

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

SPRING 2025



MACOMB



QUAD CITIES

SATURDAY, MAY 10

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A GREETING FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear, Class of 2025:

Congratulations on completing your degree from Western Illinois University! I commend each of you for your achievements and accomplishments.

Today is a day of celebration! As you close this exciting and meaningful milestone, we reflect back on your time at Western and celebrate your accomplishments and your choice to become a member of the Leatherneck family.

Western Illinois has a proud 125 year history of Leatherneck success. WIU was recently recognized as a best institution for upward mobility and opportunity. Western's campuses transform students' lives as they persevere, discover their purpose, and apply what they learn to create opportunities both for themselves and others. We celebrate this special time when each student transitions from their role as accomplished student and into the next chapter as proud Leatherneck alumni.

The future is bright because each Leatherneck graduating today has demonstrated resilience, authenticity, and an engaged focus on service to others. On behalf of everyone at WIU, we are all excited for what you will achieve, the lives you will impact, and the positive change you will create in the world.

Congratulations, Western Illinois University Class of 2025!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristi Mindrup". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "K" and "M".

Kristi Mindrup, Ph.D.
President

STATE OF ILLINOIS
J.B. PRITZKER, GOVERNOR

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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Venice

OFFICERS OF THE UNIVERSITY

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Dr. Kristi Mindrup | President |
| Dr. Mark Mossman | Interim Provost and Academic Vice President |
| Mr. Justin Schuch..... | Vice President for Student Success |
| Ms. Ketra Roselieb | Vice President for Finance and Administration |
| Ms. Amy Crosby..... | Interim Executive Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations Interim Executive Officer of the Foundation |

ACADEMIC DEANS

| | |
|--|---|
| Dr. James A. Schmidt, Interim..... | College of Arts and Sciences |
| Dr. Tara Feld, Interim..... | College of Business and Technology |
| Dr. Eric C. Sheffield, Interim | College of Education and Human Services |
| Dr. Richard M. Kurasz, Associate | College of Fine Arts and Communication |
| Dr. Lorette S. Oden..... | Centennial Honors College |
| Dr. Christopher D. Merrett | Innovation and Economic Development |
| Dr. Héctor Maymí-Sugrañes..... | University Libraries |

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

COMBINED GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE

Saturday, May 10, 2025 · 9:00 a.m.

| | |
|---|--|
| Prelude..... | WIU Symphony Orchestra Richard Cangro, Conductor |
| Processional..... | Symphony Orchestra “Fanfare and Processional, from March No. 1 in D Major, Op. 39, No. 1,” by Sir Edward Elgar, arranged by James D. Ployhar |
| National Anthem | Kena Jadin McCance “The Star Spangled Banner,” by Francis Scott Key Bachelor of Arts, Class of 2025 |
| Master of Ceremonies | Mark Mossman Interim Provost and Academic Vice President |
| Greetings from the Board of Trustees | Carin Stutz Board of Trustees Chair |
| Distinguished University Professor..... | Interim Provost Mossman Recipient: Dr. Kimberley A. McClure |
| Remarks to the Graduating Class | Kristi Mindrup Resilience and the Power of Your True Colors President |
| Distinguished Alumni Award..... | Eldon Brown, Class of 1996 Recipient: Gerald E. Salzman, Class of 1971 President, Alumni Council |
| Presentation of Candidates, Doctoral Degrees | Christopher Pynes Interim Associate Provost for Academic Programs |
| Conferring of Doctoral Degrees..... | President Mindrup |
| Presentation of Candidates, Graduate Degrees | Interim Associate Provost Pynes |
| Conferring of Graduate Degrees..... | President Mindrup |
| Hooding of College of Arts and Sciences Graduates..... | James Schmidt, Interim Dean |
| Hooding of College of Business and Technology Graduates..... | Tara Feld, Interim Dean |
| Hooding of Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Graduates..... | Christopher Merrett, Dean |
| Presentation of Candidates, College of Arts and Sciences | Interim Dean Schmidt |
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees | President Mindrup College of Arts and Sciences |
| Presentation of Candidates, College of Business and Technology | Interim Dean Feld |

| | |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees | President Mindrup |
| College of Business and Technology | |
| Presentation of Candidates, General Studies Degree Program | Héctor Maymí-Sugrañes, Dean |
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees | President Mindrup |
| General Studies Degree Program | |
| Welcome to Alumni Association..... | Brown |
| Closing Remarks..... | Interim Provost Mossman |
| Recessional | Symphony Orchestra |
| "Fanfare and Recessional," by James D. Ployhar | |

PROCESSIONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Randy Glean, Associate Vice President for Global Studies

ACADEMIC READERS

Doctoral

Christopher Pynes, Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness

Graduate

Randy Glean, Associate Vice President for Global Studies

Undergraduate

P.K. Babu, Professor of Physics
College of Arts and Sciences

Joel Gruver, Professor of Agriculture
College of Business and Technology

MARSHALS

| | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Bailey J. Barber | Paige E. Grice |
| Cody Ross Clair | Devin M. Hermsmeier |
| Abbey N. Donaldson | Olivia M. Rueschhoff |
| Nakiyah M. Epps | Mackenzie White |

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

COMBINED GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE

Saturday, May 10, 2025 · 1:30 p.m.

| | |
|--|--|
| Prelude..... | WIU Symphony Orchestra Richard Cangro, Conductor |
| Processional..... | Symphony Orchestra “Fanfare and Processional, from March No. 1 in D Major, Op. 39, No. 1,” by Sir Edward Elgar, arranged by James D. Ployhar |
| National Anthem | Marisa R. Sanchez “The Star Spangled Banner,” by Francis Scott Key Bachelor of Fine Arts, Class of 2025 |
| Master of Ceremonies | Mark Mossman Interim Provost and Academic Vice President |
| Greetings from the Board of Trustees | Carin Stutz Board of Trustees Chair |
| Distinguished University Professor..... | Interim Provost Mossman Recipient: Dr. Kimberley A. McClure |
| Remarks to the Graduating Class | Kristi Mindrup Resilience and the Power of Your True Colors President |
| Distinguished Alumni Award..... | Eldon Brown, Class of 1996 Recipient: Joseph H. Snowden, Class of 1992 President, Alumni Council |
| Presentation of Candidates, Doctoral Degrees | Christopher Pynes Interim Associate Provost for Academic Programs |
| Conferring of Doctoral Degrees..... | President Mindrup |
| Presentation of Candidates, Graduate Degrees | Interim Associate Provost Pynes |
| Conferring of Graduate Degrees..... | President Mindrup |
| Hooding of College of Fine Arts and Communication Graduates | Richard Kurasz Master of Fine Arts Associate Dean |
| Hooding of College of Education and Human Services Graduates | Eric Sheffield Interim Dean |
| Hooding of College of Fine Arts and Communication Graduates | Associate Dean Kurasz |
| Hooding of School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration Graduates | Interim Associate Provost Pynes |
| Presentation of Candidates, College of Education and Human Services | Interim Dean Sheffield |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees, College of Education and Human Services | President Mindrup |
| Presentation of Candidates, College of Fine Arts and Communication | Associate Dean Kurasz |
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees, College of Fine Arts and Communication | President Mindrup |
| Presentation of Candidates, School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration..... | Interim Associate Provost Pynes |
| Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees | President Mindrup |
| School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration | |
| Welcome to Alumni Association..... | Brown |
| Closing Remarks..... | Interim Provost Mossman |
| Recessional | Symphony Orchestra |
| “Fanfare and Recessional,” by James D. Ployhar | |

PROCESSIONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Randy Glean, Associate Vice President for Global Studies

ACADEMIC READERS

Doctoral

Christopher Pynes, Interim Associate Provost and Associate Vice President for Academic Programs, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness

Graduate

Randy Glean, Associate Vice President for Global Studies

Undergraduate

Debra Allwardt, Associate Professor of Counselor Education,
College Student Personnel, and Social Work
College of Education and Human Services

Brian Locke, Professor of Music
College of Fine Arts and Communication

Benjamin Brewer, Assistant Professor of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration
School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration

MARSHALS

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Alexis A. Betker | Emily Elizabeth Heagy |
| Vanessa Ellis | Sydney N. Hollis |
| Leslie Evon Eutsler | Sydney J. Rhoads |
| Gracie L. Havens | Gray Adaire Thompson |

COLLEGE SCHOLARS

Each of Western Illinois University's four academic colleges, the Centennial Honors College, and the University Libraries selects a graduating senior as the college's outstanding student. College Scholars receive a gold medallion on a purple and gold ribbon in recognition of their high achievement.



