



# COMMENCEMENT

DEC. 20 | FALL 2024



# UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

10:30 A.M., FRIDAY, DEC. 20

## ACADEMIC PROCESSIONAL

### POSTING OF COLORS

**Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets  
Color Guard**

### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Mary Stanford Austin**

B.A. Vocal Performance, B.A. Spanish,  
Class of 2026

### GREETINGS AND INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT SPEAKERS

**Timothy D. Sands**

University President

### OPENING REFLECTIONS

**TJ Brooks**

B.S. candidate in Political Science,  
Class of 2025

### INTRODUCTION OF MARGIE LEE

**Timothy D. Sands**

## GRADUATION ADDRESS

**Margie Lee**

Associate Dean, Research and  
Graduate Studies, Interim Director,  
Animal Cancer Care and Research  
Center, Department Head, Biomedical  
Sciences and Pathobiology, Professor

## PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES

**Cyril R. Clarke**

Executive Vice President and Provost

**College Deans**

## CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

**Timothy D. Sands**

## CONCLUDING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION OF NATHAN LAVINKA

**Timothy D. Sands**

## GREETINGS FROM THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

**Nathan Lavinka '11**

Virginia Tech Alumni Association  
Board of Directors, Immediate Past  
President

## RECESSIONAL



# GRADUATE COMMENCEMENT

2:30 P.M., FRIDAY, DEC. 20

## ACADEMIC PROCESSIONAL

### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

**Mary Stanford Austin**

B.A. Vocal Performance, B.A. Spanish,  
Class of 2026

**Juselyn (Jus) Tupik**

Ph.D. candidate in Biomedical and  
Veterinary Sciences

### GREETINGS

**Timothy D. Sands**

University President

### REFLECTIONS

**Aimée Surprenant**

### PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES AND CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

**Aimée Surprenant  
and Timothy D. Sands**

### SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS

**Cyril R. Clarke**

Executive Vice President and Provost

### MESSAGE FROM THE FACULTY

**Rachel Miles**

### GRADUATE ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

**Aimée Surprenant**

Graduate School Dean

### REMARKS FROM ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

**Nathan Lavinka '11**

Virginia Tech Alumni Association  
Board of Directors, Immediate Past  
President

### SPEAKER INTRODUCTIONS

**Aimée Surprenant**

### GRADUATE STUDENT REMARKS

**Elle Smith**

Master's in Public Administration and  
Public Affairs

### CLOSING REMARKS

**Aimée Surprenant**

### RECESSIONAL



# UNIVERSITY COMMENCEMENT

## SPEAKER

### COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

**MARGIE LEE, ASSOCIATE DEAN FOR RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES AT THE VIRGINIA-MARYLAND COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Margie Lee '82, DVM '86, transformed poultry health research and broke barriers in veterinary medicine. As associate dean for research and graduate studies at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Lee brings a unique perspective shaped by four decades of scientific innovation and a passion for pushing boundaries - both in the laboratory and on the racetrack.

Lee has been a trailblazer in education for the past four decades. Her pioneering research into the digestive microbiome of chickens resulted in two patents on diagnostic methods for pathogenic bacteria and enabled the poultry industry to implement antibiotic-free growth programs.


Her work revolutionized the industry by enabling antibiotic-free growth programs, earning her the 2023 Phibro Animal Health Excellence in Poultry Research Award for sustained excellence over two decades.

Lee is also the author or co-author of 92 peer-reviewed publications in scientific journals focusing on various aspects of microbial pathogenesis, molecular ecology and epidemiology, and diagnostic microbiology.

A Bedford County native, Lee was among the third graduating class and one of the first Black graduates of the veterinary college in 1986. Her journey began with two ponies and a dream during Virginia's school integration era, leading to a distinguished career that includes two patents for diagnostic methods in bacterial detection.

Before returning to her alma mater in 2018, Lee spent nearly three decades at the University of Georgia, where she earned her master's and doctoral degrees in medical microbiology while advancing to leadership positions.

