



**COLLEGE OF
GRADUATE STUDIES**

2026 COMMENCEMENT



College of Graduate Studies
2026 Commencement

Midwestern University • Downers Grove Campus

Thursday, the Twenty-Eighth of May,
Two Thousand and Twenty-Six



ORDER OF CEREMONY

Processional: *Pomp and Circumstance*

THE AUDIENCE WILL PLEASE STAND

Introduction: Kaila Dougherty, O.D., D.H.A., FAAO
Chief Operating Officer

National Anthem: *The Star-Spangled Banner* by F.S. Key
Joana Mathew, *Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences, Class of 2026*

Opening Reflection: Mae J. Ciancio, Ph.D.
Program Director, Biomedical Sciences Program

President's Address: Joshua C. Baker, O.D., M.S.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Dean's Welcome: Sandra E. Inouye, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Graduate Studies

Presentation of Graduates: Dr. Inouye

Conferral of Degrees: Dr. Baker

Graduate Hooding of the Class of 2026

Master of Biomedical Sciences

Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences

Master of Science in Precision Medicine

Post-Graduate Certificate in Precision Medicine

Master of Public Health

Student Remarks: Nitya Chagoor, *Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences*

Closing Remarks: Garilyn Jentarra, Ph.D.
Program Director, Precision Medicine

Closing Reflection: Tiffany Hughes, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FGSA
Acting Program Director, Public Health

Recessional

Announcer:

Kolla Kristjansdottir, Ph.D.

Student Marshals:

Andrew Hawkey, Ph.D.

Ying He, Ph.D.

Kyle Henderson, Ph.D.

Sarah Kralicek, Ph.D.

Alesia Prakapenka, Ph.D.

Cai Roberts, Ph.D.

Faculty Marshals:

Jeremy Ellermeier, Ph.D.

Rafael Mejía-Alvarez, M.D., Ph.D.

Ira Sigar, Ph.D.

Hooders:

Michael Fay, Ph.D.

Tiffany Hughes, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FGSA

Garilyn Jentarra, Ph.D.

Kristina Martinez-Guryn, Ph.D., R.D.

Mace Bearers:

Joshua Gasiorowski, Ph.D.

Walter Prozialeck, Ph.D.





MASTER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Samia Tamer Aljaradat
Elmwood Park, IL

William H. Foydel
Evanston, IL

Ivana Meseldzija
Morton Grove, IL

Briana Elizabeth Barrington
New London, WI

Warda Hayat
Watervliet, NY

Mary Immaculate Nantale
Des Plaines, IL

Aarya Bavare
Naperville, IL

Danielle K. Hochstatter
Amboy, IL

Tracey Renee Poynton
Woodridge, IL

Ethan Bengson
Geneva, IL

Yousra Hussain Hujaji
Bridgeview, IL

Patti Ann Salmon
Howell, MI

Aundrea Lillian Crain
Eldridge, IA

Jemma Mary Ibrahim
Orlando, FL

Ashley Pan Ung
Watauga, TX

MASTER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AWARDS

Tracey Renee Poynton
Dean's Achievement Award

Aarya Bavare
Leadership Award

Ashley Pan Ung
Service Award

Patti Ann Salmon
Research Award

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

China Acevedo-Chalk
Shelby Township, MI

Andrew Jay Anderson
Lanark, IL

Mishal Sajid Chaudhry
Ville Platte, LA

Haitham A. Ahmad
Oak Lawn, IL

David Michael Antos
Crystal Lake, IL

Mary Chung
Streamwood, IL

Sara Mhd Khaled AL Roujouleh
Vancouver, BC

Ruben Aranda
Chicago, IL

Emily Eileen Collins
Darien, IL

Amenah Laith Al Uzri
Lombard, IL

Mariyam Arshad
Naperville, IL

Salma Daboul
Damascus, SYR

Garrett John Alexander
Middletown, DE

Isaac Bravo
Rancho Cucamonga, CA

Logan Rene Dela-Cruz
San Diego, CA

Omar Ali
Glenview, IL

Brennan Broderick
Manhattan, IL

Subohi Fatima
Naperville, IL

Ibrahim ALRoujouleh
Vancouver, BC

Leonardo Carreon
Chicago, IL

Anet Felix
Midlothian, VA

Tariq Alsadi
East Lansing, MI

Nitya Chagoor
Aurora, IL

Margaret Yvonne Forth
Saint Paul, MN

Master of Arts in Biomedical Sciences (continued)

