

WESTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

FALL 2025



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20
WESTERN HALL, MACOMB, IL

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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

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Dr. Justin Schuch.....	Vice President for Student Success
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Ms. Amy Crosby.....	Interim Executive Director of Advancement and Alumni Relations Interim Executive Officer of the Foundation

ACADEMIC DEANS

Dr. Kyle R. Mayborn, 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, Interim	College of Fine Arts and Communication
Dr. Christopher D. Merrett	Innovation and Economic Development
Dr. Héctor Maymí-Sugrañes.....	University Libraries

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM
COMBINED GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE
Saturday, December 20, 2025 • 9:30 a.m.

Prelude.....	WIU Concert Band Matt Thomas, Conductor
Processional.....	Concert Band “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	Eden E. Beier “The Star Spangled Banner,” by Francis Scott Key Bachelor of Fine Arts, Class of 2025
Master of Ceremonies	Mark Mossman Provost and Academic Vice President
Greetings from the Board of Trustees	Polly Radosh Board of Trustees Chair
Distinguished University Professor.....	Provost Mossman Recipient: Dr. Kimberley A. McClure, Psychology
Remarks to the Graduating Class	Kristi Mindrup Integrity First: The Western Way President
Alumni Achievement Awards.....	Molly Holmes, Class of 2001, 2004 Recipients: Lori Torgerson Chesser 1984 President, Alumni Council Matthew M. Cuplin 2005, 2007 Robert H. Haley, Sr. 1985, 1987 Matthew Toland 2005, 2010
Introduction of WIU Student Laureate	Provost Mossman
Presentation of Candidates, Doctoral Degrees	Kishor Kapale, Assistant Vice President for Graduate, Online and Outreach Programs
Conferring of Doctoral Degrees.....	President Mindrup
Presentation of Candidates, Graduate Degrees	Kishor Kapale
Conferring of Graduate Degrees.....	President Mindrup
Hooding of College of Arts and Sciences Graduates.....	Kyle Mayborn, Interim Dean
Hooding of College of Business and Technology Graduates.....	Tara Feld, Interim Dean
Hooding of College of Education and Human Services Graduates	Eric Sheffield Interim Dean
Hooding of College of Fine Arts and Communication Graduates	Richard Kurasz Interim Dean

Hooding of Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs Graduates.....	Christopher Merrett, Dean
Hooding of School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration Graduates	Tara Feld, Interim Dean
Presentation of Candidates, College of Arts and Sciences	Interim Dean Mayborn
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, 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	Interim Dean Kurasz
Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees, College of Fine Arts and Communication	President Mindrup
Presentation of Candidates, General Studies Degree Program	Hector Maymi-Sugranes, Dean
Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees	President Mindrup
General Studies Degree Program	
Presentation of Candidates, School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration.....	Tara Feld
Conferring of Baccalaureate Degrees	President Mindrup
School of Law Enforcement and Justice Administration	
Welcome to Alumni Association.....	Holmes
Closing Remarks.....	Provost Mossman
Recessional	Concert Band
"Fanfare and Recessional," by James D. Ployhar	

PROCESSIONAL INTRODUCTIONS

Randy Glean, Associate Vice President for Global Studies

ACADEMIC READERS

Doctoral

Kishor Kapale

Assistant Vice President for Graduate, Online and Outreach Programs

Graduate

Randy Glean

Associate Vice President for Global Studies

Undergraduate

Elizabeth Hansen

Associate Professor of Mathematics and Philosophy, College of Arts and Sciences

Joel Gruver

Professor of Agriculture, College of Business and Technology

Debra Allwardt

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

Nicholas Miguel

Professor of Music, College of Fine Arts and Communication

MARSHALS

Katherine Castilla

Malory Eggers

Natalie L. Gibson

Luke C. Jones

Kinshuk Mangal

Michael Ramirez

Noah S. Seys

Payten Ziegler

WIU STUDENT LAUREATE OF THE LINCOLN ACADEMY OF ILLINOIS

Richard Anzueto, a senior social work major, is a part of the 50th Lincoln Academy Student Laureate program which recognizes excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities by seniors from each of the state's four-year, degree-granting colleges and universities. Student Laureates are honored for their leadership and service in the pursuit of the betterment of humanity. He was given the award on October 26, during a ceremony held at the University of Illinois Springfield.