**Arts and Sciences
Scholar**

Paige Grice (British Columbia, Canada) graduates with a B.A. degree in Foreign Languages and Cultures, with the highest academic distinction, Summa Cum Laude. Paige is also the Foreign Languages and Cultures Department Scholar and a Centennial Honors Scholar.



**Business and
Technology Scholar**

Bailey Barber (Warsaw, IL) graduates with a B.S. degree in Engineering Technology, with the highest academic distinction, Summa Cum Laude. Bailey is also the Engineering Technology Department Scholar and a Centennial Honors Scholar.



**Education and
Human Services
Scholar**

Gabrielle Hoelzer (Rock Island, IL) graduates with a B.S.Ed. degree in Special Education. Gabrielle is also the Special Education Department Scholar and a Centennial Honors Scholar.



**Fine Arts and
Communication
Scholar**

Sydney Rhoads (Macomb, IL) graduates with a B.S. in Speech Pathology and Audiology, with the highest academic distinction, Summa Cum Laude.



**Centennial Honors
Scholar**

Olivia Rueschhoff (Manito, IL) graduates with a B.S. degree in Mathematics, with the highest academic distinction, Summa Cum Laude. Olivia is also the Mathematics Department Scholar.



**University Libraries
Scholar**

Tina Moore (Altona, IL) graduates with a B.A. in General Studies, with high academic distinction, Magna Cum Laude.

CENTENNIAL HONORS SCHOLARS

A Centennial Honors Scholar is a student in Western's Centennial Honors College who has completed Honors coursework and has achieved a grade point average of at least 3.40. These candidates wear a gold medallion on a light blue ribbon.

DEPARTMENTAL SCHOLARS

Departmental Scholars are the outstanding undergraduate degree candidates in an academic major as determined by the faculty in the major department. These candidates wear a gold medallion on a sapphire blue ribbon.

ACADEMIC DISTINCTION

Candidates for the baccalaureate degree, who have earned a minimum 60 semester hours of graded courses at Western, are eligible for graduation with academic distinction. Coursework completed at WIU, and all transferable hours, are calculated to determine honors. The academic distinction of Cum Laude is awarded to students with a grade point average of 3.60-3.74 on a 4.00 scale. These candidates wear a silver medallion on a gold ribbon. The academic distinction of Magna Cum Laude is awarded to students with a grade point average of 3.75-3.89. These candidates wear a silver medallion on a purple ribbon. The academic distinction of Summa Cum Laude is awarded to students with a grade point average of 3.90 or higher. These candidates wear a silver medallion on a red ribbon.



DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS



Gerald E. Salzman
Class of 1971

Salzman, a 1971 agriculture economics graduate, is the leading principal at GES International LLC, focusing on farm equipment and services. In 2014, he retired as senior director, global marketing after 42 years with International Harvester and CaseIH. Over those four decades, Salzman held positions in product development of combines, sugar cane harvesters, grain platforms and cotton pickers. Additional roles included marketing and product management of crop harvesting, hay and forage and construction equipment. Salzman served in the U.S. Army Reserves from 1971 to 1977.

Salzman was elected to four terms on the Board of Directors of the U.S. Grains Council (USGC), serving as Chairman of the Public Relations Committee and the Agri-Business Forum. He served on the Board of Directors for the National Alpha Gamma Rho Educational Foundation from 2014 to 2020.

While at WIU, Salzman was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho and Alpha Zeta

fraternities, Blue Key, Student Government Association, Interfraternity Council, the Ag Economics Club and the University Union Board. He was named Mr. Greek in 1971.

Salzman was named an Alpha Gamma Rho Brother of the Century in 2004. He received the USGC Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012, becoming the sixth person in 50 years to earn the recognition. In 2014, he received the Torch of leadership Award from the Illinois Agricultural Leadership Foundation and in 2020 he was named a distinguished alumnus by the WIU School of Agriculture.