Fiorella Ghiorsi
Lisle, IL

Sean Nemeh
Burr Ridge, IL

Andrew Scholz
Elmhurst, IL

Adam Said Hanash
Chicago, IL

Natalia Nikolic
Oak Park, IL

Sufiyan Shaikh
La Mirada, CA

Matilda Hilarides
Winnetka, IL

Tejaswi Nunna
Aurora, IL

Khadijha Strong
Chicago, IL

Hannah Kats
Wheaton, IL

Helen Marie Offerman
Saint Charles, IL

Joshua Angel Suarez
Plantation, FL

Jasmine Khaira
Carol Stream, IL

Stephany Osei Opoku
Plainfield, IL

Kyrolos Tawfik
Indianapolis, IN

Sharmeen Khan
Skokie, IL

Alexa Oshana
Hoffman Estates, IL

Tatiana Nikolaeva Tchobanova
Mount Prospect, IL

Yasmin Sevval Kusluk
Orlando, FL

Mario Osorio
Plainfield, IL

Julia Toth
Burr Ridge, IL

Anna Caroline Latham
Bourbonnais, IL

Jason Nathaniel Otero
Chicago, IL

Kevin Tran
Tampa, FL

Joana Sara Mathew
Des Plaines, IL

Jasmine Ha Neul Park
Chino, CA

Jhanvi Vakharia
Birmingham, AL

Nicole Elizabeth McNichols
St. Louis, MO

Suma Sri Pasupulati
Buffalo Grove, IL

Julia Elizabeth Vexelman
Wilmette, IL

Maile McSwain
Flagstaff, AZ

Shreenath Patel
Schaumburg, IL

Wyatt Walters
Houston, MN

Sahil Merchant
Orlando, FL

Vishwa Patel
Des Plaines, IL

Isabella Grace Wilson
Clarkston, MI

Alina Ann Mohr
DeKalb, IL

Maneesha Pondara
Aurora, IL

Sahithy Reddy Yaramada
San Diego, CA

Calista Rose Muraskas
Manteno, IL

Jayson Hakeem Reeves
El Paso, TX

Hye Ji Yim
Los Angeles, CA

Nuha O. Nawaz
Lombard, IL

Sara A. Sandoval
Chicago, IL

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AWARDS

Natalia Nikolic
Dean's Achievement Award

Kevin Tran
Leadership Award

Sahithy Reddy Yaramada
Service Award

Joana Sara Mathew
Mario Osorio
Research Award

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRECISION MEDICINE

Emily Katelyn Bergeron*
Naperville, IL

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRECISION MEDICINE AWARD

Emily Katelyn Bergeron
Dean's Achievement Award

**Enrolled as a dual-degree student in the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine.*

POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PRECISION MEDICINE

Smriti Marwaha**
Orland Park, IL

Kelly Rose Minuskin**
Palatine, IL

Crystal Whitney Terry**
Durham, NC

POST-GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN PRECISION MEDICINE AWARD

Kelly Rose Minuskin
Dean's Achievement Award

***Also receiving the Pharm.D. degree from the College of Pharmacy, Downers Grove*

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Katherine Elizabeth Alberts****
Naperville, IL

Kajal Patel**
Lombard, IL

Danica Sinia Calingo Tuason***
San Diego, CA

Kristen Marie O. Hilo*
Skokie, IL

Anna Katherine Stubbs**
Holland, MI

Julie Zhu**
Kildeer, IL

Nina Mary Pacion**
Barrington, IL

Sydney Taylor***
Baltimore, MD

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Katherine Elizabeth Alberts
Dean's Achievement Award

**Previously received the M.A.B.S. degree from the Biomedical Sciences Program, College of Graduate Studies and the D.M.D. degree from the College of Dental Medicine, Illinois*

***Also receiving the D.O. degree from the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine*

**** Also receiving the D.M.D. degree from the College of Dental Medicine, Illinois*

*****Also receiving the O.T.D. degree from the Occupational Therapy Program, College of Health Sciences*



COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES FACULTY

Anatomy Faculty

Timothy Campbell, Ph.D.
Michael Ebeid, Ph.D.
Matthew Fardoux, M.S.
Michele Fornaro, Ph.D.
Eric Gorscak, Ph.D.
Samuel Guthertz, Ph.D.
Ji Eun Kim, Ph.D.
Erin Leslie, Ph.D.
Terrence Ritzman, Ph.D.
Erin Stephenson, Ph.D.
Joseph Terranova, Ph.D.
Maria Traka, Ph.D.
Deming Yang, Ph.D.

Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics Faculty

Bryan C. Bjork, Ph.D.
Thomas M. Bodenstine, Ph.D.
Jeffrey Kurkewich, Ph.D.
Jonathan Lerner, Ph.D.
Candice Mazewski, Ph.D.
Renier Velez-Cruz, Ph.D.
Susan M. Viselli, Ph.D.

