



**Saint Francis** University

# *Commencement*

*May 9 & May 10, 2026*

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2026

## *Commencement Message*

Dear Graduate,

Congratulations on earning your Saint Francis University degree! I am proud of you and happy for all who have gathered to celebrate with you. This is a blessed day.

In one of his inaugural apostolic letters, *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, Pope Leo compares the world of Catholic education to a constellation.

*I speak of a constellation because the world of Catholic education is a living and pluralistic network: parish schools, colleges, universities and institutes of higher learning, [...] service-learning initiatives and cultural-pastoral programs. Each "star" has its own brightness, but together they chart a course.*

Saint Francis University has been the Northstar for you, guiding you on your journey. My hope is that you have had the opportunity to deepen your faith as you prepare for life after the University. You are called now to be a 'star' that brings light into darkness.

Pope Leo further exhorts:

*Be servants of the world of education,  
Cartographers of hope,  
Tireless seekers of wisdom,  
Credible creators of expressions of beauty.*

*Fewer labels, more stories;  
Fewer sterile contrasts, more harmony in the Spirit.*

*Then our conversations will not only shine, but will also guide us:  
Towards the Truth that sets us free,  
Towards the fraternity that consolidates justice,  
Towards the hope that does not disappoint.*

I ask God's blessing upon you, that you may give prophetic witness in the world. You are well educated and well prepared to be a role model and leader in society. You are now an ambassador of the university who goes forth animated by Franciscan values.

May the light of Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, illumine your way.

Sincerely,



Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, TOR  
President





# *Student, Faculty and Staff Awards*

**The Mr. and Ms. Frankie Awards**, presented annually to the top male and female students of the senior class, are based on scholastic achievement; commitment to Franciscan values; volunteer service to the University and the community; personal character and demeanor; and diverse membership and leadership in campus activities and programs.

**Mr. Frankie - Matthew Hall**

**Ms. Frankie - Kaylin Rose**

## **Academic Achievement:**

The Saint Francis University Alumni Association presents this award to the graduating senior with the highest QPA over his or her entire college career.

### **Awardees:**

**Matthew Hall**

**Matthew Hargittai**

**Jeffrey Hoenstine**

**Hunter Myers**

**Delaney Quinn**

**Coby Romanchock**

**Laryssa Webster**

## **E.G. "Bud" Shuster Memorial**

### **Scholarship and Government Internship:**

This scholarship and internship is intended to support summer internships in the U.S. Congress or the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The student should have a strong academic background, possess good communication and research skills and have a genuine interest in legislative processes and serving the public.

### **Awardee:**

**Jelana Boldizar**

**Nicholas Kupniewski**

## **Ursula Pawlowski Memorial/Dr. Vincent and Joyce Remillard International Scholars Award:**

Awarded to a sophomore, junior or first semester senior to enhance his or her undergraduate education with advanced language study abroad. The award is intended to defray costs associated with study abroad.

### **Awardee:**

**Dakota Corle**



# *Presidents of Saint Francis College / University*

<b>President</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Bro. Giles Carroll, O.S.F.	1850
Bro. Bernardine Rogers, O.S.F.	1860
Bro. James O'Connell, O.S.F.	1880
Bro. Athanasius Gleason, O.S.F.	1889-1891, 1895-1896
Bro. Lawrence O'Donnell, O.S.F.	1870, 1881-1882
Bro. Angelus Laughlin, O.S.F.	1882-1884, 1897-1900, 1904-1906, 1909-1910
Bro. Francis Carney, O.S.F.	1891-1893
Bro. Joseph Conway, O.S.F.	1901-1902
Bro. Aloysius Gilmartin, O.S.F.	1907-1908
Fr. Victor Brown, T.O.R.	1910-1911
Fr. Cyril Murphy, T.O.R.	1911-1912
Fr. Linus Lynch, T.O.R.	1912-1914
Fr. John Doyle, T.O.R. .	1914-1916, 1921-1924
Fr. Damian J. Segourn, T.O.R.	1916-1917
Fr. Louis Donahue, T.O.R.	1917-1918
Fr. Benedict English, T.O.R.	1918-1921
Fr. DeSales Dwerlkotte, T.O.R.	1924-1926
Fr. Raphael E. Breheny, T.O.R.	1926-1933
Fr. John P.J. Sullivan, T.O.R.	1933-1937, 1940-1945
Fr. Edward P. Caraher, T.O.R.	1937-1940
Fr. John Bocella, T.O.R.	1945-1946
Fr. Adrian J. Veigle, T.O.R.	1946-1953
Fr. Xavier T. Crowley, T.O.R.	1953-1956
Fr. Kevin R. Keelan, T.O.R.	1956-1959
Fr. Columba J. Devlin, T.O.R.	1959-1962
Fr. Gabriel J. Loncosky, T.O.R.	1962-1966
Fr. Vincent R. Negherbon, T.O.R.	1966-1972
Fr. James P. Long, T.O.R.	1972
Fr. Sean M. Sullivan, T.O.R., Ph.D.	1973-1977
Fr. Christian R. Oravec, T.O.R., Ph.D.	1977-2004
Fr. Gabriel J. Zeis, T.O.R.	2004-2014
Fr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.	2014-Present



