

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
2025 Commencement



MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY
Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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

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.



MASTER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Magda Abd
Bolingbrook, IL

Bhavana Agnihotram
Montgomery, IL

Bessem Ijang Ashu
Burtonsville, MD

Desiree Kathryn Lamug Batangan
Waipahu, HI

Sorab Bedi
Chicago, IL

Jacob Patrick Dowd
Milan, MI

Bushra Fathima Gaffor
Chicago, IL

Shashir Ananton Gaonkar
Naperville, IL

Destiné LaPortia Jamerson
Plainfield, IL

Shivani P. Kayastha
Saint Charles, IL

Yoonseo Kim
Hoffman Estates, IL

Shelby Marie Main
Warren, MI

Ahmed Mohiuddin
Elmhurst, IL

Sun Kabange Mudiavita
Kinshasa, Zaire

Sophia Parpala
Deerfield, IL

Cynthia Gesare Simba
Elko, MN

Rebecca St.Germain
Plainfield, IL

Farhaan Syed
Plainfield, IL

Sarah A. Wilz
Menasha, WI

Husain Mohamed Ali Yafai
Burbank, IL

Tamam Raed Zeidan
Orland Park, IL

MASTER OF BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AWARDS

Yoonseo Kim
Dean's Achievement Award

Shelby Marie Main
Leadership Award

Sarah A. Wilz
Service Award

Desiree Kathryn Lamug Batangan
Research Award

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

Riddhi Shridhar Andurkar
Naperville, IL

Daniel Shayan Ghannad
Northbrook, IL

Rushil Patel
Bartlett, IL

Alexandra Arato
Naperville, IL

Omar Hamdan
Canton, MI

Michele Lynn Rabbitt
Canton, OH

Vaishnavi Milind Bavadekar
Alpharetta, GA

Melissa Haque
Aldie, VA

Maneesh Rajagopal
Redmond, WA

Francesca Elizabeth Bonello
Huntington Woods, MI

Maha Hussain
Hoffman Estates, IL

Arwa H. Ramadan
Burr Ridge, IL

Georgina Asmar Boudakh
Morton Grove, IL

Fatma Alzahara Hussein
Winfield, IL

Zaid Ahmed Rammaha
Orland Park, IL

Marie Boutros
Fort Myers, FL

Sawaiz Kashif
Augusta, GA

Randi Lea Sabatka
Madison Lake, MN

Cassandra Bradbury
Pawnee, IL

Heba Fatema Khan
Naperville, IL

Antonella Selboja
Shelby Township, MI

Joshua Ceng
Arcadia, CA

Shaista Shafeeq Khan
Des Plaines, IL

Ndeye Boury Silla
Round Rock, TX

Faezah Shaukat Choudhary
Brooklyn, NY

Janah Khatab
Chicago, IL

Kennedy Van
Saint Charles, IL

Hadi Dahbour
Tinley Park, IL

Da Hwi Kim
Chicago, IL

Ajay Chowdary Venigalla
St. Louis, MO

Hilda Dahbur
Tinley Park, IL

Oliver Lustre Lim
Rolling Hills Estates, CA

Grace Eleni Vlandis
Nampa, ID

Julia DeRose
Waukegan, IL

Vito Anthony Lombardi
Coal City, IL

Venika Vulpal
Madison, WI

Tianhao Dou
Beijing, China

Charles Francis McKolay
Royal Oak, MI

Briana Welcome
Carol Stream, IL

Alex Fayn
Kildeer, IL

Mansi Vikas Patel
Skokie, IL

Haley Westberg
DeKalb, IL

Veronica Garcia Perez
Miami, FL

Priya D. Patel
Downers Grove, IL

MASTER OF ARTS IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES AWARDS

Ajay Chowdary Venigalla
Dean's Achievement Award

Vito Anthony Lombardi
Leadership Award

Hilda Dahbur
Haley Westberg
Service Award

Riddhi Shridhar Andurkar
Francesca Elizabeth Bonello
Research Award

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRECISION MEDICINE

Caitlin Hill

Elgin, IL

Victoria Marshall

Orland Park, IL

Farah Hennawi

Tampa, FL

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PRECISION MEDICINE AWARD

Victoria Marshall

Dean's Achievement Award

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Sana Alnajjar*

Homer Glen, IL

Paige Madden Paul**

Estero, FL

Fiona Josephine Busser*

Chelmsford, MA

Erina Maranda**

Elmhurst, IL

Valeria Alexandra Estrella**

Phoenix, AZ

Krishna Jayendra Patel*

Richmond, TX

Oluwatobi Folaju***

Tinley Park, IL

Vaishnavi Sadigale*

Naperville, IL

Daryle Howard*

Oak Park, IL

Jane Schetter*

Chicago, IL

Nicole Kay*

Downers Grove, IL

MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Fiona Josephine Busser

Dean's Achievement Award

Master of Public Health

** 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.D. degree from the Chicago College of Optometry*

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.



MIDWESTERN UNIVERSITY

Tomorrow's Healthcare Team

Downers Grove Campus

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