



# *Commencement*

# 2026





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***Board of Trustees***

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Ms. Villalyn Baluga – Associate Vice President of Finance  
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Foundation Chief Executive Officer  
Ms. Maureen Kelly – Executive Director of Governmental Affairs  
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Dr. David Hermann – Vice President of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management  
Ms. Patricia O'Neal – Executive Associate to the President  
Dr. Joi Patterson – Chief of Institutional Engagement and Excellence



**Dear Jaguar Family and Friends,**

Welcome to the Class of 2026 Commencement Ceremony at Governors State University! Today, we celebrate not only achievement but transformation.

Graduates, it is an honor to stand with you on this milestone day. As you cross the stage, you carry with you the knowledge, resilience, and purpose shaped by your time at GovState. Your journey here—fueled by hard work, curiosity, and the support of those around you—has prepared you to lead, to inspire, and to create meaningful change in your communities and professions.

As you step into the world beyond our university, remember that you are ambassadors of excellence, inclusion, and service. Whether your path leads to classrooms or boardrooms, clinics or creative

spaces, you bring with you the spirit of GovState: a commitment to think boldly, uplift others, and pursue a better future for all.

To our graduates: you are prepared, you are capable, and you are needed. The world is waiting for your ideas, energy, and leadership. You are GovState!

**Congratulations, Class of 2026!**

With pride and warmest wishes,

Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D.  
*President, Governors State University*

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# Order of Exercises

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Saturday, May 16, 2026, 10 a.m.

College of Education and Human Development • College of Health and Human Services  
Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *University President*, Presiding

PRELUDE – MUSIC AND A YEAR IN REVIEW ..... Digital Learning and Media Design

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS..... Dr. David Conrad, *Master of Ceremonies*

PROCESSIONAL .....Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President and Grand Marshal*  
Dr. Vickii Coffey, Dr. Christopher Dignam, Ms. Latesha Newson – *2025 Excellence Award Recipients*  
*"Pomp and Circumstance"* – Traditional Graduation March

TRUMPET FANFARE..... Mr. Ron Harrigan and Mr. Nathaniel Harrigan

CALL TO ORDER..... Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

“STAR-SPANGLED BANNER” AND “LIFT EV’RY VOICE” ..... Dr. Cherise Joy Stone-Thompson, *Vocalist*  
Mr. C.J. Parker, *Keyboardist*

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....Ms. Stacy Crook, *Vice Chair*

GREETINGS FROM THE FACULTY SENATE ..... Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

GREETINGS FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION..... Dr. Nicole Randick, Ed.D. *Class of 2014*

STUDENT SPEAKER ADDRESS..... Ms. Journey Mae Manuel, *Class of 2026*

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS .....Dr. Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *President*

PRESENTATION OF DEGREE CANDIDATES .....Dr. Beverly E. Schneller, *Provost*  
College of Education and Human Development .....Dr. Shannon Dermer, *Dean*  
College of Health and Human Services ..... Dr. Catherine Balthazar, *Dean*  
College of Graduate Studies ..... Dr. Mary Carrington, *Dean*  
Governors State University Honors College..... Dr. David Rhea, *Dean*  
Name Reader, CEHD, Undergraduate .....Dr. Glenna Howell, *Full Professor*  
Name Reader, CEHD, Graduate.....Ms. Judy Ferneau, *Assistant Director*  
Name Reader, CHHS, Graduate and Undergraduate .....Dr. Nicole Bing, *Department Chair*

CONFERRING OF DEGREES .....Dr. Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *President*

CLOSING REMARKS..... Dr. David Conrad, *Master of Ceremonies*

RECESSIONAL ..... Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

MUSIC..... Digital Learning and Media Design

*Sign language interpretation provided by Chicago Hearing Society.*

The audience is requested to rise if able and remain standing during the Processional and Recessional.

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# Order of Exercises

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Saturday, May 16, 2026, 4 p.m.

College of Business • College of Arts and Sciences  
Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *University President*, Presiding

PRELUDE – MUSIC AND A YEAR IN REVIEW..... Digital Learning and Media Design

WELCOME AND SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS..... Dr. David Conrad, *Master of Ceremonies*

PROCESSIONAL .....Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President and Grand Marshal*  
Dr. Vickii Coffey, Dr. Christopher Dignam, Ms. Latesha Newson, *2025 Excellence Award Recipients*  
*"Pomp and Circumstance" – Traditional Graduation March*

TRUMPET FANFARE..... Mr. Ron Harrigan and Mr. Nathaniel Harrigan

CALL TO ORDER.....Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

“STAR-SPANGLED BANNER” AND “LIFT EV’RY VOICE” ..... Dr. Cherise Joy Stone-Thompson, *Vocalist*  
Mr. C.J. Parker *Keyboardist*

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES.....Ms. Stacy Crook, *Vice Chair*

GREETINGS FROM THE FACULTY SENATE .....Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

GREETINGS FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION..... Ms. Monica Marie Gordon, MA, *Class of 2002*

STUDENT SPEAKER ADDRESS.....Ms. Victoria Gómez, *Class of 2026*

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ..... Dr. Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *President*

PRESENTATION OF DEGREE CANDIDATES .....Dr. Beverly E. Schneller, *Provost*  
College of Business..... Dr. Sonia Dalmia, *Dean*  
College of Arts and Sciences..... Dr. Jason Zingsheim, *Dean*  
College of Graduate Studies ..... Dr. Mary Carrington, *Dean*  
Governors State University Honors College..... Dr. David Rhea, *Dean*  
Name Reader, CAS, Undergraduate ..... Dr. Scott Sowinski, *Executive Director*  
Name Reader, CAS, Graduate ..... Dr. Lara Hrycaj, *Assistant Professor*  
Name Reader, COB, Undergraduate ..... Ms. Xuefeng Lui, *Assistant Professor*  
Name Reader, COB, Graduate ..... Dr. Yon-Jin Suh, *Assistant Professor*

CONFERRING OF DEGREES .....Dr. Joyce C. Ester, Ph.D., *President*

CLOSING REMARKS..... Dr. David Conrad, *Master of Ceremonies*

RECESSIONAL ..... Mr. Joshua Sopiartz, *Faculty Senate President*

MUSIC..... Digital Learning and Media Design

*Sign language interpretation provided by Chicago Hearing Society.*

The audience is requested to rise if able and remain standing during the Processional and Recessional.



## *The Mace*

The governor's mace, traditionally carried by the Faculty Senate President who leads the academic procession, is a symbol of the authority of the university as a degree-granting institution. The legal authority of the university is grounded in the intellectual authority of the distinguished faculty who follow in the procession.

In antiquity, the mace was a weapon used to establish the "authority" of the physically strong. Its transformation into a symbol of intellectual authority is both a tribute to and a reminder of the civilizing force of a university's teaching, research and community service functions.

Engraved on the four side-panels of the governor's mace are the seal of the State of Illinois; a cardinal, the state bird; the seal of the former Illinois Board of Governors Universities; and an inscription which reads "The governor's mace, a symbol of tradition and authority of Governors State University, dedicated to the search for excellence in the pursuit of truth, knowledge and the love of learning. Presented by Peter Levin, friend of the university, June 2, 1979."

