

Commencement

December 2025



BETHEL
UNIVERSITY



Dear Graduates,

Congratulations on your graduation from Bethel University, an institution with a great past and an exciting future. We have built upon the legacy of John Alexis Edgren, who envisioned a school that educated students by first rooting them in God's Word. With that foundation, students' education equipped them for service, grounded them in Christ, encouraged them in spiritual growth, and guided them through mentoring friendships with faculty and staff.

Today Bethel stands fully within Edgren's vision, offering an education that is excellent, globally engaged, and superior in equipping you to make exceptional contributions for God in the world. We look forward to the significant ways you will make a difference as you live faithfully in the years ahead!

It has been our privilege to have you study at Bethel University in the College of Arts & Sciences, College of Adult & Professional Studies, or Graduate School. Our prayer is that your Bethel education has taught you what it means to be an adventurous Christ-follower and instilled in you a commitment to help transform the world.



Ross Allen
President



Robin Rylaarsdam
University Provost

COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCES, COLLEGE OF ADULT & PROFESSIONAL STUDIES,
AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

Commencement Exercises

Friday, December 19, 2025

5 p.m. | Benson Great Hall

Presiding

Ross Allen, B.A., President

PROCESSIONAL

“March No. 1” from *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, Edward Elgar

Cindy Reents, B.A., Organist

Order of Processional

Laver and Ewer Bearers

Marshals

Candidates for Associate’s Degrees

Candidates for Bachelor’s Degrees

Candidates for Master’s Degrees

Candidates for Doctoral Degrees

Faculty and Administration

Program Personnel

WELCOME

Ross Allen

INVOCATION

Mary Lindell, Ph.D., Professor of Education

GRADUATE REFLECTIONS

Grace Owen, B.A., Psychology, College of Arts and Sciences

Zachary Hamann, M.B.A., Business Administration, Graduate School

WELCOME TO THE BETHEL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Jason Schommer, M.B.A., Chair of Bethel National Alumni Counsel

CONFERRING OF DEGREES AND PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

Ross Allen

Robin Rylaarsdam, Ph.D., University Provost

Assisted By

Cheryl Fisk, Ed.D., University Registrar

Hooding of Graduate School Candidates

Joel Fredrickson, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

Katie Bonawitz, Ed.D., Associate Dean of Education, Program Director for M.A. Special Education

Peg McCormick, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Special Education

Nicholas Zeimet, M.S.W., Associate Professor of Social Work, Director of Field Education

BENEDICTION

Jeanine Parolini, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Business, Program Director for M.B.A.

RECESSIONAL

“Toccata” from *Symphony No. V*, Charles-Marie Widor

Cindy Reents

Please remain at your seats until after the recessional.

The ewer and laver—in common vernacular, the pitcher and basin—are the academic symbols that lead Bethel University’s formal processions to represent the university’s commitment to cultivating selfless service, humility, and sacrificial love as stated in John 13:14 (NIV): “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.”

Our laver and ewer bearers are:
Chris Carroll, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Applied Health Sciences | Ewer
Chris Moore, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science | Laver

Marshals are College of Arts & Sciences students who are chosen because of their outstanding academic achievement.

Our marshals are:
Josie Neibergall, Class of 2027
Eli Leafblad, Class of 2027

Cords or medallions may be worn over the graduation gown to recognize outstanding academic or athletic achievement as follows:

The university awards gold honor cords to College of Arts & Sciences graduates at three levels of GPA standing using the Latin honor system: *cum laude*, *magna cum laude*, and the highest level, *summa cum laude*.

In the College of Adult & Professional Studies, the university awards gold honor cords to graduates in bachelor’s degree programs based on cumulative GPA.

Graduates in Bethel’s Pietas Honors Program wear a medallion on a blue ribbon.

Members of The 25, a leadership cohort, wear white and gold cords.

The university awards navy and white cords to NCAA intercollegiate athletes.

Members of the Royals Investment Fund, an academic program where students make real-world financial investments, wear green and white cords.

