

CHICAGO COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY
2025 Commencement



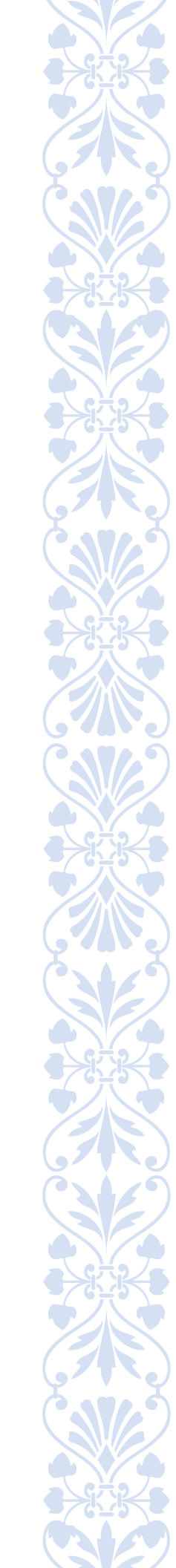
MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY
Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

CHICAGO COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY

2025 Commencement

*Midwestern University • Downers Grove Campus
Wednesday, the Twenty-Eighth of May, Two Thousand and Twenty-Five*





ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Joshua C. Baker, O.D., M.S.

Interim Dean, Chicago College of Optometry, Senior Vice President and Chief Academic 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

Mitchell R. Emerson, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Pharmacy, Downers Grove and Glendale Campuses

Michael J. Fay, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Graduate Studies, 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-Arizona

Harold J. Haering, D.M.D.

Dean, College of Dental Medicine-Illinois

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, Proposed College of Veterinary Medicine-Illinois

Fred D. Romano, Ph.D., FASAHP

Dean, College of Health Sciences, Downers Grove Campus

Shannon Sesterhenn, M.S., Ed.D.

Dean of Student Services

ORDER OF CEREMONY

Processional

THE AUDIENCE WILL PLEASE STAND

Introduction

National Anthem

Opening Reflection

Welcome Address

Optometric Oath

Presentation of Graduates

Conferral of Degrees

Musical Interlude

Student Remarks

Closing Remarks

Closing Reflection

Recessional

Video recording of commencement ceremonies using cameras or personal electronic devices is strictly prohibited. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Midwestern University reserves the right to use any photograph/video taken at any event sponsored by MWU for publicity purposes without the expressed written permission of those included within the photograph/video. MWU may use the images on its social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube), websites (midwestern.edu, mwuclinics.com, or mwuanimalhealth.com), or printed publications (e.g., invitations, programs, brochures). Thank you for your participation.



Graduation Celebration Social Media Toolkit

Congratulations Graduates! Midwestern University wants to help you celebrate commencement and provide you the tools to help you share your success on social media with customized stickers and templates for each social platform.

Add a commemorative cover photo to your Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter profile, send a Snapchat with our graduation filters or use an #MWUGrad2025 Instagram sticker to tell your story.

