

# Alternative graduation supported Occupy

About 100 people attended the event in Forest Theatre.

By Alex Dixon  
Arts Editor

As thousands gathered in Kenan Stadium Sunday, a much smaller group occupied the Forest Theatre for an alternative commencement ceremony.

The organization of the alternative commencement began in response to the announcement that Michael Bloomberg — New York City mayor and founder of financial services company

Bloomberg LP — would be speaking at the 2012 commencement ceremony in Kenan Stadium.

Charles Eisenstein, author and participant in the national Occupy movement, addressed seniors at the ceremony and said it was not an anti-Bloomberg event.

Organizers of the alternative commencement said they oppose Bloomberg's actions toward Occupy Wall Street protesters, including the eviction of protesters by New York City police.

"The hate of a tiny tyrannical executive is nothing compared to the love here today," speaker Haywood Carey said.

About 100 students, faculty, family and community members

*"As people listen to Mayor Michael Bloomberg, they know they missed the real commencement."*

Don Nonini,  
UNC professor of anthropology

attended the alternative commencement.

Speakers touched on their shared beliefs ranging from human rights and job satisfaction to nonviolence.

Nobel Peace Prize nominee Kathy Kelly shared her experiences as an activist in the Middle East and said graduates can make a difference through nonviolent protests.

"To be a person of our time is

exciting because of Occupy Wall Street," Kelly said.

Speakers and graduates showed support for the Occupy movement through hand signals associated with the protests.

"We need to shape our world, not have political leaders shape it for us," said Alanna Davis, graduating senior and alternative commencement organizer.

Classmate and fellow organizer Kathleen McDonald said the

ceremony even appealed to those who do not oppose Bloomberg because graduates could sit with their families.

Graduates at the commencement ceremony in Kenan Stadium were congregated in the student section, with family members in general seating.

Graduates and attendees were given the opportunity to speak on stage after the ceremony ended. Student band Morning Brigade played before and after the ceremony, and organizers passed out bottles of bubbles with messages and some with UNC logos.

At the end of the commencement, graduates gathered on stage and sang the UNC alma mater.

Eisenstein, a Yale University graduate, said the ceremony's style and atmosphere were more representative of graduates' college experience than traditional graduation ceremonies.

"When I graduated 23 years ago it was pretty boring," Eisenstein said. "All that just didn't seem real to me."

Eisenstein said students choosing to attend this ceremony were beginning a lifetime of following their beliefs.

"This graduation is a transition to doing what you care about," Eisenstein said.

Contact the University Editor at [university@dailytarheel.com](mailto:university@dailytarheel.com).

Thousands of graduates filled Kenan Stadium while about 20 graduates occupied Forest Theatre



New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg addresses the 32,000 in attendance at Kenan Stadium for Commencement on Sunday.



Commencement in Kenan ended with a rendition of 'Carolina In My Mind' by the Clef Hangers along with Chancellor Thorp.



Charles Eisenstein, Occupy organizer, speaks at alternative commencement.

“What makes me proud to be here is that this is something self-created.”  
CHARLES EISENSTEIN



Graduates toss their caps in the air at the end of alternative commencement on Sunday, attended by about 100 people.



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