students who care about their fellow campus citizens and the university that brings them all together.

All IUSA members: make this view a reality for you and all who will come after you at Indiana University – be a legacy.

Though I will no longer be a student at I.U., the university will always hold a special and close place in my heart. I promise that I will check in on my alma mater and on its student government that I served so long. I am confident that the years to come will be great ones for IUSA – full of students that will be leaders, that will be representatives, and that will be legacies. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Clifford". The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Brian Clifford
The Chief Justice of the Court
The Student Body Supreme Court of Indiana University