



CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

COMMENCEMENT

DECEMBER 19, 2025

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Prelude

Soohyun Yun, piano

***National Anthem**

Concert Singers, Dr. Will Griswold, conductor
Soohyun Yun, piano

***Processional**

“Pomp and Circumstance” by Edward Elgar
Soohyun Yun, piano

***Invocation**

Jon Davis

Associate Vice President for Spiritual Life

Welcome

Dean Murphy

Chairman, Board of Trustees

Hymn

“Joy to the World”

Concert Singers, Dr. Will Griswold, conductor
Soohyun Yun, piano

Special Music

“Go Tell It On the Mountain” arr. Robert Hobby
Concert Singers, Dr. Will Griswold, conductor
Soohyun Yun, piano

Senior Class Statement

Hannah Dawson

Student Government Association President

Introduction of Speaker

B. Keith Faulkner

President

COMMENCEMENT

CONTINUED

Commencement Address

Jeff Wilson

President, HCA Healthcare Charleston

Chief Executive Officer, HCA Healthcare Trident Hospital

Presentation of Honorary Doctor of Business

B. Keith Faulkner

President

Roger S. Nielsen '74

Honoree

Presentation of Candidates for Degrees

Michael S. Wilder

Provost

Conferring of Degrees

B. Keith Faulkner

President

*Alma Mater

Concert Singers, Dr. Will Griswold, conductor

Soohyun Yun, piano

*Prayer of Consecration and Benediction

Michael S. Wilder

Provost

**Recessional

“Marche Militaire” by Schubert

Soohyun Yun, piano

* The audience will please stand.

** The audience will remain in their places until graduates have dispersed.

Join us for a light reception following the ceremony.



CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

College of Education

Helaysia Ayanna Buford
Ashley Downs †
Alyse Marie Durel §
Jayla N Edwards*
Ciera Brooke Fenton

Gabrielle Channing Flower*
Matthew Lee Glover
Taylor Shay Halfacre*
Michael A. Holmes
Gabriella Marie Pacheco

Catherine Lee Sweatt §
Matthew A. Tipton
Chloe Zeitner

Hans A. Nielsen College of Business

Nyasia Montice Blackmon
Benjamin Christopher Bullock Jr.
Hailey Marie Casselman
Alexis Cora Crownover*
Parker Hiott Dawson
Ana Katyn DeCoe Cobb †
Madison Hannelore Driggers
Aizley Catherine Fuller †
Tempest Grace Giet*
Aaron Guadarrama II

Ronnie Hayes II
Sophia Marie Holem † ≈
Madeline Kicklighter
Natalie Elizabeth King †
Jacob Thomas Lemmonds
Claire Keeler Lynch
Hailey Grace Matijow †
Chloe Grace Phillips*
Erin Elizabeth Posey
Parashos Matthew Psihoulas

Joel Alexandre Rodriguez
Jack Wesley Carlton Rowland
Jake Simpson
Saylor Sutton
Maxwell Taylor
Milenka Melody Vargas Benavides
McKenley Anne Wells*

College of Adult and Professional Studies

John Ahler
Gloria Camilla Tiara Brown*
Brian Copeland
Khalilah Sanaa Deveauxx
Sophia Madison Dingmon
James Willard Dismond
Andrea Gertrud Ernstberger †
Tanner Kyle Finch
Samuel David Funk

Jacob Patrick Gildea
Alejandra Gonzalez Balderas §
John Elmore Gradick V
Chad Sims Ishmal
Charles Derrick Johnson †
Kayla Caroline Johnson §
Cora Mataya
Cassondra Ja'Lissa Miles^
Justin Bruce Murray

Rachel Nargi*
Payal D. Patel §
Jennifer Hodges Riley*
Nathaniel Segres III
Acoya Breyon Smith
Tieunish Dyeunell Smith
Reagan Danielle Vasquez
Matthew Avery Williamson

College of Nursing

Nicole Marie Adams*
Brenda Abigail Alatorre Rodriguez
Keerstin Augustin
Kelly Alexis Becker
Morgan Cary §
Cara Gaynell Corrigan
Megan Doscher
Taylor Elizabeth Douglas
Meredith Grace Eubanks
Daniela Figueroa Arriojas
Anna Marie Grayson*

Emilee Sue Karelse
Lyric Jade Lane
Ariel Leek
Mary Marshall McKenzie
Claire Angalee McLennan
Abbigale Prosser Mims
Kane Catfish Murfin^
Anna Beth Peterson
Meredith Shelley Ramirez
Ashley Shields Robertson*
Ana Rojas Diaz

