

20  
25



FRIDAY · MAY 23 · 2025

commencement

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Paramount Theatre  
OAKLAND · CALIFORNIA



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### — FIRE NOTICE —

There are sufficient exits in this building  
to accommodate the entire audience.

The exit indicated by the lighted exit sign nearest  
your seat is the shortest route to the street.

In case of fire, please do not run; walk through that exit.

Smoking and vaping are not permitted anywhere in the theatre.

# 2025 commencement

**FRIDAY · MAY 23 · 2025**

## **PRESIDING**

**Brian Clocksin · PhD**

*Executive Vice President and Provost*

## **WELCOME**

**Carl Garrubba · DMSc, PA**

*Vice Provost for Academic and Student Affairs*

## **PROCESSIONAL**

*Pomp and Circumstance March N° 1*

## **GREETINGS**

**Ching-Hua Wang · MD, PhD**

*President*

## **COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS**

**Chris Iglesias · BBA**

*CEO, The Unity Council*

## **STUDENT REMARKS**

**Alyssa Miguel Dizon**

*Doctor of Occupational Therapy*

*Class of 2025*

## **PRESENTATION OF AWARDS**

## **PRESENTATION of CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES**

## **PRESENTATION of MASTERS CANDIDATES of OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

## **HOODING of DOCTORS**

### **Occupational Therapy**

**Domenique Embrey · OTD, OTR/L**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department of Occupational Therapy*

**Chi-Kwan Shea · PhD, OTR/L**

*Adjunct Professor,*

*Department of Occupational Therapy*

## **HOODING of DOCTORS**

### **Physical Therapy**

**Jeffrey South · DPT, PT, OCS**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department of Physical Therapy*

**Kristen Waller, DPT, PT, NCS**

*Assistant Professor,*

*Department of Physical Therapy*

## **HOODING of DOCTORS**

### **Podiatric Medicine**

**Esther Kwon · DPM**

*Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs,*

*College of Podiatric Medicine*

**William Stiers · MD**

*Assistant Professor,*

*College of Podiatric Medicine*

## **HIPPOCRATIC OATH**

## **CONFERRING of DEGREES**

**Alvin McLean, Jr. · PhD**

*Chair, Board of Regents*

## **CLOSING REMARKS**

## **RECESSIONAL**



# *and* AWARDS HONORS

## **Outstanding Occupational Therapy Student Award**

This award is given to the student who has demonstrated a commitment to service, has a strong academic record, and has demonstrated a high level of professionalism and outstanding teamwork.

## **Outstanding Physical Therapist Student Award**

This award is given to a graduating student who has demonstrated strong leadership while in the program and outstanding achievement in at least two of the three following areas: service, clinical practice, and scholarship.

This award is meant to exemplify the highest level of achievement and potential in relation to the mission and values of the Department of Physical Therapy.

## **Podiatric Medicine Scepter Award**

The Scepter Award was established by the former California College of Podiatric Medicine Board of Trustees and the College of Podiatric Medicine (CPM) Alumni & Associates to symbolize their commitment to academic excellence. Each year the graduating students and the faculty have an opportunity to recognize a member of the senior class who exemplifies the scholarly

and humanitarian qualities of podiatric medicine. The Scepter is symbolic of the attributes of mind and heart that characterize the true podiatric physician.

## **Delta Phi Tau National Physical Therapy Student Honor Society**

Graduates who have been inducted into the National Physical Therapy Student Honor Society have demonstrated excellence, integrity, and professionalism in areas of academic achievement, leadership, and service during their time as a student.

## **Pi Delta National Podiatric Medicine Honor Society**

Election into Pi Delta recognizes high standards of intellectual and scholarly activity. Students inducted into the Pi Delta Society must be in the top twenty percent of their class after the second academic year and must maintain at least a ninety percent grade point average thereafter. Graduates who are members of Pi Delta can be identified by the gold honor sashes worn with their academic regalia.

## AWARDS & HONORS, *continued...*

### Graduation Speaker

The student graduation speaker rotates on a yearly basis among the programs. In 2025, the Department of Occupational Therapy had the honor of selecting the student speaker. For the Master of Occupational Therapy graduating class, the student was selected by the department faculty to deliver the speech following a review of all submitted speeches.