## *Professors Emeriti / Emeritae*

**Dr. Emilie Allan**  
Professor Emerita of Sociology

**Dr. Rosemary Bertocci**  
Professor Emerita of Religious Studies

**Dr. Robin Cadwallader**  
Professor Emerita of English/Communications  
& Women's Studies

**Dr. William Duryea**  
Professor Emeritus of Biology

**Dr. Patricia Fitzgerald**  
Professor Emerita of Physical Therapy/  
Exercise Physiology

**Dr. Elizabeth Gensante**  
Professor Emerita of Education

**Dr. Stephen Gilmour**  
Professor Emeritus of Psychology

**Dr. John Harris**  
Professor Emeritus of Engineering

**Dr. Sara King**  
Professor Emerita of Psychology

**Dr. Marian Langer**  
Professor Emerita of Biology

**Dr. James Logue**  
Professor Emeritus of Accounting

**Dr. Mark Lynch**  
Professor Emeritus of Social Work

**Dr. Dennis McInay**  
Professor Emeritus of  
Business Administration

**Dr. Jean Samii**  
Professor Emerita of Nursing

**Dr. Devonna Sue Shoemaker**  
Professor Emerita of Biology

**Dr. Peter Skoner**  
Dean & Professor Emeritus of Physics

**Dr. Wayne Takacs**  
Professor Emeritus of Biology

**Dr. Rita Trofino**  
Professor Emerita of Nursing

**Dr. Donald Walkovich**  
Dean & Professor Emeritus of  
Occupational Therapy

**Dr. Dee Ann Wallace**  
Professor Emerita of Education

**Dr. Kirk Weixel**  
Professor Emeritus of English

**Dr. Daniel Wetklow**  
Professor Emeritus of Computer Science

**Dr. Timothy Whisler**  
Professor Emeritus of History

## *The University Mace*

The mace has been used as a symbol of authority for centuries. Official emblems were carried before ancient Roman magistrates, and in the Middle Ages, ceremonial maces were borne by bodyguards of French and English monarchs. Later, the mace became an important symbol of office in both civil and academic processions. One of the oldest traditions in academia, dating from 1385 at the University of Vienna, the university mace is meant to reflect the character and values of an institution. The mace precedes the University President in academic processions as a symbol of order and authority, responsibility and service.

The re-designed Saint Francis University mace was first used in 2001 to celebrate the 150th Commencement at Saint Francis and our first as a University. The mace is topped with a Celtic cross, signifying the preeminence of Jesus Christ in the University's life, the institution's Catholic identity, and the Irish heritage of the six Franciscan friars who established Saint Francis Academy in 1847.



The cross rests atop an orb, which symbolizes the global vision and universal mission of Franciscan higher education and represents the many countries of the world from which Saint Francis students, staff, and alumni have come. A band of brass carries the three names by which our institution has been known while spanning three centuries: Saint Francis Academy, Saint Francis College, and Saint Francis University.

The orb rests upon an octagon, its eight sides symbolizing the eight Articles of the first Charter written by the Franciscan founders for their friary and academy in 1848 and the eight Goals of Franciscan Higher Education at Saint Francis developed in 1991. The octagon incorporates eight symbolic elements on its lateral faces.

On four sides of the octagon, institutional seals are engraved: the seal of Saint Francis Academy, which is also the seal of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis (T.O.R.), the Franciscan Order to which the friars of Saint Francis University belong; the seal of the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, that portion of the Third Order Regular in the United States which sponsors the University; the seal of Saint Francis College, the name of the institution for over one hundred years; and the seal of Saint Francis University. The same four seals are represented on the Presidential Chain of Office, worn by the University President for Commencement and other special institutional functions.

The other four sides have: Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron of the University, as he is depicted on the fountain sculpture in the center of the campus mall; the rose window from the University Chapel, portraying "The Canticle of the Creatures" of Saint Francis of Assisi; the Bell Tower, one of the oldest structures on campus and the only remnant of Old Main, once the primary building for the Academy and the College; a pine cone and branch, symbolizing both the newness of life and the evergreen trees that have graced the school "among the pines" from its beginning.

Below the octagon, the staff of the mace is decorated with fluting, common to classical columns. The entire mace is constructed from the wood of pine, maple, and black walnut trees, all of which are found on the University campus.

The Saint Francis University mace was designed by Dr. Stephen Rombouts, retired Registrar, from a concept proposed by the Very Rev. Christian R. Oravec, T.O.R., Minister Provincial, Sacred Heart Province, and was constructed by Leonard Siedlarczyk, former master carpenter at Saint Francis. The cross and brass elements were crafted by Servinsky Jewelers of Cresson, Pennsylvania.



## *Academic Attire*

The academic attire worn today originated in the universities of the Middle Ages, when a warm gown and hood were useful for scholars and clerics in unheated buildings—the distinctive gown served to set students apart from fellow citizens. The cap, or mortarboard, usually has a black tassel, though doctoral tassels may be of gold.

The cap is worn throughout the entire ceremony. Gentlemen remove their caps during prayer, the national anthem, and the alma mater. Degree candidates wear their tassels on the right, shifting them to the left when diplomas are received.

Although academic gowns may appear similar, there are differences that denote the wearer's educational degree. Sleeves are pointed for the bachelor's degree, oblong for the master's, and full, round, and bell-shaped for the doctor's. The doctoral gown may also be faced with velvet.

The hoods worn with the gowns also vary according to academic degree, the bachelor's hood being 36 inches long, the master's hood 42 inches long, and the doctor's hood 48 inches long. The colored inner lining of the academic hood is the official color of the institution granting the degree. The velvet edging of the hood, the width of which varies from two inches to five inches according to the degree, represents the academic field for which the degree was granted.

**The colors of the edging on the hoods and the banners on display represent various academic disciplines, including the following:**

Arts, Letters, & Humanities: **White**

Business Administration: **Drab**

Economics: **Copper**

Education: **Light Blue**

Engineering: **Orange**

Fine Arts: **Brown**

Human Resources: **Drab**

Journalism: **Crimson**

Law: **Purple**

Library Science: **Lemon**

Medicine: **Green**

Music: **Pink**

Nursing: **Apricot**

Occupational Therapy: **Slate Blue**

Philosophy: **Dark Blue**

Physical Therapy: **Teal**

Physician Assistant: **Green**

Science: **Golden Yellow**

Social Science: **Cream**

Social Work: **Citron**

Theology: **Scarlet**

# The University Seal

The official seal of the University bears the University's name in Latin, date of founding, coat of arms, and motto.



