



CONVOCATION

**FRIDAY, THE TWENTY-FIRST OF AUGUST
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX**

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES,
PRESIDENT ELIZABETH A. RIDER,
AND THE FACULTY AND STAFF OF
Elizabethtown College

WELCOME YOU TO



CONVOCATION

**FRIDAY, THE TWENTY-FIRST OF AUGUST
IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-SIX**

CONVOCATION PROGRAM

Processional*

Marshals

Shannon M. Clancy, Ph.D.
Elizabeth D. Dalton, Ph.D.
Kurt M. DeGoede, Ph.D.
Kristin M. Kurjiaka '18, DSW
Sarah Noveral, M.S.
Kevin T. Shorner-Johnson, Ph.D.
Deborah Waltermire, DrPH, OTR/L

Students

Faculty

Senior Administrators & Deans

President's Party

Senior Director for Student
Experience & Leadership

Stacey L. Zimmerman, MSL'26

Peer Mentor

Katie E. Idgunji '28

Interim Provost & Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Jodi L. Lancaster, Ph.D.

Vice President for Student Life
& Dean of Students

Nichole J. Gonzalez, MBA

Lead Peer Mentors

Trey A. Firestone '27

Emma R. O'Toole '26

Kate E. Wellons '27

Chaplain & Director of
Spiritual & Religious Life

Rev. Amy B. Shorner-Johnson

Mace-Bearer

Tara L. Moore '01, Ph.D., P'25

President

Elizabeth A. Rider, Ph.D.

*Audience members, if able, are invited to stand.

Opening Remarks	Stacey L. Zimmerman, MSL'26
Student Welcome	Katie E. Idgunji '28
Recognition of Newly Promoted Faculty & Recognition of Academic Achievements & Awards	Jodi L. Lancaster, Ph.D.
Presentation of the Class of 2030	Nichole J. Gonzalez, MBA
Convocation Presidential Address	Elizabeth A. Rider, Ph.D.
Interfaith Blessing of the Learners*	Rev. Amy B. Shorner-Johnson
Candle Lighting & Litany of Light	Trey A. Firestone '27 Emma R. O'Toole '26 Kate E. Wellons '27 <i>Lead Peer Mentors</i>
Closing Remarks	Stacey L. Zimmerman, MSL'26
Alma Mater* Jennie Miller Via, Class of 1909 Revised by James Haines, Ph.D. '81 / Arr. Darrell Douglas	Kaitlin M. Riley '27 Alicia M. Le '26, M.S.'27 Nate R. Kubasko '28 Andrew R. Wickenheiser '28
Recessional*	



TAP FOR
CLOSED-CAPTIONING
SERVICE

NEWLY PROMOTED FACULTY

Patrick S. Allen, Ph.D.

Promoted to Associate Professor of English Literature and Tenured

Wendy L. Bellew '95, M.Ed.

Promoted to Associate Teaching Professor of Education and Program Director

Laura B. Cunningham '07, M.S.'08, OTD'24, OTR/L, CCTP

Promoted to Associate Teaching Professor of Occupational Therapy

Diane M. Martin, OTD, OTR/L

*Promoted to Associate Teaching Professor of Occupational Therapy
and Capstone Coordinator for Doctoral Program*

Terrie L. Riportella, CPA

*Promoted to Edgar T. Bitting Chair of Accounting and Associate Teaching Professor
and Director of the Accounting Program*

Dionna C. Rookey, M.S., MSPAS, PA-C

*Promoted to Associate Teaching Professor of Physician Assistant Program
and Program Director*

Jingwen "Jessica" Wang, Ph.D.

Promoted to Associate Professor of Computer Science and Tenured

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND AWARDS

2025-2026 Kreider Prize for Teaching Excellence Recipient

Leyla Batakci, Ph.D.

Professor of Mathematics

2025-2026 Polanowski Prize for Excellence in Faculty-Student Advising and Mentorship Recipient

Oya Dursun-Özkanca, Ph.D.

*Professor of Political Science (College Professor of International Studies Endowed Chair) and
Director of the Honors Program*

2025-2026 Ranck Prize for Research Excellence Recipient

Kirsten A. Johnson, Ph.D.

Professor of Communications

2025-2026 Schmidt Prize for Excellence in Student-Faculty Service Recipient

Wendy L. Bellew '95, M.Ed.