### Other Occupational Therapy Honors

In keeping with department tradition, the chair leads the graduates in the procession.

### Other Physical Therapy Honors

Graduating DPT students elect a member of their class who they believe represents leadership and professional values to lead the graduating class during the procession.

### Other Podiatric Medicine Faculty Honors

Each year members of the graduating class participate in a balloting process to determine those faculty members who will lead the graduates in the procession and hood the candidates. Faculty members who are so honored at graduation are considered by the students to best represent the ideals and principles of an educator and a physician.

### Samuel Merritt University Interprofessional Education (IPE) Passport

Interprofessional Education (IPE) is anytime health professionals learn from, about, and with each other. IPE is a core part of healthcare, and Samuel Merritt University aims to make IPE a core part of the SMU student experience.

The IPE Passport allows SMU students to engage with Interprofessional Education – and more importantly, Interprofessional Practice & Education – at their own pace, depending on

the student's individual level of interest and schedule. Participation in most IPE activities at SMU is elective.

The SMU IPE Passport is divided into three levels:

**Level 1 (Preparatory)** is comprised of activities that are self-paced, completed online, asynchronously (within the IPE Passport Canvas course) and provides learners with core foundational knowledge about IPE.

**Level 2 (Foundational)** is comprised of TeamSTEPPS (Team Strategies and Tools to Enhance Performance and Patient Safety) training. Most students take part in TeamSTEPPS training within one of their existing SMU courses within the first two terms of their academic program.

**Level 3 (Applied)** is a menu of synchronous, interprofessional learning opportunities. Students must complete at least two activities.

In order to complete the entire IPE Passport, students must complete all three levels prior to graduation.

The graduates wearing blue, white, and green cords are recognized as IPE participants.

### Tutor Coordinator

Tutor Coordinator is a student leadership role within the Academic Support Department. These students provide targeted academic support for their programs through workshops, mock exams, and one-on-one support. They also serve as the leaders for the tutors in their respective programs by voicing concerns and communicating needs to the professional staff. Overall, the Tutor Coordinators are exceptional students who chose to dedicate their time at SMU to helping others succeed.

# 2025 graduating class

## Master of Occupational Therapy








Shea B. Caddel  
Jill Dionisio Dayrit

Nico Medina  
Kasandra Faye Slattery

Nicole Tumia












## Doctor of Occupational Therapy











Veronica Aguila  
Krizia Mae Mendigorin Azarcon  
Guadalupe Isabela Barajas  
Katherine Brown  
Kathryn Kearby Butterworth  
Kiara Calayag  
Chloe Marie Campion  
Kristen Soriya Chhom  
Daniel Hong Chin  
Carmen Contreras-Jeronimo  
Alyssa Miguel Dizon


Emily Margaret Gayton   
Natalie Thao My Hong   
Brierre Yvonne Johnson  
Savannah Alexia Longoria   
Lucas Malilay Martin  
Arianna Isabel Mendez  
Maria Guadalupe  
Morales Romero  
Katherine Moss     
Kristine Gonzales Ocampo  
Tenaya Jo Raives  

Julia Rangel  
Brianna Ranney  
Rebecca Yadegar Redman  
Adriana Ruiz  
Alvin Sun  
Taylor Alicia Tavares  
Gabiella Katya Tecun  
Rashmeet Kaur Toger  
Alessandra M. Velasquez  
Allison Keiko Shirasawa Yamada

## Doctor of Physical Therapy

Saifussalam Amath  
Christian Arenas  
Andrea Anai Arrizon   
Christopher Naoto Born   
Kailynn Boyd    
Jesus Alberto Bueno Vasquez  
Victoria Imani Campfield   
Robert Nathaniel Cruz Carrillo, Jr.  
Elizabeth Castañeda  
Tracy Aprilia Chairudin   
Jennifer Alice Chang   
Keith Ka Ho Cheung    
Isabella Chu  
Harpreet Kaur Deol  
Jason Do  
David Dominguez  
Dorian Devon Duggins  