The left side of the shield contains symbols of the Franciscans who founded Saint Francis Academy in 1847 and the friars of the Province of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus of the Third Order Regular of Saint Francis.

On the upper left are the cross among clouds and the Franciscan symbol of the crossed arms of Jesus and Saint Francis of Assisi. In the center a crown of thorns and three nails reflect the passion of Christ and signify sacrifice, conversion and reconciliation. On the lower left, flames issue from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, symbolizing love. The crescent moon symbolizes Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

The right side of the shield bears symbols reflecting the University. On the top right, the open book symbolizes wisdom and knowledge. The left page of the book bears a circle, a sign of eternal truth, while the right page shows a straight vertical line, a sign of finite truth. The ray emanating from the book expresses the Franciscan spirit of teaching truth, knowing truth, and loving truth. The ray of light begins as a narrow burst and widens to suggest that truth originates from and is imbued with the divine.

On the bottom right, the evergreen tree is a sign of the Irish heritage of the founding Franciscan friars as well as the school's designation for many years as "the College among the Pines."

Atop the shield rests a crown to represent Saint Louis, King of France, and Saint Elizabeth, Queen of Hungary, patron and patroness of the Third Order of Saint Francis. Below the shield is the Latin motto *Virtus, Veritas, Virtus* (Valor, Truth, Honor). The entire University community is called to embrace truth with valor and honor.

# Academic Honors

Degrees with honors are conferred by the University for exceptional scholastic achievement. Graduates are presented with bronze, silver, and gold medallions to be worn around their necks to designate these honors.



**The degrees with honors are as follows:**

- Cum Laude for a general Q.P.A. of 3.5
- Magna Cum Laude for a general Q.P.A. of 3.7
- Summa Cum Laude for a general Q.P.A. of 3.9



Those receiving the Honors Program diploma have maintained a minimum cumulative Q.P.A. of 3.25 and have completed the Honors Program curriculum, including a thesis requirement. To qualify for Departmental Honors, a student must have department approval and must complete an independent study of at least six credits that earns an "A."



# *Anthem to Saint Francis University*

O Saint Francis University you crown the  
Laurel hills,  
gracious bounty of the Friars,  
who have led us where God wills.  
we recall the days of friendship  
and we cherish olden times,  
that we shared with each other  
among the ancient pines.  
There we searched for truth and virtue  
and sought God's love to know,  
as we carried forth his message as our  
Francis, long ago.

## **Interlude**

And when all has passed and we have  
gone to meet beyond the pall;  
we will greet each other in embrace and  
praise "My God My All."

## *Alma Mater*

Hail, Saint Francis, ever true we  
stand and sing of love for thee from  
the halls of inspiration onward  
move in dignity.

### **Chorus:**

Praise thee ever, Alma Mater  
virtue with love combines proudly  
now we hail to thee Alma Mater  
among the pines.

When our college days are through  
we will ever loyal be to the  
memories that we cherish and the  
love of friends we knew.

### **Chorus:**

Praise thee ever, Alma Mater  
virtue with love combines proudly  
now we hail to thee Alma Mater  
among the pines.

**Saint Francis** University



*Graduate Ceremony*  
**School of Health Sciences & Education**

# Order of Ceremony

Saturday, May 9, 2026

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## *Prelude and Processional*

Saint Francis University Band

## **Division III: Master and Doctoral Degree Candidates**

Marshals

Dr. Mark Boland, DPT, Clinical Associate Professor,  
Physical Therapy  
Dr. Amy Hudkins, DHSc, Clinical Associate Professor,  
Occupational Therapy

## **Division II: Faculty**

Marshals

Dr. Jill Cavalet, DHSc, Clinical Professor,  
Physician Assistant Science  
Dr. Camille Wendekier, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Nursing

## **Division I: Platform Party**

Grand Marshal

Dr. Justin Merry, Ph.D., Professor, Biology

## *Presiding*

Ms. Teresa Polley '82, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

## *Invocation*

Fr. Dr. Joseph Krilich, T.O.R., DPT, Physical Therapist,  
Holy Trinity Rehabilitation

## *National Anthem*

Ms. Anna Bernasconi  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

Ms. Lydia Foor  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Welcome*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.  
President, Saint Francis University

## *Honorary Degree Conferral and Introduction of Speaker*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.  
Dr. Elliott Bedford, Ph.D. (Doctor of Humane Letters)

## *Commencement Address*

Dr. Elliott Bedford, Ph.D.

## *Interlude*

Anthem to Saint Francis University

Ms. Anna Bernasconi, vocalist  
Rev. Christopher Dobson, T.O.R., organist

## *Presentation of Degree Candidates*

Dr. Michael McGinnis, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Kerri Golden, Ed.D.  
Dean, School of Health Sciences & Education

## *Conferral of Degrees and Presentation of Diplomas*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.

## *Welcome to New Alumni*

Mr. Eric Horell '13, M.B.A. '17, Assistant Vice President  
for Advancement and Alumni Engagement

## *Alma Mater*

Ms. Anna Bernasconi, vocalist  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Benediction*

Fr. Dr. Joseph Krilich, T.O.R., DPT, Physical Therapist,  
Holy Trinity Rehabilitation

## *Recessional*

Saint Francis University Band

# *Honorary Doctorate Recipient*

Commencement Speaker: School of Health Sciences & Education, Graduate Ceremony

## *Dr. Elliott Bedford*

Elliott Bedford, MA, PhD, is the proud husband of Theresa and a devoted father to their five children—Emma, Ava, Luke, James, and Rose. He considers his vocation as a husband and father his greatest calling, finding deep joy in spending time with his family and supporting them in their many activities. His commitment to family life reflects the same values of faith, service, and intentional living that shape both his personal and professional endeavors.

Since 2014, Dr. Bedford has served as Director of Ethics Integration for Ascension St. Vincent in Central and Southern Indiana, and since 2020, he has also held the same role with Ascension Via Christi in Kansas. In these positions, he collaborates with physicians, administrators, and care teams to ensure that healthcare delivery and organizational decision-making are aligned with the ethical principles of the Catholic tradition. His work includes providing consultation on complex clinical cases, developing educational initiatives, and helping guide policies that uphold human dignity and compassionate care.

