



# Austin Campus Center COMMENCEMENT 2024

Friday, October 18th 7 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
The Austin Stone Church  
9001 N. FM 620 | Austin, TX 78726





Founded in 1875 in Parkville, Mo., a suburb of Kansas City, Park University is a nonprofit, private institution that is a national leader in higher education. In 2000, Park achieved university status and currently serves more than 6,600 students at 21 locations in 15 states and online, including Parkville and Independence, Mo.; Gilbert, Ariz.; Barstow, Calif.; Columbus, Ohio; Austin and El Paso, Texas; and 16 military installations across the country.

Serving an ethnically diverse student population and non-traditional adult learners has, for many years, been central to Park's educational mission. Even in its first year, Park University enrolled women students as well as men, something that was unusual at the time; and two of the original 17 students were Native Americans. Park was also an early integrator when it welcomed African-American students to live in Park's residence halls in the 1950s.

Park continues to increase access to higher education by offering the quality undergraduate and graduate degrees students desire at locations, times and delivery formats that best serve their needs. The University has been ranked among the top private colleges/universities in the country for adult learners as well as for annual return on investment, and it is consistently ranked among the top least expensive private schools in the country.

Providing such access has developed considerable diversity among the student population, with 528 international students from 76 countries and a 60 percent student representation from racial, ethnic and cultural groups typically underrepresented in colleges and universities. In addition, extracurricular activities and championship-caliber athletic programs (NAIA) complement Park's outstanding scholastic programs.

Park University offers numerous degree programs online, and it maintains a long-standing relationship with the U.S. military for which it has been recognized as one of the largest providers of online undergraduate education to military learners worldwide. Park has received international recognition by various military-related publications as a top military friendly college/university. In addition, Park is among the top-ranked "best for vets" private colleges/universities in the country.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Park University transforms lives through accessible, student-centered, quality higher education.

## VISION STATEMENT

Park University will meet learners' needs for a lifetime.

## CORE VALUES

We expect **ACCOUNTABILITY** for our actions at all levels, to each other and to Park University.

We treat all with **CIVILITY** and **RESPECT** while being open and honest in our communications.

We seek **EXCELLENCE** in all we do, with passionate learning as our highest priority.

We celebrate **GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP** through our connected learning and working environment, liberal arts education and community stewardship.

We embrace **INCLUSIVITY** that fosters diversity, teamwork and collaboration.

We act with **INTEGRITY** through honesty, efficiency and reliability.

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Park University Class of 2024,

As we celebrate the culmination of your academic journey at Park University, it is my honor to extend heartfelt congratulations to each of you. Today marks a significant milestone in your lives, and I am immensely proud of your dedication and perseverance to reach this momentous occasion. Your achievements reflect your individual efforts and contribute to the rich legacy of excellence that defines Park University.

Looking ahead, I am thrilled to share that as you step into the next chapter of your lives, you do so during a remarkable time in Park's history. In 2025, Park University will celebrate its 150th anniversary. This extraordinary milestone underscores the enduring commitment to education and community at our institution's core since its inception. After you cross the Commencement stage, carry with you the values and knowledge you have gained here, and let them guide you in positively impacting the world.

As you transition from students to alumni, remember that your connection to Park University does not end with graduation; it evolves. You are now lifetime Park University Alumni Association members, joining a global network of accomplished individuals who share a common bond in their Park experience. Embrace this community, stay connected and continue to make us proud with your accomplishments.

I extend my warmest wishes for your continued personal and professional success. May your journey be filled with fulfillment, growth and meaningful contributions to the world.

Congratulations!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shane B. Smeed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Shane B. Smeed  
President  
Park University

# COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

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PRELUDE	Candidates for Graduation, Faculty, Staff and Guest Speaker
INVOCATION *	Nicole Garza, Park Alumni
WELCOME	Cynthia Tafoya, Campus Director
COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER	Joel Coffman, Executive Director RecognizedGood
RECOGNITION OF STUDENT HONORS	Karen Evans
CONFERRING OF DEGREES	Christopher Schaefer & Darrick Nicholas
OUTSTANDING GRADUATE RECOGNITION	Darrick Nicholas
BENEDICTION*	Nicole Garza, Park Alumni
PARK UNIVERSITY ALMA MATER	Cynthia Tafoya
RECESSIONAL †	Cynthia Tafoya

\* The audience will please stand.

† The audience is requested to please remain in place until the  
academic procession has departed the Auditorium.