Graduates who belong to a national or international society may choose to wear these insignia:

Members of Act Six, an academic society committed to servant leadership on campus and throughout the Twin Cities, wear golden medallions.

Members of Lambda Pi Eta, a communication honor society, wear crimson and silver cords.

Members of the National Association of Social Workers of Minnesota, a global organization that advocates for social workers, wear teal cords.

Members of Phi Alpha, a social work honor society, wear blue and gold cords.

Members of Pi Sigma Alpha, a political science honor society, wear red, black, and white cords.

Members of Sigma Theta Tau, a nursing honor society, wear purple and white cords.

Members of Sigma Zeta, a science and mathematics honor society, wear a medallion on a gold ribbon.

Members of TriBeta, a biological honor society, wear red and green cords.

Following the recessional, everyone is invited to a reception in Brushaber Commons. Signs and hosts will direct you.

Guests are encouraged to meet graduates and faculty by program banners at the reception.

The Campus Store, also located in Brushaber Commons, will be open until 7 p.m..

If you need assistance, please ask event staff.

Candidates for Graduation

College of Arts & Sciences Bachelor's Degrees

APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES

Madison Grace Doeden
B.S. Biokinetics
summa cum laude

Michael Eule Massa
B.S. Biokinetics

Rosalie Marie Penke
B.S. Biokinetics
summa cum laude

Benjamin David Wynia
B.S. Biokinetics

Aubrey Alisandra Baker
B.S. Exercise Science
magna cum laude

Riley David Gritz
B.S. Exercise Science

Anna Gayle Sukle
B.S. Exercise Science
magna cum laude

Isaiah Joseph Ward
B.S. Human Bioenergetics
cum laude

ART and DESIGN

Olivia Grace Nienaber
B.F.A. Art
cum laude

Kylee Reigh Breault
B.A. Graphic Design
magna cum laude

Natalie Joy Wright Enos
B.A. Graphic Design
Art
magna cum laude

Tara Jordan Sinclair
B.A. Graphic Design
magna cum laude

BIBLICAL and THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

Isaiah Michael Walvatne
B.A. Biblical and Theological Studies
magna cum laude

Matthew Henry Walz
B.A. Biblical and Theological Studies
magna cum laude

Alan Kristopher Kopitske
B.A. Missional Ministries

Ella Ruth Sushka
B.A. Missional Ministries
summa cum laude

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Eli William Berg
B.S. Biology
summa cum laude

Raquel Marie Diehl
B.A. Biology

Olivia Victoria Johnson
B.S. Biology
summa cum laude

Eleanor Jane Pelzel
B.S. Biology
magna cum laude

Quentin Robert Platt
B.A. Biology

Habetamu Erchafo Abide
B.S. Environmental Science

Lauren Christine Groff
B.S. Environmental Science

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES and CHEMISTRY

Silas Jonathan Ihde
B.S. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology
summa cum laude
Honors Program

Alexander James Michuda
B.S. Biochemistry and Molecular Biology

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES and PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Cassidy Lynnae Yates
B.S. Neuroscience