Dr. Bedford's academic formation provides a strong foundation for his work at the intersection of faith and healthcare. He earned both his Bachelor of Arts (2008) and Master of Arts (2009) in Philosophy from Franciscan University of Steubenville, followed by a Master of Arts in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology in 2012. He completed his Doctorate in Health Care Ethics, Catholic Tradition, at Saint Louis University in 2014, equipping him to thoughtfully engage the moral questions that arise in modern medicine.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Dr. Bedford serves as an adjunct professor in the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Marian University in Indianapolis, where he helps prepare future healthcare professionals to approach their work with a strong ethical and values-based framework. He is also the board chair for Ignite Formation, LLC, a charitable lay men's fraternal organization dedicated to helping men grow in their vocations as disciples of Christ—especially as husbands, fathers, and workers. Through this work, he is passionate about forming men to live with purpose, integrity, and faithful leadership in all aspects of their lives.



# *Executive Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership and Innovation*

## **Transforming Leadership Through Research: Aggiornamento 2023 Cohort (Ed.D. Class of 2026) Dissertation Topics**

### **Susan Bosnick-Sinift**

*Is Mutual Obligation and Respect Relevant in High-Quality Relationships? Exploring Psychological Safety and Trust as Key Elements of the LMX Theory High-Quality Relationship*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Patrick Crawford (chair), Dr. Leah Spangler, Dr. Thomas Butler

### **Mary Elizabeth Yancosek Gamble**

*The Journey to the “She” Suite: How Did She Get There? Skills and Stories from Women in Higher Education Administration in Appalachia on Mentorship and Developmental Networks*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Patrick Crawford (chair), Dr. Tricia McFadden, Dr. Danielle Mehlmann Brightwell

### **Sarah Gerber**

*Colliding Truths, Shared Growth: A Case Study of Mentoring, Reverse Mentoring, and Institutional Readiness Across Generations*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Aspen Mock (chair), Dr. Tamara Willis, Dr. Kent Tonkin

### **Allison Grindle**

*The Influence of Leadership Traits and School Culture on College Graduation Rates*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Tricia McFadden (chair), Dr. Pete Skoner, Brooke Good

### **David Kasievich**

*Community-Centric Fundraising: The Opportunities and Resistance in NativityMiguel Coalition Schools*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Leah Spangler (chair), Dr. Matthew Thomas, Jennifer Shropshire

### **Bridget Kozar**

*Virtual Voices: A Quantitative Study to Understand the Experiences That Influence Teacher Retention in Online K-12 Schools*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Pete Skoner (chair), Dr. Cassie Grassmyer, Dr. Katy Gionvinski

### **Erin Riggi**

*Making a Masterpiece: Integrating Art History into Core Curriculum for Career and College Readiness*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Tricia McFadden (chair), Dr. Brennan Thomas, Ms. Maureen Vissat

### **Shannon Scanlan**

*Factors Driving Sustained Volunteerism in the American Physical Therapy Association*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Brennan Thomas (chair), Dr. Mark Buckwalter, Dr. Lori Bordenave

### **Nicole Sliko**

*Gendered Dynamics and Experiences in Predominantly Female Workplaces*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Leah Spangler (chair), Dr. Tamara Willis, Dr. Jason Moore

### **Jeffrey Truhan**

*An Exploration of Self-Agency in Relation to Early-Career Primary Care Physicians' Unwillingness to Self-Report Medical Errors in Outpatient Settings*

**Dissertation Committee:** Dr. Tricia McFadden (chair), Dr. Kellie Hobbs, Dr. Raghavendra Tirupathi

## *Doctor of Education*

Susan Bosnick-Sinift  
Mary Elizabeth Yancosek Gamble  
Sarah E. Gerber  
Allison Grindle  
David Kasievich  
Bridget Kozar  
Erin Riggi  
Shannon M. Scanlan  
Nicole Sliko  
Jeffrey Truhan

## *Doctor of Physical Therapy*

Kelly S. Albright  
Anna Therese Bernasconi  
Kristiana L. Cascino  
Lydia Adelle Foor  
Abigail M. Fordyce  
Madeline Grace Harbin  
Jenna Marie Izydore  
Joseph W. Kovachick  
Jonathan P. Mazur  
Samantha Ann Murphy  
Claire Frances Oliver  
Coral S. Root  
Rory M. Schaeffer  
Mia Kathryn Yahner

## *Master of Education*

Madelynn Bates  
Grace Bowser  
Alyssa Brozenich  
Caleb M. Burkett  
Van Duong Chau  
Alissa Copeland  
Cody A. Ebersole  
Alexis Eckenrode  
Jessica Fishburn  
Randi Jo Hovan  
Emily Imgrund  
Heather L. Jones  
Mitchell G. Jubas  
Megan Mason  
Jessica Moser  
Zachary Myers  
Nicole Peterson  
Crystal Tutton  
Margaret Waldron  
Misti Washburn