Atop the mace is a silver rendition of the university logo. The three sides of the "triangle" symbolize the university's teaching, research and community service functions. The three lines visually suggest the shape of a rocket; reminding us both that the university was founded within days of Neil Armstrong setting foot on the moon and that the university is a hope-filled, pioneering community, committed to a better future for all men and women. The circle symbolizes the fact that the university is, indeed, a community. Finally, the fact that the tips of the triangle reach beyond the circle indicates the university's outreach into the region, state and nation, and its commitment to teaching, research and community service.

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## Student Speakers

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### *Journey Mae Manuel*



Journey Manuel is a first-generation college student graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Health Informatics. She is passionate about the intersection of healthcare, data, and human experience, a perspective shaped deeply by her personal journey living with two autoimmune diseases. This lived experience fuels her commitment to improving healthcare systems and bridging the gap between science and empathy-driven care.

With a laser focus on academics, Journey is a creative force on campus. She has contributed to and led multiple events and initiatives through the First-Generation Center, using her creativity to build spaces that celebrate identity, connection, and student success. Her work reflects a belief that storytelling and art have a place in every discipline, including healthcare

and informatics.

As a first-generation student, Journey's path has been grounded in resilience and family support. Her parents have been a constant source of encouragement, proudly witnessing milestones such as her student speech at President Ester's inauguration—an experience that remains a defining moment in her college journey.

Beyond her creative and academic contributions, Journey is also a dedicated advocate. Through her involvement in Student Senate, she has worked to represent and elevate student voices, particularly those navigating college as first-generation students. Her leadership is rooted in empathy, lived experience, and a strong commitment to making systems more accessible and inclusive for others.

Journey will speak at the 10 a.m. ceremony for the College of Education and Human Development and the College of Health and Human Services.

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### *Victoria Gómez*



Victoria Gómez is a dedicated and creative student, who will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in English from Governors State University. With her commencement, Victoria will become the third GovState grad in her family. As a determined leader involved with on-campus organizations such as Reading Jaguars, an organization that she founded and Tau Sigma, a national honor society where she served as President, Victoria brings love and color to her life as a proud Latina woman.

Throughout her time at GovState, Victoria has also extended her voice beyond the classroom. She has presented at multiple Research Days and represented the university at the National Tau Sigma Conference in Austin, Texas, sharing her work on a national stage. In addition, she has worked closely with the Office of Marketing and Communications, where she contributed to social media content creation, wrote for the university Newsroom, and supported student mentorship efforts.

Victoria is highly involved outside campus with her church, volunteering in the community and she also ran the Chicago Marathon in 2025 raising money for A Safe Haven. She is a part of the graduating class for the GovState Honors College, where she's extended her academic journey by pushing herself with high-impact coursework and experiential learning.

As the 2026 afternoon student Commencement speaker, Victoria is set to inspire the Class of 2026 and share her story of overcoming, taking up space where there isn't any, and thriving in a family that supports continuing education.

Victoria will speak at the 4 p.m. ceremony for the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Business.

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## *Student Leader*

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### *Sean O'Brien, Student Senate President*



Sean serves as the Student Senate President at Governors State University, where he is recognized for his steady leadership, commitment to community, and student-centered approach to governance. In this role, he represents the student body at the highest levels of university decision-making, bringing student concerns, ideas, and perspectives directly to administration and institutional leadership.

Grounded in consistency and accountability, Sean's leadership is defined by his belief that meaningful change comes from showing up, listening, and following through. He has played an active role in strengthening communication between students and university leadership, helping ensure that student voices are not only heard but reflected in campus-wide decisions and initiatives.

A dedicated leader, Sean is also an inspiring student-athlete on the Governors State Cross Country team, balancing the demands of competition, academics, and campus leadership. His experience as an athlete further shapes his approach to teamwork, discipline, and perseverance—values that carry into every role he takes on.

Through his involvement in Student Senate, Sean has contributed to fostering a more connected and engaged campus community. He approaches leadership with a focus on collaboration, making space for diverse perspectives while working to build solutions that benefit the broader student body. His role also includes participation in university committees and governance discussions that shape the student experience at GovState.

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## *Student Trustee*

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### *Brett Porter*



Brett Porter is a master's student in Computer Science at Governors State University and the current Student Trustee on the University's Board of Trustees. After returning to college nearly two decades after graduating high school, he approached his education with a clear commitment to fully engage in the opportunities available to him on campus.

Brett is an alumnus of GovState, graduating with his bachelor's in 2025. He has been deeply involved in student leadership, founding the Software Engineering Club, having served as Vice President of the Drone Engineering Club, while also contributing to organizations including Student Senate, and Tau Sigma National Honor Society. His leadership and involvement across campus led to his selection as the student representative to the University's Board of Trustees, where he helps bring the student perspective into institutional decision-making.

Brett has remained active in service and campus initiatives, supporting programs such as the GovState Food Pantry, voter awareness efforts, STEAM camps, and volunteering with Special Olympics. His work across campus reflects a belief that meaningful involvement and collaboration are essential parts of the college experience.



## The Lincoln Academy of Illinois

### *What it Means to be a Lincoln Laureate*

Becoming a Lincoln Laureate is a prestigious honor conferred by The Lincoln Academy of Illinois. It celebrates outstanding individuals across diverse domains. Named in homage to Abraham Lincoln, the award acknowledges remarkable contributions made by individuals within the state, upholding the legacy of excellence and service.

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### *Jonathan Cooper, 2025 Lincoln Laureate*



Jonathan Cooper is the 2025 Lincoln Laureate for Governors State University, a distinction awarded to one outstanding senior from each four-year university in Illinois in recognition of excellence in both academic and extracurricular achievement. An Army and Marine Corps veteran and Political Science and History double major, Jonathan's academic journey is marked by resilience and a deep commitment to service. After a 2-year break from college, he returned to higher education with a renewed sense of purpose, bringing lived experience, discipline, and leadership into every space he entered.

At GovState, Jonathan quickly became a pillar of student leadership and engagement. He has served as Veterans Representative for Student Senate, advocating for fellow student veterans and helping ensure their needs and perspectives are represented across campus. He also serves as President of the National Society of Leadership and Success (NSLS) and President of the SALUTE Veterans National Honor Society, while founding and leading Pi Sigma Alpha (Alpha Nu Beta), the Political Science National Honor Society.

Beyond campus, Jonathan extends his leadership into his community, recently being elected Trustee for the Village of Hazel Crest, where he continues his commitment to civic engagement and public service.