BUSINESS

Beslie Juliza Archila
B.S. Accounting and Finance

Brandon Allan Bortnem
B.S. Accounting and Finance

Terrence Emmanuel Johnson
B.S. Accounting and Finance

Jameson Kincaid Muller
B.S. Accounting and Finance
Honors Program

Xavier David Lortie
B.S. Actuarial Science and Finance

Collin Theodore Asplin
B.A. Business
cum laude

David Jesse Bowen
B.A. Business
cum laude

Andrew Jay Cardenas
B.A. Business

David Matthew Erickson
B.A. Business
magna cum laude
Honors Program

Matthew Chase Friesen
B.A. Business

Cole Wilson Hillman
B.A. Business
cum laude

Drew Michael Holmes
B.A. Business

Sarah Rebecca Huotari
B.A. Business

Brenden Hyeon Hong Jankowski
B.A. Business

Gabriel Douglas Lawver
B.A. Business

Emelia Mae Marks
B.A. Business
summa cum laude

Joseph Eric Meurer
B.A. Business

Jackson Roger Ogden
B.A. Business

Juan Antonio Orozco Sanchez
B.A. Business

Jovani Perez Sanchez
B.A. Business
cum laude

Kayanna Elizabeth Pierson
B.A. Business
magna cum laude

Thomas Javier Rush
B.A. Business

Samuel Aiden Smith
B.A. Business

Matthew Edward Spelbring
B.A. Business

Jenna Nicole Standing
B.A. Business

Scott Michael Sundblad
B.A. Business

Simon Richard Swenson
B.A. Business

Bontu Degefa Tola
B.A. Business

Megan Lynn Trigg
B.A. Business

Sarah Rose Wagemaker
B.A. Business

Kyra Lynn Warner
B.A. Business

Angel John Wehlage
B.A. Business

Olivia Jean Weinberg
B.A. Business

Benjamin Ray Westling
B.A. Business

Austin David Woolf
B.A. Business
cum laude

COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Audrey ChunHang Harbaugh
B.A. Communication Studies
Organizational Communication
cum laude

Jazlyn Jewel Toedter
B.A. Communication Studies
summa cum laude

Samuel Stephen Sheedlo
B.A. Media Production

Taylor Mae Hanson
B.A. Organizational Communication
cum laude

Bethany Hyunjin Werth
B.A. Organizational Communication
cum laude

EDUCATION

Emillia Heather Aadland
B.A. Communication Arts and Literature Education, Grades 5-12

Grace Gertrude Rubin
B.A. Communication Arts and Literature Education, Grades 5-12
magna cum laude

Seema Kiran Bemboom
B.A. Elementary Education, Grades K-6
Special Education

Arielle Regina Evans
B.A. Elementary Education, Grades K-6
Special Education
cum laude

Ellie Jo Germo
B.A. Elementary Education, Grades K-6

Kate Christine Hildenbrand
B.A. Elementary Education,
Grades K-6

Elizabeth Thoo
B.A. Elementary Education,
Grades K-6

Elizabeth Grace Wollan
B.A. Elementary Education,
Grades K-6
magna cum laude

Isabelle Kathryn Erhard
B.A. Special Education

ENGLISH and JOURNALISM

Michael Alexander Harjo
B.A. English

Laura Helen Hunt
B.A. English
Applied Philosophy
summa cum laude

Elizabeth Mary Heebsh
B.A. Digital Humanities
History
magna cum laude

HISTORY, PHILOSOPHY and POLITICAL SCIENCE

Nicholas Jeffrey Nelson
B.A. History

Ryan Andrew Swanda
B.A. History
Political Science
summa cum laude

Peter David Wicklander
B.A. History
Political Science
Philosophy
cum laude

Jacob Nicholas Wynia
B.A. History

Gavin C. Miller
B.A. Philosophy
Digital Humanities

Alaina Kathryn Geiszler
B.A. Political Science
History
cum laude

Thien-Cam Phuoc Le
B.A. Political Science
summa cum laude

Ellie Grace Wasserman
B.A. Political Science

LANGUAGES and CULTURES

Laura Beatris Carrion Caceres
B.A. Teaching English as a Second
Language, Grades K-12

MATH and COMPUTER SCIENCE

Sam James Neumann
B.A. Computer Science
summa cum laude

David Anthony Schieffer
B.S. Computer Science
Software Engineering
summa cum laude

PHYSICS and ENGINEERING

Daniel Paul Carlson
B.S. Applied Physics
Physics
magna cum laude

Thomas Nathaniel Lokkesmoe
B.S. Applied Physics
Physics
magna cum laude

Ezekiel Stephen Fahs
B.A. Physics
B.S. Mechanical Engineering
summa cum laude

Abel William Piper
B.S. Physics
Applied Physics
magna cum laude

PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Madelyn Ann Alipour
B.A. Psychology

