

# College of Coastal Georgia 2025 Fall Commencement

#### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Congratulations, Class of 2025! Today marks a momentous milestone in your life—one that reflects years of dedication, resilience, and growth. The future is yours to shape, and we are grateful that you chose the College of Coastal Georgia to prepare you and set you on course toward success.

Your start here marked the beginning of a transformative experience. You arrived with dreams and determination, and you are leaving with knowledge, experience, and a degree that represents your hard work and perseverance. Along the way, you've faced challenges, embraced opportunities, and made lasting contributions to our campus—like Bethany Watters, who is earning a bachelor's degree in psychology. Bethany served as president



of the Student Government Association and rallied students to get involved on campus and let their voices be heard. Like many of you, she spent her time helping others find their place in the campus community.

The fall Class of 2025 represents 35 different Georgia counties, seven states, and two countries. Thirty of you are the first in your family to attend college, setting a new precedent for success that others in your family can follow. Nearly half of the graduating class are non-traditional students, with our oldest graduate being 59 years old and our youngest just 20. This demonstrates how the shared goal of earning a degree can bring together people from all walks of life. In addition to internships, research projects, and clinicals, you have collectively contributed over 3,600 service-learning hours across 241 service-learning experiences. You've given back to our local community while reinforcing your own education in the process. Because of these efforts, you've grown not only as scholars but as leaders, advocates, and changemakers.

As you step into the next chapter—whether it is graduate school, a new career, or a well-deserved break—know that you carry the values and spirit of what it means to be a Mariner. You are now part of a proud legacy of alumni who continue to make a difference in the world. Please stay connected with us. Your journey at the College of Coastal Georgia doesn't end here—it evolves. We look forward to hearing about your accomplishments and welcoming you back as alumni, mentors, and lifelong members of the Mariner community.

From all of us at the College, congratulations! Go Mariners!

Dr. Johnny L. Evans Jr, President



# Sixty-Seventh Commencement of the College of Coastal Georgia Order of Ceremony

## **Processional Grand Marshals**

Dr. Don H. Mathews Professor of Economics

## **National Anthem**

Aubry Dorsey Remley Farr Josh Hinson Dr. Colleen Knight

## **Invocation**

Paige Spence, Class of 2025

#### Welcome

Dr. Johnny L. Evans, Jr. President

# **Greetings from SGA President**

Logan Zimmerman

# Charge to the Class

Alejandra Padilla, Class of 2025

# Presentation of Candidates School of Arts and Sciences School of Business and Public Management School of Nursing and Health Sciences

Dr. German Vargas Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

# **Conferring of Degrees**

President Evans

## **Announcement of Graduates**

Dr. Michael Butcher Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students

# Recognition of Alumni Status

Daren Pietsch Chair, College of Coastal Georgia Foundation

**Closing Remarks and Recessional** 



#### THE HISTORY OF ACADEMIC REGALIA AND THE CEREMONIAL MACE

The gown, the cap, and the hood, representing the major components of the academic dress, are a ceremonial inheritance from the medieval universities of the eleventh and twelfth centuries where dress was the outward sign of privilege and responsibility. The academic dress worn by those participating in today's academic processional symbolizes the level of their academic attainment and the institution they attended.

The gown is usually black, however some universities have authorized colored gowns. The gown for an undergraduate degree has pointed sleeves and is worn closed in front. The gown for the master's degree is typically black and has longer oblong sleeves, with a large section that hangs below the wrist. The gown for the doctoral degree is distinguished by the loose sleeves with bell-shaped cuffs, three bars of velvet on each sleeve and velvet facing running down the front of the gown.

The most symbolic feature of the academic dress is the hood. The velvet edge of the hood represents the specific degree or discipline with dark blue for Doctorate of Philosophy, light blue for Education, apricot for Nursing, brown for Fine Arts, canary for Library Science, crimson for Communications, drab for Accounting or Business Administration, gold for Science, sage for Health and white for Arts. The satin field and chevrons of the hood represent the colors of the university that granted the degree. Master's and doctor's degree holders wear the hood draped over the shoulders and back.

The standard cap, known as the mortarboard, is flat and square with a tassel fastened to the center of the stiff top. Bachelor's and master's tassels are black or the color of the gown. Doctor's tassels are shorter and gold. Once the degree is conferred, the tassel is worn on the left. In recent years, some American universities have adopted soft velvet caps for holders of their doctor's degrees.