# College of Education and Human Development

## BACHELOR OF ARTS

Israa Ghassan Abedrabbo  
 Wala A. Adawi  
 Noor Al Qaisi  
 Vyan Alkurdi  
 Rayna Margarita Alvarez  
 Saeda Amra \*  
 Sadeen Arabeiat  
 Rylee Karsen Bancsy \*\*\* §  
 Jon William Bannister \*\* §  
 Taleya Beck \*\*  
 Isabella G. Beggs \*\*\*  
 Kayleigh Jan Bonick  
 Carly Bowen  
 Omar S. Braxton \*\*\*  
 Kaitlyn Elizabeth Cacciato \*\*  
 Iyana D. Cager  
 Emma C. Caise \*\*  
 Jasmine S. Cauley  
 Gabriela Chaparro \*\*  
 Imprynce Collins  
 Danielle Corcoran \*\*\*  
 Jennifer Lynn Cordes \*  
 Pache Renee Covington \*  
 Kylie M. Cronin  
 Yolanda Beatriz Cruz  
 Caroline Marie Cuellar  
 Tuka K. Daoud  
 Amber Lynn Delos Reyes \*  
 Miguel Diaz Ramirez \*\*  
 Jennifer Nayleth Esparza \*  
 Alfreda Farley \*  
 Rebecca Fassbender \*\*\* §  
 Beatriz Maria Galvan  
 Celena Marie Garcia  
 Arieana Gardner  
 Breanna Leigh Garza \*  
 Alexis Briana Gayton  
 Paul Alan Godbold, Jr.  
 Dekari Graham  
 Jessica Halcin \*  
 Raquel Catherine Harper  
 Alyssa Lorraine Haton  
 Brenden K. Heard  
 Vikki Hermon  
 Joana A. Hermosillo  
 Lorissa Hernandez  
 Joshua Hill  
 Dasha Holiday  
 Mona Hulais \*

Brice R. Ingram \*\*  
 Anneka Jackson  
 Marilyn Denise Jackson  
 Sabrina G. Jean-Simon  
 Kassondra Renee Johnson  
 Lamika Elise Johnson  
 Kim Y. Kellogg  
 Kennedy Kennedy  
 Kyla Rose Krajnovich \*  
 Dalya Kamal Krakra \*  
 Brooke Lynne Laakson  
 Arys Lamb \*  
 Rodolfo Leal  
 Simon LeBeau  
 Mark S. Lewis  
 Jasmine Nicole Lopez \*  
 Sebastian Lopez \*\*\*  
 Thera Selene Lopez \*\*\*  
 Nevaeh R. Lowe  
 Maisa Lukyana \*\*  
 Madeline Majka \*  
 Amal Mansour  
 Evelyn Martinez  
 Michelle Martinez  
 Megan Cecilia Masterson  
 Amani Amin Matariyeh  
 Destiny M. Mckinney  
 Kristyana Aneonique McKnight  
 Monica Ronisha Mickle  
 Mya C. Motley \*\*  
 Jacqueline Muro Castaneda  
 Molly C. Murphy \*  
 Kierra Janae Myrick  
 Elizabeth Nieken  
 Judy Orozco  
 Erica Ann Osgood  
 Nekhiyah Jatou Patton  
 Keylany Perez \*\*  
 Leonardo Ivan Perez  
 Laurie M. Peterson Castillo  
 Charlene Lavone Phillips Stewart  
 Alyssa L. Pierce  
 Alana Marie Pourroy  
 Marisol Ramos  
 Will Thomas Ravetto \*\*\* §  
 Stephen Craig Rayson \*\*\*  
 Yasmine A. Remigio  
 Mario Joseph Rios  
 Maria Olivia Rufino \*\*  
 Sophia Madison Rusch

Nesma Naseem Salah \*  
 Manar Salama  
 Joy Marie Sapp \*\*  
 Kyra Monique Savage §  
 Tracy Lynn Schoenbaum \*\*  
 Karli Kathleen Schuster \*\*\*  
 Iyanna Renee Singleton \*\*  
 Destiny Kay Skelnik \*  
 Jordan D. Jarosz  
 Lakeisha Smith \*  
 Jordan Josephine Solner  
 Kendal Ryan Stanek  
 Breanna Nicole Stovall  
 Alexander C. Strough \*\*  
 Karla Sullivan  
 Corey Anthony Sykes  
 Emma Rose Talamonti \*\*\*  
 Elisa Maria Talis  
 Latanya Taylor  
 Ian Telschow \*  
 Bobby James Terrel  
 Carolyn A. Thill \*\*\*  
 Christina Jean Urso \*  
 Morgan Carol Velky \*\*\*  
 Cody Scott Vollan \*\*  
 Alyssa Shea Voss \*  
 Ariel Tylin Watts  
 Jordyn Anne Wilamowski  
 Tatyana Wilkins  
 Alexis Williams \*  
 Tycila T. Williams \*\*\*  
 Britney Sierra Wintersmith  
 Dunya Yasin  
 Abigail Lynn Yimet \*  
 Christina Zahorik \*\* §  
 Leila Zarzour \*\*  
 Danielle O Zydek\*\*\*

## MASTER OF ARTS

Antavia Alicia Adams  
 Danna Ahmad  
 Jose Manuel Alarcon-Romero  
 Fatima Ayala  
 Tenya S. Baskett  
 Kristin L. Becker  
 Guillermo Benitez Leon  
 Jennifer M. Bernat  
 Rita Nicole Bilotto  
 Brian Matthew Blewitt  
 Kathryn Born

Allaina K Bradshaw  
 Brooke Bryant  
 Melvetta Lashaun Buckley  
 Mariah Renee Castillo  
 Emma Grace Coghlan  
 Kathryn Stephanie Collins  
 Christina Elizabeth Conroy  
 Quavies Lee Crump  
 Elva Maria De La Torre  
 Kimberly J. Rinehart Demetrio  
 Paris Patrice Dewberry  
 Ashley Lashae Dowden  
 Colleen M. Dunford  
 Carter Reid Dupuis  
 Kaitlyn Pamela Dupuis  
 Mainard James Easley  
 Tala A. Elchami  
 Morgan Fallen  
 Jessica Rose Foster  
 Lisa Francis  
 Anngelita Freeman  
 Evette Galvan  
 Ena M. Gardner  
 Karoline M. Giza  
 Daniel Goldfain  
 Shannon Gormley  
 Mariah L. Gray  
 Kristi Marie Green  
 Brianna Herard-Exorphe  
 Kathryn Hosman  
 Heithon T. Hurdle, Jr.  
 Sharice Ericka Johnson  
 Samantha Nicole King  
 George W. Klupchak  
 Samantha Laning  
 Dasia Lawrence  
 Sarah Marie Lenfield  
 Shenika Lockhart  
 Brianna Lorenzen  
 Karla Rose Manning  
 Britney Martin  
 Craig McGill  
 Mary Mckenna  
 Tiffany McMillan  
 Kyle Tiberius Meers  
 Christine M. Moehlig  
 Robert L. Moehlig, Jr.  
 Jennifer Montes  
 Camry Moore  
 Meikeia T. Morgan

\* = Cum Laude \*\* = Magna Cum Laude  
 \*\*\* = Summa Cum Laude § = University Honors Program  
 Academic honors awarded to undergraduate students only.  
 For Commencement, cumulative GPA calculated through Fall 2025.