Emma Jo Carmichael
B.A. Psychology

Logen Rayce Hacklander
B.A. Psychology
magna cum laude

Hallie McKenzie Haskell
B.A. Psychology

Anastasia Giessl Herrera
B.A. Psychology

Chanthida Kaynna Insixiengmay
B.A. Psychology

Drew Avery Johnson
B.A. Psychology
magna cum laude

Carolyn Rose Krieger
B.A. Psychology

Avery Jane Mantich
B.A. Psychology

Abigail Ruth Nelson
B.A. Psychology
magna cum laude

Grace Marie Owen
B.A. Psychology
Communication Studies
summa cum laude

Meadowe Diane Swanson
B.A. Psychology
cum laude

Sophia Rae Tienter
B.A. Psychology
Missional Ministries
magna cum laude

PUBLIC and COMMUNITY HEALTH

David Nifemi Adetunji
B.A. Public and Community Health

Gloria Chinti Nkwain
B.A. Public and Community Health

Spencer Alan Sealock
B.A. Public and Community Health

College of Adult & Professional Studies Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS

Theresa Marie Felix
in absentia
A.A. General Studies

Lorena Valenzuela Guerrero
A.A. General Studies

LeShanta Janese McClanahan
A.A. General Studies

Naomi Dolores Miranda
A.A. General Studies

Natasha Renee Robinson
in absentia
A.A. General Studies

ACCOUNTING

Amber Scharber
B.S. Accounting

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Brock A. Bordenave
in absentia
B.S. Business Management

Momolu Gbainai Kpakelipaye
B.S. Business Management

Tamara Koren Noel
in absentia
B.S. Business Management

CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES

Olivia Claire Baker
B.A. Christian Ministries

Joshua Richard Friedman
B.A. Christian Ministries

Marta Hertle
B.A. Christian Ministries
with honors

Jacob Danial Williams
in absentia
B.A. Christian Ministries

HUMAN SERVICES

Erin Herda
in absentia
B.A. Human Services

NURSING

Julie Ann Ray
in absentia
B.S. Nursing

Waris Mohamed Abdullahi
in absentia
B.S. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Maryan Adani
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Emma Catherine Anderson
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Natalie Rose Anderson
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Carissa Renee Artz
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Max Bailey Barber
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Madeline Margaret Burkholder
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Michaela Rebecca Clarke
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Robert Joseph Dorn
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Nicole Catherine Empting
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Brooke Yvonne Hager
in absentia
B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Vincent Luu Ho
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Austin Garth Kindelberger
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Emma Alizabeth Marek
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Hibo Garaad Muse
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Nicole Ann Preo
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Chad David Prescher
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Libin Yusuf Said
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Anna Sarpong
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Ashley Rae Shelton
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Farhiya Adan Shiek
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Rachel Virginia Sparr
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Rita Sphabmixay
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Ellie E. Steidle
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Jessey Mae Van Leuven
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Janell Elizabeth Voves
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

Bulungu M'Bai Zanzu
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

Xylia Zhang
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing
with honors

John William Zieske
in absentia
 B.S.N. Post-Baccalaureate Nursing

PSYCHOLOGY

Christiana Robison
 B.A. Psychology

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Shelby Koch
 B.A. Special Education
with honors

Shawn Morris
 B.A. Special Education
with honors

Camille Annette Mosser
in absentia
 B.A. Special Education
with honors

Travis J. Collins
in absentia
 B.A. Special Education Studies

Graduate School Master's Degrees

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Nicholas T. Boettcher
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Kirk Howard Darling
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Ian Anthony Halberg
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Zachary Hamann
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Erin Marie Hobson
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Nathan Kallevig Holm
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Violah Kamusiime
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Devynn Shae Link
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Chloe Ann Nietfeld
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Jason Bruce Norman
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Shriteja Purane
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Hayley Schevenius
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Steven Neil Soneral
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Sabrina Guadalupe Torres
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Julie Jo Vancura
in absentia
 M.B.A. Business Administration