When not leading research initiatives or serving on national scientific advisory boards, Lee can be found carving through turns at Talladega or Virginia International Raceway on her motorcycle.





# THE ACADEMIC PROCESSION

*The following information, digested from “An Academic Costume Code and Ceremony Guide” prepared by the American Council on Education, may prove helpful in identifying the costumes you will see in the Commencement Procession.*

When American colleges and universities desired to adopt some suitable system of academic apparel many years ago, a conference held at Columbia University in 1895 made up of representatives from various institutions drew up a “By-Law Regulation, or Statute” for the establishment of a suitable code of academic dress for colleges and universities in the United States. This code, with modifications made in 1959, is still in force; the costumes and colors, trimmings, and patterns you will see are all traditional and interpret both degree and the field of learning. The bachelor’s gown, designed to be worn closed, has pointed sleeves; the master’s gown, which may be worn open or closed, has an oblong sleeve open at the wrist which hangs down in traditional manner. The rear part of its oblong shape is square cut and the front part has the arc cut away. The doctor’s gown has bell-shaped sleeves. It may be worn open or closed. Bachelor’s and master’s gowns are untrimmed. Doctor’s gowns are faced with black velvet with three bars across the sleeves; or the color of velvet may be that which is distinctive of the degree, agreeing with that of the edging of the hood. The colors you will see in the hoods and gowns of our faculty represent the various fields in which the degrees were taken. A few are:

## **ACCOUNTANCY, COMMERCE,**

**BUSINESS:** Drab (Yellow-Brown)

**AGRICULTURE:** Maize (Pale Yellow)

**ARCHITECTURE:** Blue-Violet (Purple)

**ARTS, LETTERS, HUMANITIES:** White

**ECONOMICS:** Copper

**EDUCATION:** Light Blue

**ENGINEERING:** Orange Natural

**RESOURCES:** Russet (Rust)

**PHILOSOPHY:** Dark Blue

**VETERINARY MEDICINE:** Gray

**SCIENCE:** Bright Gold (Golden Yellow)

The hoods, differing in length for the three degrees (bachelor’s, master’s, and doctor’s), are lined with the official colors of the university or college conferring the degree, usually with one color forming a chevron pattern over the other (for example, orange and maroon for Virginia Tech). Hoods are edged and bound with velvet of the color appropriate for the degree. You will see in our procession many edged with dark blue for doctor of philosophy. Mortarboards are the approved headgear. Tassels are worn on the right side prior to receiving a degree and on the left side after the degree has been conferred. The tassel may be of gold if the holder has a doctor’s degree.

Among the bachelor’s candidates, honor students are distinguished by special sashes in white.



## CLASS OF 2024 LOGO AND MOTTO

### 2024 MOTTO

*Incepto Ne Desistam (May I Not Shrink From My Purpose)*



## CLASS OF 2024 OFFICERS

President: **Colin Roberts**

Vice President: **Divya Singh**

Secretary: **Mikayla Dolo-Pittman**

Treasurer: **Stratis Bohle**

Historian: **Elle Smith**

Cadet Member-At-Large: **Chris Hall**

Female Member-At-Large: **Madison Fleming**

Male Member-At-Large: **Jason Brown**

## CLASS OF 2024 CLASS RING



## BOARD OF VISITORS

**Edward H. Baine**, Rector

**David L. Calhoun**, Vice Rector

**Sandy Cupp Davis**

**Nancy Dye**

**William Holtzman**

**Donald Horsley**

**Anna James**

**Starlette Johnson**

**Letitia Long**

**Ryan McCarthy**

**Jim Miller**

**J. Pearson**

**John Rocovich**

**Jeanne Stosser**

**Rachel Miles**, Faculty Representative

**Janice Austin**, A/P Faculty Representative

**LaTawnya Burleson**, Staff Representative

**Leslie Orellana**, Undergraduate Student Representative

**William Poland**, Graduate Student Representative