Anthony Malabanan Dulay  
Tyler Chad Dutton  
Crystal Briana Estrella  
Alberto Daniel Garcia  
Aidan Haynes   
Casey Henson    
Christopher Adiel Herrera  
Joshua Chii-Herng  
Ho     
Lyudmilla Konings  
Jason Yik Hung Lau   
Joungwon Lim  
Magon Liu  
Quinton K. Mackins  
Federico Topiltzin Mendoza  
Gerald Dayle Yumang Morales  
Christine Nakatsuji   

Joshua Perez  
Sonali Ashok Raj  
Jessica Mariah Rodriguez  
Karina C. Rubio  
Jessica Elizabeth Sanchez   
Rashika R. Sunku  
Lyanna Jane  
Medina Tompkins    
Vincent Tuan Tran  
Elizabeth Trujillo  
Bryanna Francesca  
Aquino Villena    
Judith Wang   
Jaime Wah Wong  
Karen Win-yan Wong    
Melissa Paige Woo    
Anna Justine Zarate  
Ben Zwerling Baltrushes 

# 2025 graduating class

## Doctor of Podiatric Medicine

**Shayan Carduny**

*HCA Florida Westside Hospital  
Plantation, Florida*

**Sagar M. Dave**

*Morristown Medical Center  
Morristown, New Jersey*

**Miko Fogarty** **ΠΔ**

*Beth Israel Deaconess  
Medical Center  
Boston, Massachusetts*

**Kendalyn Kaily Green** **ΠΔ**

*UCSF Health St. Mary's Hospital  
San Francisco, California*

**Kanika Sethi Grewal**

*Pending*

**Sarah Hassan** **ΠΔ**

*Cedars-Sinai Medical Center  
Los Angeles, California*

**Ghassan Ali Iqbal**

*Pending*

**Abdulla Mahmood Ismail** **ΠΔ**

*Kaiser Santa Clara Medical Center  
Santa Clara, California*

**Tina Javanbakht**

*Legacy Health  
Portland, Oregon*

**Robin Kaur Judge**

*Scripps Mercy Hospital  
San Diego, California*

**Manmeet Kaur**

*DVA Palo Alto  
Palo Alto, California*

**Junaid Khan**

*Pending*

**Angel Kristina King**

*Rochester General Hospital  
Rochester, New York*

**Carter W. Knedgen**

*St. Elizabeth's Medical Center  
Boston, Massachusetts*

**MaryKathryn Kordash**

*Legacy Health  
Portland, Oregon*

**Tiffany Lee** **ΠΔ**

*Swedish Medical Center  
Seattle, Washington*

**Jasmine Madera Magsino**

*DVA Palo Alto  
Palo Alto, California*

**Claudia Melkonian**

*Metrowest Medical Center  
Framingham, Massachusetts*

**Zane Andrew Myers**

*Intermountain Medical Center  
Murray, Utah*

**Theresa Ha Tien Nguyen**

*Chino Valley Medical Center  
Chino, California*

**Tran My Nguyen**

*UCSF Health St. Mary's Hospital  
San Francisco, California*

**Michael Ikechi Ogbonna**

*Pending*

**Luong Quan Phan**

*Pending*

**Brandon Lee Hiro Putra**

*DVA Jerry Pettis Memorial VA  
Loma Linda, California*

**Aaron Pippin Rapo**

*DVA Palo Alto  
Palo Alto, California*

**Mohammad Salehi**

*Pending*

**Hamda Shakil**

*Pending*

**Jaya Rachel Sigamala**

*University of Texas  
Rio Grande Valley  
Harlingen, Texas*

**Vanessa Courtney Som**

*DVA Palo Alto  
Palo Alto, California*

**Jalen Michael Sullivan**

*Pending*

**Connor Payton Thunshelle** **ΠΔ**

*Scripps Mercy Hospital  
San Diego, California*

**Phuong NN Tran**

*DVA New Mexico  
Kaiser Foundation  
Albuquerque, New Mexico*

**Quang Minh Truong**

*Fountain Valley Medical Center  
Fountain Valley, California*

**Arsh Vaid**

*DVA Orlando  
Orlando, Florida*

### ΠΔ Pi Delta National Podiatric Medicine Honor Society

PLEASE NOTE: The preceding list of graduates is based on information supplied by the Registrar's Office. Although every effort was made to ensure that the information was correct at the time the program was printed, a student's status may change after that date. Graduation status, degree completion, and academic honors are subject to a final degree requirements evaluation by the Registrar's Office. The posting of the earned degree on the official transcript record in the Registrar's Office remains the official testimony of the possession of the degree.

