



RUTGERS UNIVERSITY-NEW BRUNSWICK
AND RUTGERS HEALTH

259th Anniversary Commencement

SUNDAY, MAY 18



We acknowledge that the land on which we stand is the ancestral territory of the Lenape People. We pay respect to Indigenous people throughout the Lenape diaspora—past, present, and future—and honor those who have been historically and systemically disenfranchised. We also acknowledge that Rutgers University, like New Jersey and the United States as a nation, was founded upon the exclusions and erasures of Indigenous peoples.

President's Message



Dear Members of the Class of 2025,

Congratulations!

Today you are receiving a degree from one of the best public universities in the nation. All the hard work you've done to reach this milestone has paid off. This day is one for celebration, and your Rutgers degree is a tribute to your diligence, your curiosity, your intelligence, your willingness to test your limits and accept new challenges, and of course your perseverance.

You have overcome obstacles large and small on your academic path and you deserve to take enormous pride in all you have accomplished. Please know that your families, your friends, your faculty, and all those who have supported you at Rutgers are delighted to share that pride.

Your Rutgers education has prepared you to approach the future with confidence. In completing your degree, you have acquired knowledge, honed your talent and intellect, and developed critical thinking skills that will help you master the personal and professional opportunities that await you. I also hope that your Rutgers experience inspires you to take an active role in civic life, advancing our mission of service to the common good in communities local and global.

As you take your place among our distinguished alumni, remember that you are Scarlet Forever. We are excited to see all that the Class of 2025 will accomplish, armed with a Rutgers degree, adding prestige to the university with your achievements. And we hope you will always keep in touch throughout your life as our university strives to make you ever prouder to be a Rutgers alum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Holloway".

Jonathan Holloway
President and University Professor
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey



Congratulations from Our Chancellors



Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on your remarkable achievement! Each of you has earned a degree from the nation's #15 top public university. This hard-earned and extraordinary accomplishment marks a turning point in your life, prepares you for success in your future pursuits, and fosters the value of engaged citizenship. You are equipped with the knowledge, resilience, and purpose to pursue your dreams and contribute meaningfully to the world around you.

Your journey to commencement has undoubtedly been eventful, filled with both challenges and triumphs—moments of anxiety and stress, but also joy and discovery. I encourage you to reflect on those memories. The difficulties taught you that you can overcome. You clarified your purpose and commitment to becoming your best self. These lessons will serve you for years.

Remember that you did not walk this path alone. Your success was supported by a community of loved ones—family, friends, mentors—who offered encouragement, stability, and care. Be sure to share your gratitude and the joy of this day with them.

Rutgers–New Brunswick is honored to have been your home and partner throughout this transformative period of your life. As you embark on your next chapter, know that you are a lasting part of our nearly 260-year legacy. We hope you remain connected to your alma mater and the global network of Rutgers alumni as you go on to shape a better future.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Francine Conway".

Francine Conway

Chancellor and Distinguished Professor, Rutgers University–New Brunswick



Dear Rutgers Health Graduates,

As you transition into the next phase of your journey, I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each of you. Your dedication, compassion, and commitment to serving others have been evident throughout your time here at Rutgers Health.

Whether you choose to focus on individual patient care, community health initiatives, education, or research, remember the importance of equitable access and outcomes for all. Your role in advancing the health and well-being of diverse populations is invaluable.

Today, surrounded by your mentors, peers, loved ones, and supporters, I commend you for your hard work and perseverance. Your achievements are a testament to your resilience and dedication.

As you embark on this new chapter, I encourage you to stay connected with Rutgers and continue to foster the relationships you have built here. May you find fulfillment in your professional pursuits and always cherish the joy of learning.

Congratulations once again, and best wishes for a successful and rewarding journey ahead.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian L. Strom".