## *Master of Special Education*

Mark Mamrosh  
Madison N. Runk

## *Master of Physician Assistant Science*

Brooke Karen Alexander  
Gracie J. Azzato  
Jada Dawn Bailey-Clyburn  
Elizabeth Baj  
Andrea L. Bean  
Jacqueline A. Beck  
Cheyanne Ruth Beiswenger  
Michelle Isabella Binder  
Abigail Boulos  
Amalia Huifeng Bradburn  
Kaelee Bresslin  
Jessica Buchan  
Allison Camillo  
Baylee Larue Carpenter  
Brooke Catherman  
Leighann Nicole Chalmers  
Julianna Sophia Crisfulla  
Anna Grace Crumrine  
Madison Lauren Dando  
Julianne Marie O'Connell Dee  
Lauren Elizabeth Dzialowski  
Emma C. Fenton  
Taylor Field  
Emma M. Fleck  
Sophia A Fusaro  
Caitlyn Elizabeth Galinac  
Seamus John Girdusky  
Natalie Grace Glessner  
Brianna Henry  
Joel D. Hogue  
Karissa L Holt  
Taigen Dalton Hood  
Abbie L. Horton  
Olivia F. Hotchkiss  
Matthew Jason Jalbert  
Olivia Grace Kiray  
Paige Annalise Kistner  
Abigail R. Lobick  
Madelyn Marzina\*  
Pauline Hayes Meagher  
Mykenzie Ruth Moore  
Brooke Madison Morgan  
Carissa M. Novotny  
Morgan R. Philibin  
Nicole Marie Piccioni  
Lindsay Marie Schanck  
Bella Shupp  
Sydney L. Sowers  
Madison Nicole Suman  
Ryan Yamuta Tandoc  
Josilyn Ann Wehner\*  
JoAnna Clancy Woods

## *Master of Occupational Therapy*

Nicole Altschuh  
Alexzya M. Bjornberg

## *Master of Occupational Therapy (cont.)*

Grace Martha Callahan  
Sydney Marie Clements  
Sarah E. Costello  
Shane Patrick Curran  
Sienna Lee Fiorenza  
Taylor Kennedy  
Andrea Kiser  
Maddax Laret  
Cecelia Leardi  
Jenna Madonna  
Nicole A. McCombie  
Katlyn McDonald  
Olivia Marie Metz  
Faythe Mackenzie Miller  
Kynneddy R. Miller  
Makayla Olivia Murray  
Natalie Noel Rodgers  
Ava Josephine Silva  
Shannon Snyder  
Kalli Anne Taylor  
Abigail Uhl  
Arianna Westrick  
Jordyn P. Williamson  
Emma Claire Zawalnicki

## *Master of Science in Nursing*

Kaitlyn Gallagher  
Abigail Hanley  
Grace-Serene Hoffman  
Mary G. Holtz  
Cassandra Sheldon  
Lyndzey Thomas  
Kelsey Yeckel

## *Master of Public Health*

Addison Baughman  
Amanda Grace Collier  
Sharon Glass  
Desire M. Morris

*\* Indicates Degree Completion Summer 2026*

**Saint Francis** University



*Undergraduate Ceremony*  
**School of Health Sciences & Education**

# *Order of Ceremony*

*Saturday, May 9, 2026*

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## *Prelude and Processional*

Saint Francis University Band

## **Division III: Bachelor Degree Candidates**

Marshals

Dr. Lorie Rowles, OTD, Associate Professor,  
Occupational Therapy  
Dr. Thomas Woods, DHSc, Professor,  
Physician Assistant Science

## **Division II: Faculty**

Marshals

Dr. Suzanne Black, DSW, Clinical Associate Professor,  
Social Work  
Dr. Melissa Kagarise, DHSc, Professor,  
Physician Assistant Science

## **Division I: Platform Party**

Grand Marshal

Dr. Justin Merry, Ph.D., Professor, Biology

## *Presiding*

Ms. Teresa Polley '82, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees

## *Invocation*

Br. Matt Aubin, T.O.R., Director,  
Dorothy Day Outreach Center

## *National Anthem*

Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Welcome*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.  
President, Saint Francis University

## *Commencement Address*

Dr. Elliott Bedford, Ph.D.

## *Interlude*

Anthem to Saint Francis University  
Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT, vocalist  
Rev. Christopher Dobson, T.O.R., organist

## *Presentation of Degree Candidates*

Dr. Michael McGinnis, Ph.D.  
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Kerri Golden, Ed.D.

Dean, School of Health Sciences & Education

## *Conferral of Degrees and Presentation of Diplomas*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.

## *Tassel Ceremony*

Mr. Luke Lamb, Physician Assistant Science Major

## *Welcome to New Alumni*

Mr. Eric Horell '13, M.B.A. '17, Assistant Vice President  
for Advancement and Alumni Engagement

## *Alma Mater*

Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT, vocalist  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Benediction*

Br. Matt Aubin, T.O.R., Director,  
Dorothy Day Outreach Center

## *Recessional*

Saint Francis University Band

# *Honorary Doctorate Recipient*

Commencement Speaker: School of Health Sciences & Education, Undergraduate Ceremony

## *Dr. Elliott Bedford*

Elliott Bedford, MA, PhD, is the proud husband of Theresa and a devoted father to their five children—Emma, Ava, Luke, James, and Rose. He considers his vocation as a husband and father his greatest calling, finding deep joy in spending time with his family and supporting them in their many activities. His commitment to family life reflects the same values of faith, service, and intentional living that shape both his personal and professional endeavors.

Since 2014, Dr. Bedford has served as Director of Ethics Integration for Ascension St. Vincent in Central and Southern Indiana, and since 2020, he has also held the same role with Ascension Via Christi in Kansas. In these positions, he collaborates with physicians, administrators, and care teams to ensure that healthcare delivery and organizational decision-making are aligned with the ethical principles of the Catholic tradition. His work includes providing consultation on complex clinical cases, developing educational initiatives, and helping guide policies that uphold human dignity and compassionate care.

Dr. Bedford's academic formation provides a strong foundation for his work at the intersection of faith and healthcare. He earned both his Bachelor of Arts (2008) and Master of Arts (2009) in Philosophy from Franciscan University of Steubenville, followed by a Master of Arts in Theology from Aquinas Institute of Theology in 2012. He completed his Doctorate in Health Care Ethics, Catholic Tradition, at Saint Louis University in 2014, equipping him to thoughtfully engage the moral questions that arise in modern medicine.