Biomedical Sciences Faculty

Mae J. Ciancio, Ph.D.
Michael Fay, Ph.D.
Joshua Gasiorowski, Ph.D.
Andrew Hawkey, Ph.D.
Sarah Kralicek, Ph.D.
Kolla Kristjansdottir, Ph.D.
Kristina Martinez-Guryrn, Ph.D., RD
Alesia Prakapenka, Ph.D.

Microbiology and Immunology Faculty

Jeremy Ellermeier, Ph.D.
Richard Laddaga, Ph.D.
Ira Sigar, Ph.D.
Michelle Swanson-Mungerson, Ph.D.
Julie Swartzendruber, Ph.D.
Martin Szul, Ph.D.
Vaibhav Tiwari, Ph.D.
Michael V. Volin, Ph.D.

Pathology Faculty

John N. Kasimos, D.O., M.S., M.S.H.C.E.,
F.C.A.P, F.A.S.C.P., F.A.O.C.P.
Luigi Strizzi, M.D., Ph.D.

Pharmacology Faculty

Milad J. Alasady, Ph.D.
Joshua Edwards, Ph.D.
Phillip Kopf, Ph.D.
Marsha Pierce, Ph.D.
Walter C. Prozialeck, Ph.D.
Prasanth Puthanveetil, Ph.D.
Cai Roberts, Ph.D.

Physiology Faculty

Kyle Henderson, Ph.D.
Isabel Martinez-Peña y Valenzuela, Ph.D.
Rafael Mejía-Alvarez, M.D., Ph.D.
Maura Porta, Ph.D.
Alexander J. Rosenberg, Ph.D.
Sinju Sundaresan, Ph.D.

Precision Medicine Faculty

Kimberly Bussey, Ph.D.
Ying He, Ph.D.
Garilyn Jentarra, Ph.D.
Kolla Kristjansdottir, Ph.D.
Rosa Ventrella, Ph.D.

Public Health Faculty

Karen Gruszynski, D.V.M., M.P.H., Ph.D., DACVPM
Tiffany Hughes, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.B.A., FGSA
David Line, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.S.W.
Felicia Trembath, Ph.D., M.P.H.
Mariah Zeigler, D.V.M., M.P.H., DACVPM

ACADEMIC REGALIA AND PROCESSIONAL

Gown

The gown is the cornerstone of the academic costume that has its origins in 12th and 13th century Europe, a period when universities were being formed. Today, Midwestern University follows guidelines established by the American Council on Education. All graduates wear black gowns, with the front panels of the doctoral gown trimmed in black velvet. Each sleeve of the doctoral gown is adorned with three bars of black velvet with bell-shaped wrist ends. The master's gown is unadorned, with the wrist ends of the sleeve open oblongs that extend beyond the hand.

**Chicago College of
Osteopathic Medicine**

Discipline Color: Kelly Green
Liner Color: Black
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences
Occupational Therapy Program**

Discipline Color: Sage Green
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**Chicago College of
Optometry**

Discipline Color: Seafoam
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Pharmacy,
Downers Grove**

Discipline Color: Olive
Liner Color: Light Purple
Chevron Color: White

**College of Health Sciences
Clinical Psychology Program**

Discipline Color: Gold
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies
Biomedical Sciences Program**

Discipline Color: Gold
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences
Physician Assistant Program**

Discipline Color: Gold
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences
Speech-Language Pathology Program**

Discipline Color: Crimson
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies
Public Health Program**

Discipline Color: Salmon
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Health Sciences
Physical Therapy Program**

Discipline Color: Teal Blue
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

College of Dental Medicine—Illinois

Discipline Color: Lilac
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold

**College of Graduate Studies
Precision Medicine Program**

Discipline Color: Gold
Liner Color: Navy
Chevron Color: Gold



Hood

The hood, a commencement accessory placed around the neck that drapes down the back of the graduate's gown, signifies achievement in higher education. Its velvet top layer is the discipline color of the program of study. Both the lining and the chevron trim colors are those of the college or the program. The doctoral hood is four feet in length; the master's hood is three and one-half feet in length. At Midwestern University, the hood is carried over the right arm of the graduate in the processional and is placed on the graduate during the ceremony.

Tam

All Midwestern University graduates wear black velvet tams with black (master's programs) or gold (doctoral programs) tassels that hang to the right front side.

Honor Cords

The honor cord, nearly six feet in length, is worn around the graduate's neck and drapes down the front of the gown. The different cord colors designate the academic achievement or honor status in a national academic/professional society. A graduate can wear multiple cords if he or she qualifies for individual honors.

Midwestern University Coins

A custom minted coin is a military tradition to recognize achievement, create incentive, improve safety, or show appreciation for duty, dedication, or a job well done. Midwestern University proudly presents graduates who are in the military or entering the military following graduation with a coin to honor their service to our country.