DEGREE CANDIDATES: If your name has been misspelled, misplaced, or wrongly omitted, please advise the Registrar's Office.





# DR. SAMUEL MERRITT

## A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

**SAMUEL MERRITT, MD** was born in 1822 in Harpswell, Maine, and graduated from the Medical School of Maine at Bowdoin College. After practicing medicine in Plymouth, Massachusetts for three years, Dr. Merritt joined the great migration of 1849 to California. Here he made his fortune as a businessman and his reputation as one of the leading founders of the Bay Area.

When Dr. Merritt died forty years later in 1890, the *Oakland Tribune* called him the man most prominent in the establishment and building of the City of Oakland. He had touched every aspect of public life here, serving as the thirteenth Mayor of Oakland, and one of the original Regents of the University of California. Dr. Merritt played a significant role in the creation of Lake Merritt and the construction of the Oakland Public Library and City Hall. As the first president of the Mountain View Cemetery, he continued to influence the architectural landscape of the city. In his will, Dr. Merritt provided for the establishment of Samuel Merritt Hospital and the training school for nurses that has now evolved into Samuel Merritt University.

Dr. Merritt died before Samuel Merritt Hospital and its school were built. However, his fortune and forward thinking made the founding of the institution possible. Today the women and men who carry on his mission — as students, faculty, and staff — are looking ahead to the next one hundred years. The transformation of Samuel Merritt University in the twenty-first century continues the tradition started long ago by this extraordinary individual who had a mighty vision for the quality and well-being of the East Bay community.



# ACADEMIC COSTUME

The history of the academic dress worn by those participating in the graduation processional reaches far back into the early days of the oldest universities. The academic costume consists of the gown, hood, cap, and tassel. The hoods worn by the participants are lined with the official color or colors of the college or university from which they received the degree. The edging of the hood is in widths of two inches, three inches, and five inches for the bachelor's, master's, and doctor's degrees, respectively. The color of the hood edging is indicative of the subject to which the individual's degree pertains. For all academic ceremonies the colors associated with the different subject areas are as follows:

## DEGREE

## COLOR

Agriculture	Maize
Arts/Letters	White
Commerce/Business	Drab
Oratory	Silver Gray
Pharmacy	Olive Green
Economics	Copper
Education	Light Blue
Engineering	Orange
Fine Arts	Brown
Forestry	Russet
Journalism	Crimson
Law	Purple
Library Science	Lemon
Medicine	Green

## DEGREE

## COLOR

Music	Pink
Nursing	Apricot
<b>Occupational Therapy</b>	<b>Green</b>
Dentistry	Lilac
Philosophy	Dark Blue
<b>Physical Therapy</b>	<b>Teal</b>
Physician Assistant	Green
<b>Podiatric Medicine</b>	<b>Nile Green</b>
Public Administration	Peacock Blue
Public Health	Salmon Pink
Science	Golden Yellow
Social Work	Citron
Theology	Scarlet
Veterinary Medicine	Gray



# *The* HIPPOCRATIC OATH

**I SWEAR TO FULFILL**, to the best of my ability and judgement, this covenant:

**I WILL** respect the hard-won scientific gains of those in whose steps I walk, and gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow.

**I WILL** respect the privacy, rights and dignity of all individuals.

**I WILL** act with compassion and caring.

**I WILL** act with respect for differences and in ways that promote inclusion.

**I WILL** act with integrity and exercise sound judgement in ethical and legal practice.

**I WILL** not be ashamed to say, "I do not know," nor will I fail to call in my colleagues when the skills of another are needed for a patient's recovery.

**I WILL** remember that I am treating a whole person and will advocate for their needs and rights to services and resources.