Salzman, who now lives in Mundelein, IL, joined the WIU School of Agriculture Advisory Board in 2020, including a term as chair. Throughout his time on the board, Salzman has encouraged all board members to support the School of Agriculture philanthropically. He has achieved Sherman Circle recognition through his financial support of WIU and is a frequent attendee of Quad Cities and Chicago area WIU golf outings.

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED)



Joseph H. Snowden
Class of 1992

Snowden, a 1991 sociology graduate, is the deputy chief of staff and executive director of administrative services for the City of Mobile, AL. He has worked for the City of Mobile for more than six years, starting as the senior director of maritime and transportation. Mobile is the second largest city in Alabama and the sole seaport in the state and ninth busiest in the U.S.

Prior to working for the city, Snowden had a successful military career, serving in the U.S. Coast Guard for 27 years. Snowden retired from the Coast Guard as Sector Commander and Commanding Officer for Sector Mobile. Sector Mobile is an Eighth Coast Guard District command consisting of 19 sub-units. Sector Mobile's area of responsibility encompasses all or part of Mississippi, Alabama, Florida and Georgia, covering 420 miles of coast and 1,900 miles of inland waterway. To carry out its mission, Sector Mobile has 594 Active Duty, 206 Reserve, and 33 Civilian personnel.

Previously, Snowden was a Program Analyst in the Department of Homeland Security where he was responsible for program review and budget development for Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, constituting a \$92.6 billion portfolio and 83,6000 personnel.

Snowden enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard in 1986 and through the ROTC as a Second Lieutenant in 1989. In addition to his WIU degree, Snowden graduated from the U.S. Army War College in 2011 with a masters in strategic studies and from Troy University in 2002 with a masters in human resources management.

Snowden is involved in several facets of the Mobile community, including the vice president of the Mobile Bay Propeller Club, vice chair of the commission ceremony for the U.S.S. Mobile, a fourth degree Knight of Columbus and director of the Navy League of Mobile. During his time at WIU, Snowden was an ROTC cadet and a resident assistant.

Snowden's military decorations include the Legion of Merit, three Meritorious Service Medals with "O" device, two Coast Guard Commendation Medals with "O" device, four Coast Guard Achievement Medals with "O" device, two Army Achievement Medals, five Commandant's Letters of Commendation with "O" device and Command Ashore and Prevention Professional Device. He was awarded the Coast Guard Foundation Award for overseeing the largest mass rescue effort in Mobile Bay history. The Governor of Alabama awarded him the Distinguished Service Medal for his many contributions and service to Alabama citizens.

DISTINGUISHED UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR

DR. KIMBERLEY A. McCLURE



Kimberley A McClure, Professor of Psychology, earned a Doctorate (1998) in Experimental Psychology with a Psychology & Law concentration, Master of Arts (1994), and Bachelor of Science (1989) degrees from the University of Texas at El Paso. Dr. McClure is a native El Pasoan and military “brat” with farming roots in the Midwestern United States.

Dr. McClure joined Western’s faculty in 1998. McClure was the motivation behind the Forensic Psychology minor in 2006, and subsequently the forensic psychology major option in 2014. Dr. McClure has a chronicled record of scholarly research involving eyewitness memory, memory for use-of-force encounters, own-ethnicity bias in person perception, and science to practice translations for police organizations and the courts. Dr. McClure has served as the advisor for the Forensic Psychology program since its inception, her focus is on science in service to the community. In the WIU community, she has served as a member or chair of multiple committees at the department, college, and university levels including as a member of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and Chair of the Graduate Student and Writing in the Discipline Councils. McClure has also served as a member of national and international professional associations including the American Psychological Association, American Psychology and Law Society (APLS), Association for Psychological Science, and the Midwestern Psychological Association. As member and chair of the APLS Teaching, Training and Careers Committee, and currently as the Project Director for the Community Oriented Policing Services De-Escalation Training through Active Learning (COPS DeTal) Assessment and Research Center, she continues to contribute to translating science into practice for a more just and equitable society.

Dr. McClure has been an invited speaker for the University of Notre Dame Law School Journal of Legislation’s Wrongful Conviction Symposium, Bradley University, PSI CHI Honors Society, and

the Psychology Department at the University of Texas, El Paso. In connecting with professional communities McClure has

presented at the Women in Criminal Justice and the International Association of Chiefs of Police conferences. McClure has provided expert consultation and testimony on eyewitness science, and technical research advice for private and community organizations in the United States.

