



D.C. AREA COMMENCEMENT

SPRING 2025 | MAY 18 | 1:00 P.M.

GMU Center for the Arts
4373 Mason Pond Dr, Fairfax, VA 22030



PRELUDE

Quintessential Brass Repertoire

ACADEMIC PROCESSIONAL

POSTING OF COLORS

Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets

NATIONAL ANTHEM

DC Washington, Quintessential Brass

WELCOME

Barbara Hoopes

Graduate School Associate Dean

REMARKS FROM THE PRESIDENT

Timothy D. Sands

University President

REMARKS FROM THE PROVOST

Cyril Clarke

Provost

REMARKS FROM THE GRADUATE SCHOOL DEAN AND INTRODUCTION OF GRADUATE STUDENT SPEAKERS

Aimée Surprenant

Graduate School Dean

GRADUATE STUDENT SPEAKERS

Priyansh Pradhan

*Master's Candidate in Business Administration,
Global Business Analytics Concentration*

Rukayat Adeniran

*Master's Candidate in Business Administration,
Hospitality & Tourism Management Concentration*

INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Timothy D. Sands

University President

GRADUATION ADDRESS

Jon Rucker

President and CEO, Ultra I&C

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES AND CONFERRAL OF DEGREES

Aimée Surprenant
and Timothy D. Sands

Reading of names: Alexis Snyder

CLOSING REMARKS

Aimée Surprenant

RECESSIONAL

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Jon Rucker currently serves as president and CEO of Ultra I&C, where he leads a global team delivering advanced communication, cybersecurity, and command and control solutions to mission partners worldwide. As an industry veteran, Rucker has a distinguished track record with decades of technology and leadership experience in the United States and abroad.



Before his tenure at Ultra I&C, Rucker held the role of senior vice president with SAIC, overseeing their Army portfolio valued at \$1.4 billion. He also served as the senior vice president of the \$700 million Command, Control, Communications, and Intelligence group at CACI, and 20 years in an array of technical, program management, and executive leadership roles at Lockheed Martin.

In 2025, Rucker won his second consecutive Wash100 award, demonstrating his notable executive leadership within the government contracting landscape in the Washington, D.C., region.

Rucker earned an undergraduate degree in aerospace engineering from Virginia Tech, followed by a master's degree in electrical engineering from Johns Hopkins University, and an MBA from Penn State University. He is an alumnus of the Leadership Montgomery Core Program and has actively contributed to several non-profit boards in various leadership capacities. Rucker has devoted his time as a volunteer leader for youth programs at both the elementary and high school levels and currently serves as the committee chair for his sons' Boy Scouts troop.

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.