**I WILL** use my professional skills and knowledge to improve the health and wellbeing of the diverse communities I serve.

**I WILL** remember that I remain a member of society, with special obligations to all my fellow human beings.

**I MAKE THESE PROMISES** solemnly, freely, and upon my honor.

# FACULTY

## COLLEGE *of* HEALTH SCIENCES

**Sathees Chandra · PhD** *Professor and Dean, College of Health Sciences*

**Ben Barr · PhD** *Assistant Professor and Chair, Department of Social Work*

**Keith Schildt · PhD** *Professor and Associate Dean for Programming, Global Health Initiative*

**Sergio Serna · MSW, LCSW** *Instructor and Director of Practicum Placement, Department of Social Work*

## BASIC SCIENCES

**Kamla Ahluwalia · PhD** *Assistant Professor and Co-chair, Department of Basic Sciences*

**Mary Premenko-Lanier · PhD** *Associate Professor, Co-chair, Department of Basic Sciences*

Akash Khare · MD

Karissa Legleiter · EdD

Richard Rocco · PhD

Rhea Kimpo · PhD

Lisa Margerum · PhD

## OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

**Yvette Meré-Cook · EdD, OTR/L** *Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Occupational Therapy*

Marci Baptista · OTD, OTR/L, CHT

Kate Hayner · EdD, OTR/L

Diane Tom · OTD, OTR/L

Elizabeth Ching · OTD, OTR/L

Jack Kleine · OTD, OTR/L

Nichole Vasquez · OTD, OTR/L

Domenique Embrey · OTD, OTR/L

Jessica Richman · OTD, OTR/L

Robyn Wu · OTD, OTR/L

## DOCTOR *of* PHYSICAL THERAPY

**Sharon Gorman · DPTSc, PT, GCS** *Professor and Chair, Department of Physical Therapy*

Sheryl Ettinger · DPT, PT, PCS

Angela Rusher · PhD, DPT, PT, NCS

Kristen Waller · DPT, PT, NCS

Heidi McGregor Garske · PhD, DPT, PT

Hoda Salsabili · PhD, PT

Andy Weyer · PhD, DPT, PT

Preeti Nair · PhD, PT

Jeffrey South · DPT, PT, OCS

Robert Nee · PhD, PT

Tracey Wagner · DPT, PT, OCS

FACULTY, *continued...*

## COLLEGE *of* PODIATRIC MEDICINE

**Mark Razzante · DPM** *Assistant Professor, Dean, College of Podiatric Medicine*

**Cherri Choate · DPM** *Assistant Professor, Associate Dean of Educational Affairs, College of Podiatric Medicine*

**Esther Kwon · DPM** *Assistant Professor, Associate Dean of Clinical Affairs, College of Podiatric Medicine*

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Joel Clark · DPM

Mona Dini · DPM

Timothy Dutra · DPM

Louis Gilles · DPM

Stephen Hill · PhD

Christina Pratt · DPM

Alexander Reyzelman · DPM

Charles Starrett · DPM

William Stiers · MD

David Tran · DPM

Mher Vartivarian · DPM

Tracey Vlahovic · DPM

Bennett Zier · MD



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Former Director,  
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Prager, Sealy & Co., LLC

## Katherine Schapiro · BA

Principal,  
KS Investment Consulting

## Conrad Vial · MD

Senior Vice President  
and Chief Clinical Officer,  
Sutter Health

## Ching-Hua Wang · MD, PhD

President,  
Samuel Merritt University

## Lisa Zuffi · BA

Retired, Senior Vice President  
and Group Director,  
Signature Bank

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Executive Vice President  
and Provost

## David Lawlor · BA

Executive Vice President  
Chief Operating Officer

## Lindsey McClenahan · BA

Vice President of Advancement  
and Communications

## Emily Prieto-Tseregounis · PhD

Vice President of External Affairs  
and Chief of Staff to the President

## Gina Squara · BS

Vice President of Strategic Growth  
and Marketing

## Ching-Hua Wang · MD, PhD

President



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*[samuelmerritt.edu](http://samuelmerritt.edu)*