Adriana Rebeca Segura Canola*
Jordan Lynn Stracensky
Sydney Sutphin
Lily Joy Trephan
Alaina Rae Weatherford
Brooke Ashtyn Welch
Gabriella Zapata

CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

College of Science and Mathematics

Elisa A. Assaf
Katie D. Baxley +
Conner Alexander Brandon +
William Tyrone Cason II^
William James Chambers
Matthew John Clark
Connor Nathaniel Cook +
V. E. Leanne Gaskins
Ariel Faith Godsey
Karlie Adora Hayes § ~

Meredith Elyse Henderson +
Evan Charles Hill* ~
Jacob Irmen*
Raelyn Sade Jordan^
Olivia Nicole Keeter §
Brayden Michael Kirkland*
Karly Jane Moos +
Kylee Hope QiongRong Nanna*
Adonis Pineda
Anna Lynette Reynolds § ^

Michela Rhett
Symone Ariel Simmons +
Colton Dallas Stice
Charlotte Eden Strobl*
Malea Thomson*
Minh Hoang Tran*
Lochlynn Tweedie*
Jordan Anthony Vasquez
Jason Caleb Alexander Vestrand
Camden Bradshaw Woodman +

College of Health Sciences

Magdalena Birkner
Kayla Nicole Burr
Jenna Campbell +
Arrionna E. Cogsdill*
Jayden Arthur Harper
Caitlin Grace Hollingsworth
Christian Mariner +
Kaylee Ann Nolen §

Aaron James Pierce
Brandon Carson Powell
Billy L. Price §
Timhu Kenloi Samuel Richards
Jemma Christine Romano
Skylar Sanders
Kiran Hannah Sharma § ~
Semaya Maryssa Stokes

Sierra Nicole Sumpter
Jared Terhune ^
Taylor Turner +
Samantha Erin Vance
Kinley Grace Verastegui*
Grace Waite +

College of Christian Studies

Bryson Preston Bishop
Aaron Michael Bright

Megan Jordan Garner*
Annabelle Hope Hamrick §

Mollie Elizabeth Wolfe

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

Landon Owen Amick
Susana Arboleda*
Serenity Baker
Emily Morgan Bauer +
Ashton Ramon Becks
Tanner Grace Berry
Jamil Tariq Bishop-Al-jabbar
Allison Grace Bryant*
Keturah Michelle Grace Cartwright
Susana De Jesus Polo Castillo*
Anna Irene Dahlberg
Harmony Dede Doku
Allie Briana Dombkowski
Delaney Grace Evers
Jayon Lewis Ferrell

Susan L. Fisk +
Sarah Ann Gangl
Isaiah Gordon
Hayden R. Henry §
Eric Alexander Hodge
Sophia M. Kluska +
Adrianna Senae Mackie §
Gabriela McCauley
Davis Marie McNeill
Alyssa Pomer Medina
Katherine Grace Morton § ~
Tais Pineda Mora*
Nelson Alejandro Ponce-Real
Roosevelt A. Pringle^
Emily Hayes Rahalewicz*

Julie E. Reist
Lewis Carter Rice
Mackenzie Rutkoff
Jordan Alexis Sharp
Kaden Smith
Riley Griffith Thompson +
Madeline Van Huss §
Harleen Virk*
Alisha Jolynn Whisnant +
Korey Jamir Williams
Hannah Grace Williamson* ~
Chase Wilson
Logan Worley

* Cum Laude (3.5 - 3.74 GPA)
† Magna Cum Laude (3.75 - 3.89 GPA)
§ Summa Cum Laude (3.9 - 4.0 GPA)
~ Honors Program
^ U.S. Military Veteran

ACADEMIC REGALIA AND CEREMONY

The history of academic dress dates back to the 14th century. Their use was presumably for warmth in the unheated building during European winters. Now, they are reminders of the years of work required to earn academic degrees. The color and pageantry of the academic regalia prevalent in the United States today was fixed by convention in 1895 and revised in 1932, 1959, and 1986.

