



**National
University**
Of Health Sciences

**College of Professional Studies
and
College of Allied Health Sciences
& Distance Education
Commencement Ceremony**



**Friday
The Twenty-First of August
Two-Thousand and Twenty-Six**

*Earl G. Liss Auditorium
Lombard, Illinois*

Because:

- **We value students** as unique individuals seeking quality health sciences education through our service and support;
- **We value being progressive**, knowledgeable, adaptable, original, and academically sound in our academic programs;
- **We value the substantive quality of our curricula** through emphasis upon academic excellence;
- **We value progress** achieved by the development of new knowledge and its importance to chiropractic medicine and other complementary healing arts and sciences;
- **We value quality** training and practice in the clinical skills of all relevant programs with particular emphasis upon the physician/patient relationship within the first professional programs;
- **We value complementary and alternative care** for its emphasis upon holism and use of the least invasive therapeutic procedures necessary for optimizing human health;
- **We value collegiality and cooperation** among all members of the University community, the related professions, other health care systems, and the community;

Therefore:

The mission of National University of Health Sciences is to provide and promote the necessary leadership, management, and resources for the advancement of education, new knowledge, cultural awareness in healthcare education, outreach, and the ethical practice of the healing arts and sciences as taught within the programs of this university.

PROGRAM

Processional.....Pomp and Circumstance
March #1 - Elgar

Master of CeremoniesDaniel R. Driscoll, DC
Dean of Institutional Compliance

National Anthem.....Star Spangled Banner
Francis Scott Key

Presentation of Colors.....Matthew Kinney, Nikol Gueorguieva Zdravkova
Junior Marshals

**Introduction of
Commencement Speaker**Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC
President

Commencement AddressJoAnn Yáñez, ND, MPH, CAE

Joseph Janse Award.....Phillip Nicotera, MD, MSED
Interim Dean, College of Professional Studies, Florida Site

Awarding of Academic Honors.....Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Sciences

Presentation of Candidates Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC
Vice President for Academic Services

**Conferral of
Bachelor of Science Degree**Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Administration of the Integrative Health Professions

Oath College of Professional Studies.....Candace Passi, MS, EdD, PhD
Dean of the College of Professional Studies, Illinois Site

Master of Science in Diagnostic Imaging

Presentation of Candidate..... Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC

**Conferral of
Diagnostic Imaging Degree**Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

PROGRAM

Master of Science in Oriental Medicine Degree

Valedictory Address Yelitza E. Franco Perez
Valedictorian

Presentation of Candidate..... Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC

**Conferral of Master of Science
in Oriental Medicine Degree**Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Doctor of Acupuncture Degree

Presentation of Candidate Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC

**Conferral of
Doctor of Acupuncture Degree**.....Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Chiropractic Medicine Degree

Valedictory AddressPaige Weyer
Valedictorian

Presentation of Candidates Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC

**Conferral of Doctor of
Chiropractic Degree**.....Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Naturopathic Medicine Degree

Valedictory AddressDiana My Dao
Valedictorian

Presentation of Candidates Randy L. Swenson, MHPE, DC

**Conferral of Doctor of
Naturopathic Medicine Degree**.....Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

President's Final Remarks.....Joseph P.D. Stiefel, MS, EdD, DC

Benediction.....Daniel R. Driscoll, DC

Recessional Trumpet Time
Purcell

■ **AUGUST 2026 GRADUATES** ■

**GRADUATES OF THE BACHELOR OF SCIENCE
IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES PROGRAM**

Jaz Autumn Culpepper ♦Illinois

Sierra M. Wells †Illinois

**GRADUATE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
DIAGNOSTIC IMAGING**

Ayla May OsbornTexas

**GRADUATE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTICE PROGRAM**

Tyree Devonte' AllenAlabama

**GRADUATE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE IN
ORIENTAL MEDICINE PROGRAM**

Yelitza E. Franco Perez †Puerto Rico

**GRADUATES OF THE
DOCTOR OF ACUPUNCTURE PROGRAM**

Christine Elizabeth Geberbauer.....Illinois

Lauren Elizabeth Warner Ohio

Gyorgy Schrader Polczer.....Pennsylvania

■ **AUGUST 2026 GRADUATES** ■

**GRADUATES OF THE
CHIROPRACTIC MEDICINE PROGRAM**

Ciara J. AtkinsonFlorida

Julia Rose AtkinsonIllinois

Mayra BarajasMexico

Brayden Carson CasperIndiana

Timothy Edmund CurtinNew Hampshire

Samuel L. A. GibbsCanada

Bryce Daniel Goeden ♦Florida

Martha Georgena KalyvasFlorida

Salah Mohammed KhanIllinois

Sofia Kharkover ♦★New York

Natasha Owens MathisTexas

Brandon J. McCorristonCanada

Magdalena RamirezFlorida

Jacob Thomas Rivard ★Michigan

Gabrielle Danielle SmithSouth Carolina

Austin Marsden TchikatilovFlorida

Paige Weyer †●Wisconsin

Receipt of the degree for those listed as August 2026 graduates
is contingent upon completion of applicable requirements.

