

**President Dennis Assanis**  
**Commencement for the Class of 2024**  
**Saturday, May 25, 2024, Delaware Stadium**

Thank you, Provost Carlson.

Good morning, Blue Hens ... and welcome, everyone! Congratulations to our amazing Class of 2024, that's all of you, the best class to ever graduate from the University of Delaware! Applause!

You finally made it to commencement -- for many of you, this may be your first in-person graduation ceremony! Well done.

And you picked a beautiful and memorable day to graduate.

This is my favorite event of the year at the University of Delaware. And I am thrilled that all of us -- our graduating students, our dedicated faculty and staff, and our honored guests -- could be here together for this special day.

To the families and friends of our graduates, all of us want to say thank you, because your support and encouragement of our students have been absolutely essential to their success. Let's give your families and friends a round of applause!

Class of 2024, today we are all here to celebrate your accomplishments as you are ready to join more than 205,000 Blue Hen alumni.

You walk among many who have made this journey before you -- and who have gone on to do truly incredible things. That includes today's keynote speaker, Joe Flacco!

Perhaps you have not YET been named Super Bowl MVP like Joe. But you have all certainly accomplished so much during your time at the University of Delaware.

Here with us on stage are the recipients of the Warner and Taylor Awards for outstanding seniors, Allie Rebeck and Emilie Delaye.

The Class of 2024 also includes Katherine Snyder, who earned this year's highest grade-point index, which is a combination of her perfect 4.0 GPA and the courses she took.

Also among you are four Goldwater Scholars, one Truman Scholar, two Fulbright Scholars, three Gilman Scholars and seven National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows.

Let's give all of them a round of applause.

Now I want to recognize the hard work of all of you, throughout your time at UD.

As I call on your group, please stand as you are able, and remain standing. And please hold your applause until the end.

If you earned a scholarship or award because of your academic achievements ... please stand.

If you studied in another country, or if you worked with a professor on a research project ... please stand.

If you had your picture taken by the book sculpture at Mentor's Circle, under the kissing arches, or in the fountain on the South Green ... please stand.

If you have ever taken a selfie with me, my wife Eleni, or both of us, anytime during the past four years, please stand.

If you transformed a great idea into a business or a nonprofit, or if you helped your community through a service organization, or UDance ... please stand.

If you were a proud Blue Hen student-athlete ... please stand.

In case there's anyone left sitting, I've got one more: If you ever pulled an all-nighter to finish a project or prepare for a big test ... please stand!

Let's give all of our excellent graduates a big round of applause!

Clearly, you've all worked hard, so please sit down now.

Graduates, your education here at UD is far more than the papers you wrote, the research experiments you conducted, the lectures you attended, or even the courses you completed. It's the connections you have made with your peers, your professors, the greater UD community and, of course, the connections you have made with YOURSELVES ... connections that translate into new insights, discoveries, ambitions, values and dreams.

And it is connections like those that often times result in technological innovations that continue to literally change our world in unimaginable ways. Artificial intelligence is driving the latest disruption. I know that many of you are already using Chat GPT to draft a note, complete a project, get that next job, or advance any number of personal or professional goals.

But always remember that no technology or tool can replace the lessons that you have learned from the connections you made with others during your time on the UD campus. Cherish the friendships and nurture the relationships that sustain you...and never underestimate the power of empathy, compassion, and human understanding.

The personal and unique moments that inspire, excite or motivate us, the moments that make us cry, laugh, love and care ... and our shared feelings and thoughts, as members of this special campus community, truly define the human experience. I hope you will always remember that human connection is precious and irreplaceable.

Class of 2024, you are on the verge of entering an incredibly exciting world that is powered by creativity and innovation, and enabled by technology, in new ways every day. But also, a world where humanity is facing grand challenges that are calling for grand solutions.

Our world needs YOU, and the HUMAN aspect of who you are – to care about the planet ... to care about justice and equity ... to debate respectfully and collaborate creatively, to make things better for all.

UD Class of 2024, I'm so incredibly proud of you. Your college experience here in Delaware will always represent a pivotal point in your life journey. You are ready and empowered to build on your experiences, your connections and insights to shape a future that you will lead. No matter what challenges lie ahead, remember who you are, where you

came from, and invest in the dreams that will carry you forward with a big heart ... and an open mind. Wherever you go and whatever you pursue, I know you will do great things to make our world a better place....

In closing, to each and every one of you: Congratulations on all your accomplishments!

And now, on the count of three, I want to hear "Go Blue Hens!" One ... two ... three ... GO BLUE HENS!

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