There are three basic academic gowns. The gown for bachelor degrees has pointed sleeves and is worn closed. The gown for master degrees has oblong sleeves with slit openings at the elbow and the base hanging down. It is worn with a hood, and the color indicates the discipline of the degree. The doctoral gown is tastefully ornamented with colored velvet down the front and three chevrons on the bell-shaped sleeves. Only presidential gowns have a fourth chevron on the sleeves. Both the master's and doctor's hoods have a velvet border, with the doctoral hood being the more elaborate. A gold tassel on the doctor's cap replaces the black* on the master's and bachelor's caps.

The colors lining the hoods worn by the faculty are those of the institution granting the degree and the velvet border indicates the branch of knowledge in which the degree was acquired. The colors for the subjects are:

Arts and Humanities *White*

Business *Drab*

Economics *Copper*

Education *Light Blue*

Fine Arts *Brown*

Law *Purple*

Library Science *Lemon*

Medicine *Green*

Music *Pink*

Nursing *Apricot*

Philosophy *Dark Blue*

Physical Education *Sage Green*

Physical Therapy *Teal*

Science *Golden Yellow*

Theology *Scarlet*

GRADUATION BIBLE

In addition to their diplomas, each graduate will be presented with a CSU Graduation Bible provided through the Frank J. and Brenda B. Johnson Bible Endowment and the Lockman Foundation.

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

Jeff Wilson

*President, HCA Healthcare Charleston
Chief Executive Officer, HCA Healthcare Trident Hospital*

Mr. Jeff Wilson joined the Charleston community in March 2024 and is President of HCA Healthcare Charleston and Chief Executive Officer of HCA Healthcare Trident Hospital. He brings more than 20 years of experience with HCA Healthcare, including 13 years in the San Antonio Division, where he served as Chief Executive Officer of Methodist Hospital | Stone Oak and previously of Methodist Hospital | Specialty and Transplant.

Earlier in his career, Wilson worked at both the federal and state levels, focusing on healthcare policy and improving coordination between public and private health systems. His leadership reflects a deep commitment to advancing patient care, strengthening health systems, and developing future healthcare professionals. He holds an undergraduate degree from the University of Kansas, a certificate in Management from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and a master's degree from Virginia Commonwealth University.

HCA Healthcare Charleston and Charleston Southern University share a strong partnership, particularly with CSU's nursing and health sciences programs. Their investment in education and clinical collaboration plays a vital role in preparing CSU graduates to lead and serve in healthcare.



HONOREE

Roger Nielsen '74

Founder, Abbey Color Incorporated and Abbey Companies

Alumnus Roger Nielsen's life and leadership reflect the very best of Charleston Southern University.

Roger Nielsen came to what was then Baptist College from New Jersey to play baseball. He earned his accounting degree in 1974 and went on to build a remarkable business career as the owner of Abbey Color Incorporated in Philadelphia and Abbey Companies, now the world's premier dye manufacturer. Today, the company continues under the leadership of his children, Brian Nielsen and Dr. Kristen Nielsen-Donnelly, extending the Nielsen legacy of excellence and purpose.

For many years, Roger and his wife, Joyce, supported CSU quietly, never seeking recognition. But after the Emanuel 9 tragedy, Roger watched with amazement as Buccaneer baseball player Chris Singleton stood before the world and declared: "Love is stronger than hate." Inspired by Chris's courage and faith, Roger felt called to invest more deeply in CSU. In 2018, he committed to support Buccaneer baseball, and Nielsen Field was later named in honor of his family.

Roger's impact extends far beyond athletics. Recognized for his business insight and passion for mentoring students, he joined the College of Business Executive in Residence program in 2018 and the Board of Advisors in 2019. In 2022, through the generosity of Roger, his wife Joyce, and their children, the university named the business school the Hans A. Nielsen College of Business in honor of Roger's father.

The Nielsen family's support—much of it offered quietly—has strengthened programs such as the Center for Personal Financial Management and launched the Community Research Institute, which gives CSU students real-world opportunities to serve the community through evidence-based solutions.

The Nielsen family's commitment—financial and personal—is helping CSU expand its reach and prepare students to lead with faith and purpose. Roger has said, "We were taught to create wealth, not accumulate it."

Roger Nielsen's journey from student-athlete to entrepreneur, mentor, and philanthropist exemplifies Christian leadership in business and the heart of this university.

Alma Mater

Hail to thee, O Charleston Southern:
Fount of God's great truth and knowledge.
We thy children all sing praises ever more to thee.
Source of inspiration, beacon of salvation;
Honor, Courage, Faith, and Justice
These thou hast taught us day by day.
Hail to thee, O Charleston Southern,
Alma Mater Hail!