Assistant Teaching Professor of Education & Program Chair

EMERGENT SCHOLARS

Habiba M. Abouelnagah, *Engineering*
Marvellous Alagbe, *Mathematical Business*
Audrey M. Allen, *Health Sciences*
Cadence G. Anderson, *Biology - Health Professions*
Ethan M. Armao, *Music Education*
Sarah P. Avenarius, *Biology - Health Professions*
Benjamin Backenstose, *Finance*
Lucas J. Beaver, *Engineering*
Madelyn L. Becker, *Psychology*
Maren R. Beckett, *Actuarial Science*
Tatiana M. Belair, *Business Administration*
Patricia Boukamp, *Early Childhood Education*
David J. Bray, *Chemistry*
Ronelaire Cafirma, *International Business*
Nicole M. Cecconi, *Early Childhood Education*
Ava G. Chapman, *Early Childhood Education*
Vanessa Chavez Gallegos, *International Business*
Anastacia I. Colon, *Legal Studies*
Tessa C. Conville, *Criminal Justice*
Zane A. Cooper, *Engineering*
Robert Costello, *Communications - Journalism*
Isabella G. Cowger, *Actuarial Science*
Emma G. Dahl, *Psychology*
Katia N. Daly, *Computer Science*
Sanya V. Dedhia, *Biology - Health Professions*
Ava K. Deeter, *Communications - Journalism*
Lydia C. DeFacis, *Health Sciences*
Breanna M. DeLarme, *Psychology*
Christopher DiPlacido, *Finance*
Scott A. Domboski, *Information Systems*
Emilee N. Drumheiser, *Early Childhood Education*
Jessica H. Dunn, *Exercise Science*
Shalyn R. Eaton, *Political Science*
Ella C. Fasnacht, *Mathematics Education*
Madeline Ferraro, *Early Childhood Education*
Nicholas Fiorini, *Business Administration*
Abigail Frantz, *Early Childhood Education*
Miranda G. Freeman, *International Business*
Aaron J. Frist, *Computer Science*
Natalie M. Frohnhofer, *Early Childhood Education*
Caleb J. Frymoyer, *Early Childhood Education*
Ella G. Fulk, *Political Science*
Karly F. Ghaner, *Psychology*
Shannon N. Gingrich, *Social Work*
Arun P. Gopinath, *Biochemistry & Molecular Biology*
Seth C. Haak, *Engineering*
Emily A. Hammaker, *Accounting*
Jacqueline E. Hammond, *Biochemistry & Molecular Biology*

EMERGENT SCHOLARS (CONTINUED)

Emily R. Harrell, *Music Education*
Gavin A. Hawley, *Engineering*
Katie E. Heim, *Social Work*
Elias I. Homer, *Undecided/Undeclared*
Ty M. Hornick, *Engineering*
Isabella Johnston, *Biology - Health Professions*
Annabelle G. Keefer, *Psychology*
Evan J. Kenny, *Communications - Journalism*
Claire Koar, *Asian Studies*
Austin R. Kohler, *Biology - Health Professions*
Emily G. Kozemchak, *Health Sciences*
Nathan R. Kubasko, *Psychology*
Paul F. Kvech, *Actuarial Science*
Adam J. Lawrence, *Engineering*
Avonlea Lechleitner, *Biotechnology*
Kaedyn J. Lentz, *Early Childhood Education*
Olivia B. Leslie, *International Business*
Gage C. Lucas, *Biology - Health Professions*
Victoria Luck, *Psychology-PreMCP 3+2*
Mary Mansberger, *Psychology-PreMCP 3+2*
Nathan Marshall, *Computer Science*
Sahan Mathew Shinoj, *Biology - Health Professions*
Joshua McCoy, *Accounting*
Jonah McDonald, *Psychology*
Hailey A. Meyer, *Engineering*
Kaiden D. Miller, *Computer Science*
Elliot M. Mock, *English Literature*
Nathan Moser, *Finance*
Kayla J. Myer, *Health Sciences*
Collin C. Neiles, *Finance*
Sydney E. Newshel, *Health Sciences*
Patrick Neyer, *Engineering*
Panagiotis Omiridis, *Accounting*
Jonathan E. Oxendine, *Finance*
Josh Painter, *Japanese*
Joie A. Palma, *Health Sciences*
Delaney K. Parker, *Health Sciences*
Gage M. Patterson, *Biology - Health Professions*
Jonah M. Pertet, *Engineering*
Ashley Queen, *Fine Art*
Mercy M. Rao, *Health Sciences*
Brett Reed, *Engineering*
Emma S. Rizzutto, *Early Childhood Education*
Trent F. Robinson, *Finance*
Rachel Rooff, *Early Childhood Education*
Jack S. Rosen, *Actuarial Science*
Julianna M. Ruhf, *Biology - Health Professions*