In addition to his professional responsibilities, Dr. Bedford serves as an adjunct professor in the College of Osteopathic Medicine at Marian University in Indianapolis, where he helps prepare future healthcare professionals to approach their work with a strong ethical and values-based framework. He is also the board chair for Ignite Formation, LLC, a charitable lay men's fraternal organization dedicated to helping men grow in their vocations as disciples of Christ—especially as husbands, fathers, and workers. Through this work, he is passionate about forming men to live with purpose, integrity, and faithful leadership in all aspects of their lives.



## *Bachelor of Arts*

Tessa G. Paluzzi  
Madison Wagner

## *Bachelor of Science*

Amelia M. Abell  
Bati Assefa  
Megan Baker  
Ashlyn Ball  
Brooke Barner  
Autumn Nicole Baum  
Aubree Berkhimer  
Cassie R. Berkhimer  
Avery Beunier Lucas  
Dominic Francis Bevilacqua  
Riti Bhatnagar  
Kaylee Biletdeaux  
Averey Black  
Brooke A. Boring  
Tia M. Bradley  
Violet R. Brickner  
Adam Bryant  
Korrin A. Burns  
Faye T. Butterbaugh  
Chloe Butz  
Casey Buynack  
Rachel Centurion-Rocha  
Alexa Breanne Chapla  
Naomi Cho  
Breana L. Chuhran  
Rebekah G. Claar  
Autumn Cuppett  
Trina Dang  
Leah Decker  
Hannah Rae Dgien  
Cole Dorn  
Kelly Dowuona  
Paige Drake  
Sydney J. Erculiani  
Jessica L. Evans  
Annabelle M. Farmer  
Camryn Figard  
Connor James Flaig  
Madeline Foor  
Jordan Foster  
Meaghan Foster  
Taylor Foster  
Vincent Franco  
Ryan M. Frank  
Azjia Gardner  
Bailey N. Garver  
Gina Gaye  
Dimitri Geronimos  
Olivia Golden  
Rashelle A. Greenawalt  
Caroline Grindle  
Hailey M. Hampton  
Caitlin Harshberger

## *Bachelor of Science (cont.)*

Hannah Elizabeth Hartle  
Mia Haughn  
Chase Haught  
Gabrielle Rebecca Helsel  
Elizabeth Henderson  
Jordan Henehan  
Ethan Hess  
Hallie Shiann Hillegass  
Ella Hinish  
Chloe Hoffman  
Ava Holden  
Lena M. Howard  
Macy Celene Hughes  
Caleb J. Hunt  
Tobey Jamnik\*  
Kaitlyn Kasisky  
Sydney E. Keagy  
Ellen Kennedy  
Emma Kent\*  
Ashley A. Kim  
Chloe King  
Lindsey Koontz  
Raine Korpics  
Elizabeth Kovalchik  
Ryan Kozy  
Madelyn Emma Kramer  
Bayle J. Kunsman  
Alivea R. Kurtz  
Luke C. Lamb  
Madelyn Lersch  
Jenny Lin  
Nathan Little  
Juliann Litzinger  
Vivian Litzinger  
Brooke A. Long  
Alexandra Lukon  
Courtney Elizabeth Lyle  
Daniela Marius  
Emily Marquez  
Kori J. McClure  
Aaliyah McGinnis  
Payton J. MCGough  
Aubrey Meredith Miller  
Gabrielle Miller  
Jayce M. Miller  
Zaiha Minnis  
Jillian Minsky  
Morgan Moniz  
Mary J. Moran  
Catherine Moyer  
Ammanuel Ojha  
Caylah Olay  
Phillip Joseph Olszewski  
Hayun Park  
Jaida Parker  
Innocende Renee Patterson  
Allison Polenik  
Jessen L. Poullos  
Thomas Presnar

## *Bachelor of Science (cont.)*

Anna Grace Quackenbush  
Carol Ramos  
Liah Ramsey  
Emily Elizabeth Ream  
Grace Ann Reed  
Brady D. Reese  
Colleen A. Roche  
Abigail M. Rose  
Kaylin Lanying Rose  
Rebecca Royer  
Logan Ruter  
Marah Elisabeth Saleme  
Alaina Sand  
Alexandra Sappia  
Jacob Andrew Schneider  
Ethan Schriver  
Willow Bianca Sepan  
Sydney Shifko  
John Skelley  
Victoria Catherine Spaid  
Alexis Speranzo  
Hanah Stafford  
Ethan Connor Stroup  
Kaelyn Stultz\*  
Brady Stump  
Emma Szymanski  
Melena Templeton  
Joey Testa  
Lauren Timblin  
Andrew P. Tinker  
Gregory Troyan  
Sara Catherine Turner  
Olivia Vlasak  
Madison Waldspurger  
Hanna Jane Weaver  
Stevie Webber  
Ruby Welpott  
Lucia Willis  
Saige Wilt  
Makaila A. Work  
Abby Yahner  
Erin M. Yahner  
Dolly Marie Yarnish  
Zachary Zagorski  
Meghan Zambruno

*\* Indicates Degree Completion Summer 2026*



*Combined Ceremony*

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**Shields School of Business**

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**School of Science, Technology,  
Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics**

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**Division of Professional Studies**

# Order of Ceremony

Sunday, May 10, 2026

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## *Prelude and Processional*

Saint Francis University Band

## **Division III: Associate, Bachelor, and Master Degree Candidates**

Marshals

Dr. Rose Clark, Ph.D., Professor,  
Chemistry

Dr. Ed Zovinka, Ph.D., Professor,  
Chemistry

## **Division II: Faculty**

Marshals

Dr. Patrick Farabaugh, Ph.D., Professor,  
Communications

Dr. Kelly Rhodes, D.M., Associate Professor,  
Communications

## **Division I: Platform Party**

Grand Marshal

Dr. Justin Merry, Ph.D., Professor, Biology

## *Presiding*

Fr. Dr. Joseph Lehman, T.O.R., Ph.D.  
Chairman, Board of Trustees

## *Invocation*

Br. Marius Strom, T.O.R., Lab Instructor, Engineering

## *National Anthem*

Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT  
Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Welcome*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.  
President, Saint Francis University

## *Honorary Degree Conferrals and Introduction of Speaker*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.

Sr. Dr. Margaret Carney, OSF (Doctor of Humane Letters)

## *Commencement Address*

Sr. Dr. Margaret Carney, OSF

## *Interlude*

Anthem to Saint Francis University

Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT, vocalist

Rev. Christopher Dobson, T.O.R., organist

## *Presentation of Degree Candidates*

Dr. Michael McGinnis, Ph.D.

