



COMMENCEMENT

SPRING 2025



GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

3 P.M., WEDNESDAY, MAY 14

ACADEMIC PROCESSIONAL

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Erin Krug

B.A. in Music Education, Class of 2025

GREETINGS

Timothy D. Sands

University President

Cyril R. Clarke

Executive Vice President and Provost

SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS

Aimée Surprenant

Dean, Graduate School

GRADUATE STUDENT REMARKS

Jiayuan Dong

Ph.D. in Human Factors and Human-
Computer Interaction

Emily Tirrell

Ph.D. in Translational Biology,
Medicine, and Health

REFLECTIONS

Aimée Surprenant

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES
AND CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

**Aimée Surprenant
and Timothy D. Sands**

READING OF NAMES

Joseph Merola

Professor, Department of Chemistry

CLOSING REMARKS

Aimée Surprenant

RECESSIONAL





UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

8:30 A.M., FRIDAY, MAY 16

POSTING OF COLORS

**Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets
Color Guard**

INTRODUCTION OF COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Timothy D. Sands

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

Erin Krug

B.A. in Music Education, Class of 2025

GRADUATION ADDRESS

Regina Dugan '84, '85

CEO, Wellcome Leap

GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT SPEAKERS

Timothy D. Sands

University President

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT AND *UT PROSIM* MEDAL RECIPIENT

Timothy D. Sands and Edward Baine

MESSAGE FROM CLASS OF 2025 CLASS OFFICER

Sarvani Kasibhotla

Class Officer, Class of 2025

Bill Henika

Patricia A. Caldwell '71

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Charles D. Phlegar

Senior Vice President, Advancement

CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

Cyril R. Clarke

Executive Vice President and Provost

College Deans

Deseria Creighton-Barney '86

Mark Lawrence '80





STUDENT REFLECTIONS

Sydney Weeks

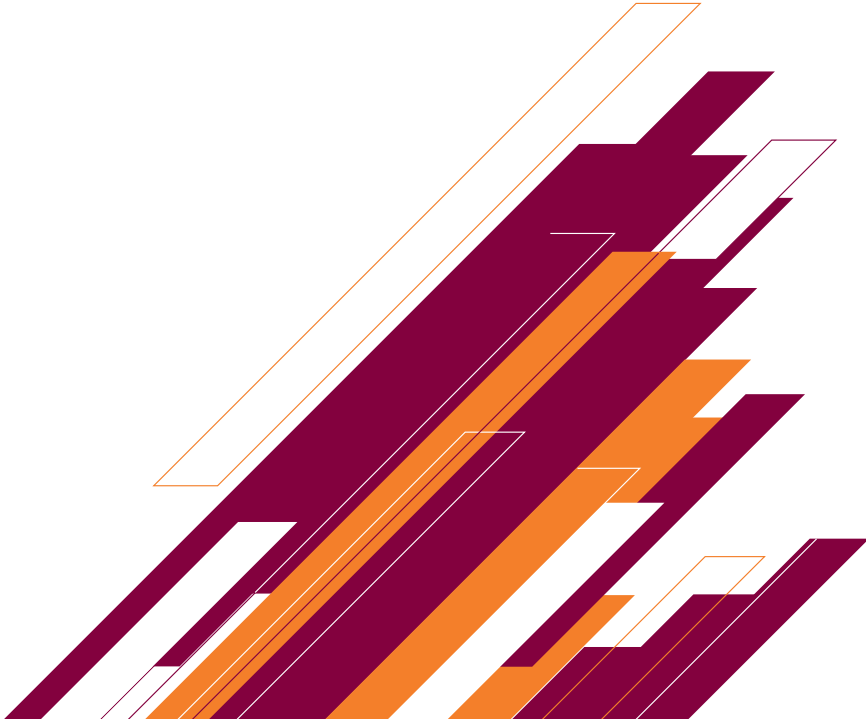
Class Secretary, Class of 2025

GREETINGS FROM THE
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Keith Stemple '95

President, Virginia Tech Alumni
Association Board of Directors

RECESSIONAL





UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

SPEAKER AND AWARD RECIPIENTS

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

REGINA DUGAN '84

Regina Dugan is a fearless innovator who has shattered barriers in science, technology, and national security.

Dugan has spent her career breaking glass ceilings and rewriting the rules of innovation. She made history as the 19th director – and first woman – to lead the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), where she spearheaded next-generation breakthroughs in everything from synthetic biology to hypersonic flight.

Known for her grit, she hasn't led teams from behind a desk. She's been on the ground, clearing landmines in Bosnia and Africa and deploying to Afghanistan five times to drive DARPA's first operational mission since Vietnam. For her efforts, DARPA received the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, an honor typically reserved for combat teams.