Sophia K. Rulavage, *Music Education*
Samara Ruth, *Early Childhood Education*
Omar N. Saif, *Chemistry Laboratory Science*
Kathy Saldana Renteria, *Computer Science*
Kelly A. Salvatore, *English Literature*
Lucas D. Scheib, *Engineering*
Ella C. Scholes, *Health Sciences*
Dhriti Shah, *Biology - Health Professions*
Riley N. Sharpnack, *Exercise Science*
Maureen E. Smith, *Graphic Design*
Alana Solimini, *Political Science*
Lucy J. Stanek, *Environmental Science*
Brandon J. Stepp, *Engineering*
Abigail Stine, *Healthcare Administration*
Marina R. Tague, *Music Therapy*
An T. Tran, *Biology - Health Professions*
Gavin M. Troutman, *Exercise Science*
Maya C. Tumolo, *English Literature*
Emanuel J. Velazquez, *International Business*
Sam M. Vossen, *Information Systems*
Luke J. Vottero, *Elem/Middle Education - Social Studies*
Jake C. Vottero, *Engineering*
Hannah K. Walker, *Biology - Health Professions*
Kaylee J. Whiteford, *Biochemistry & Molecular Biology*
Alison Williams, *Business Administration*
William Withall, *Engineering*
Taylor N. Witmyer, *Health Sciences*
Brendan M. Yatsko, *Biotechnology*
Liliana B. Zimmerman, *Social Work*

Emergent Scholars hold at least a 3.75 cumulative GPA at the end of their first three semesters. They must be full-time undergraduate students with at least 42 credits. Note some scholars are not listed due to FERPA restrictions. The above names are accurate as of Dec. 2025.

EMERGENT SCHOLARS MENTORS

Alireza Askarzadeh, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor of Finance*
Leyla Batakci, Ph.D., *Professor of Mathematics*
Jean C. Batista Abreu, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Engineering*
Wendy L. Bellew '95, M.Ed., *Associate Teaching Professor of Education & Program Director*
Kathryn A. Caprino, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Education & Director of the Teaching and Learning Design Studio*
Nancy A. Carlson, Ph.D., OTR/L, *Associate Professor of Occupational Therapy*
Elizabeth D. Dalton, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Psychology & Program Director*
Marla Davis '15, MSOT'16, OTD, OTR/L, *Assistant Professor of Occupational Therapy*
Amy E. Defnet, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor of Biochemistry*
Kurt M. DeGoede, Ph.D., *Professor of Engineering*
Hayden R. Denesha, D.M.A., *Artist-in-Residence, Music Program, Director of Instrumental Studies*
Sean di Renzo, *Esperanto Scholar-in-Residence, Modern Languages Program*
Erica M. Dolson, MFA, *Assistant Teaching Professor of English & Director of the Bowers Writers House*
Joni Eisenhauer, M.S., *Assistant Director of Health Promotion*
Emily Yoder Frantz, MMT, MT-BC, *Assistant Teaching Professor of Music Therapy & Program Director*
Barry L. Fritz, *Technical Operations Director*
Matthew P. Fritz, D.M.A., *Professor of Music*
Jaime L. Gibson, M.S., *Adjunct Faculty, Psychology*
Anya Goldina, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Biology*
Rachel M. Grove Rohrbaugh, MLIS, *Archivist, Earl H. and Anita F. Hess Archives and Special Collections*
Michelle L. Henry, M.S., *Director of the Learning Zone*
Kirsten A. Johnson, Ph.D., *Professor of Communications*
Kristin M. Kurjiaka '18, DSW, *Assistant Teaching Professor of Social Work & Field Education Director*
Peilong Li, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Computer Science & Program Director*
Jeffery D. Long, Ph.D., *Carl W. Zeigler Professor of Religious Studies*
James A. MacKay, Ph.D., *A. C. Baugher Professor of Chemistry*
Luke D. Mackey '17, MPP'18, *Assistant Director of the Honors Program & Program Assistant for Academic Affairs*
Tina M. Martin, M.A., *Scholar-in-Residence, Engineering & Computer Science*
Paula C. Nelson, D.M.A., *Adjunct Instructor of Flute*
Veronica F. Nolt, M.Ed., *Assistant Director of Athletics, Head Women's Basketball Coach, & Senior Woman Administrator*
Robert M. Northington, Ph.D., *Assistant Professor of Biology & Environmental Science*
Sarah Noveral, M.S., *Assistant Teaching Professor & Lab Coordinator, Biological & Environmental Sciences*
Oya Dursun-Özkanca, Ph.D., *Professor of Political Science (College Professor of International Studies Endowed Chair) and Director of the Honors Program*
Kevin Peters, Ph.D., *Assistant Teaching Professor of Education*
Maria J. Petty, M.S., *Director of Global Engagement*
Lena K. Poff '96, M.A., *Director of Field Experiences, Education*
Jean E. Pretz, Ph.D., *Professor of Psychology*