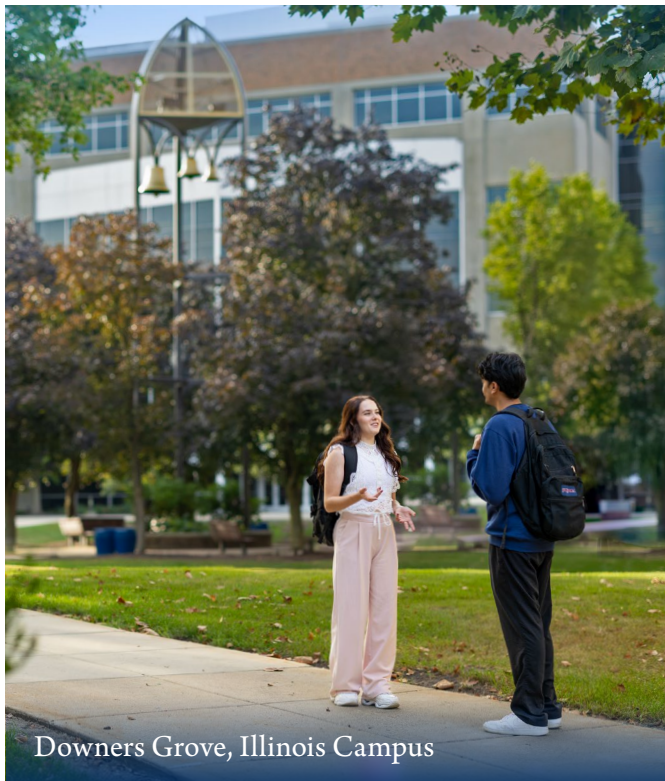
HISTORY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1900 as the American College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery in Chicago, Illinois, Midwestern University began with a clear mission to educate healthcare professionals in a not-for-profit, student-centered environment. Early leadership and faculty built a strong reputation for academic excellence and hands-on clinical training, helping shape the future of osteopathic medicine.

The University's growth reflects both vision and responsiveness to the needs of healthcare. In 1986, the institution relocated to Downers Grove, Illinois, creating space for expanded programs across the health sciences. In 1995, Midwestern University established a second campus in Glendale, Arizona, significantly broadening its reach and impact. Over time, the University expanded to include programs in pharmacy, dental medicine, optometry, health sciences, podiatry, nursing, biomedical science, and veterinary medicine.

Today, Midwestern University is a comprehensive graduate university with two campuses, multiple colleges, and a wide range of healthcare programs. Students learn in modern facilities and gain valuable experience through interprofessional education, clinical education, and community-based clinics. The University's One Health initiative further emphasizes the connection between human, animal, and environmental health, preparing students to collaborate across disciplines to address complex global challenges.

Throughout its history, the University has remained committed to its founding principles of academic excellence, compassionate care, and student success, preparing our graduates to thrive in a rapidly changing healthcare environment.



ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Joshua C. Baker, O.D., M.S.
President and Chief Executive Officer

Thomas A. Boyle, D.O., M.B.A., FACEP, FACOEP
Dean, Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine

Sheri Brownstein, D.M.D., M.Ed.
Dean, College of Dental Medicine-Arizona

Jared Chamberlain, Ph.D.
*Dean, College of Health Sciences,
Glendale Campus*

Megan Dallianis, Ed.D.
Dean of Student Services, Downers Grove Campus

Mitchell R. Emerson, Ph.D.
*Dean, College of Pharmacy,
Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses*

Alicia E. Feis, O.D., FAAO
Dean, Arizona College of Optometry

Carla Gartrell, D.V.M., J.D., DACVIM
Dean, College of Veterinary Medicine

Harold J. Haering, Jr., D.M.D.
Dean, College of Dental Medicine-Illinois

Brianne N. Hobbs, O.D., Ph.D., FAAO
Dean, Chicago College of Optometry

Sandra E. Inouye, Ph.D.
*Dean, College of Graduate Studies,
Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses*

Jeffrey L. Jensen, D.P.M., FACFAS
Dean, Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine

Lori A. Kemper, D.O., M.S., FACOFP
Dean, Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine

Coretta C. Patterson, D.V.M., DACVIM-SA
Dean, Chicago College of Veterinary Medicine

Sarah Radtke, Ed.D., ATC
*Dean, College of Health Sciences,
Downers Grove Campus*

Shannon Sesterhenn, M.S., Ed.D.
Dean of Student Services, Glendale Campus

Yir Gloria Yuch, Ph.D.
Provost



Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

Downers Grove Campus
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Downers Grove, IL 60515
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