Throughout her career McClure has been the recipient of grant funding from the U.S. Marshals Service, the American Psychology and Law Society, and WIU Research Council. Currently Dr. McClure’s research and teaching is being supported by a grant from the COPS Office through the U.S. Department of Justice and The Tracy Foundation.

Dr. McClure has professional publications in flagship, peer-reviewed journals including Law and Human Behavior, Journal of Applied Psychology, Applied Cognitive Psychology, Psychology, Crime, & Law, Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology, and Journal of Forensic Science.

The 2025 Distinguished Faculty Lecture is titled “When We Know Better, We Can Do Better: A Cultural Context Approach to Forensically Relevant Research, Education and Training.” The focus is on interdisciplinary partnerships that are fundamental to applying behavioral science and educational strategies in professional contexts. With an emphasis on culture, which determines norms, traditions, and expectations about interactions between individuals, an awareness of culture can facilitate solutions to challenges affecting professions, communities, regions, and countries. Emphasizing de-escalation skills training specifically, education and culture are posited as interpersonal foundations for human interactions. Such is the foundation that forms the cornerstones of the COPS DeTal Center including respect for people, health and wellness, resilience, and fostering understanding in interpersonal interactions.

THE WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CEREMONIAL MACE

The ceremonial mace, a symbol of university scholarship and integrity since the 11th century, is used to lead the academic procession at commencement and other special ceremonial occasions, signifying the importance of the event and the confirmation of the academic process.

The University's mace was designed by WIU Department of Art and Design Chair Kat Myers, and crafted by Myers in collaboration with the late Kenneth B. Epperson, Western alumnus and former WIU Admissions' community college director.

The turned walnut shaft is encircled by three engraved sterling silver bands with four pierced sterling silver fins cradling a freely moving gold sphere.



The fins represent Western Illinois University's four core values—Academic Excellence, Educational Opportunity, Personal Growth, and Social Responsibility—positioned as the four directions of the compass. The sphere, representing the student, is held and guided by the fins as it moves to find its place in the world.

The incorporated sphere was formed by raising, a 3,000-year-old metalsmithing process using steel hammers and forms to shape sheet metal. The sphere is made of 24K gold-plated brass. While the process was chosen as a representation of Western's respect for tradition, the sphere remains mobile, illustrating the University's readiness to adapt as it looks toward an ever-changing future.

ABOUT THE FLAGS

Displayed in the arena are the flags of 34 nations representing students in today's graduating class at Western Illinois University. The flags represent the following countries: Afghanistan, Antigua, Australia, Bangladesh, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, China, Dominica, France, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, India, Iran, Ireland, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, Nigeria, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the United States and Zimbabwe. Western Illinois University was home to students from 65 countries during the Spring 2025 semester.

ABOUT THE GONFALONS

Gonfalons made their inaugural appearance in Western's Fall 2009 Commencement ceremonies. The gonfalons are banners hung from a crossbar on poles, which represent the specific group immediately following the gonfalonier, the person carrying the banner.

Their origins date back to medieval Italy, when gonfalons were used to distinguish Italian republics. They have also been used in ecclesiastical processions, as well as in war, and they have evolved into bearing coats of arms for individuals and groups.

Many universities and colleges have adopted the use of gonfalons to enhance the ceremonial nature of commencement exercises.

Today's processions include gonfalons for Western Illinois University, the School of Graduate Studies, the Centennial Honors College, University Libraries and each of the four academic colleges: Arts and Sciences; Business and Technology; Education and Human Services; and Fine Arts and Communication.

ACADEMIC REGALIA

The colorful regalia worn by academicians is steeped in tradition, dating back to the ecclesiastical garb of the Middle Ages. Adaptations from ecclesiastical to academic dress began in early European universities, which were founded by the church. University faculty and students wore the adapted robes for distinction and warmth. The University of Cambridge is cited as the first to use the academic gown.

Representatives of American universities met in the early 1890s and agreed upon a standard style of academic attire. The Intercollegiate Code, revised in 1932, and again in 1959, is followed today by American colleges and universities, except for a few schools, which continue to use the styles of England.