The ceremonial mace, a symbol of presidential authority, is carried at the head of the academic procession by the Grand Marshal, Dr. Don H. Mathews. The College of Coastal Georgia mace is a gift from the Golden Isles community and Dr. Carl Dohn. Dr. Dohn handcrafted the mace out of reclaimed heart pine cut from huge beams collected and donated by the former Sea Island Company Chairman and CEO Bill Jones, III. This same heart pine was used by Dr. Dohn to craft the table used by the ten delegates of the G-8 Summit, held on Sea Island, Georgia in June of 2004. The mace was first used at the inauguration of the former College of Coastal Georgia President, Dr. Valerie A. Hepburn, in 2009.

#### **LEGEND**

Summa Cum Laude - 3.9 - 4.0 Grade Point Average Magna Cum Laude - 3.70 - 3.89 Grade Point Average Cum Laude - 3.50 to 3.69 Grade Point Average Honors - Associate Degree - 3.75 to 4.0 Grade Point Average

#### REGALIA LEGEND

Academic Honors - Gold Cord Athletics - Royal Blue Cord Residents Assistant - White Stole Veterans - Navy Stole

# **GRADUATES**

## **School of Arts and Sciences**

Dr. Syvillia Averett, Dean

# **Bachelor of Arts - American Studies**

Jordan Alexander Lawrence Dalton Kevin Stanford

# **Bachelor of Science - Biological Sciences**

Kaylee Lynn Alexander Zoe Lee Johnston-Hadaway, Kaya Pearce Brock Summa Cum Laude Noah Alan English, Cum Laude Gabrielle Jo Judy

Campbell Fretz

Makinsy Ashley Frost
Diamond Ma'Skya Gaffney, Cum Laude
Lola Kate Harrelson, Summa Cum Laude

Taylor Elizabeth Kennedy
Michele Renee Mixon
Caitlin S. Power
Nathan Vickers

Tracey Danyaelizabeth Henninger

#### **Bachelor of Science - Data Science**

Alexios Joseph Georvasilis, Magna Cum Laude

## **Bachelor of Science - Environmental Sciences**

Michael E. Helton, III, Magna Cum Laude Emilie Marie Trimble, Magna Cum Laude

Paige Spence, Magna Cum Laude Emily Weber

## **Bachelor of Science - Interdisciplinary Studies**

Kikio Marie Awuku, *Cum Laude*Elizabeth Brook Blue

Katie Grace Hall, *Cum Laude*Kelvin Ladon Harris, II

Alexis Michelle Burgess LeeAnn Nicole Hill, Cum Laude

Carl Lewis DeFore, Jr. Kimberly Kay Hyde, Magna Cum Laude

Joshua Robert Feighner, Alyssa Gwen Leatherwood *Magna Cum Laude* Melissa Joy Prescott

Athena Mary Graham, *Summa Cum Laude* Vanessa Janeé Williams

# **Bachelor of Science - Psychology**

Mary Anna Elliot Jesse Marie Shuman
Madison Joy Hilburger-Walker Callie Morgan Smith
Abigail Lynn Maye, Magna Cum Laude
Jada Makenzie Parker Reagan Stansell Wysocki



# **School of Business and Public Management**

Dr. William S. Mounts, Jr., Dean

#### **Bachelor of Business Administration - General Business**

Alissa Breanna Barnes, *Magna Cum Laude* Stephanie Louise Branch

Tyler Renee Butler Riley Ashley Crosby Corinne Paris Dantonio Lillian Grace Dowdy

Javonna Aria Dykes, Cum Laude

Paul Rick Elliott, III
James Bradley Hammock
Riley Michelle Horne
Skyler Renee Howell
Benjamin Michael Jordan

Laura Kate Kessler, Summa Cum Laude

Hailey Anne Laroche Jenny Lynn Leska Brianna Abigail Markes Adriana Martin Alyson Lee Millican Matthew Benjamin Ours

Tanay Pandey

Skyler Lynn Purvis, Cum Laude

Montavius Russell

Grace E. Sanders, *Magna Cum Laude* Cameron Bryce Shipman, *Cum Laude* 

Robert Lee Smith, *Cum Laude* Patricia Esparagoza Sunga

Dillon Troedsson, Magna Cum Laude

Brittany Lane Varnadore

Thi Huong Duyen Vu, *Cum Laude*Amaya Annalese Williamson
Zataylauray Ellene Wright, *Magna Cum Laude* 