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dr. Randy Frye, Ed.D.

Dean, Shields School of Business

Dr. Arthur Remillard, Ph.D.

Dean, School of Science, Technology, Engineering,  
Arts, & Mathematics

Dr. Julie Warnick, Ed.D.

Dean, Division of Professional Studies

## *Conferral of Degrees and Presentation of Diplomas*

Fr. Dr. Malachi Van Tassell, T.O.R., Ph.D.

## *Tassel Ceremony*

Ms. Lexanny Gonzalez, Class of 2026 President

## *Welcome to New Alumni*

Mr. Eric Horell '13, M.B.A. '17, Assistant Vice President for  
Advancement and Alumni Engagement

## *Alma Mater*

Dr. Anna Bernasconi, DPT, vocalist

Physical Therapy Major, Graduate

## *Benediction*

Br. Marius Strom, T.O.R., Lab Instructor, Engineering

## *Recessional*

Saint Francis University Band

# *Honorary Doctorate Recipient*

Commencement Speaker Combined Ceremony: Shields School of Business, STEAM, and  
Division of Professional Studies

## *Sr Margaret Carney, OSF, STD*

Sr. Margaret Carney is a member of the Sisters of St. Francis of the Neumann Communities. Her services to the Church over her decades in religious life include teaching, administration, writing and participation on boards and organizations with a goal of fostering the Catholic and Franciscan mission.

She holds a degree in education and theology from Duquesne University and a degree in Franciscan Studies from St. Bonaventure University. She completed doctoral studies on St. Clare of Assisi in Rome at the Pontifical University Antonianum.

An international project to renew the Rule of Life for Franciscans of the Third Order Regular found her serving as the representative of the Franciscan Federation of the USA as part of an international editing team. The project succeeded and the revised Rule was approved by St. John Paul II in 1982.

After serving two terms as the general minister of her original congregation in Whitehall, Pa. she joined the faculty of the Franciscan Institute of St. Bonaventure University. She went on to become dean of the faculty and then president of the university. She served in that role from 2004-2016. Working with other institutions of Catholic higher education she served as chair of the boards of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities and the Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities. Her work as an educator led to her reception of the Monika Hellwig Award of ACCU and the Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice Medal awarded by Pope Francis in 2016.

While retired from major administrative duties, Sr. Margaret continues to serve as consultant, board member and lecturer promoting the Franciscan vision of life and work in our time. Her biography, *Flower of Assisi: The Story of St. Clare*, has enjoyed a warm reception among Catholic laity and religious.



**Master of Human  
Resource Management**

Trey A. Baney  
Anthony Beatty  
Ryan Cox

**Master of Business  
Administration**

Sara F. Butler  
Mark Calandra  
Sienna M. Chippie  
Jaelyn Cole  
Adam Conner  
Karlee DeYulis  
Jacob Frank  
Nicholas Gibson  
Cassandra Hawthorne\*  
Michael A. Heist  
John Imbt  
Aleah James  
Richard Kaminski  
Jennifer Koontz  
Samantha Leamer  
Katie McCloskey  
Gretchen Messner  
Joni Ndrenika  
Ryan D. Negola  
Connor Oechslin  
Noah Ohler  
Ikechukwu Okoye  
Christopher M. Palazzi  
Lauren E. Persichetty  
Angelina Petro  
Sandra J. Rea  
Sonia Marika Sato  
Jill D. Sciranko  
Kathleen Mary Slingerland\*  
Kayley Sossong  
Thi Thuy Hang Tran  
Danielle L. Vella  
Erik Ward  
Nathan Ivo Zini

**Master of Arts in  
Strategic Leadership**

Anna Batrus  
Molly Brandt  
Lucas Killmeyer  
Dadou Loum  
John McKeown  
Shelby Ricks  
Cameron Tweedy

**Bachelor of Science**

Ashtin Ancheta  
Nicklaus Anderson\*  
Chase Brenneman  
Tyler Cheslock\*  
John Reagan Courtney  
Michael P. Darcy  
Maridza Desir  
Zachary Eckenrode  
Christian Fochler  
Camille Gagnon  
Aliya Michelle Garroway  
Anthony Jeffrey George  
Timothy Golden  
Haley I. Gray\*  
Shane Graziosi  
Matthew C. Hall  
Daniel Heider  
Jeffrey D. Hoenstine  
Austin F. Horner  
Etinosa Igiebor\*  
Kylie Innes  
Lucia Johnson  
Hannah Kantola  
Eaghan Francis Kieff  
Jude S. Koehle  
Noah Kohan  
Marlana M. Krug  
Abigail Kutchel  
Samuel Lane  
Ryan Joseph Lenz  
Melissa Rose Malackany  
Megan E. Marlin\*  
Morgan E. McConnell  
Morgan McNaughton  
Adrian Jovan Mejia\*  
Christopher Michael Moncrief  
Catherine Moyer  
Hunter A. Myers  
Luke Christopher Nowak  
Connor Oechslin  
Anna Phelan  
Macrae Plummer  
Delaney Quinn  
Coby Romanchock  
Christina Roncarati  
Sarah E. Saltsgiver  
Evan J. Sanders  
Julian Saunders  
Bryar Schilling  
Harrison Ray Snyder  
Braeden Sorensen\*  
Garrett W. Strohmier  
Kareem Swain Jr  
Grayson Swoager