Gowns are traditionally black. However, some universities have authorized use of a color symbolic of the institution. Bachelor's gowns have pointed sleeves and are designed to be worn closed. Master's and Specialist gowns have long, closed sleeves with an arc near the bottom and an opening for the arm. Doctoral gowns are faced with wide velvet panels and have bell-shaped sleeves with three horizontal velvet bars.

Caps, originally round, are typically square mortarboards. Some universities have adopted a doctor's cap with a soft crown instead of the mortarboard.

ACADEMIC REGALIA (CONTINUED)

At Western, the tassel color of bachelor degree candidates indicates the college or program from which students graduate: College of Arts and Sciences, white for bachelor of arts, gold for bachelor of science, white and gold for bachelor of liberal arts and sciences, and apricot for bachelor of science in nursing; College of Business and Technology, sapphire blue; College of Education and Human Services, light blue for bachelor of science and bachelor of science in education, and citron for bachelor of social work; College of Fine Arts and Communication, brown for bachelor of arts, bachelor of fine arts, and bachelor of science, and pink for bachelor of music; General Studies Degree Program, white for bachelor of arts. Master's tassels are black. Doctoral tassels are old gold.

Hoods, which originally were attached to the gown and could be slipped over the head for warmth, are the most colorful articles of specialist, master's, and doctor's clothing. The color of the lining of the hood represents the university awarding the degree. The color of the facing of the hood reflects the academic discipline of the wearer's highest degree. At Western, the colors awarded for doctoral and graduate degrees are: light blue, education doctorate, education specialist, master of arts in teaching, and master of science in education; gold, specialist in school psychology and master of science; sapphire blue, master of accountancy and master of business administration; white, master of arts; white and gold, master of liberal arts and sciences; pink, master of music and master of public health; and brown, master of fine arts.

Colors which may be seen among the marching faculty and their corresponding fields of study include: brown (fine arts), crimson (journalism), dark blue (philosophy), golden yellow (science), lemon yellow (library science), light blue (education), yellow brown (commerce, business, accountancy), pink (music), purple (law), sage green (physical education), scarlet (theology), gold and white (liberal arts and sciences), and white (arts, letters, humanities).

INFORMATION FOR DEGREE CANDIDATES

Undergraduate and graduate students are eligible to participate in Commencement if they anticipate completion of requirements for graduation during the spring or summer semester.

The roster of candidates listed in this program is a compilation of those eligible to participate and who have not submitted the Exclusion of Directory Information Form. It should not be construed either as a complete or official list of those who will receive a University degree. Due to publishing deadlines, names of some degree recipients may not appear, while names of degree candidates may appear even though they have not completed their degree requirements.

Undergraduate honors distinctions are based on the candidate's academic record at the time of publication.

Diplomas will be mailed approximately eight weeks after Commencement to those who have completed requirements and have no University encumbrances.

The University has arranged for a professional photographer to take individual photographs as students cross the stage. A postcard with the link to the commencement photo galleries will be mailed to the student's home address within 7-14 days of the ceremony. Photographs may be ordered from the website.

The University's official registry for conferral of degrees is the Office of the Registrar.

GUEST INFORMATION

Western Illinois University is proud to recognize the accomplishments of our graduates and hopes each ceremony is a meaningful event for graduates, families, friends, faculty, and staff.

Please silence all electronic devices. For safety and decorum, aisles must remain clear during the ceremony. Guests are expected to remain seated until the stage party, faculty, and graduates have recessed.

Disability parking and seating are available at Western Hall. Assistive listening devices are available at the sound table south of the stage in Western Hall. Sign language interpretation is also provided. Mobility devices provided by Western Illinois University are not permitted outside Western Hall.

A public first aid station is located in the east-west hallway behind the lower seating level on the south side of Western Hall.

Please note all emergency exit locations. Emergency exits in Western Hall are located behind the stage at the west end of the gym, through the East Arena, and through the main entry at the north lobby doors.

Western Illinois University is a smoke-free, tobacco-free and marijuana-free campus.

CANDIDATES FOR DOCTORAL DEGREES

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE: LARGE RIVER ECOSYSTEMS

Dr. Roger Viadero, Jr., Director

Ermon Dave Timothy Thomas

“Developing a Water Quality Screening Tool using Publicly Available Data as an Alternate Approach to Support Mandating Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plans for Select Illinois Wastewater Treatment Plants”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Roger Viadero, Jr.