Stephanie A. Rankin, M.S., *Associate Dean of Students, Director of Academic Advising & Center for Student Success*

Nancy J. Reddig, M.S., *Assistant Teaching Professor of Information Systems*

Terrie L. Riportella, CPA, *Edgar T. Bitting Chair of Accounting & Director of the Accounting Program*

Jeffrey A. Rood, Ph.D., *Professor of Chemistry*

Milagros Saez, M.Ed., *Adjunct Faculty, Modern Languages*

Curtis J. Smith, MFA, *Adjunct Faculty, English*

Adam J. Swartzendruber, D.H.Ed, CSCS, NSCA-CPT, TSAC-F, *Assistant Teaching Professor of Exercise Science & Program Director*

Nobuaki Takahashi, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Japanese*

Gene A. Thomas, M.S., *Assistant Director of the Learning Zone*

Judson E. Wagner, Ed.D., *Assistant Teaching Professor of Physics*

Jingwen “Jessica” Wang, Ph.D., *Associate Professor of Computer Science*

Christina G. Watkins, M.A., *Scholar-in-Residence, Mathematics*

Suzanne E. Webster, DPhil., *Ralph W. Schlosser Professor of English & Program Director*

Debra L. Wohl, Ph.D., *Professor of Biology*

Ashley D. Yinger, Ph.D., *Assistant Teaching Professor of Criminal Justice*

LITANY OF LIGHT

- Leader:** Each of us has talents, abilities, knowledge, and purpose.
- Response:** *We strive to use our talents, abilities, knowledge, and purpose to make our community stronger.*
- Leader:** Each one of us is committed to the College's motto of Educate for Service.
- Response:** *We commit to using our education to serve, grow, create, and discover.*
- Leader:** Etown values integrity, courage, and a willingness to try new things.
- Response:** *We are committed to acting with integrity, being courageous and having a growth mindset.*
- Leader:** You all belong here and we are Etown because of you.
- Response:** *We will uphold the sense of belonging for every student and will build community in our classrooms, in athletics, in our clubs, and all around campus.*

THE ALMA MATER

We hail you Alma Mater dear,
As now we sing your praise;
O let your walls and storied halls
Resound with song always.

The just and fair alike do share
The labor of your hand;
Together they proclaim always
Your glory through the land.

As long as breezes 'round you blow,
And endless ages roll,
May countless honors on you rest,
While we your name extol.

CHORUS:
We Educate for Service,
To that we will be true;
We love you ever, oh E.C.
And your colors Gray and Blue.

A LETTER TO THE CLASS OF 2030

Dear Class of 2030,

Welcome, new Blue Jays, to Elizabethtown College! We are sure it doesn't feel real yet, but trust us, one day you will be the seniors writing a similar letter to this one, wondering how it all went by so fast. There will be a lot of people who give you suggestions on how to soak up the "college experience." They're not wrong. But the truth is that you might not always realize what matters most while you are busy in the semester. The little things, like walks across campus, people you see regularly, and Blue Bean coffee trips, are the things that will end up meaning more than you expect.

We all had our moments where it felt like things were falling apart, and other times everything fell into place. Both are equally important and inevitable in the college experience. You will grow in ways you never thought you could, and likely won't notice the growth until later. That's normal and part of the journey.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not have to have everything figured out here at Etown. None of us graduates did. You will find little bits and pieces of yourself in late study nights, setbacks, and conversations with friends that allow you to discover who you are.

If we can say anything as the Class of 2026, it is this: **be where you are.** These years, while they may feel long in the moment, truly fly by. One day, you will wish you could go back to running into a friend on campus or laughing with roommates. Hold on to these moments. They all add up. We are all leaving with more than we ever expected, and less time than we hoped for. But as the Class of 2026, we are grateful for it all. Please take care of our nest and cherish your years here at Etown.

With love,

The Class of 2026