Richard Anzueto

"Receiving the Lincoln Laureate and having the ability to represent Western Illinois University was a great honor," Anzueto said. "I feel that my involvement on campus was the leading cause of my recognition. As a social work student we are required to obtain volunteer hours, this allowed me to network, meet new people, and learn about the resources on campus. By joining the WIU ROTC program my leadership skills and opportunities increased, every week is eventful and a learning experience."

The program presents each Laureate with a certificate signed by the president of The Lincoln Academy and Illinois Governor JB Pritzker, a commemorative coin and a \$1,000 check. Each student is nominated by their institution.

After graduation, Anzueto plans to attend graduate school to receive a master's in social work to become a licensed clinical social worker. Richard also plans on commissioning into the Illinois National Guard as a second lieutenant and working at Youth Crossroads or J.S. Morton East High School as a counselor.

"When I enrolled at Western Illinois University, I pursued a double major in social work and Spanish to learn how to be more empathetic and supportive, but also to improve my native language. I want to return to Cicero, IL, and Chicago, IL, to give back and invest in the community. I hope to provide families, children and veterans with the resources and counseling they need to achieve greatness."

COLLEGE SCHOLARS

Each of Western Illinois University's four academic colleges 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**

Payten Ziegler
(Silvis, IL)
Graduates with a B.S.
in Psychology with
highest academic
distinction, Summa
Cum Laude.



**Business and
Technology Scholar**

Kinze Haywood
(Rushville, IL)
Graduates with a B.S.
in Agriculture with
highest academic
distinction, Summa
Cum Laude. Kinze is
also the Agriculture
Department Scholar.



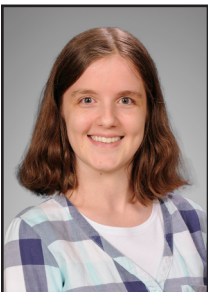
**Education and
Human Services
Scholar**

Melissa Alexander
(Havana, IL)
Graduates with a B.S.
in Special Education.
Melissa is also the
Special Education
Department Scholar.



**Fine Arts and
Communication
Scholar**

Grant Hibbeler
(Batavia, IL)
Graduates with a B.M.
in Music Education
with high academic
distinction, Magna
Cum Laude. Grant
is also the Music
Department Scholar.



**University Libraries
Scholar**

Erin Teggatz
(Rock Island, IL)
Graduates with a B.A.
in General Studies
with academic
distinction, Cum
Laude. Erin is also
the General Studies
Department Scholar.

HONORS SCHOLARS

An Honors Scholar is a student who has completed Honors coursework in their major. 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.



ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS



Lori Torgerson Chesser
Class of 1984

Chesser, a 1984 Finance graduate, is a prominent immigration attorney and advocate in Des Moines, IA. After earning her juris doctorate from the University of Georgia School of Law, she initially practiced corporate law before identifying the growing need for immigration services in Iowa. Chesser started at Dentons Davis Brown as a summer associate in 1988 and became president in January 2025.

Throughout the last 30 years, Chesser has developed and led a nationally recognized immigration law practice, representing a variety of clients, from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies across multiple industries including health care, insurance, IT, agribusiness and higher education.

Chesser has been recognized by multiple organizations for her work, including the Iowa State and Polk County Bar Associations' Pro Bono Award in 1999, the Business Record's Forty Under 40 Class of 2022 and Women of Influence Award in 2008, the Immigrant Champion Award at the Immigrant Entrepreneurs Summit in 2011 and the A. Arthur Davis Distinguished Community Leadership Award by the Greater Des Moines Leadership Institute in 2015. Additionally, Chesser has been the Immigration Law Lawyer of the Year for the Des Moines metropolitan area in 2020, 2024 and 2026, the 2025 Great Plains Super Lawyers list, the Chambers USA

2025 Immigration Iowa Band 1 and the Best Lawyers in America for Immigration Law every year from 2003 to 2026.

Outside of her work, Chesser has been deeply involved in immigration law and policy. Chesser was a co-founder and the first chair of the Iowa/Nebraska chapter of American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). She has also chaired multiple national committees and held numerous leadership positions within AILA. Chesser served on the board of trustees of the American Immigration Council for ten years, including two years as chair. In the community, Chesser has served as chair of organizations such as Catholic Charities for the Diocese of Des Moines and Nexus Executive Women's Alliance and is currently a board member of the Greater Des Moines Partnership, Central Iowa's chamber of commerce, and a member of Nexus Women's Executive Alliance and the Greater Des Moines Committee.

