

University of Delaware President Dennis Assanis

Commencement, Delaware Stadium, May 24, 2025

Thank you, Provost Carlson.

Good morning, Blue Hens! Congratulations to the amazing Class of 2025, the best class ever to graduate from the University of Delaware! You made it! Well done, we're so proud of you!

Welcome to the parents, family members, significant others and friends of these outstanding graduates of the University of Delaware. Thank you for being here to share in this proud moment and important milestone.

Your support and encouragement of our students have been absolutely essential to their success.

Students, let's give your families and friends a round of applause!

Class of 2025, today, we celebrate your accomplishments, as you are ready to join nearly 213,000 Blue Hen alumni around the world, including today's speaker, Matt O'Donnell! They have achieved amazing things at UD and beyond, just like you.

For instance, Cornelia Meiss has earned this year's highest grade point index, which is a combination of her perfect 4.0 GPA and the courses she took.

Among you are a Fulbright English Teaching Award recipient, two National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows, and a Goldwater Scholarship recipient.

And, on stage with us today, we have the recipients of the Warner and Taylor Awards for outstanding seniors: Isabella Haigney, who is also your student body president, and Grace Mahony.

Let's please give your classmates a round of applause for these impressive accolades.

Now I want to recognize the hard work and accomplishments of all of our graduates, throughout your time at UD.

As I call on your group, give me your loudest, most spirited "Go Blue Hens!"

Ready?

If you earned a scholarship or award because of your academic achievements ... Go Blue Hens!

If you studied in another country, or if you worked with a professor on a research project, or you were a proud Blue Hen student-athlete ... Go Blue Hens!

If you transformed a great idea into a business or a nonprofit, or if you helped your community through a service organization or UDance ... Go Blue Hens!

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 ... Go Blue Hens!

I've got one more: If you ever pulled an all-nighter to finish a project or prepare for a big test ... Go Blue Hens!

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

It has certainly been a memorable time, hasn't it? When we reach a milestone like this, it's natural to reflect on the meaning of our experiences ... to reflect on how all the pieces fit together in the narrative arc of our lives.

In many ways, today marks the end of one chapter in your story.

And, of course, it is also the beginning of a new chapter.

I encourage you to see today as a continuation of your journey, one in which you constantly build on your experiences to gain a clearer understanding of the world and of yourself.

This is a lifelong process for every one of us. But it's not one that we can complete on our own. We need each other. We need to rely on the relationships we have made with our families, our peers, our teachers and our mentors.

These are the priceless connections that spark new ideas ... that drive us to explore new horizons ... that encourage us to look deep within ourselves to find new strengths and new insights about our lives.

Class of 2025, you are on the verge of some very exciting times in your lives and careers. One major factor influencing your future will be the technology that is continuously evolving at an exponential rate.

Artificial intelligence, for example, is becoming more ubiquitous every day, changing the ways we learn, work, shop and conduct our lives. It can summarize a mountain of data and conjure up words and images, all in the blink of an eye, but can we trust what we read and what we see?

The renowned scholar Edward O. Wilson once said “We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom. The world henceforth will be run by synthesizers, people able to put together the right information at the right time, think critically about it, and make important choices wisely.”

So, here is a piece of advice for you: Harness the power of technology, understand its potential and shortfalls, and team up with it, while always keeping your humanity at the center of everything you do.

And you — the Class of 2025 — can bring tremendous value to our world. That’s because you can rely on all your experiences to understand and interpret complex situations. Your strengths are the ones that technology can never replicate.

- Your creativity, curiosity and strength of conviction
- Your integrity, intuition and sense of humor
- Your willingness to change your mind and find a new path
- Your compassion, empathy and eagerness to help others

All of these traits are the distinctive qualities of being human, and they are irreplaceable.

Graduates, you are the next generation of leaders, problem solvers, creators, thinkers, educators, change makers and entrepreneurs.

Be inspired to be the lifelong learners, critical thinkers and trailblazers the world needs.

Remember that success is about connections – the relationships we forge, the bridges we build, and the humanity we respect and value in ourselves and others.

Take all of the experiences you have had here at UD — all the knowledge you have gained ... all the exploring and growing you have done ... all the relationships you’ve made ... and most importantly, all of the things that make you uniquely you — and apply them to ensure that our technological future is a human-centered one.

We are so excited to see what you will do next.

I want to conclude on a personal note. This Commencement ceremony is especially meaningful for me, as it marks my final year as President of the University of Delaware. It has truly been my distinct honor and privilege to serve in this role over the past nine years. I know I also speak for my wife, Eleni, when I say that every member of the UD community has filled our hearts with gratitude and pride, and for this we will be eternally grateful.

Over the years, we have been so impressed and so inspired by the drive, the dedication and the amazing talents of UD’s students. Thank you for the transformative

and memorable time we have spent together. And thank you to the kind-hearted Blue Hens who have rescued our puppies, Apollo and Coco, when they wandered around to explore the marvels of Newark.

During my time at UD, I've also taken thousands of selfies with you and many other students. I will treasure all of them. And now I need one with the entire Class of 2025. So, big smiles for my most memorable selfie of all ...

Thank you, and congratulations on all your accomplishments!

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

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