Brian L. Strom

Chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

Order of Exercises

ACADEMIC PROCESSION

Rutgers Wind Ensemble from the Mason Gross School of the Arts
Dr. Kraig A. Williams, Conductor

BOARD OF GOVERNORS' WELCOME

Ms. Amy L. Towers
Chair of the Board of Governors

NATIONAL ANTHEM

Members of the Rutgers University Choirs from the Mason Gross School of the Arts
Dr. Stephanie Tubiolo, Conductor

GREETING

Dr. Prabhas V. Moghe
Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

CONFERRING OF HONORARY DEGREES

Dr. Prabhas V. Moghe
Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Mr. Peter Seligmann
Cofounder and Chair, Conservation International; Cofounder, President, and
Chief Executive Officer, Nia Tero

"THE BELLS MUST RING"

by Richard Hadden
Rutgers University Glee Club
Dr. Brandon Williams, Conductor

CLASS OF 2025 ADDRESS

Mr. Jack P. Ramirez
Bachelor of Arts
Political Science, School of Arts and Sciences
President, Rutgers University Student Assembly (2023–2025)

ALUMNI WELCOME

Ms. Gloria K. Vanderham
Chair, Rutgers University Alumni Association Board of Directors
Video Presentation: *We Are You*

ALMA MATER

Members of the Rutgers University Choirs from the Mason Gross School of the Arts
Dr. Brandon Williams, Conductor

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES AND CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Dr. Prabhas V. Moghe
Executive Vice President, Academic Affairs

Dr. Francine Conway
Chancellor, Rutgers University–New Brunswick

Dr. Brian L. Strom
Chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs

RECESSIONAL

Rutgers Wind Ensemble from the Mason Gross School of the Arts
Dr. Kraig A. Williams, Conductor

Commencement Music

Rutgers Wind Ensemble from the Mason Gross School of the Arts

Kraig A. Williams, *Conductor*
Kevin Cotter, *Assistant Conductor*

Pre-ceremony

The Fairest of the Fair
Theme from Gettysburg
Salute to the Big 10
Ponyo on a Cliff by the Sea
The Liberty Bell
Florentiner March
Young Person's Guide to John Williams

John Philip Sousa
Randy Edelman, arr. Moss
Thomas Bourgault
Joe Hisaishi, arr. Goto
John Philip Sousa
Julius Fucik
John Williams

Commencement Fanfare

Joseph Marta, *Bachelor of Music '24*

Academic Procession

Midway March
Procession of the Nobles
March Processional
Crown Imperial
Pomp and Circumstance No. 1

John Williams
Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov
Clare Grundman
William Walton
Edward Elgar

Recessional

Sogno di Volare from *Civilization VI*
Into the Unknown from *Frozen 2*

Christopher Tin, arr. Conaway
Kristen and Robert Lopez, arr. Murtha



Commencement Speaker



Photo courtesy of Peter Seligmann

PETER SELIGMANN

Rutgers is proud to welcome Peter Seligmann as this year's commencement speaker. For nearly 40 years, Seligmann has been an influential and inspiring voice in conservation. His efforts have been shaped by a belief that societies will not thrive without a shared and integrated commitment to equity, environmental health, and economic vitality. He has worked closely with governments, multi-lateral and bi-lateral organizations, corporations, foundations, and civil society partners across multiple continents.

As a first-generation U.S. citizen, Seligmann graduated from Rutgers University in 1972 and from Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Science in 1974. He worked for the Nature Conservancy in California from 1976 to 1986, and from 1986 to 1987, he led their International Program. In 1987, Seligmann, along with several colleagues, founded Conservation International (CI), where he served as CEO and chair through 2017. Since its inception, CI and its partners have protected 1.5 billion acres of land and sea, benefiting millions of people in more than 100 countries. CI has emerged as a global leader in supporting healthy societies through the protection of vast ecologically vital regions on land and in the oceans. Seligmann was awarded an honorary doctor of science degree in 2003 by Rutgers for "distinguished service to science."

As chair of CI, in 2017, Seligmann, along with several colleagues, founded Nia Tero, an organization dedicated to supporting Indigenous Peoples' guardianship of their territories. In the first 7 years, Nia Tero partnered with over 300 Indigenous Peoples to support the protection of over 300,000,000 acres of their territorial waters and lands. In January 2025, Seligmann stepped down as CEO and continues to serve on Nia Tero's Board of Directors.

In January, Seligmann became the chair of Sylvania, a natural capital fund committed to establishing nature as an investable asset class. In March, Seligmann was appointed distinguished professor of practice at Arizona State University.

He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and serves on the boards of the Mulago Foundation and the New School's Zolberg Institute on Migration and Mobility.