Karen Elizabeth Zolik
 M.B.A. Business Administration

EDUCATION K-12

Madison Dorn
 M.A. Education K-12

Mallory Hoffman
 M.A. Education K-12

Olivia Nelson
 M.A. Education K-12

Wanqing Zhao
in absentia
 M.A. Education K-12

MEDICAL SCIENCES

William Mark Dos Santos
in absentia
 M.S. Medical Sciences

Waleed Tashtoush
 M.S. Medical Sciences

Ihuoma Ugonna
 M.S. Medical Sciences

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT

Nicole Elizabeth Bellino
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Lindsey Nicole Best
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Lauren Marie Bonin
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Lucas Campbell
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Lauryn Renee Caulley
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Nathaniel Quyen Chau
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Daniel Crossman
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Drew Jacob Elvehjem
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Anna Carolynn Enderle
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Louis Jordan Garibay
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Abigail Grace Garofalo
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Matthew Michael Hagen
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Spencer W. Haugen
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Morgan Carmen Hein
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Jason Kolbert
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Lauren Anne Lavery
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Nguyen Thu Ngan Le
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Michael Kenneth Losasso
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Zoezy Marion Malone
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Anne Elizabeth Maurer
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Megan Marie Meyers
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Sarah Mae Miller
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Michelle Olga Mironovich
in absentia
 M.S. Physician Assistant

Joshua Peter Nelson
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Mallory Lynn O'Brien
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Erin Shea Osborne
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Stephanie J. Pidde
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Hanna Pierre
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Abigail Lei Rangaard
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Kellie Aileen Schmidt
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Adam Schriever
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Mariah Callahan Sexe
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Hailey Grace Thom
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Kathryn Tschida
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Shannon Terese Wagner
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Georgia Weege
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

Grace Welter
in absentia
M.S. Physician Assistant

SOCIAL WORK

Krista Yvonne Perdue
in absentia
M.S. Social Work

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Ololade Banire
M.A. Special Education

Emma Carlson
M.A. Special Education

Jennifer Krista Geisinger
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Michael Gordon Gibbs
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Ashley Ila Gilbertson
M.A. Special Education

Karlie Nicole Groves
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Jonah James Jackson
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Rebecca Lindsay Lapham
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Mackenzie Elaine Peterson
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Shannon Roy
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

Amanda Weddle
M.A. Special Education

David Wenell
M.A. Special Education

Samantha Marie Willman
in absentia
M.A. Special Education

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

Matthew James Sund
in absentia
M.A. Strategic Leadership

TEACHING

Madeleine Bakken
M.A. Teaching

Elice Frances Brunnette
in absentia
M.A. Teaching

Andrea Esterly
M.A. Teaching

Nicole Rose Johnson
in absentia
M.A. Teaching

Adam J. Ludwig
M.A. Teaching

Abigail Marie Osborn
M.A. Teaching

Ava Dorothy Raisanen
M.A. Teaching

Kayla Rose Schlichting
in absentia
M.A. Teaching

Amanda Cherylanne Sleen
M.A. Teaching

Emma Van Ermen
M.A. Teaching

Brian Klett Ward
in absentia
M.A. Teaching

Graduate School Doctoral Degrees

Frederick Alton Cummings
Ed.D. Leadership in Higher Education
Dissertation: *Socioeconomic Determinants of College Enrollment Decisions: A Quantitative Study of Incoming Freshmen*
B.S., University of Southern Indiana
M.B.A., Oakland City University
M.S.M., Oakland City University

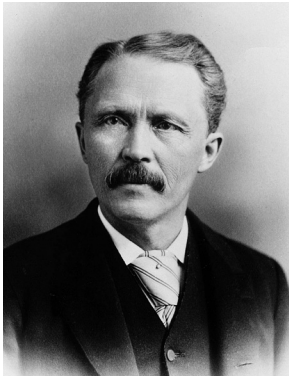
Adriana Noel Haugen
Ed.D. Leadership in K-12 Administration
Dissertation: *Special Education Teachers' Burnout: Exploring the Impact of Special Education Setting and Teaching Experience*
B.A., University of Colorado
M.A., University of Southern California