# College of Education and Human Development

Hayat Msouty  
 Jacob Multack  
 Lauryn Lynn Murphy  
 Robert William Neylon  
 Nasreen Ayyad  
 Tyra M. Panion  
 Chenise Payton  
 Jennifer Lauren Pendleton  
 Jeanette Perkins  
 Shaunwell Ra'mon Posley  
 Lea Rachel Powers  
 Kimberly O'Donnell  
 Elizabeth Rios  
 Shanta Rivers  
 Nikita A. Robinson  
 Mariana Rodriguez  
 Monica Rojas Gratton  
 Julieann Rotondi  
 Sara Russell  
 Maryam Salameh  
 April S. Sanchez  
 Adrienne Reese Sanders  
 Miljana Savic  
 Danielle Schaar  
 Santez L. Scott  
 Aron Adam Servin  
 Folashade Shekoni  
 Ashley D. Smith  
 Brianna Telisa Smith

Brett Carter Stegmueller  
 Brian Anthony Stewart  
 Natalie Strobel  
 Megan Studencki  
 Kathryn Shannon Sugrue  
 Danielle Nicole Thieman  
 Tasha Thomas  
 Ariana Alexis Torrence  
 Nicole Tromotola  
 Molly Ann Vacha  
 Teyah Amani Wheat  
 Travaun J. Whittaker  
 Lauren Wilson  
 Alicia Zachery  
 Samantha Christine Zimny

## EDUCATION SPECIALIST

Aarin Adams  
 Kaylee Lynn Bennett-Kester  
 Brett Robert Gallagher  
 Timothy John Hendrik Germeraad  
 Jarrett Lenell Gunn, Jr.  
 Sharifah Hassan  
 Elijah Hassen  
 Samantha Hernandez  
 Allison Marie Kaufmann  
 Sunankhem S. Kheperu  
 Bliss Laurelyn Like-Jones  
 Kristen M. O'Meara

Brenda Nelly Reyes  
 Shena Chong Scalf  
 Sajeedah Abdullah Shabaneh  
 Aridai Silva  
 Nicholas William Terry  
 Kendal Rose Travis  
 Kaitlyn Marie Utsch  
 Maricela Laura Vega  
 Sydney Winters

## DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Alesha Marie Allen  
 Julie L. Anderson-Roy  
 Melissa Arguelles  
 Khadijah Bradford  
 Richard A. Brown  
 Jonathan Coronel Cruz  
 Brittinae Bianca Davis  
 Michael A. Davis  
 Stacy Dority Edwards  
 Sean W. Doyle  
 Patricia A. Edmond  
 Keshia M. Cagnolatti  
 Tiffany M. Fincher  
 Anne Elizabeth Frosh  
 Donnica L. Gordon  
 Stephen Terrell Hale  
 Lisa M. Merchant  
 Annette Johnson

Collice L. King  
 Shereeta Little  
 Connie Fae Love  
 Mary Mack  
 Gladys F. Marquez  
 Cheryl Y. Martin-Franklin  
 Sarah McCusker  
 Chastinee Camille McNeil  
 Robbin L. Mitchell  
 Selena Musleh  
 Kimberly A. Redfern  
 Jennifer K. Schmidt  
 Myiti Sengstacke-Rice  
 Phyllis C. Starks  
 Scott Brian Thesen  
 Michael Richard von Schultzmeyer  
 Jasmine Washington  
 Meagan Cheve Washington-Sims  
 Grady Clifton Wheaton, Jr.  
 Karen A. Williams  
 Michelle Jeannine Williams  
 Deshonda Wright

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Andrea Burruss  
 Alexis Mercedes Gregorash  
 Patrice L. Henderson  
 Sakina T. Hull



\* = Cum Laude \*\* = Magna Cum Laude  
 \*\*\* = Summa Cum Laude § = University Honors Program  
 Academic honors awarded to undergraduate students only.  
 For Commencement, cumulative GPA calculated through Fall 2025.

# College of Health and Human Services

## BACHELOR OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Jumana Alsayes  
Samantha Catherine Argueta  
Kayla K. Fincher  
Kiara Giles \*  
Taylor Greer  
Ryan Jackson  
Laurie Marie Keating  
Arianna Milton  
Dionne Nelson  
Viviana Ortega \*  
Majeda H. Owaida  
Scott Joseph Preuss  
Kendra Scurlock  
Gina Christine Werner \*  
Felicia Williams \*

## BACHELOR OF HEALTH SCIENCE

Imaan Akhtar Ali  
Sara Salah Alsalahi  
Samira Firas Atieh \*\*  
Nia A. Baker  
Jessica Ann Barkauskas \*  
Jennifer Margaret Barwicka  
Adam Christian Benson  
Norie Lajyah Boone  
Jillian Marie Brinkmann  
Maria Chanell Brooks  
Barbara Broschat \* §  
Celeste Chantal Brown  
Alyssa Jolie Buczkowski  
Lilyan Alieth Camacho  
Diana Carbajal  
Tia Ann Marie Carter  
Faith Chandler  
Sierrah C. Dewberry \*  
Caprisha J. Drane  
Erin Marie Drexler \*\*\* §  
Yasmin Esparza  
Gracen Fenimore \*\*\*  
Karen Renee Fleming  
Yesenia A. Garza \*  
Ivette Claudia Gomez  
Enjoli Adair Goodwin  
Dar'Nae Gunn  
Rund Hamdan  
Aubrey E. Heil  
Juanita Hogue  
Eva Marie Kiko Holm \*

Journey Hurd  
Hayatt Sharaf Ihmud  
Tyrell Isom  
Najhea A. Jolly  
Empress Tyranee Marie Lee  
Kira Ann Lesczynski  
Luz Martinez  
Rose Binu Mathew  
Javonte Mckenzie  
James Mckinney, Jr. \*\*  
Aeron Dominik O. Mendoza \*\*  
Mohammad Jamal Morad  
Jada M. Morgan  
Amber Kayla Mulder  
Lola Onanusi  
Diana Perez  
Allison Elizabeth Pfeffer \*\*  
Dinora Romo \*\*  
Keiran Alecia Smith \*  
Kemiah Victoria Joanne Smith  
Alexis Stephens  
Corayma Vilchis  
Cheyenne Melise Walton  
Alexandra E. Watkins  
Tiara Emma Young

## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

Dominique Cato  
Brianah Dunne \*\*  
Journey Manuel  
Elsie Abimbola Onasanya

## BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING

Opeyemi Elizabeth Awodunmila \*\*  
Margarita Bondar  
Kristy L. Conner  
Jacqueline Marie Dochee  
Gabrielle Marie Fredrickson  
Jonathan Gutierrez  
Lamicka J. Hoover  
Briseyda Juarez  
Tamika Lewis  
Gabriela Araceli Mendoza Pineda  
Terri A. Murison  
Noel Christian Nesbit  
Kathleen Jara Punzalan  
Sarah Yvonne Ratliff  
Wirnyvelis Rodriguez Torres \*  
Kerri S. Skora

## BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK

Giovanni Allen \*  
Shaniquah Shanelle-Veda Clemens \*  
Natalie Dominique Cooper  
Marisa Alison DuBois \*  
Blake Edward Fialka  
Brianna Fuller  
Donna Grant  
Cassandra S. Guy \*  
Alexis Hamilton  
Miriam Lizbeth Hernandez \*\*  
Cassie Jackson  
Deshawn Thomas-Jenkins \*  
Trinity P. Jones \*\* §  
Tiffany Holyfield \*\*  
Lea Kesner-Barry \*\*  
Casimira Kwak  
Fallon Shenece Lee \*  
Laurie Leslie \*  
Sandra J. López Ortiz \*\*\*  
Alberta L. Lymon \*  
Lolita Meacham \*  
Claire Myrna Miller \*\*  
Pashan A. Mixon-Ellis  
Brianna M. Pacelli \*\*  
Marsalis Aaron Pugh Embrey \*  
Destiny Imani Quinn  
Jasmine H. Steward \*  
Latoiya Terry \*  
Monika Thomas  
E. Dream Townsend \*\*  
Tyla Walton

## MASTER OF HEALTH ADMINISTRATION

Sharmain R. Chatman  
Devante Taylor Davis  
Navpreet Kaur Dhaliwal  
Syed Mohammed Ali Hussaini  
Vyshnavi Naraharishetti  
Dasean Matthew Quinn

## MASTER OF HEALTH SCIENCE

Fadya Ali Ahmed  
Yarit Vanesa Alcantara  
Clara Bebawy  
Marisela Briseno  
Ronald Citlau

Catherine Caroline Czernik  
Kyshiaayna Evans  
Alexandra Rose Fieramosca  
Patricia Mary Susan French  
Lindsey Grabowski  
Delores Green  
Aubrey Fawn Hardesty  
Billy Wayne Havener  
Brianna-Sherie Audra Henderson  
Unique Henley  
Priscilla Herring - Okorie  
Paul Anthony Kelly  
Gloria Marie Kidd  
Ernest N. Lohrer III  
Shaniya Ree McMiller  
Barea Victoria Miggins  
A'ishah Toni Muhammad  
Isabel Nehf  
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Kelly Dunn  
Eric G. Garcia  
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# College of Health and Human Services

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Yamunasrivalli Akki  
Devi Allam  
Patience Avoroyo  
Marisol Solorio Ayala  
Vaishnavi Belide  
Amulya Bhavana  
Revathi Bolla  
Sowmya Priya Channa  
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Saiprasad Gone  
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Keerthana Gunda  
Akhila Gunti  
Chandini Gurrupu  
Sri Ramya Hanumanthu  
Preethi Janagam  
Malini Jullalamudi  
Sindhuri Kadari  
Harshitha Kadiveti  
Uday Sri Kamineni  
Usha Sri Karuturi  
Chandrika Kasani  
Jyothirmai Kommalapati  
Goutham Sai Kondeti  
Bala Manohar Krishna Kovvuri  
Harika Mandala  
Divya Mandalapu  
Anusha Mannem  
Priscilla Ivon Martinez  
Mehvish Mirza  
Sameera Mohiuddin  
Gayathri Molakalapalli  
Vimala Reddy Muppidi

Nikhitha Sri Narsing  
Sushma Orus  
Anusha Pachava  
Sahithya Parkulam Santosh  
Harika Pulime  
Ramya Punati  
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Arthi Ratnabala Ramesh  
Rajinikanth Rekulapalli  
Surya Sri Asha Rudraraju  
Aadil Shaik  
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Leanaina Priscilla Bala Sunkara  
Firasath Ullah Hussaini Syed  
Maaria Tabassum  
Prema Sai Talkonda  
Shivani Talloju  
Gowthami Tankasala  
Sadaf Unisa  
Shravan Valluri  
Ramyasri Varadaraju  
Vamshika Vendi  
Srikavya Venigalla  
Priyanka Vinnakota  
Dheeresh Bahadur Waghay  
Naga Venkata Sai Lakshmi  
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Tasneem Amin Hamed  
Angel Jackson  
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Aldith Monica McTaggart  
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 Nicole Elizabeth Chavez \*\*  
 Desire Olivia Epps  
 Deart Ramadan

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 Pranith Kumar Akuthota  
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 Paige Courtney Allen  
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 Rohan Amaradi  
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 Kwaku Amoabin  
 Soumya Amudala  
 Srikanth Anandpalle  
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 Madhulatha Anugu  
 Roshini Anukuri  
 Harsathabinav Anusuya Suresh  
 Amulya Appani  
 Sai Teja Aruva  
 Naveen Athinamoni

Anurag Ausula  
 Raviteja Ayyori  
 Fardeen Abdul Aziz  
 Charan Reddy Badala  
 Nakiran Bairu  
 Sanjana Balannagari  
 Jaahnavi Bandaru  
 Tulasi Bandaru  
 Srivigna Bandela  
 Bhavana Bandi  
 Venkata Sai Kaushik Banka  
 Indira Priyadarshini Bathula  
 Loka Sai Rama Mohan Rao  
 Bhima  
 Johns Binoy  
 Varshitha Bobbarala  
 Sai Gangadhar Boddeti  
 Nived Sai Bodige  
 Bhanuprasad Rao Boinapally  
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 Sukrutha Buddha  
 Buducheri Dharani Priya  
 Shivani Shaileshkumar Bulsara  
 Shivani Chandupatla  
 Udaya Bhanu Chandupatla  
 Sai Kumar Reddy Chappidi  
 Prashanth Kumar Chelpuri  
 Vishal Cherla  
 Amulya Chiluveru  
 Nikhitha Chintakuntla  
 Varun Varshith Chirumarthy  
 Akash Chittel  
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 Bhautik Rajeshbhai Chodvadiya  
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 Varun Sai Dasari  
 Harshavardhan Varma Datla  
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 Dontabhaktuni  
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 Destiny U. Etuk  
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 Vijaya Reddy Ganta  
 Hema Latha Garikipati  
 Mukesh Gattam Reddy  
 Thanusha Girish  
 Sushma Gonu  
 Vamsi Gorle  
 Swechha Reddy Grudhanti  
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## *College of Arts and Sciences*

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Essence Jackson  
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Gayathri Kammidi  
Hema Latha Kandula  
Chanikya Karu  
Manasa Kasha  
Moaz Kassar  
Aravind Katta  
Vamshi Krishna Keerthi  
Bhavana Reddy Keesarla  
Saad Khan  
Vijayakumar Kokkalakonda  
Venkata Sivareddy Kolagatla  
Vivek Kondaparthi  
Siddartha Konga  
Rohan Kulkarni  
Umadevi Kunduru  
Varshitha Reddy Lattupalli  
Sai Venkata Manoj Maddi  
Vishnu Madhipatla  
Sreeja Reddy Maliki  
Sairam Mallela  
Sasi Pallavi Mallula  
Praveen Mamidi  
Sravani Mamidi  
Sahucharan Marampally  
Sudha Rani Maroju  
Saketh Reddy Matta

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Shiva Krishna Reddy Moddu  
Rohith Mogili Golla  
Mohammad Muzamil Aldin  
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Shoibuddin Ahmed Mohammed  
Ian P. Moriarty  
Ram Chandhar Muddam  
Nikhil Mukkamula  
Harvi Bharatbhai Mulani  
Deepthi Sree Mummadi  
Sai Sumanth Mungamuru  
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Hannah Viola Deva Madhuri  
Muthyala  
Taraka Naga Kasi Satya Sai  
Mutyala  
Dharmik Nakrani  
Bhargavi Nalla  
Bhavana Naramaneni  
Sai Keerthi Nare  
Likitha Navya Sri  
Manogna Nellutla  
Vani Nethi  
Mekala Niharika  
Ayesha Noureen  
Padmini Chowdary Nuthalapati  
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Dhruvi Rajeshkumar Patel