# **Bachelor of Science - Accounting**

Corinne Paris Dantonio

Nichol P. James

## **Bachelor of Science - Criminal Justice**

Allison Kennedy Lounder, Cum Laude

Alejandra Padilla, Summa Cum Laude

Marsha Elizabeth Myers-Bue

Sydney Abigail Romaine

## **Bachelor of Science - Public Administration**

Antoinette Charess Jackson

## **Bachelor of Applied Science - Workforce Management**

Matthew Douglas Wyatt



In Memory of
Kennedy Ashley Waymer
January 9, 2006 - October 14, 2025

Student, athlete, and friend.

Kennedy was a loving, selfless, and kindhearted teammate with a faithful heart, courageous drive, and joyful spirit. Her resilient, witty, intelligent, and competitive nature will forever live in our hearts.

# **School of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Dr. Lydia A. Watkins, Southeast Georgia Health System Distinguished Chair and Dean

# **Bachelor of Science - Nursing**

Daijha D'evelyn Ali-Neely Shekerra Twanaye Ellis Cicelia Ladriques Brown Chelsea Cailin Holcomb Mackenzie Campbell Joyce Marie Mabry

## **Bachelor of Science - Health Sciences**

Marvella Clark Alyssa Kay Haggerty Breanna Fowler Noah Jacob Johns

## **School of Arts and Sciences**

Dr. Syvillia Averett, Dean

#### **Associate of Arts**

Zephaniah Naquel Mack

## **Associate of Science**

Chrishai Victoria Cummings Nicholas Alexander Stanton

Markevia Givens
Annalise Jenkins
Fatou Njie
Mary Ohlrich
Jonaque Stephens
Gonzalo Angel Tano
Taylor Reese Thurman
Kristopher Daniel Wisneski

Nadiuska Blamir Ramos

# **School of Business and Public Management**

Dr. William S. Mounts, Jr., Dean

# **Associate of Applied Science - Culinary Arts**

Stephanie Lynn Bass, *Honors* Leah Fuxiao Ward, *Honors* 

# **School of Nursing and Health Sciences**

Dr. Lydia A. Watkins, Southeast Georgia Health System Distinguished Chair and Dean

# Associate of Science - Nursing

Raigen Marie Brockett Ashley Nicole Pechin, Honors

Shelly Ardrika Carpenter Jaycee Ryan Peeples Leah Mackenzie Carter Leslie Danyelle Perez Hayle Nicole Poston Marie Carl Liza Atienza Castro Michele Lee Fournier Lindsey Ann Rentz Katrina A. Singleton Kieara Louise Gibbs Trina Gwyneth Pingul Gonzales Taylor Renee Taliaferro Jennifer Gutierrez Santana Hayley Jesse Verdecanna Tzu H. Huang Jaelyn Brianna Wheat

Carly Sue Jasman Wy'Keiamber Auza'Sha Wiley

Alyson Grace Miller Reynelle N. Williams
Samantha Miness Lauren Lee Zappone

## Associate of Science - Radiologic Science

Danita Desha Dasher Morgan Hunter Pillow Grace Anne Eckelberry Karlee Lynn Shores

## 2025-2026 FULL TIME FACULTY

Cynthia J. Atwood, Senior Lecturer of Criminal Justice

James Atwood, J.D., Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

Maxwell Auerbach, Ph.D., Lecturer of Mathematics

Syvillia Averett, Ph.D., Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Tyler E. Bagwell, M.F.A., Professor of Communication

Ashley H. Barnes, D.N.P., Associate Professor of Nursing

Jennifer Beirdneau, Lecturer and Clinical Coordinator for Radiologic Science

James Benton, Ph.D., J.D., Professor of Accounting

Jamie Berrie, Senior Lecturer of Mathematics

Scott Bird, Professor of Practice: Leadership and Management

Carla Bluhm, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Emily Boyle, Director of Honors Program, Senior Lecturer of English

Robert Brant, Lecturer and Clinical Coordinator of Nursing

Katie Beth Brooks-Harvey, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English