**Please silence all cell phones and other electronic devices. Thank you.**

We invite you to join the **#ParkGraduation** celebration on  
X (@ParkUniversity) and Instagram (@ParkUniversity).

# COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

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## **Joel Coffman**

**Executive Director of RecognizeGood  
and**

**Vice President of Marketing of TyRex, Group**

Since a pivotal moment early in his e-commerce career, Joel Coffman has dedicated his professional and personal time and talents toward the betterment of a community he holds very dear. He has served since 2013 as the executive director at RecognizeGood, a foundation built to strengthen Central Texas through sharing great examples of goodness such as outstanding individual volunteerism, dedicated group service and exceptional business ethics. Since its inception, RecognizeGood has awarded over \$350,000 in pay-it-forward donations to local nonprofits in celebration of community service, and awarded over \$200,000 in scholarships to Central Texas students studying ethical business. Joel has recognized over 200 volunteers, community service organizations and ethical businesses and conducted over 400 filmed interviews with Central Texas businesses giving back to their community. He is also Vice President of Marketing at TyRex Group, a family of advanced manufacturing companies. Joel has a bachelor's degree in Journalism and Advertising from the University of North Texas in Denton, TX.

Volunteer experience includes Austin Miracle League, Austin Gives, the Mayor's Corporate Engagement Council, Leadership Austin, I Live Here I Give Here, Goodwill of Central Texas, Keep Austin Fed, the Greater Austin STEM Ecosystem and Austin / Round Rock / Leander ISDs. He was a 2024 finalist for the Austin Under 40 Awards, a 2019 graduate of Leadership Austin's Essential program, the 2018 Volunteer of the Year from the Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce for his work with Austin Gives, and was named a 2017 Business Leader of the Year by the Career and Technology Association of Texas, among other accolades. Joel was born and raised in Longview, TX, and currently lives in Leander, TX with his wife Jackie, who helps lead a local hospice clinic, and his adorable third-grade daughter June.

# GRADUATE CANDIDATES

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## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

Ramos, Perla	Master of Public Administration/ Criminal Justice Administration
Copeland, Amy	Master of Arts/Industrial Organizational Psychology

## COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

Arroya-Mena, Enid	Master of Business Administration/Management
Hamid, Gladiola	Master of Business Administration/ Human Resources Management
Kota, Jaya	Master of Science: Information Systems and Business Analytics
Moore, Luke	Master of Business Administration/ Project Management
Poole, Jessica	Master of Business Administration/Management Accounting
Ramnarine, Rochelle	Master of Business Administration/ Management Accounting

## GRADUATE CERTIFICATES

Brooks, Debra	Graduate Certificate/Project Management
Dhou, Khaldoun	Graduate Certificate/Marketing
Garcia, Latoya	Graduate Certificate/Management Information Systems

## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

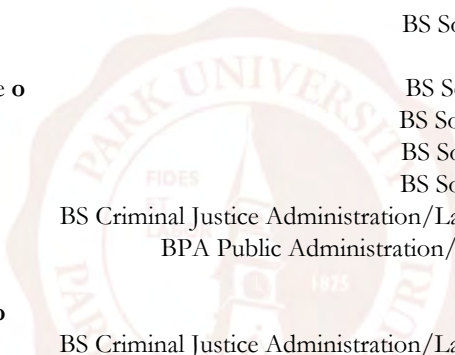
President, Gaetan	Master of Healthcare Administration/ Disaster and Emergency Management
Rice, Sirivia	Master of Healthcare Administration/ Human Resource Management
Francis, Carl	Master of Education/ Organizational Leadership and Adult Learning



# UNDERGRADUATE CANDIDATES

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

### BACHELOR DEGREE



Alvarado, Mariana o	BS Criminal Justice Administration/Law Enforcement
Argeyo, Willie o	BS Criminal Justice Administration/Law Enforcement
Baltazar, Cassandra	BS Social Psychology
Brown, Renae o	BS Criminal Justice Administration/Law Enforcement
Diaz, Tessa +	BS Social Psychology
Dobbins, Dawn +	BA Psychology
Gully, Regan	BS Social Psychology
Long, Patrick	BA Psychology
Means, Kei'Monie o	BS Social Psychology
Monet, Kaleea	BS Social Psychology
Munoz, Hector	BS Social Psychology
Olvera, Luisa	BS Social Psychology
Opoku, Evans	BS Criminal Justice Administration/Law Enforcement
Phillips, Jerald +	BPA Public Administration/Criminal Justice
Pruitt, Mandy	BA Psychology
Ramos, Rodolfo o	BA Sociology
Stewart, Mellissa	BS Criminal Justice Administration/Law Enforcement

### ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Jackson, Deshawn	AS Social Psychology
Williams, David	AS Criminal Justice Administration

## COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT

### BACHELOR DEGREE

Alvarado, Kevin *	BS Management/Finance
Barksdale, Tomas	BS Management
Barragan, Lupe	BS Business Administration/Human Resources
Casiano, Joseph	BS Business Administration/Human Resources
Castaneda, Nicholas	BS Management
Clark, Sean Luke	BS Business Administration/Corporate Financial
Cortez, Herman +	BS Management/Human Resources
Coleman, Jourdan	BS Management/Human Resources
Colter, Morgan	BS Business Administration/Management
Connor, Gary	BS Management

## COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT *(cont.)*

Fernandez Hernandez, Rene *	BS Business Administration/Human Resources
Gauna, Christopher	BS Management/Human Resources
Hearne, Jasmine	BS Business Administration/Marketing
Huff, Jacob +	BS Information Systems
Johnson, Brashawn	BS Business Administration/Management
Johnson, Tiffany +	BS Management
Jones, Chriss	BS Management
Kemp, Alecia	BS Business Administration/Human Resources
Leas, Natosha	BS Management
Noto, Nicole o	BS Business Administration/ Corporate Financial Management
Pearson, Rachel	BS Management
Reyes, Michael *	BS Business Administration/Management
Roskopf, Sway	BS Information and Computer Science/ Information Technology
Santana, Katherine	BS Business Administration/Human Resources
Turner, Kellianne o	BS Business Administration/Management
Williams, Dezmeshea o	BS Business Administration/Logistics

### ASSOCIATE DEGREE

Johnson, Brashawn	AS Management
Colter, Morgan	AS Management
Henderson,, Harold	AS Logistics

### UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE

Castaneda, Nicolas	Undergraduate Certificate/Project Management
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## COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS

### BACHELOR DEGREE

McCulloch, Larissa *	BSE Education Studies/ ECE Teaching Young Children
Cruz, Stephanie +	BSE Education Studies/ ECE Teaching Young Children



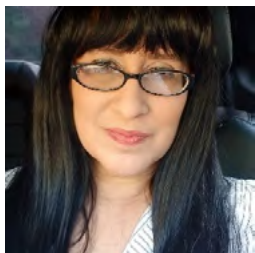
### **Honors Designation Key:**

- \* = Summa Cum Laude – 3.9 - 4.0 with 30 Park credit hours
- o = Magna Cum Laude – 3.7 - 3.899 with 30 Park credit hours
- + = Cum Laude – 3.5 - 3.699 with 30 Park credit hours
- ^ = Alpha Chi – Coeducational Academic Honor Society
- > = Psi Chi – International Honor Society for Psychology
- # = Phi Alpha – National Social Work Honor Society
- < = Honors Academy – Students complete academically challenging courses and a self-designed research project while participating in service learning; internships; prestigious off-campus summer programs; study abroad; and preparation for graduate study and careers. (The Honors listed are as of the program print deadline.)
- { = Mu Chi/Delta Mu Delta – International Honor Society for Business
- } = Pi Sigma Alpha – Political Science Honor Society
- ] = Sigma Tau Delta – International English Honor Society

# MESSAGE FROM

## Cynthia Tafoya, Campus Center Director

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Dear Class of 2024,  
Congratulations on your graduation from Park University! I do hope that this milestone that you celebrate today is a self-reflection of the hard work and dedication that you have invested in yourself and are proud of. I wanted to leave you with some thoughts as you continue on your way.

Today your commitments do not go unnoticed! You were able to complete this education journey with an open heart, an open mind and genuine effort to prepare yourself for the professional journey ahead during extraordinary times. Your commitment has allowed you to build life-long relationships, broaden your view of the world and increased your awareness of the gift of an education. You have earned your degree! Earning a degree is not for everyone!

Today the value of your intelligence will change lives! You were able to grow in wisdom, trust in each other's point of view as a team and lead courageously with the best-calculated learning outcome of your constructed work. When in doubt, draw near to this mindset, it is a skillset well earned and it will differentiate from your peers. Lead with confidence for all the work you have put in over the years!

