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Winning Proposal

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Winning Proposal

A surprise made this year's Commencement even more special for one alumna.



Juan Gomez Velez '14 pops the question to Madelyn "Maddie" Greybar '15 as President Wilson looks on.

When Juan Gomez Velez '14 decided to pop the question to Madelyn "Maddie" Greybar '15, he pondered what might be the perfect setting for his marriage proposal.

"I realized that Madelyn and I needed to be surrounded by the people we love and care about the most. Her graduation quickly became a dream setting. I knew if I could pull it off, we would be surrounded by our families, friends and the faculty that has undoubtedly changed our lives for the better."

Juan set his sights on the May 3 Commencement ceremonies, where Madelyn would be receiving her diploma as a business administration major and standout varsity athlete in track and volleyball. Juan first imagined proposing to Madelyn right after she received her diploma but was told this would not work within the structure of the ceremony, and Juan himself "understood my original plan was indeed an impossible situation."

Vice President of Student Affairs/Dean of Students Karla Carney Hall suggested an alternative. Madelyn had earned a Leadership Award that she was unable to personally receive at the Senior Dinner, "so the excuse became that President Wilson wanted to have a picture with her immediately following the ceremony," says Juan. He doubled the surprise by telling Madelyn he was too busy to attend the ceremony because of his upcoming finals at the University of South Florida, where he is a graduate student in physics.

"So when he proposed," says Madelyn, "I was just surprised to see him, and then I was definitely surprised when he pulled out the little black box! My sister, mom and I were all tearing up — well, I was bawling. The news traveled really fast, so I could see my friends running from all over the quad when they found out. It couldn't have been a more perfect moment. Graduation was a great thing already, but it was definitely a bit overlooked by an engagement. Two huge steps in one day!"

"Madelyn is both my best friend and my better half. I was overjoyed to be able to show her a glimpse of how much she means to me," says Juan, who hopes to complete his Ph.D. studies in Chicago, where Madelyn now works for Bottleneck Management. The couple plan to marry in about two years. Is a campus ceremony a possibility? Stay tuned! — *Tim Obermiller*