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Prince Rajendrakumar Patel  
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Rishikesh Penchala  
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Syed Salahuddin Quadri  
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Abdul Shahbaaz  
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Vinay Kumar Sundarpalli  
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Sohel Ahmed Syed  
Touqeer Ul Hasan Syed  
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Tejavath Jeevan  
Sai Ram Thangella  
Venkat Thangella  
Srujan Vyas Thota  
Bala Akhil Reddy Thumma  
Deekshitha Tummala  
Sai Sindhu Tumukunta  
Danush Shiva Udaiyar  
Samreen Unnisa  
Jagadeesh Vadagana  
Pooja Vadaman  
Manish Kumar Vaddaram  
Charan Naidu Vallala  
Arun Kumar Reddy Vanam  
Siri Priya Veeramaneni  
Deva Rajesh Veluri  
Sreemaan Reddy Vindiyala  
Naga Ashrith Vollala  
Harshith Reddy Vurumalla  
Thomas Finny Yalla  
Sai Tarun Yamala  
Mounika YeddulaVedavyas  
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Munjed Jaber  
Gabrielle Jackson  
Abraham E. Jaimes Guilarte  
Robert Eric Johnson  
Timothy Stephen Kruse  
Trina Kay Mayhill  
Cassidy Moffett  
Donya Mustafa  
Christina Elaine Nelson \*\*\*  
Joseph O. Ogunbode \*  
Arthenia Olive  
Isabella Grace Olson \*  
Andrew Joseph Pack \*\*\*  
Valeria Pena  
Christopher Quevedo  
Samantha Rangel  
Israel Trujillo-Torres \*  
Keith Floyd Turner \*\*  
Ahmad Ghassan Yasin \*\*

## MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Nicole F. Anderson  
Rana Asmar  
Ana Barraza  
Hajera Begum  
Jocelyn Nicole Bell  
Alexis J. Berry  
Timothy Michael Bock  
Ericka T. Carter  
Kalvina Eubanks  
Heriberto Garza  
Nicholas Frank Gawron  
Joy Octavia Gohanna  
Asia Harris  
Veronica Hernandez  
Desiree Diana Horton  
James Thomas Kapsalis  
Justina Kyei-Dompim  
Ciara Luckett  
Taleb Michael Masri  
Samantha Elise McDonald  
Amro Bilal Mehyar  
Hadiyah Muhammad  
Parthavi Patel  
Daniel Perez  
Elio Rocha  
Justin Sam  
Kyra D. Schaffer  
Andrew Seyden  
Justin Deandre Smith  
Latisha M. Williams  
Maia Grace Williams  
Antoine Willis  
Douglas C. Zalesky

## MASTER OF SCIENCE

Snehalatha Adiyala  
Syed Fayez Ul Abidin Ahmed  
Mir Anas Ali Khan  
Chetana Anapuru  
Sahithi Anyam  
Vamshi Krishna Badinehal  
Kritika Bhandari  
Jackson David Busch  
Barbara Elizabeth Chambers  
Sai Teja Danda

Denisha Marcellia Davis  
Mithun Dondapati  
Ravi Chandar Reddy Dubba  
Sokhna Fall  
Christopher J. Fielding  
Elena Lisette Flores  
Tierra Monee' Gully  
Pratap Dhanush Gunturu  
Edward Lee Horath  
Kazi Rahat Al Islam  
Eryn G. Jerz  
Bryce C. Johnsen  
Sai Supraj Karnam  
Venu Karriavula  
Mohammed Haseeb Khan  
Samin Khan  
Liam Gregory Kirschbaum  
Siva Venkat Vinay Deep Korada  
Brock Austin Krska  
Erica Lewis  
Manasa Ratna Ravali Lingoji  
Nikitha Malreddy  
Pranav Minumula  
Anas Mohammed  
Ibrahim Zia Ul Huda Mohammed  
Riyan Ahmed Mohammed  
Mohammed Sarshaar  
Shreya Narwa  
Ashritha Nerella  
Brigida Noble  
Yashaswini Racha  
Lakshmi Harshitha Rangineni  
Harish Rayalapati  
Rachel Anneliese Reeder  
Abdul Rehman Junaid  
Narendra Vamsi Krishna Reddy  
Resapu  
Limahl Q. Robinson  
Sa'Layah Candi Robinson  
Pablo Andres Rosso Rodriguez  
Mervat Khaldi Saleh  
Moiz Izhar Siddiqui  
Tiara E. Travis  
Someswar Naik Vankudoth  
Vishnu Vardhan Reddy Vennapusa  
Chaitanya Kumar Vepareddygari  
Suryakiran Vuppary

\* = Cum Laude \*\* = Magna Cum Laude  
\*\*\* = Summa Cum Laude § = University Honors Program  
Academic honors awarded to undergraduate students only.  
For Commencement, cumulative GPA calculated through Fall 2025.

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# *Commencement Marshals*

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## **Role and Significance**

Commencement Marshals play a vital role in ensuring the success, dignity, and continuity of the University's most significant academic ceremony. Serving as leaders and stewards of tradition, Marshals guide graduates through each stage of the ceremony with precision and respect.

Representing the faculty and staff who supported students throughout their academic journey, their presence reflects the transition from student to graduate, bringing the Commencement experience full circle.

We are pleased to recognize and warmly welcome this year's Commencement Marshal Leadership Team and Ceremony Marshals, whose service and commitment help make this celebration possible.

## **Marshal Leadership Team**

Joshua Sopiartz - Faculty Senate President, Grand Marshal  
Debra King – Lead Marshal

## **Marshals**

### **AM Ceremony**

Ahmet Can  
Tareylon Chairse  
Siobhan Dalrymple  
Joseph Day  
Christopher Dignam  
Jan Figa  
Giesela Grumbach  
Cheun-Yeong Lee  
Shaalein Lopez  
Blaise Lukasiewicz  
Rich Manprisio  
Somi Nagaraj  
Latesha Newson  
Mohammed Salam  
Steven Sharp  
Lamise Shawahin  
Amy Vujaklija  
Amy Wagner  
Leonis Wright

### **PM Ceremony**

Jan Figa  
Chris Greiner  
Steven Hyzny  
Shelly Kumar  
Xuefeng Liu  
Blaise Lukasiewicz  
Rich Manprisio  
Rashidah Jaami`  
Muhammad  
Jelena Radovic-Fanta  
Mohammed Salam  
Udaysinha Shinde  
John Simon  
Abbas Toure  
Angela Thompson  
Amy Vujaklija

### **Hooding Ceremony**

Amy Bala  
Ahmet Can  
Siobhan Dalrymple  
Christopher Dignam  
Jan Figa  
Blaise Lukasiewicz  
Shelly Kumar  
Rashidah Jaami`  
Muhammad  
Somi Nagaraj  
Mohammed Salam  
Amy Vujaklija

# – Honors Cords, Medallions, and Stoles for Commencement –

The medals worn by some graduates symbolize their completion of the Honors College.