May the diploma you walk away with today lead you to generosity for the good of humanity and drive you to discover encounters in ways that you can serve others. May it empower you to lead others through your academic example and integrity. May it capture the joys of the day that you can finally say, "I did it!" May it remind you to stop and take a moment to express sincere gratitude of all of those who have inspired and supported you along the way. Let us not forget those who couldn't be with us here today.

Be proud of who you are today Class of 2024 a Park University Alumni!!!  
Be steadfast for the extraordinary opportunities to come.  
It has been a great honor in serving you!

**-Cynthia Tafoya**  
**Campus Center Director**  
**Park University Austin Campus Center**

# THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION WELCOMES YOU

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On behalf of the Park University Alumni Council, I am thrilled to congratulate each and every graduate on a job well done! Completing a degree program is one of life's most challenging and rewarding accomplishments. Your investment of time and effort was worth it. The best is yet to come.

Today, a new journey begins: we are excited to welcome you into the Park University Alumni Association! The Park University Alumni Association exists to inspire passion and pride, and to promote continued participation with the University. We are here to help you maintain meaningful lifelong connections with other alumni.

As a member of the Alumni Association, you will have many opportunities to get involved in alumni activities and events. And while we'll reach out often to keep you updated, we also invite you to contact us. You can reach the Office of Alumni Relations by phone (816-584-6200), through social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and more), via e-mail at [alumnioffice@park.edu](mailto:alumnioffice@park.edu) or online at [advancing.park.edu](http://advancing.park.edu) when you want to get involved or need our assistance. We are always here to offer support.

Again, congratulations on this milestone. We are very proud of you!

Best wishes,

**Phillip Reeder, '12**

# WE HAVE THE ANSWER TO YOUR NEXT EDUCATIONAL STEP

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## **Accessible**

Park University meets the growing demand for career-enhancing education by offering a variety of master's degrees and certificate programs with a practical focus, high academic standards and flexible course scheduling to meet the challenges faced by today's professionals.

## **Affordable**

Graduate students enrolling at Park University can complete their degrees in traditional face-to-face classes, online or in a combination that suits their needs and enhances their educational experience. Our goal is to keep your advanced degree journey as convenient as possible for you. Regardless of your daily demands, Park's variety of classes and flexibility of schedules will meet your needs. Park's tuition rates are especially competitive, providing a superb private educational experience at a public price.

## **Accredited**

Park University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Its graduate degree programs in professional fields are accredited by their respective accreditation agencies or in the process of securing program accreditation.

Please contact the Park University at [graduateadmissions@park.edu](mailto:graduateadmissions@park.edu) or (816) 741-2000 for questions about Park's graduate degree and certificate programs.

**PARK. YOU.**  
**[park.edu/grad](http://park.edu/grad)**

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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**Terry Calaway, Ed.D.**

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Lenexa, KS

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*Vice Chair of the Board*  
Weatherby Lake, MO

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**Gary Henry, '89**

Phoenix, AZ

**Benny Lee**

Kansas City, MO

**Sarah Moe**

Gladstone, MO

**Timothy Pachasa, '18**

Phoenix, AZ

**Andrew Romer, '07**

Oak Grove, MO

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Overland Park, KS

**Ami Wisdom**

*Assistant Secretary of the Board*  
Parkville, MO

## HONORARY TRUSTEES

**John C. Brown**

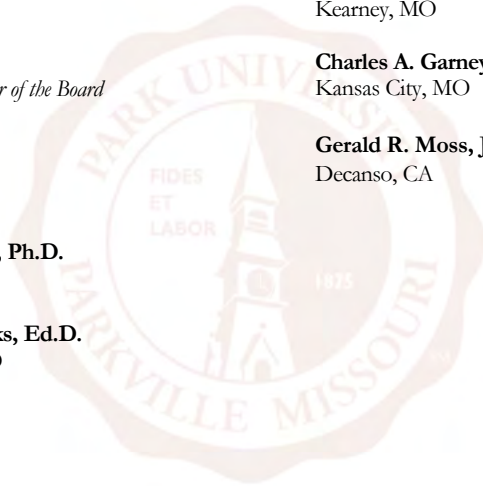
*Past Chair of the Board*  
Kearney, MO

**Charles A. Garney**

Kansas City, MO

**Gerald R. Moss, J.D.**

Decanso, CA



# PARK UNIVERSITY

## CAMPUSES

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More than 6,600 Park University students attend classes at one of 21 locations in 15 states and online from national or international settings.