Amy Danielle McGuire
in absentia
Ed.D. Leadership in K-12 Administration
Dissertation: *School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports as a Framework for Equity: Addressing the Discipline and Academic Achievement Gap in Minnesota Schools*
M.A., Bethel University
B.S., North Central University

Laura Nugteren
Ed.D. Leadership in Higher Education
Dissertation: *An Examination of Clinical Self-Efficacy and Confidence After The Rolling Through the Complications Clinical Debriefing Experience*
B.S., South Dakota State University
M.A., Bethel University

Patricia Pothour
in absentia
Ed.D. Leadership in Higher Education
Dissertation: *Criminal Background Disclosures and Enrollment Trends in Higher Education Admissions*
B.S., University of Wisconsin-Platteville
B.A., University of Wisconsin-Platteville
M.S., University of Wisconsin-Platteville

A History of Bethel University



John Alexis Edgren, founder of what is now Bethel University, wrote a letter to Christopher Silene, his first student, and convinced the young Swedish immigrant from Minnesota to attend the new school for preachers by simply stating, “Come, brother; God will provide.” Silene arrived in Chicago in October 1871 to find the city in ruins, the result of a fire only two days before. In the wake of the Great Chicago Fire, the determined

teacher and the aspiring student forged ahead in their calling to Christian theological education and ministry preparation.

A fellowship of churches—which became the Baptist General Conference (now Converge), Bethel’s sponsoring denomination—originated in the late 19th century among stalwart Swedish settlers who were scattered across the northern United States. They were pietistic Christians characterized by simple worship, an irenic spirit, and a vital and personal relationship with Christ.

Edgren, born in Sweden in 1839, stands out clearly as the pivotal figure of the third and fourth decades of Swedish Baptist life in America. A gifted linguist, theologian, sea captain, artist, and educator, he had a passion for life and a commitment to excellence in both preparation and service.

Edgren founded what became known as the Scandinavian Department of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary, which was associated with the University of Chicago. From the beginning, he made clear his desire for Swedish Baptists to

have an academy and a college, as well as a ministry training school. His vision was realized when, after brief relocations to Minnesota in 1884 and Nebraska in 1886, the seminary made a permanent move to St. Paul in 1914. The seminary then joined with Bethel Academy, a high school opened in 1905 in Minneapolis by the Swedish Baptist Conference, to become Bethel Academy and Theological Seminary. A campus was constructed on Snelling Avenue adjacent to the state fairgrounds.

In 1931, Bethel Junior College opened, and subsequent to the phasing out of the academy, expanded its academic program to become a four-year liberal arts college in 1947. By 1959, with the awarding of accreditation by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, it became evident that room was needed to house the growing schools. Land was purchased, and a new campus was built in the present Arden Hills location. The seminary relocated to the new location in 1965 and the college in 1972. Many enhancements have been made to the facilities over the years to meet the changing needs of the schools.

On July 1, 2004, the corporate name was changed from Bethel College & Seminary to Bethel University, with the College of Arts & Sciences, the College of Adult & Professional Studies, the Graduate School, and Bethel Seminary as component schools. Bethel University enrolls more than 4,000 students from 48 states and 17 countries in undergraduate, graduate, seminary, and adult undergraduate programs. Based in St. Paul, Minnesota, Bethel University offers rigorous majors and programs in more than 81 relevant fields.

Throughout the years, Bethel has remembered its rich heritage and held to the guiding principles of its founder while forging a Christ-led vision for the future.



Bethel Academy and Theological Seminary, St. Paul, MN, in 1920.

Academic Regalia and Symbols

Academic Regalia

Academic regalia lend dignity and pageantry to commencements and other college and university ceremonial occasions, and reveal academic achievements through styles of gowns, hoods, and varying colors. The custom of wearing distinctive dress for academic ceremonies dates to the Middle Ages.