The stoles or cords worn by some graduates symbolize their membership in an honor society.

## Honors College – undergraduates only

Honors College graduates complete a rigorous honors program including an honors capstone with the goal of promoting leadership and personal development for the betterment of the students, the university, and the local and global community.

<b>Program</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Color</b>
Honors Program	Medallion	Gold

## Latin Honors and Lincoln Laureate – undergraduates only

<b>Honor</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Color</b>
Cum Laude	Cord	White
Magna Cum Laude	Cord	Silver
Summa Cum Laude	Cord	Gold
Lincoln Laureate	Medallion	Gold

## Honor Societies and Student Senate

<b>Society</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Color(s)</b>
Alpha Alpha Alpha	Cord	Blue and Gray/Silver
Alpha Eta Society (Allied Health)	Cord	Green
Alpha Iota Sigma (Interdisciplinary)	Cord	Blue and White
Alpha Phi Sigma (Criminal Justice)	Cord	Royal Blue and Gold
Alpha Sigma Lambda (Adult Learners)	Cord	Burgundy and Antique Gold
Beta Gamma Sigma (Business)	Cord	Royal Blue and Gold
Chi Sigma Iota (Counseling)	Stole	Blue and White
Kappa Delta Pi (Education)	Cord	Green and Purple
Lambda Pi Eta (Communication)	Cord	Crimson and Cream
Phi Alpha (Social Work)	Stole	Blue and Gold
Phi Theta Epsilon (Occupational Therapy)	Cord	Navy and Gold
Pi Alpha Alpha (Public Administration)	Stole	Light Blue and Gold
Psi Chi International (Psychology)	Cord/Stole	Dark Blue and Platinum/Platinum
SALUTE Veterans	Cord	Red, White, and Blue
Sigma Tau Delta (English)	Cord	Red and Black
Sigma Theta Tau (Nursing)	Cord	Purple
Tau Sigma (Transfer)	Cord	Burgundy and Gold
Upsilon Phi Delta (Healthcare)	Cord	Blue and Red
Upsilon Pi Epsilon (Computer Science)	Cord	Maroon and White
Student Senate (Student Governance)	Stole	Black and White

## Dual Degree Program – undergraduates who entered GovState through the Dual Degree Program

<b>Dual Degree Partners</b>	<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Color(s)</b>
City Colleges of Chicago	Cord	Light Blue and Black and White
College of DuPage	Cord	Green and Black and White
Harper College	Cord	Blue and Black and White
Joliet Junior College	Cord	Purple and Black and White
Kankakee Community College	Cord	Red and Black and White
Moraine Valley Community College	Cord	Green and Black and White
Morton College	Cord	Blue and Black and White
Prairie State College	Cord	Green and Black and White
South Suburban College	Cord	Blue and Black and White
Triton College	Cord	Maroon and Black and White
Waubensee Community College	Cord	Maroon and Black and White

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# *Academic Regalia*

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During the commencement ceremony, students and faculty wear academic costumes indicating the wearers' degrees, colleges/universities, and fields of study.

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## *The Cap*

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The black mortarboard type is the most common cap worn. Degree candidates wear cap tassels that are black and white, the university colors. Colors worn by the faculty vary according to their fields of study.

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## *The Gown*

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Gowns are of three kinds. The bachelor's gown is relatively simple, with lines falling straight from a fairly elaborate yoke. Its distinguishing characteristic is the long pointed sleeve. Braided silken cords are worn by students who have achieved special scholastic recognition. The master's and specialist's gowns have sleeves, with a back end extending down below the knee in a crescent shape. The doctoral gown is an elaborate costume with velvet panels down the front and around the neck and three velvet bars on the bell-shaped sleeves.

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## *The Hood*

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The official colors of the college or university from which a degree is conferred are represented in the lining of the hood. For each field of study, there is a corresponding trim color. While each program of study has a specific color, some programs display the same color. The repetitive color reflects the college (ex. Addictions Studies and Communication Disorders graduates earn a Master of Health Science for which the hood color is Salmon Pink). The trim colors for doctoral and master's hoods are as follows:

<b>Degree Programs.....</b>	<b>Color</b>
Accounting.....	Drab
Addictions Studies.....	Salmon Pink
Analytical Chemistry.....	Golden Yellow
Art.....	Brown
Business Administration.....	Drab
Communication Disorders.....	Salmon Pink
Communication and Training.....	White
Computer Science.....	Golden Yellow
Counseling.....	Light Blue
Counselor Education and Supervision Ph.D. ....	Royal Blue
Counselor Education and Supervision Ed.D. ....	Light Blue
Criminal Justice.....	Navy
Early Childhood Education.....	Light Blue
Education.....	Light Blue
Educational Administration.....	Light Blue
English.....	White
Environmental Biology.....	Golden Yellow
Independent Film and Digital Imaging.....	Brown
Interdisciplinary Leadership.....	Light Blue
Health Administration.....	Salmon Pink
Management Information Systems.....	Golden Yellow
Mathematics.....	Bright Gold
Multicategorical Special Education.....	Light Blue
Nursing.....	Apricot
Occupational Therapy.....	Slate Blue
Physical Therapy.....	Teal
Political and Justice Studies.....	White
Psychology.....	Light Blue
Public Administration.....	Peacock Blue
Reading.....	Light Blue
School Psychology.....	Light Blue
Social Work.....	Citron

# Faculty and Academic Staff

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Zingsheim, Jason  
Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

## **DIVISION OF ARTS AND LETTERS**

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Full Professor

Reynolds Andujar  
Program Coordinator – History, B.A. / Social  
Sciences, B.A. with Concentration in Teacher  
Education

Morenikeji Asaju  
Assistant Professor

Amanda Athon  
Associate Professor

Quenna Barrett  
Assistant Professor

Sayoni Bose  
Associate Professor

Janet Brewer  
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Criminal Justice, M.A.

Mary Bruce  
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Deborah Burk  
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Erica Ceka  
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Javier Chavira  
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Staci Corum  
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Valerie Cronin-Fisher  
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Donald Culverson  
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Natalia Ermasova  
Program Coordinator – Public Administration,  
M.P.A.

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Assistant Professor

Eddie Gamboa  
Director Of Forensics

Kelly Gawel  
Assistant Professor

Jayne Goode  
Full Professor

Chris Greiner  
University Lecturer

Cheryl Hague  
University Lecturer Senior Status

Michael Hart  
University Lecturer Senior Status

Lara Hrycaj  
Assistant Professor

Miwa Ito  
Assistant Professor

Caron Jacobson  
University Lecturer Senior Status

Debbie James  
Chair

Gretchen Jankowski  
Associate Professor

Vincent Jones  
Associate Professor

Julie Keck  
Director, Center For Community Media

Mary Lanigan  
Full Professor

William Lanigan  
Associate Professor

Megan Lindsay  
University Lecturer

Khalil Marrar  
Associate Professor

Leanne McClurg  
Full Professor

Nina Moon  
Visiting Assistant Professor

Kerri Morris  
Full Professor

Rashidah Muhammad  
Full Professor

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Program Coordinator – Independent Film and  
Digital Imaging, M.F.A.