DOCTOR OF OPTOMETRY CLASS OF 2025

Arthur Jacob Alford

*Brandon, MS
Cum laude*

Daniela Avalos

Knoxville, TN

George Michael Carlos Bagay

Pittsburgh, PA

Andrew Baker

St. Charles, MO

Kalli Athena Choles

*Madison, WI
Summa cum laude*

Giacomo Cilliani

Fontana, CA

Neha Meriel Costanzo

*Telford, PA
Cum laude*

Pierre Akouete Dekpoh

Bolingbrook, IL

Lauren Kaye Delisi

*Crystal Lake, IL
Summa cum laude*

Kate Enot

Uniontown, OH

Serene Fakhoury

*Crown point, IN
Cum laude*

Denisa Luminita Figueroa

Schaumburg, IL

Giancarlo Dimitri Figueroa

*Gilberts, IL
Cum laude*

Jordyn Michelle Flemons

Dallas, TX

Oluwatobi A. Folaju*

Chicago, IL

Emily Rachel Forman

Austinburg, OH

Harkirat Gill

Canton, MI

Grace Marie Grabenstein

*Mitchell, SD
Cum laude*

Emma Audrey Gurgel

*Eau Claire, WI
Cum laude*

Fatima Haider

Romeoville, IL

Kari Hatridge

*Salem, MO
Cum laude*

Baraeera Iqbal

Papillion, NE

Maryrose Tony Issa

Springfield, VA

Reena Alice Jacob

Cleveland, OH

**Also receiving the Master of Public Health degree*

Bailey Reese Johnson

Harrisonburg, VA

George Ellias Katholos

Buffalo, NY

Hamza Irfan Khan

Pembroke Pines, FL

Alex James Kitzmann

Bettendorf, IA

Eleni S. Lafazanos

Long Grove, IL

Ariel Lau

Phoenix, AZ

Claire Lupton

Morrisonville, IL

Brooke Marie Major

Bourbonnais, IL

Luma Ali Mallah

Chicago, IL

Myriam Morcos

Romeoville, IL

Magna cum laude

Heeren Parekh

Scottsdale, AZ

Chi Young Park

Palisades Park, NJ

Ana Maria Pernia

Parkland, FL

Cum laude

Shereen Rammaha

Mokena, IL

Caroline Celestina Rosario

Kansas City, MO

Anna Frances Sandlin

Elkmont, AL

Ortenca Shalsi

Tampa, FL

Brady Michael Skillingstad

Yankton, SD

Roman Christopher Somogy

River Falls, WI

Cum laude

Hena Tahir

Iselin, NJ

Kaila Marie Taitano

Stafford, VA

Cum laude

Gurveen Thandi

Brampton, Canada

Cum laude

Kelsey Alexandra Thomas

Plant City, FL

Hana Tulemat

Worth, IL

Ehab Turshan

Oak Lawn, IL

Linda Ly Vang

Saint Paul, MN

Magna cum laude



OPTOMETRIC OATH

With full deliberation, I freely and solemnly pledge that:

I AFFIRM that the health of my patient will be my first consideration.

I WILL practice the art and science of optometry faithfully and conscientiously, and to the fullest scope of my competence.

I WILL uphold and honorably promote by example and action the highest standards, ethics and ideals of my chosen profession and the honor of the degree, Doctor of Optometry, which has been granted me.

I WILL provide professional care for the diverse populations who seek my services, with concern, with compassion and with due regard for their human rights and dignity.

I WILL work to expand access to quality care and improve health equity for all communities.

I WILL place the treatment of those who seek my care above personal gain and strive to see that none shall lack for proper care.

I WILL hold as privileged and inviolable all information entrusted to me in confidence by my patients.

I WILL advise my patients fully and honestly of all which may serve to restore, maintain or enhance their vision and general health.

I WILL strive continuously to broaden my knowledge and skills so that my patients may benefit from all new and efficacious means to enhance the care of human vision.

I WILL share information cordially and unselfishly with my fellow doctors of optometry and other professionals for the benefit of patients and the advancement of human knowledge and welfare.

I WILL do my utmost to serve my community, my country and humankind as a citizen as well as a doctor of optometry.

I HEREBY commit myself to be steadfast in the performance of this my solemn oath and obligation.

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: Gold

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.

Tam

All Midwestern University graduates wear black velvet tams with black (master 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 Coin

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. Following the military tradition, Midwestern University proudly presents graduates who are in the military or entering the military following graduation with a Midwestern University Coin to honor their service to our country.

HISTORY OF MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Midwestern University has a proud and impressive history. Founded in 1900 as the American College of Osteopathic Medicine and Surgery by J. Martin Littlejohn, Ph.D., D.O., M.D. (1865–1947), the organization was incorporated in Chicago, Illinois, to train physicians in a not-for-profit environment.

Dr. Littlejohn hired talented faculty that enabled the College to establish a reputation as a leader in medical education, research, and clinical practice. The early faculty mentored their students in the art and science of osteopathic medicine while teaching surgery, the principles and practices of osteopathic medicine, anatomy, and basic science.

The growth of the osteopathic college is intertwined with that of the osteopathic medical profession itself. Ever since 1874 when a country doctor, Andrew Taylor Still, announced his new theory of treating patients and began the first college in 1892, the profession has grown in reputation and acceptance around the country and international settings.