Seligmann is a board member of Azul, a Brazilian Airline, and First Eagle Investment Holdings. He is on the advisory boards of BDT/MSD Partners and GITI, a Singaporean corporation. Seligmann and his wife, Lee Rhodes (the founder of Glassybaby), split their time between Montana and Seattle, and have between them 6 children and a growing number of grandchildren.

Honorary Degree Recipient



Photo courtesy of Laurie L. Patton

LAURIE L. PATTON

Doctor of Letters

Rutgers is proud to bestow upon Laurie L. Patton an honorary doctor of letters degree. Patton is president of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, a position she started in January 2025. She is a scholar, poet, translator, and leader who has spent a life in letters, and in service to higher education.

Prior to the Academy, Patton served as president of Middlebury College—the first woman to lead the institution in its 224-year history. Her leadership at Middlebury brought a signature initiative on conflict transformation, where skills in addressing conflict are understood as a necessary part of a 21st-century education. As a result of her environmental leadership, Middlebury is now well on its way toward its goal of being the first campus of its kind to be 100 percent powered by renewable energy in 2028, after becoming carbon neutral in 2016. Patton also introduced new arts, sciences, and residential learning programs and raised \$500 million in a record-breaking comprehensive campaign.

Previously, Patton served as dean of Duke University's Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and the Durden Professor of Religion. At Duke, she oversaw 36 academic departments and programs in arts and sciences for the school, which awards 80 percent of Duke's bachelor's degrees. Patton also oversaw Trinity's \$435 million commitment to the "Duke Forward" campaign.

From 1996 to 2011, Patton served on the faculty and administration at Emory University, where she was the Charles Howard Candler Professor of Religions and inaugural director of Emory's Center for Faculty Development and Excellence in the Office of the Provost. At Emory, Patton was chair of the Religion Department from 2000 to 2007. Patton began her career at Bard College, where she was assistant professor of Asian religions from 1991 to 1996.

Patton is an authority on South Asian history, culture, and religion, and on religion and the public sphere. She is the author or editor of 11 books and more than 70 articles in the field and has translated the classical Sanskrit text *The Bhagavad Gita* for Penguin Classics. She has also published three books of poetry, focusing on themes of Indian mythology, Biblical narrative, and the architectural imagination. Patton has lectured widely on interfaith issues and religion and public life and has consulted with White House offices on faith-based initiatives and civic engagement. She has held Fulbright Fellowships in Israel and India and visiting appointments at the University of Tel Aviv, Hebrew University, and Deccan College (India).

Patton earned her B.A. from Harvard University in 1983 and her Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in 1991. From 2008 to 2011, she served as president of the American Society for the Study of Religion. In 2019, Patton became president of the American Academy of Religion, a national scholarly society of over 8,000 members. She was elected to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 2018 in two categories, philosophy/religion and educational leadership.

Since becoming president, Patton has been focusing the Academy's initiatives on building and maintaining democracy through the cultivation of thought leadership.

Honorary Degree Recipient



Photo courtesy of Rajiv Vinnakota

RAJIV VINNAKOTA

Doctor of Laws

Rutgers is proud to bestow upon Rajiv Vinnakota an honorary doctor of laws degree. A pioneering social entrepreneur, Rajiv Vinnakota serves as president of the Institute for Citizens & Scholars, leading its mission to cultivate the talent, ideas, and networks that develop lifelong, effective citizens. To that end, he works tirelessly to build relationships with the partners and sponsors without whom Citizens & Scholars could not succeed, while at the same time fostering a strong organizational culture focused on American civic values.

Vinnakota has dedicated his life to initiatives that help American citizens from all walks of life to become productive and engaged members of society. Early in his career, Vinnakota co-founded the SEED Foundation, the nation's first network of public, college-preparatory boarding schools for underserved children. The SEED schools were featured in both television and film, and Vinnakota won multiple awards for his work with SEED, including Harvard University's Innovation in American Government Award, Fast Company/Monitor Group's Social Capitalist Award, and Oprah Winfrey's Use Your Life Award. Vinnakota continues to serve on the Board of Directors for SEED.

Before joining the Institute for Citizens & Scholars, Vinnakota served as executive vice president of the Aspen Institute. In this role, he launched and led the new Youth & Engagement Programs division devoted to youth leadership development, civic engagement, and opportunity.