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. James LaPrad, Director

Yohanna Agyei

“Exploring the Experiences of International Students from West Africa: Using Cross-Cultural Adaptation Theory”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tracy Davis

Andy Anderson

“From Outlier to Outlier: An Analysis of Schools Based on Illinois Middle School Math Achievement, Socioeconomic Status, and the Sequential Approach to Student Success”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Sharon Stevens

Theophilus Antah

“African American Students’ Perceptions of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in a Midwestern American University”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Rashmi Sharma

Tristan Alleyne Browne

“The Impact of COVID-19 on Student Achievement in Texas: Deepening Disparities”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julie Brines

Cara Allison Cerullo

“The Impact of Organizational Climate on Burnout of College Counseling Center Clinicians”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Stuart Yager

Chandra A. Courtney

“Quantitative Insights into Implicit Bias and Its Role in the Recommendation Process for Gifted and Talented Programs”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Stuart Yager

Sigmund Courtney

“Demographic Composition, Academic Profile, and Their Impact on Student Performance in Advanced Placement (AP) Science Courses”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Stuart Yager

Macy Yvette Ferguson-Smith

“‘We Exist in All Spaces’: A Critical Race Analysis of Black Professionals’ Perspectives During COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter 2020 in Rural Illinois”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tracy Davis

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

Anjanette W. Garza

“Continuous Improvement: A Qualitative Exploration of Learning Organization Development in a Rural Illinois K-8 District”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Bridget Sheng

Clayton Edward Gingles

“Principals’ Experiences with Unauthorized Student-to-Parent Communication During School: A Qualitative Inquiry”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Pamela Rockwood

Kisha Abba Grant

“The Underrepresentation of Women in Political Leadership: An Exploratory Case Study of Six Political Actors in the Anglophone Caribbean”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tracy Davis

Renisha A.M. James-Thomas

“The Power of Presence: Black Educators’ Awareness, Resilience, and Resistance”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julie Brines

Kirsten A. Knowles

“The Role K-12 Plays in Ending Cyclical Poverty”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Stuart Yager

Zahra Lake

“Perspectives on the Impact of Steelband Education in the African Diaspora: Exploring Empowerment, Cultural Identity, and Social Justice”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Julie Brines and Dr. Tracy Davis (co-Chair)

Elizabeth Eno-Mends

“Exploring Power Dynamics and Gender Bias in Courtroom Cross Examination in Criminal Courts in Ghana: A Critical Discourse Analysis”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tracy Davis

Simon A. Merila

“An Analysis of Community and School Variables on School Success”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Pamela Rockwood

Gloria Osei

“A Hermeneutic Phenomenological Study of Women Leaders of Color’s Experiences with Workplace Equity in an American Regional Comprehensive University”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Gloria Delany-Barmann

Ruth Owusu-Ansah

“The Influence of Parent-Teacher Collaborations on the Performance of Students with Special Needs in a K-12 Midwestern Rural School District”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Rashmi Sharma

Claudia Alexandra Pereira

“Organizational Health: An Evaluation of K-8 Illinois Charter Schools”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Bridget Sheng

Nicole Marie Pierson

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Noah Epley

Cum Laude

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| Karaline Gray | Stormy Rae Lopez | Alidia N. Smith |
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| | Michael Pundt | Ymanni Rae Zárate |

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HISTORY OF WESTERN

On April 24, 1899, a bill to establish Western Illinois University (then called Western Illinois State Normal School) was passed by the state legislature. Macomb was selected in 1900 as the location for the new normal school in west central Illinois, and on Tuesday, September 23, 1902, Western Illinois State Normal School opened its doors for the first official day of classes on the new campus.

In 1921, the General Assembly changed the name of Western Illinois State Normal School to Western Illinois State Teachers College, and in 1947, the school was renamed Western Illinois State College. Ten years later, the school became Western Illinois University. Illinois Gov. William G. Stratton approved the change July 5, 1957, and Western began its transformation into a university.

Today, Western offers numerous undergraduate and graduate degree programs, as well as two doctoral programs and several post-baccalaureate certificate programs, and is comprised of the main campus in Macomb, IL, and the urban Quad Cities campus in Moline, IL.



Western Hall