In the 12th century, universities took form under the jurisdiction of the church. Most of those studying were clerics in holy orders, monks, or priests. They wore woolen cloaks or habits for warmth in unheated quarters. Attached to the cloaks were cowls or hoods, used to warm their tonsured heads or thrown back in mild weather. Sometimes these hoods served the purpose of holding food or the alms that were dropped in by passersby.

As European commerce began to flourish, persons of the same trade or pursuit formed associations called guilds. Their dress was an outward sign of privilege and responsibility, designed to distinguish the wearer from other guilds and other townspeople. The teaching guild was for the master of arts, and the bachelor was the apprentice of the master.

The styles and colors of academic garb came to vary greatly in Europe. In 1894, most American universities and colleges adopted a uniform code of academic attire drawn up by a convention of representatives called together by Princeton University. The underlying concept was that the academic costume is a uniform that unites a given group of persons (academics) while distinguishing among them by significant variations. Each part of the uniform is therefore significant in characterizing the level of the degree and the institution and discipline conferring it.

Principal features of academic dress are the cap, gown, and hood. The cap worn almost universally in academic processions is the Oxford cap, better known as the mortarboard. From poetry we learn that the cap of scholarship is square to symbolize a book. Another style, called the Cambridge cap, resembles a large beret. Caps and gowns representing degrees from foreign universities may vary

noticeably from those in the United States—the most obvious difference being the cap, which is often a soft, round hat of the style worn by medieval scholars.

The use of a dark robe in academic processions is thought to have arisen from the clerical practice of wearing a cape or mantle in religious processions during the 12th and 13th centuries, when universities arose from cathedral schools. Traditionally, commencement gowns have been black. In recent years, however, a number of universities have adopted other hues that signify the school's traditional colors.

The bachelor's gown has long, pointed sleeves. The master's gown has crescent-shaped sleeves descending from the elbows. The doctor's robe has very full sleeves with three horizontal bars of velvet on each sleeve and two vertical velvet bars down the middle of the front. The velvet is either black or the degree color.

Hoods are the most significant conveyors of degree identification. The bachelor's hood is pointed, three feet long, with a two-inch border. The master's hood is pointed, three-and-one-half feet in length, with a three-inch border. The doctor's hood is four feet long, rounded at the bottom, with a five-inch border. The hoods have velvet borders and are lined in silk or satin in the official color of the institution that conferred the degree, with a chevron used for a second color if needed. The color of the velvet border represents the discipline. Investiture with the hood signifies the conferral of the degree.

In practice, the bachelor's hood is rarely worn. Instead, conferral of the baccalaureate degree is signified by moving the tassel from the right to the left side of the cap. All persons possessing at least a bachelor's degree wear the tassel on the left side of the cap.

The president's apparel is notably different from that of the faculty. It is a doctoral-style robe with four horizontal bars on the sleeve. The president wears a pendant medallion, in the form of the school seal, that bears the names of previous presidents.

Academic Symbols

One hundred fifty years ago, John Alexis Edgren founded a seminary that would become today's Bethel University. To celebrate the milestone, and to function as a symbol of servant leadership into the future, Bethel Provost Robin Rylaarsdam commissioned the creation of new academic symbols to be used in commencement ceremonies. In a collaboration between two students and a faculty member, a ewer and laver—in common vernacular, pitcher and basin—were created and now serve as the academic symbols that lead Bethel University's formal processions. The simplicity of these two symbols suggests that the loving act of footwashing be a

humble, simple, and common manifestation of faith in action. The decision to place the university's insignia in the bottom of the laver, where one would place their feet for washing, communicates the concepts of servant leadership from Mark 10:43-44. The ewer remains without insignia to represent the selfless love that each graduate is ceremonially encouraged to practice in both their professional and personal lives. The collaborative creation of these symbols lives out one of Edgren's core principles of education:

The relation between teacher and students should not be that of superior and subordinate, but one of real friendship and helpfulness, remembering that One is our Master, and we are all brethren.



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The information in this program is accurate as of the time of publication.