Vinnakota currently co-chairs the Civics and Civic Engagement Taskforce for the United States Congress Semiquincentennial Commission celebrating the 250th anniversary of the country's founding. Vinnakota also co-chairs the Civic Learning Pillar of the Partnership for American Democracy, a coalition of American leaders directing resources and attention toward efforts to save U.S. democracy, and serves on the advisory committee for Citizen Data.

Vinnakota has been at the forefront of innovative scholarship and research that has played a pivotal role in shaping the civic field. His publication credits include "From Civic Education to a Civic Learning Ecosystem," "Mapping Civic Measurement," and "The Civic Outlook of Young Adults in America." He appears regularly on media outlets such as Associated Press, NPR, The Hill, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Philanthropy News Digest*, and *Nonprofit Quarterly*. As an expert on civic learning and Gen Z, he has spoken at Fordham Institute, Results for America, Civic Learning Week, and the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and as commencement speaker for the University of Chicago Charter School and the University of Pittsburgh.

Vinnakota grew up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the child of Indian immigrants who instilled in him the faith that a good education could open doors to great things. He graduated from Princeton University and is a recipient of Princeton's Woodrow Wilson Award, the university's highest honor for undergraduate alumni.

Student Speaker



JACK P. RAMIREZ

Bachelor of Arts

Political Science

School of Arts and Sciences

President, Rutgers University Student Assembly (2023–2025)

Rutgers is delighted to have Jack Ramirez represent the Class of 2025.

Jack Ramirez was born in Ridgewood, New Jersey, but now calls Reading, Pennsylvania, home. He is graduating magna cum laude with a major in political science and a minor in critical intelligence studies. Ramirez is an active member in the Rutgers–New Brunswick community, with leadership roles in both the Rutgers University Student Assembly (RUSA) and Sigma Chi fraternity. Recognized for his dedication to Rutgers, Ramirez is the recipient of the Office of Fraternity and Sorority Affairs Distinguished Leadership Award and the Dr. Jewel Plummer Cobb Women’s Empowerment Award.

Ramirez came to Rutgers ambitious and ready to make change. Joining student government his first year on the banks, he dove headfirst into his new role. One of his first actions was becoming chair of the Sexual Violence Education Committee, overseeing the expansion of access to free menstrual hygiene products and working with the Rutgers University Police Department on public safety initiatives. His time in leadership inspired Ramirez to run for student body president in his sophomore year; a race he won. In his first year as president, Ramirez championed additional public safety and public health initiatives. Ramirez went on to be re-elected by his peers, becoming the longest serving student body president in recent history.

As a member of Sigma Chi, Ramirez quickly became a reliable leader. He was appointed to the Sigma Chi Leadership Institute Board of Directors and advocated for expanded leadership training across the country. Back on the banks, Ramirez was elected historian, helping his brothers feel connected to each other and to the history of the chapter. Ramirez says he has cherished each moment with his fraternity and will continue to remain a close friend beyond graduation.

Ramirez also has served on numerous advisory boards at Rutgers, including Senior Vice Chancellor Sal Mena’s Student Advisory Committee where, together, the group shared ideas about how to advance the campus community, and President Jonathan Holloway’s Presidential Student Advisory Committee where he collaborated with campus leaders from Rutgers–Camden and Rutgers–Newark to advocate for the collective Rutgers community.

Beyond academia, Ramirez had the opportunity to intern for the U.S. House of Representatives, Johnson & Johnson, and the New Jersey Business & Industry Association. Ramirez plans to use his experience to continue having a positive impact on the community.

Ramirez shared that throughout his time in leadership, he has been “surrounded by an incredible team.” Citing the unwavering support of Kaia Dyckman, Samuel Meizys, Julia Hernandez, and many others, he says he is able to graduate knowing he fulfilled his college dreams of serving his community. He says he is also deeply grateful for the guidance of his mentors, whose lessons have shaped his journey and extends a special thanks to the RUSA advising team for their dedication and support. Above all, he thanks his community—whom he considers more than just peers, but friends—for making his time at Rutgers truly unforgettable.