During her time at WIU, Chesser was involved in the student alumni council, serving as president for two years. She was also a member of the orientation team, Beta Gamma Sigma and the WIU choir. Chesser has been a consistent supporter of Leatherneck Athletics and the Malcolm and Mary Lou Torgerson Scholarship in the College of Business and Technology.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED)



Matthew M. Cuplin
Class of 2005, 2007

Cuplin, a 2005 Marketing and 2007 master of Sport Management graduate, is a decorated financial planner and business owner in Madison, WI. He started his career at Thrivent Financial in 2007 as a financial representative. In 2008, Cuplin was hired at Midwest Financial Group as a senior financial advisor. He became a Certified Financial Planner in 2015 and a Certified Financial Fiduciary shortly after. Since 2017, Cuplin has served as the President and CEO of Midwest Financial Group in addition to his senior financial advisor role.

Cuplin has earned numerous recognitions throughout his career, including Top 4 Under 40 Advisors in Wisconsin by the National Association for Insurance and Financial Advisors in 2016 and Top 4 Under 40 nationally by Advisory Today in 2017. In 2020, he was named to the InvestmentNews 40 Under 40 list.

Cuplin has been recognized by Forbes several times, including Best-in-State Next-Generation Wealth Advisor in 2019 and the national Best Next-Generation Wealth Advisors title in 2021. He was invited to join the Forbes Finance Council in 2019. In 2022, Forbes named Cuplin a Best-In-State Wealth Advisor. Earlier this year, Forbes recognized Cuplin again as a Best In-State Wealth

Advisor and Midwest Financial Group as a Best In-State Wealth Management Team.

In 2023, Cuplin was named the Small Business Executive of the Year by In Business Magazine, based on his leadership, innovation and company success. In 2025, Cuplin was named to the AdvisorHub Advisors to Watch list.

Through Midwest Financial Group, Cuplin is a strong supporter of the Madison community, including the Boys & Girls Club and the Madison Mini Marathon and 5K. Cuplin can also be seen as a contributor on WISC-TV's "Buzzed into Madison" segment, providing financial insights and resources to the greater Madison community.

While a WIU student, Cuplin served as a resident assistant, was recognized as the Resident Assistant of the Year, was the founder of the men's club soccer team and was a member of the University Union Board and the student orientation team. He is also a former member of the WIU Alumni Council. Cuplin frequently supports the Leatherneck Athletics Purple & Gold Auction and has contributed to the upcoming Finance & Commodities Trading Lab project, among other philanthropic priorities.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED)



Robert H. Haley, Sr.
Class of 1985, 1987

Haley, a 1985 Law Enforcement Administration and 1987 master of Law Enforcement Administration graduate, is the founder and CEO of an opioid treatment center outside of Cincinnati, OH. He has dedicated his 30-year career to the behavior health field, serving as the director of Premier Care of Illinois and Premier Care of Ohio. In 2017, he was instrumental in the opening of Choices Behavioral Health Care in Middletown, OH. Haley opened QIS Behavior Health in Middletown, OH, in 2020.

Outside of his professional career, Haley has deeply invested in WIU students. In 2023, Haley established the Haley Education Excellence Fund to provide scholarship support to students from Southern Illinois. When fully endowed, the \$1 million fund will support approximately 40 students annually. Beyond his scholarship fund,

Haley has also provided financial resources for multiple student experiences. He has supported Dumela Alumni Council, provided a five-figure gift to upgrade furniture in the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center lounge and has covered expenses for WIU students to attend and present at the National Council for Black Studies conference. He has also supported the GBCC Dance Troupe and the upcoming Goldfarb Center for Performing Arts.

As a student, Haley was a member of the Black Students Association. He worked as a graduate assistant in the Gwendolyn Brooks Cultural Center. In 2024, Haley was selected as a recipient of a Black Excellence Award by the WIU Black Alumni Council. Based on his philanthropy, Haley has been recognized as a member of the Foundation Fellows for his lifetime giving and the Sherman Circle for his annual financial support.

ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENTS (CONTINUED)



Matthew Toland
Class of 2005, 2010

Toland, a 2005 Women's Studies and 2010 master of Museum Studies graduate, is a museum consultant in Chicago. He has built a distinguished career advancing the preservation of cultural heritage and strengthening professional organizations.

Toland began his career as assistant director of the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies. He then went on to become the executive director of the International Preservation Studies Center, a museum director, then a professional museum association director, prior to launching his consulting business. He is a previous adjunct faculty member at WIU and Highland Community College.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, Toland is deeply involved in his community. He performs in Lakeside Pride Music Ensembles and is a section leader for the Ravenswood Community Orchestra. Toland serves on the board of Gerber/Hart Library & Archives and has served on the boards of the Illinois State Historical Society, the Illinois Association of Museums and Quad Cities Affirming Diversity.

While at WIU, Toland was involved in UNITY (then BGLFA), Iota Iota Iota Honors Society, the Women's Center and Women's Studies

Student Ambassadors. He has remained involved with WIU since graduating. He donated a framed portrait of Abraham Lincoln, made from an original glass plate negative from an 1860 portrait session, to WIU in 2013. In 2015, Toland coordinated the addition of 1,400 LGBTQA-related books to the WIU University Libraries.

In 2024, Toland wrapped up a 14-year stint on the Alumni Council, where he served in multiple roles including President. He was instrumental in establishing enduring traditions, including the Alumni Council President's Medallion, which is worn during commencement exercises, and the annual Alumni Council holiday ornament program. During his time on the council, Toland was a frequent attendee of alumni events across the United States and as far away as South Korea.

Toland has also been a strong financial supporter of WIU. In 2022, he established the Dr. Huang International Student Scholarship. He has also supported his academic programs, the Multicultural Center and Alumni Programs through his personal philanthropy. Toland is a member of the Foundation Fellows and is a Sherman Circle donor.

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 18 nations representing students in today's graduating class at Western Illinois University. The flags represent the following countries: Antigua, Bangladesh, Barbados, Canada, China, Dominica, Germany, Ghana, Grenada, India, Iran, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nigeria, Spain, St. Kitts and Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States. Western Illinois University was home to students from 61 countries during the Fall 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, 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 fall 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 EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. James LaPrad, Director

Marva Bowen-Neptune

“Industry-Relevant Education in a Rapidly Changing Environment: A Participatory Action Research Study on Improving Building Technology Curriculum at T.A. Marryshow Community College”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Tracy Davis

*Aparna Kishor Kapale

“High School STEM Education in Rural West-Central Illinois: Best Practices and Growth Opportunities”

Dissertation Chair: Dr. Stuart Yager

** 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

*Completed degree requirements Summer 2025

**Completed degree requirements Spring 2025

CANDIDATES FOR GRADUATE DEGREES

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MASTER OF ARTS

ENGLISH
Dr. Daniel Barclay, *Interim Chair*

Amanda Carman
Emma Cortelyou
* Wyatt Gordon
* Christopher Moses Perez
Joshua Darius Stinson
Brittney Witt

HISTORY
Dr. Timothy Roberts, *Chair*

Anna Lucken
Abby Troxell-Skaggs

POLITICAL SCIENCE
Dr. Gregory Baldi, *Chair*

Tarannum Rashid
Zsayla Simlin

SOCIOLOGY
Dr. Tawnya Adkins Covert, *Chair*

* Germaine Long
Ananya Sharma Proma
* Sampa Shikdar

MASTER OF SCIENCE

BIOLOGY
Dr. Richard Musser, *Interim Chair*

Philip Appiah
Edet Edet Ebieme
Alyssa Rae Hall
Yusiro Adeshewa Ismail
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Matthew R. Judd

Nicholas W. Koenig

Morgan Kowalski

Jaquelin Leon

Alexis Leyva

Manuel Luna III

Yohanna Patrick Maulawin

Dylan Reed McCafferty

Donovanne Parker

Paul V. Pham

Josh Pieper

Jaylen A. Posley

Matt Rasmussen

Isaiah Cruz Rincon

Kara Rogers

Kennedy L. Roggenbauer

Isaiah H. Rueben

Jess Seibert

Benjamin C. Sleaford

Summer A. Thorpe

Emmy Rose Treece

Wonmen S. Vah

Andrea Weathersby

Steven Arthur Wetle

Collin Wilson

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