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Assistant Professor

Vida Owusu-Boateng  
Assistant Professor

Novia Pagone  
Associate Professor

Beth Parin  
Associate Professor

Jun Park  
Assistant Professor

Jelena Radovic-Fanta  
Associate Professor

Taylor Rogers  
Assistant Professor

Cindy Rousseau  
Program Coordinator – English, B.A. with  
Concentration in Teacher Education

Joao Salm  
Associate Professor

Fatima Sattar  
Assistant Professor

Jessica Scott  
Assistant Professor

Jarrold Shanahan  
Associate Professor

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Stefany Sigler  
Graduate Academic Advisor

Gerald Slowik  
University Lecturer Senior Status

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Philip Spangler  
University Lecturer

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Media Studies, B.A. / Theatre and Performance  
Studies, B.A.

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University Lecturer

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Political and Social Justice Studies, M.A.

Christopher White  
Program Coordinator – English, B.A. / English,  
M.A.

Laura White  
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Bruce Wilson  
Associate Professor

Jillian Klean Zwilling  
Program Coordinator – Gender and Sexuality  
Studies, B.A.

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University Lecturer Senior Status

Oscene Barrett  
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Jasmine Chen  
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Computer Science, M.S.

Neng-Shin Chen  
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Xiaoyong Chen  
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Xin Chen  
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Christopher Craddock  
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Priyanshi Garg  
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Daniel Grigoletti  
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Hemanth Gudaparthi  
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Jianwei Hao  
Assistant Professor

Walter Henne  
Full Professor

Stephen Hyzny  
University Lecturer Senior Status

Ross Johnson  
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Stephen Kent  
University Lecturer

Shailendra Kumar  
Full Professor

Heng Li  
Associate Professor

Ya Lin  
University Lecturer

Alex Liu  
University Lecturer

Yunchuan Liu  
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University Lecturer

Jessica Nicoletti  
University Lecturer

Shukmei Oh  
University Lecturer

Soon-Ok Park  
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University Lecturer

Lauren Ryba  
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Kamil Samara  
Assistant Professor

Aslam Shahid  
University Lecturer Senior Status

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Joong-Won Shin  
Full Professor

John Sowa  
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Clare Tang  
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Abbas Toure  
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Chris Tweddle  
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Jing Wang  
University Lecturer

Meng Yu  
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John Yunger  
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Jing Zhang  
Full Professor

Jun Zuo  
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## PSYCHOLOGY

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## DIVISION OF ACCOUNTING, FINANCE, MIS, AND ECONOMICS

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Praggyan Mohanty  
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Stephen Wagner  
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## **COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT**

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## **DEPARTMENT OF ADDICTIONS STUDIES AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

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Wyvon Blackwell  
Nursing MSN (CNS) Coordinator

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University Lecturer Senior Status

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## **DEPARTMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

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## **DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY**

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Assistant Professor

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Maryleen Jones  
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Melissa Naegele  
University Lecturer

Nicole Stotts  
University Lecturer

Renee Theiss  
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## **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK**

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Services

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## **GOVERNORS STATE UNIVERSITY HONORS COLLEGE**

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## **UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

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Jan Figa  
Dean, University Library

Joel Mota  
Public Services Librarian, University Lecturer

Michel Nguessan  
Associate Professor

Joshua Sopiartz  
Librarian, Full Professor

## **STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Mushtaq Choudhary  
Associate Vice President of Student Affairs &  
Dean of Students

# *Acknowledgments*

**Dear Governors State University Community and Class of 2026,**

It is with immense pride and joy that I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the remarkable Class of 2026. Today marks not only the culmination of your academic journey but also the beginning of your next chapter as alumni of Governors State University.

Your perseverance, dedication, and resilience throughout your educational journey have prepared you for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Each of you has contributed to our vibrant community in your own unique way, and we are confident that you will continue to make meaningful contributions to society as you move forward.

This momentous occasion would not be possible without the extraordinary efforts of our university community. I wish to express my profound appreciation to our distinguished faculty, whose expertise and mentorship have guided our graduates toward academic excellence. Your commitment to fostering critical thinking, creativity, and professional growth has empowered our students to reach their full potential.

To our dedicated staff across all departments—Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, President and Event’s Offices, Marketing and Communications, Public Safety, Advisors, Center for Performing Arts, Facilities, Digital Learning and Media Design, Arena, Registrar’s Office, Provost’s Office, Colleges, and many others—your tireless work behind the scenes has been instrumental in creating an environment where our students can thrive. From organizing this beautiful ceremony to providing support services throughout the academic year, your contributions have been invaluable.

To the families and friends of our graduates, thank you for your unwavering support and encouragement. Your presence today is a testament to the important role you have played in our graduates' success.

As our newest alumni embark on their professional journeys, they carry with them not only their degrees but also the values and principles that define Governors State University. May you continue to embrace lifelong learning, champion equity and inclusion, and serve as catalysts for positive change in your communities.

Congratulations once again to the Class of 2026! We celebrate your achievements today and look forward to your future accomplishments.

Warmest regards,



Beverly Schneller, Ph.D.  
*Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs*



**National Anthem**  
**The Star-Spangled Banner** - abridged

Francis Scott Key

O say can you see, by the dawn's early light,  
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming,  
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,  
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?  
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,  
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;  
O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave  
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

**Black National Anthem**  
**Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing** - abridged  
J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson

Lift every voice and sing,  
Till earth and heaven ring,  
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;  
Let our rejoicing rise  
High as the list'ning skies,  
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.

God of our weary years,  
God of our silent tears,  
Thou who has brought us thus far on the way;  
Thou who has by Thy might, Led us into the light,  
Keep us forever in the path, we pray.

Lest our feet stray from the places, our God, where we met Thee,  
Lest our hearts, drunk with the wine of the world, we forget Thee;  
Shadowed beneath Thy hand,  
May we forever stand,  
True to our God,  
True to our native land.





## WELCOME TO THE GOVSTATE ALUMNI FAMILY!

Graduates,

What an incredible journey you've taken. Today, we celebrate not only your accomplishments but also the determination and resilience that brought you here. As you cross this milestone, you join a proud and growing community of more than 60,000 Governors State University alumni.

Graduation is not the end of your connection to GovState—it is the beginning of your lifelong relationship with the Alumni Association. As alumni, you are part of a network built to support you in every stage of your personal and professional journey.

We encourage you to stay connected by participating in alumni events, joining affinity groups, mentoring fellow Jaguars, and taking advantage of career and professional development resources. Be sure to explore the New Graduate Starter Kit to update your information, claim your complimentary one-year premium alumni membership, and stay engaged with your GovState community.

As you move forward, remember that your connection to GovState remains strong. The relationships you've built here continue, and your involvement helps shape the future of the University and those who will follow in your footsteps.

Congratulations, Class of 2026. Welcome to the Governors State University Alumni Association—we are proud to have you as part of our community and look forward to all that you will accomplish.