Christine Brown, D.P.T., Health Sciences Program Coordinator,

Assistant Professor of Health Science and Anatomy and Physiology

John Lloyd Brown, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

Drew Cagle, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science

James R. Carpenter, Assistant Professor of Biology

Joshua Clark, Senior Lecturer of Biology

Kelly Clark, Laboratory Lecturer of Biology and Geology

Robert C. Clark, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Stacie Conley, Nursing Clinical Lecturer

Stephanie B. Conner, Ed.D., Associate Professor of English

Richard Lee Cranz, Chef Instructor

Megan Crews, Research, Instruction and Engagement Librarian, Assistant Professor of Library Science

Nicole Critcher, Director of Field Experience, Certification, and Outreach, Instructor of Education

Marci R. Culley, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

James Deemy, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Environmental Science

Wanda DeLeo, Ph.D., Professor of Accounting

Baboucarr Dibba, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Data Science

Savannah Downing, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Communication

Patrice Edwards, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy

Johnny L. Evans Jr., Ph.D., President

Heather Farley, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Business and Public Administration, Associate Professor of Public Management

Kyle Fox, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Arts and Humanities, Assistant Professor of Communication

Nicole Shupe Fullard, Assistant Professor of Nursing

Julie Fusco, Laboratory Lecturer of Anatomy and Physiology

Leon C. Gardner, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry

Bill Garlen, Ed.D., Director of Business Innovation and Development

Caroline Geiken, Ed.D., Professor of Practice: Special Education

Mylynda D. Gill, Archive, Instruction, and Special Collections Librarian, Assistant Professor of Library Science

Laura Grantham, D.N.P., Assistant Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Assistant Professor of Nursing

Kimberly H. Graw, Lecturer of Nursing

Jennifer Pooler Gray, Ph.D., Coordinator of the Writing Center, Professor of English

Elizabeth Gregory, Lecturer of Nursing

Rachel Hartnett, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English

Jennifer M. Hatchel, Ph.D., Academic Affairs Liaison for the Camden Center, Professor of Biology

Deanna Helphrey, Lecturer of Biology

C. Tate Holbrook, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Natural Sciences, Professor of Biology

Debra L. Holmes, Ed.S., Dean of Library Services, Assistant Professor of Library Science

Michele Johnson, Public Services Librarian, Assistant Professor of Library Science

John L. Kissinger, Public Service Librarian, Assistant Professor of Library Science

Colleen Knight, Ph.D., Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement, Professor of Chemistry

Andrea Kwasny, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Annabelle Lassiter, Lecturer of Mathematics

Alison Lawson, Lecturer of Nursing

Nevada LeCounte, D.N.P., Simulation Specialist, Associate Professor of Nursing

Kathryn Lee, Lecturer of Nursing

Rebecca Long, Lecturer of Nursing

Karen Lucas, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Mathematics Education

José Lugo Santiago, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Mathematics

Kimberly Kinsey Mannahan, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Nicole R. Masano, D.N.P., Professor of Nursing

Don H. Mathews, Ph.D., Professor of Economics

Mary McGinnis, Ph.D., Director of the ENDEAVOR Center for High Impact Practices, Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning, Associate Professor of English

Robin McLachlan, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Geology

Jessica Melilli-Hand, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English

Hector Montford, Ph.D., Associate Professor of History

Michael P. Morris, Ph.D., Professor of History

Tara Mosher, D.N.P., Assistant Professor of Nursing

Matthew Mosley, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management

William S. Mounts Jr., Ph.D., Dean of the School of Business and Public Management, Professor of Economics

Chloe Mulkey, Lecturer of Nursing

David Mulry, Ph.D., Professor of English

Holly Nance, Ph.D., Director of STEM Initiatives, Associate Professor of Biology

Caílín Noble, Senior Lecturer of Mathematics

Kathryn Ostrander, D.A.T., Assistant Professor of Health Science

Nicole Pankiewicz, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science

Ernest Pascoe, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry

Lainie Pomerleau, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of English

Aurora Pope, M.F.A., Associate Professor of Visual Arts

J. Brian Pope, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Ashley Prosser, Lecturer of Mathematics

Aurora Ramos Núñez, Ph.D., Student Success Coordinator, Associate Professor of Psychology

T. David Reese, Ph.D., Professor of Finance and Economics

Richard Roberson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Chef Instructor