The Downers Grove Campus was purchased in 1986, and the Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine moved from its prior home in Hyde Park, Illinois, to this western suburb of Illinois. Following the relocation of the College, the Board of Trustees voted to begin the development of new academic programs within the health sciences, including the College of Pharmacy, Downers Grove (1991) and the College of Health Sciences, Downers Grove (1992). In 1993, the Board of Trustees unanimously approved a single educational mission for the institution, and Midwestern University emerged. The Downers Grove Campus has since expanded to include the College of Dental Medicine–Illinois (2009), the Chicago College of Optometry (2014), the College of Graduate Studies, Downers Grove (2018), and the Proposed College of Veterinary Medicine–Illinois (2024). The Downers Grove Campus, located on 105 acres, has buildings that include academic classrooms, laboratories, a state-of-the-art library and auditorium building, and student housing. The Midwestern University Multispecialty Clinic and the future Companion Animal Clinic sit on 11 acres in Downers Grove. Established in 2013, the Multispecialty Clinic includes the Dental Institute, a Family Medicine Practice, the Speech-Language Institute, the Physical Therapy Institute, the Eye Institute, and other health services designed to meet a wide range of healthcare needs.

The Glendale Campus was established in 1995 when the Board of Trustees approved the purchase of land and the building of a new campus in Arizona. The Glendale Campus is home to the Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine (1995), the College of Health Sciences, Glendale (1996), the College of Pharmacy, Glendale (1998), the College of Dental Medicine–Arizona (2006), the Arizona College of Optometry (2008), the College of Veterinary Medicine–Arizona (2012), the College of Graduate Studies, Glendale (2018), and the Arizona College of Podiatric Medicine (2020). The campus has seen rapid growth in the number of buildings, academic programs, faculty, staff, and students. The Glendale Campus, located on 134 acres, has buildings that provide for academic classrooms, state-of-the-art laboratories, and student housing. Midwestern University operates six community clinics in Metro Phoenix. Five are located on the University’s 40-acre Clinical Campus: the Multispecialty Clinic, which opened in 2007; the Dental Institute and the Eye Institute, which opened in 2010; the Animal Health Institute—comprised of the Companion Animal Clinic (opened 2014), Large Animal Center (opened 2015), and Diagnostic Pathology Center (opened 2016); and the Therapy Institute, which opened in 2020. The Midwestern University Comprehensive Care Clinic – Central Phoenix, operated in partnership since 2023, is located in north central Phoenix.

Midwestern University is still governed by the strong principles of the founding administration and faculty. An independent, not-for-profit corporation organized primarily to provide graduate and postgraduate education in the health sciences, the University is dedicated to the education and development of its students, faculty, and staff in an environment that encourages learning and personal development.

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the Midwestern University Downers Grove Campus is on the traditional and ancestral homelands of the people of the Council of Three Fires. We honor with gratitude the land itself and the Indigenous peoples who have been caretakers of the land throughout generations, past and present. Acknowledging the history of the land on which our campus is located presents an opportunity to support and collaborate with Indigenous communities today.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

O SAY CAN YOU SEE, BY THE DAWN'S EARLY LIGHT,
WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAIL'D AT THE TWILIGHT'S LAST GLEAMING,
WHOSE BROAD STRIPES AND BRIGHT STARS THROUGH THE PERILOUS FIGHT
O'ER THE RAMPARTS WE WATCH'D WERE SO GALLANTLY STREAMING?
AND THE ROCKETS' 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?



The national anthem of the United States of America is “The Star-Spangled Banner,” whose lyrics were inspired by a poem written in 1814 by Francis Scott Key after he witnessed the victorious defense of Fort McHenry in Baltimore, Maryland, during the War of 1812. Key wrote the poem after seeing a large United States flag—composed of 13 red and white stripes, and 15 white stars against a field of blue—flying triumphantly above the fort after its bombardment the night before by British ships in Chesapeake Bay. “The Star-Spangled Banner” was named the official national anthem by a Congressional resolution on March 3, 1931.



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Downers Grove Campus
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www.midwestern.edu