**Bachelor of Science (cont.)**

James K. Tharpe  
Damian Tobias  
Laryssa Webster  
Kayla Weslager

*\* Indicates Degree Completion Summer 2026*

# School of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, & Mathematics

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## Bachelor of Arts

Autumn Nicole Baum  
Logan Belford  
Avery Beunier Lucas  
Brandon Dick  
Edward Drzewiecki  
Grace Gibson  
Joel Isaac Godissart  
Naomi K. Hillen  
Mason Imbt  
Zachary Krepelka  
Gestin Junior Liberis  
Isabel Lumley  
Parker Lutz  
Angelina Jane Marasco-Keene  
Theresa Martz  
Reace Myers  
Shane Nichols  
Olivia Rowan  
Kilburn Russo  
Connor Jacob Van Tassell  
Andrew Vines  
Laryssa Webster  
Joshua Wos

## Bachelor of Science

Connor Paul Adomaitis  
Evan Amigh  
Nathaniel Eric Anderson  
Mitchell Auer  
Jared Berkheimer  
Kelly Biddle  
Haley L. Brag\*  
Mary Jane Bukowski  
Nathan Lieb Cammarata  
Khorte Drury  
Nathan R. Dumm  
Zachary Fry  
Jacob Thomas Garrity  
Ashton George  
Lexanny Gonzalez  
Sydney Gula-Weir\*  
McKenzie Gustas  
Matthew Hargittai  
Sarah Hartwell  
Naomi K. Hillen  
Mason C. Hogue  
John Improta  
Andre Isreal

## Bachelor of Science (cont.)

Jacob Jolly  
Megan Kindja  
Sebastian Gregory Kline  
Zachary Krepelka  
Adam Charles Lanzendorfer  
Daniel Robert Lightner  
James Robert Lilley  
Isabel Lumley  
Nicholas James Marcino  
Alexia Matts  
Abigail Meehan  
Nathanael Miller  
Emilee Myers\*  
Mina Nikolic  
James Parmelee\*  
Nicholas Patterson  
Mikayla Rose Quaid  
Kevin Joseph Salmon  
Abigail Seese  
Ian Shuey  
John Christian Shuster  
Preston Slagle

## Bachelor of Science (cont.)

Ethan Joseph Spade  
Mallory Thomas  
Natalie R. Vogt  
Henry Warner

## Division of Professional Studies

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### Associate of Applied Science

Breyden Campbell  
Jasmine Carlyle\*  
Tristen Conrad  
Jack V. Dively  
Michael Folton  
Amber Heather  
Daniel Kelley  
Liam Kerlin  
Mason Krouse  
Joshua Mathis  
Madison Ann McGaughey\*  
Malachi D. Richards  
Calvin Shirey  
Parker Sleppy\*  
Patrick Slingerland\*  
Hayden Sutton

### Associate of Science

Bianca Alvarado  
Melissa Lee  
Alyssa Lindstrom  
Jenah Lombardo  
Tanya Meacham  
Casarah Relic

### Bachelor of Arts

Yolanda D. Dunn  
Kristiana Kalset\*  
Ashley J. McCoy  
Audra Robertson  
Ariana Shue

### Bachelor of Science

Bryson Bagley  
Jessica Berry  
Juliet Bice  
Christopher A. Bobak  
Courtney Burkett  
Marissa L. Cavallo  
Kara Childers  
Morgan Crocefoglia  
Kathryn Lorraine Davis\*  
Misty Jo Despot  
Lacie Dilginis  
Danielle Dinger  
Alexander Felice  
Leah Fornoff  
Emily Glacken  
Jadeyn Aleah Goss

### Bachelor of Science (cont.)

Jordyn Heuston  
Pamela J. Hollen  
Oseghae O. Iguade  
Noah Laird  
Marie Lieb  
Alexis Kristen Long  
James C. Malloy  
Macray Markovich  
Michael Matson  
Natasha McCall\*  
Allison Menikheim  
Stacy Nixon  
Chelcie Ream  
Jayden L. Skillings  
Tessa Snavely  
Annamae Vanfossen  
Dana Walls  
Abbigail Warfield  
Angel M. Weaver  
Jeremy A. Weis  
LeeAnn Weslager  
Heidi T. Wheeler  
Abigail Williams

*\* Indicates Degree Completion Summer 2026*

# *Welcome to the Red Flash Alumni Family!*

Today marks the end of your student careers, but it's the start of a lifetime as a member of the Red Flash Alumni Family. Like any family, know that we're proud of you and are excited to see where your Saint Francis education takes you.

## **Join the Saint Francis University Alumni Association**

The Alumni Association enhances your experience while also providing for the next generation of SFU alumni.

- Engage with your fellow alumni on campus, wherever you call home, and around the world.
- Receive special invites to SFU's Annual Homecoming Tailgate, Alumni Weekend, and more on-campus events.
- The Alumni Association sponsors regional alumni chapters that bring Loretto to you, with more chapters emerging every year.

## **Support our current students and your soon-to-be fellow alumni.**

Membership dues support the following student-centric initiatives:

- Mentorship Week, bringing alumni back to campus and into the classrooms every week before Homecoming.
- The Alumni Association Scholarship, awarded to eight students every year who are the children, stepchildren, or grandchildren of SFU alumni.
- The Freshmen Ice Cream Welcome and the Senior Alumni Welcome Picnic, ensuring all students start and end their SFU careers with alumni support.

## *Join us for one of our alumni events in 2026!*

- Annual Alumni Golf Weekend: May 29 - 31
- Occupation Therapy Conference & Reunion: June 20
- Alumni Weekend: July 23 - 26
- Harrisburg Area Alumni Chapter Golf Outing: August 29
- Pittsburgh Area Alumni Chapter Pirates Game:  
September 18
- Family Weekend: September 25 - 27
- Mentorship Week: October 12 - 16
- Homecoming Tailgate & Football Game: October 17

*For details visit: [francis.edu/Alumni](https://francis.edu/Alumni)*



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