Traesha Robertson, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biology

Maryanne Sandberg, Ed.D., Student Success Counselor, Associate Professor of Nursing

Safraz Sattaur, Technical and Electronic Services Librarian,

Assistant Professor of Library Services

Roscoe Scarborough, Ph.D., Chair of the Department of Social Sciences, Associate Professor of Sociology

Thomas Schnibben, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Mathematics

Raziye Shadmehry, Lecturer of English

Tonya Smith, Lecturer of Education

Amy Sneed, Ph.D., Assistant Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Associate Professor of Middle Grades Education

Ashleigh Spurlock, Program Director of Radiologic Science, Lecturer of Radiologic Science

Nelbert St. Clair, D.Sc., Associate Professor of Cyber Security and Criminal Justice

David Stasek, Ph.D., Professor of Biology

Richard Stephens, Ed.D., Lecturer of Business Administration

Kimberly Takagi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Environmental Science and Oceanography

Dantera Tangpisuthipongsa, M.D., Associate Professor of Biology

Lori Tigani, Laboratory Lecturer of Chemistry

Melissa Trussell, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Economics

Min-Cheng Tu, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Environmental Science

Jason W. Umfress, Ph.D., Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management

German A. Vargas, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Professor of Mathematics

Joseph Vasquez, Ph.D., Lecturer of Political Science

Tyra Warner, Ph.D., J.D., Chair of the Departments of Hospitality,

Tourism and Culinary Arts, Interim Chair of the Department of Criminal Justice and Public Policy, Associate Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management

Lydia A. Watkins, D.N.P., Dean of the School of Nursing and Health Sciences, Professor of Nursing

Scott Williamson, Professor of Practice: Marketing and Communication

Aaron Yeager, Ph.D., Chair of Faculty Senate, Associate Professor of Mathematics

Renren Zhao, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Mathematics



## THE HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE OF COASTAL GEORGIA

1964-1966: Inaugural Brunswick Class The College began operations as "Brunswick College" with an initial class of 269 students, 11 full-time teaching faculty members, and 25 full-time staff. In 1966, 28 students were awarded associate degrees at the College's first graduation. Over the next four decades, the College offered associate degree programs as well as postsecondary technical and adult programs.

1992: Camden Instruction Began The Board of Regents authorized an off-site instructional unit to be located in Camden County to serve students in the region. Classes were offered one year later in the former Kingsland Elementary School until the Camden Center site was opened in 2004.

1996: Community College Status To better reflect the broader mission of serving the educational needs of the surrounding coastal communities, the College was renamed "Coastal Georgia Community College."

2007: State College Status College Degree Access for Coastal Southeast Georgia, a report to the USG Chancellor, recommended "senior college" status for the College, noting that the campus is in one of the state's most desirable locations and has one of the largest acreages within the System. The report called for the new "senior college" to offer a wide range of targeted baccalaureate degrees and to become a "destination campus to attract Georgians from other regions."

2008: Baccalaureate Degrees Began The College was renamed "College of Coastal Georgia" and was approved to offer the inaugural set of baccalaureate degrees in business administration, early childhood/special education, middle grades education, and nursing. The master plan for the College shifted to "1) serve significantly increasing numbers of people from its 12-county region, and 2) be a destination College, attracting students from elsewhere in Georgia and, to a lesser extent, from other states and nations." Over the last decade, the College has implemented a full array of innovative baccalaureate programs and community engagement strategies.

2012: Student Housing Offered The College began offering student housing, which has grown today to two on-campus student housing complexes as well as off-campus housing.

Today:

Today, the College has a fall enrollment of over 3,600 students, employs over 250 full-time faculty and staff, offers 19 baccalaureate degrees as well as associate degrees in core curriculum and three career associate degrees. The College graduates over 550 students each year, with roughly half earning a baccalaureate degree.



# **ALMA MATER**

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater
Hear the song we raise to thee;
Fount of wisdom, Seat of knowledge,
We do pledge our loyalty.

Hail to thee, dear Alma Mater Symbol of the joys of youth; Lead us on as we grow older, Help us keep thy ways of truth.

Through the years, dear Coastal Georgia

Memories bonds will hold you near;

For all wisdom and all knowledge,

We lift up our thanks sincere.

Alma Mater, Alma Mater
Coastal Georgia hail to thee;
Alma Mater, Alma Mater
Shine through all eternity.