Presentation of Candidates and Conferring of Degrees

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs Prabhas V. Moghe

RUTGERS HEALTH

Chancellor, Rutgers Biomedical and Health Sciences
and Executive Vice President for Health Affairs
Brian L. Strom

Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy

Dean Joseph A. Barone
Doctor of Pharmacy

New Jersey Medical School

Dean Robert L. Johnson
Doctor of Medicine

Rutgers School of Dental Medicine

Dean Cecile A. Feldman
Master of Dental Science
Master of Science
Master of Science in Dentistry
Doctor of Dental Medicine

School of Nursing

Dean Angela Starkweather
Bachelor of Science
Master of Science in Nursing
Post-Master's Certificate
Doctor of Nursing Practice
Doctor of Philosophy

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Dean Amy P. Murtha
Doctor of Medicine

School of Health Professions

Dean Jeffrey DiGiovanni
Associate of Science
Bachelor of Science
Master of Science
Doctor of Clinical Laboratory Science
Doctor of Clinical Nutrition
Doctor of Health Informatics
Doctor of Occupational Therapy
Doctor of Physical Therapy
Doctor of Philosophy

School of Public Health

Dean Perry N. Halkitis
Post-Baccalaureate Certificate
Master of Public Health
Master of Science
Doctor of Philosophy
Doctor of Public Health

School of Graduate Studies*

Dean Mark Gregory Robson
Master of Arts
Master of Arts for Teachers
Master of Bioenvironmental Engineering
Master of Biomedical Sciences
Master of Business and Science
Master of Engineering
Master of Landscape Architecture
Master of Philosophy
Master of Science
Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences
Master of Science for Teachers
Doctor of Philosophy
Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Engineering

**The School of Graduate Studies—formed in July 2017 from the merger of the Graduate School–New Brunswick and the Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences—is a unit of both Rutgers University–New Brunswick and Rutgers Health.*

RUTGERS UNIVERSITY– NEW BRUNSWICK

Chancellor Francine Conway

School of Engineering

Dean Alberto Cuitiño
Bachelor of Science

School of Environmental and Biological Sciences

Executive Dean Laura J. Lawson
Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Science

Graduate School of Education

Dean Christopher M. Span
Master of Education
Specialist in Education
Doctor of Education

Rutgers Business School–Newark and New Brunswick

Dean Lei Lei
Bachelor of Science
Master of Accountancy
Master of Accountancy in Accounting and Analytics
Master of Business Administration
Master of Financial Analysis
Master of Information Technology and Analytics
Master of Quantitative Finance
Master of Science
Doctor of Business Administration

School of Social Work

Dean George S. Leibowitz
Master of Social Work
Doctor of Social Work

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology

Interim Dean Daniel Hart
Master of Applied Behavior Analysis
Master of Applied Psychology
Master of Psychology
Doctor of Psychology

Mason Gross School of the Arts

Dean Jason Geary
Bachelor of Fine Arts
Bachelor of Music
Master of Fine Arts
Master of Music
Artist Diploma
Doctor of Musical Arts

School of Communication and Information

Interim Dean Dafna Lemish
Bachelor of Arts
Master of Communication and Media
Master of Health Communication and Information
Master of Information

Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

Dean Stuart Shapiro
Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Science
Master of City and Regional Planning
Master of City and Regional Studies
Master of Health Administration
Master of Public Affairs and Politics
Master of Public Policy
Master of Public Informatics

School of Management and Labor Relations

Dean Mark Anner
Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Science
Master of Human Resource Management
Master of Labor and Employment Relations

School of Arts and Sciences

Executive Dean Juli Wade
Bachelor of Arts
Bachelor of Science

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Alma Mater

ON THE BANKS OF THE OLD RARITAN

From far and near we came to Rutgers,
And resolved to learn all that we can;
And so we settled down, in that noisy college town,
On the banks of the old Raritan.

Chorus:

On the banks of the old Raritan, my friends,
Where old Rutgers evermore shall stand;
For has she not stood since the time of the flood,
On the banks of the old Raritan.

Then sing aloud to *alma mater*,
And keep the Scarlet in the van;
For with her motto high, Rutgers' name shall never die
On the banks of the old Raritan.

Chorus:

On the banks of the old Raritan, my friends,
Where old Rutgers evermore shall stand;
For has she not stood since the time of the flood,
On the banks of the old Raritan.





Office of the Secretary of the University
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