<b>Parkville (Flagship Campus)</b>	<b>Parkville, MO</b>
<b>Independence</b>	<b>Independence, MO</b>
<b>Little Rock Air Force Base</b>	<b>Little Rock, AK</b>
<b>Gilbert</b>	<b>Gilbert, AZ</b>
<b>Barstow Community College</b>	<b>Barstow, CA</b>
<b>Camp Pendleton Marine Corps Base</b>	<b>Oceanside, CA</b>
<b>Moody Air Force Base</b>	<b>Valdosta, GA</b>
<b>Mountain Home Air Force Base</b>	<b>Mountain Home, ID</b>
<b>Malmstrom Air Force Base</b>	<b>Great Falls, MT</b>
<b>Holloman Air Force Base</b>	<b>Alamogordo, NM</b>
<b>Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station</b>	<b>Cherry Point, NC</b>
<b>Defense Supply Center Columbus</b>	<b>Columbus, OH</b>
<b>Wright-Patterson Air Force Base</b>	<b>Dayton, OH</b>
<b>Beaufort Marine Corps Air Station</b>	<b>Beaufort, SC</b>
<b>Charleston Air Force Base</b>	<b>North Charleston, SC</b>
<b>Austin</b>	<b>Austin, TX</b>
<b>El Paso</b>	<b>El Paso, TX</b>
<b>Fort Bliss</b>	<b>El Paso, TX</b>
<b>Hill Air Force Base</b>	<b>Ogden, UT</b>
<b>Fairchild Air Force Base</b>	<b>Spokane, WA</b>
<b>Francis E. Warren Air Force Base</b>	<b>Cheyenne, WY</b>



# ACADEMIC ROBES AND REGALIA

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The pageantry and color of an academic convocation come from medieval Europe where academic robes and regalia were adapted from Ecclesiastical garb. Most robes are black to symbolize the democracy of scholarship, since they cover any dress indicating social standing worn beneath. Bachelors' gowns are cut with long, pointed sleeves, while masters' gowns feature closed, slit sleeves. Doctoral gowns are full-cut with double-belled sleeves and bars of velvet trim.

The hood, originally a simple cowl attached to the gown, bears the heaviest symbolism of the academic costume. The bordering color indicates the field of learning in which the degree is earned. The square cap, or mortarboard, originated in the 13th century at the University of Paris and came to England in Tudor times. Round caps originally were reserved for doctoral degree holders. Doctoral tassels are usually gold, with other degrees represented by black. However, in recent years, tassels have come to match the lining of the hood to indicate the field of learning. The Honors Medallion symbolizes completion of the Honors Academy which involves independent development of projects with the assistance of faculty mentors. Alpha Chi is the highest honor society at Park University and encompasses all academic areas. The stole is worn as an indication of this recognition.

Art, Letters, Humanities	<i>White</i>
Business and Administration	<i>Drab</i>
Economics	<i>Copper</i>
Education	<i>Light Blue</i>
Fine Arts	<i>Brown</i>
Healthcare Administration	<i>Kelly Green</i>
Law	<i>Purple</i>
Library Science	<i>Lemon Yellow</i>
Music	<i>Pink</i>
Nursing	<i>Apricot</i>
Philosophy	<i>Dark Blue</i>
Physical Education	<i>Sage Green</i>
Public Affairs	<i>Aqua</i>
Science	<i>Golden Yellow</i>
Social Work	<i>Citron</i>
Speech/Theatre	<i>Silver Gray</i>
Theology	<i>Scarlet</i>

# ALMA MATER

David Lueker, '47, arr. Dr. Roger Kugler

First system of musical notation (measures 1-4). The music is in 4/4 time, featuring a piano accompaniment with chords and a vocal line. The lyrics are: Hail Al - ma Ma - ter, We sing to thee.

Second system of musical notation (measures 5-8). The music continues with the piano accompaniment and vocal line. The lyrics are: Thy name for - e - ver a guid - ing light shall be.

Third system of musical notation (measures 9-12). The music continues with the piano accompaniment and vocal line. The lyrics are: Strong as an oak tree, thy name shall ne - ver fail. To

Fourth system of musical notation (measures 13-16). The music concludes with the piano accompaniment and vocal line. The lyrics are: thee Al - ma Ma - ter, Hail, Park, Hail!