Today, as president and CEO of Wellcome Leap, Dugan is taking on one of the biggest challenges of our time: accelerating breakthroughs in human health. Dugan has a history of leading high-impact global teams, building unconventional products, and sparking billion-dollar innovations.

A globally recognized thought leader, Dugan has been named to CNN's Top 10 Thinkers, CNBC's NEXT LIST, Fast Company's Most Creative People in Business, and The Verge 50. Fortune hails her as one of the world's leading experts on product innovation, "the kind that unhinges old ways of operating, juices competition and creates new growth." The New York Times credits her with "having a knack for inspiring, and ... insisting on creative thinking."

Beyond her leadership in tech, defense, and health, Dugan is a dynamic speaker who has taken the stage at TED, SXSW, the Clinton Global Initiative, Fortune's Most Powerful Women Summit, and more. Her 2012 TED Talk was one of the top 10 trending topics worldwide on X, formerly Twitter.

Dugan holds a bachelor's and master's degree from Virginia Tech and a Ph.D. from the California Institute of Technology, where she was named a Distinguished Alumna in 2017. At Virginia Tech, she has been recognized with the University Distinguished Achievement Award and is a member of the Academy of Engineering Excellence.





UT PROSIM MEDAL

PATRICIA A. CALDWELL '71

Patricia Caldwell's journey from upstate New York to a trailblazing career in business and finance began at Virginia Tech. After earning her undergraduate degree in mathematics, she went on to Bell Labs, completed her MBA at the University at Albany, and built a successful career in investment banking - culminating in co-founding Gordian Group, a boutique firm focused on corporate restructuring.

Caldwell is an active member of the community, volunteering for Virginia Tech, serving on the University Council for the University at Albany, and the board of SPOP, Inc., an agency that offers therapy to adults aged 55 and older. She is committed to giving back and exemplifies the Hokie Spirit through her service and leadership.

UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

BILL HENIKA

Through a lifelong dedication to geology and education, Bill Henika has built a career rooted in exploration, service, and scholarship. After earning his master's degree in geology at the University of Virginia, Henika brought his expertise in regional geology and applied geophysics to roles in research, teaching, and public service.

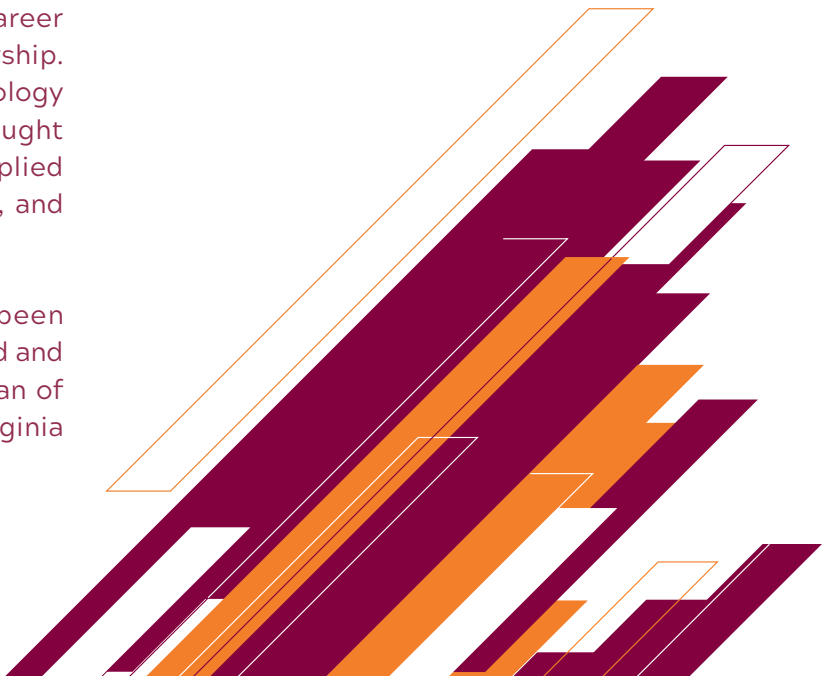
Throughout his career, Henika has been recognized for his contributions to the field and community with top honors. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and continues to serve the Virginia Tech community with distinction.

ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

DESERIA CREIGHTON-BARNEY '86

Deseria Creighton-Barney is a trailblazer and dedicated Virginia Tech alumna whose commitment to service has made a lasting impact on the university and throughout her 25 years as a human resources professional. She was the first African American female to serve as president of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors and has held leadership roles with the Virginia Tech Foundation and the Boundless Impact Campaign.

Creighton-Barney holds a degree in communications from Virginia Tech, along with certifications in diversity and inclusion for human resources and women's entrepreneurship from Cornell and the University of South Florida. Guided by her personal motto, "say yes", she leads with passion and purpose in the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve).






ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

MARK LAWRENCE '80

As vice president of governmental and external affairs at Carilion Clinic, Mark Lawrence is an advocate for healthcare at the local, state, and national levels. Since graduating from Virginia Tech with a degree in business, Lawrence has been a dedicated supporter of his alma mater, having served as president of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association Board of Directors and as a member of the Virginia Tech Foundation Board.

Lawrence's commitment to service and leadership embodies the Hokie Spirit. Through his dedication and advocacy, he makes a difference in the lives of others and within the Virginia Tech community.





THE ACADEMIC PROCESSION

The following information, digested from “An Academic Costume Code and Ceremony Guide” prepared by the American Council on Education, may prove helpful in identifying the costumes you will see in the Commencement Procession.

When American colleges and universities desired to adopt some suitable system of academic apparel many years ago, a conference held at Columbia University in 1895 made up of representatives from various institutions drew up a “By-Law Regulation, or Statute” for the establishment of a suitable code of academic dress for colleges and universities in the United States. This code, with modifications made in 1959, is still in force; the costumes and colors, trimmings, and patterns you will see are all traditional and interpret both degree and the field of learning. The bachelor’s gown, designed to be worn closed, has pointed sleeves; the master’s gown, which may be worn open or closed, has an oblong sleeve open at the wrist which hangs down in traditional manner. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut and the front part has the arc cut away. The doctor’s gown has bell-shaped sleeves. It may be worn open or closed. Bachelor’s and master’s gowns are untrimmed. Doctor’s gowns are faced with black velvet with three bars across the sleeves; or the color of velvet may be that which is distinctive of the degree, agreeing with that of the edging of the hood. The colors you will see in the hoods and gowns of our faculty represent the various fields in which the degrees were taken. A few are:

ACCOUNTANCY, COMMERCE,

BUSINESS: Drab (Yellow-Brown)

AGRICULTURE: Maize (Pale Yellow)

ARCHITECTURE: Blue-Violet (Purple)

ARTS, LETTERS, HUMANITIES: White

ECONOMICS: Copper

EDUCATION: Light Blue

ENGINEERING: Orange Natural

RESOURCES: Russet (Rust)

PHILOSOPHY: Dark Blue

VETERINARY MEDICINE: Gray

SCIENCE: Bright Gold (Golden Yellow)

The hoods, differing in length for the three degrees (bachelor’s, master’s, and doctor’s), are lined with the official colors of the university or college conferring the degree, usually with one color forming a chevron pattern over the other (for example, orange and maroon for Virginia Tech). Hoods are edged and bound with velvet of the color appropriate for the degree. You will see in our procession many edged with dark blue for doctor of philosophy. Mortarboards are the approved headgear. Tassels are worn on the right side prior to receiving a degree and on the left side after the degree has been conferred. The tassel may be of gold if the holder has a doctor’s degree.

Among the bachelor’s candidates, honor students are distinguished by special sashes in white.



CLASS OF 2025 LOGO AND MOTTO

2025 MOTTO

Curiositatem Accende (Ignite Your Curiosity)



CLASS OF 2025 OFFICERS

President: **Princess Merritt**

Vice President: **Maya Snyder**

Secretary: **Sydney Weeks**

Treasurer: **Diego Valencia**

Historian: **Jason Liu**

Cadet Member-At-Large: **Elizabeth Schwend**

Female Member-At-Large: **Olivia Dorsey**

Male Member-At-Large: **TJ Brooks**

Class Member-At-Large: **Kevin Painchaud**

BOARD OF VISITORS

Mr. Edward Baine, Rector

Mr. David Calhoun, Vice Rector

Ms. Sandy Davis

Dr. Nancy Dye

Mr. William Holtzman

Mr. Donald Horsley

Ms. Anna James

Ms. Starlette Johnson

Ms. Letitia Long

Mr. Ryan McCarthy

Mr. Jim Miller

Mr. J. Pearson

Mr. John Rocovich

Ms. Jeanne Stosser

Ms. Rachel Miles, Faculty Representative

Dr. Janice Austin, A/P Faculty Representative

Ms. LaTawnya Burleson, Staff Representative

Mr. William Poland, Graduate Student Representative

Ms. Leslie Orellana, Undergraduate Student Representative

CLASS OF 2025 CLASS RING