†valedictorian ♦ salutatorian

●summa cum laude ★magna cum laude ♦cum laude

GRADUATES OF THE NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE PROGRAM

Deborah Lynne ChristensenPennsylvania
 Diana My Dao [†]♦ California
 Alexandra Rebecca Livesay DukeIndiana
 Zoey Amber Freund.....Wisconsin
 Ahmed Saeed Habib.....Canada
 Kendra Nicole Hill ^{♦♦} Tennessee
 Sydney Danielle Kerzie..... California
 Sierra Camelia Kim..... Texas
 Tatiana KojoIllinois
 Jamie Malinda-Maria McClain.....Alabama
 Samantha Molda-Zachary.....Illinois
 Yetunde Omotola Oyenuga Nigeria
 Keyzamar L. Roman-Ramirez Puerto Rico
 Angela R. WeberWisconsin

Summa Cum Laude Paige Weyer

Magna Cum Laude Sofia Kharkover
 Jacob Thomas Rivard

Cum Laude Diana My Dao
 Bryce Daniel Goeden
 Kendra Nicole Hill

Receipt of the degree for those listed as August 2026 graduates
 is contingent upon completion of applicable requirements.

[†]valedictorian ♦ salutorian

● summa cum laude ★ magna cum laude ♦ cum laude



JoAnn Yáñez, ND, MPH, CAE

JoAnn Yáñez, ND, MPH, CAE, is Executive Director of the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges (AANMC), where she leads international initiatives advancing naturopathic medical education, accreditation, healthcare workforce development, and public

policy. A licensed naturopathic physician with more than two decades of leadership experience, Dr. Yáñez has worked at the intersection of higher education, public health, healthcare policy, and association management to strengthen health professions education and improve access to high-quality, person-centered care.

Throughout her career, she has collaborated with academic institutions, accrediting bodies, federal agencies, and interdisciplinary coalitions to advance educational quality, competency-based training, workforce research, and evidence-informed health policy. She has contributed to initiatives involving the World Health Organization (WHO) to help ensure the accurate representation of traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine, including naturopathic medicine, and has participated in national discussions on healthcare innovation, interprofessional education, and workforce development.

Dr. Yáñez is a Professional Member of the Public Health Academy of the National Academies of Practice and has received numerous honors for her leadership and service, including Physician of the Year from the New York Association of Naturopathic Physicians and Alumni Legacy Award from Sonoran University of Health Sciences. She earned her Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine from Sonoran University, her Master of Public Health from Des Moines University, and holds the Certified Association Executive (CAE) credential.

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Daniel R. Driscoll, DC *Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Secretary*

THE ACADEMIC REGALIA

The academic costume or regalia worn by the faculty and graduates in NUHS ceremonies originated in medieval Europe. The gown was originally an outer robe worn by scholars. The academic regalia can vary from institution to institution. In the United States, a more unified code began to be recognized in the late 1900's. This codified approach was meant to help identify what school or institution a scholar graduated from and their discipline of study.

Robes that graduates wear will signify their academic degree. The doctoral degree is unique in that it features velvet trim including three velvet chevrons on each sleeve. A master's degree is conveyed through black robes with long trailing sleeves. Bachelor's and certificate degrees both have traditional bell-shaped long sleeves.

The hood was once a real hood, but today's hoods are purely ornamental. All hoods have a black base and are lined with the school colors (National University of Health Sciences' are maroon and goldenrod), and are trimmed in the colors of the discipline in which the degree is being granted. Green is the color of medicine, and this is the most common color you will see at an NUHS graduation. Other colors you may notice are dark blue, indicating a degree in the sciences; light blue, for education; and lemon, for library science. The length of the hood itself is also indicative of the level of degree earned, with doctorate level hoods being longer than those of the master's degree hoods.

Non-tenured faculty and graduates wear four-sided mortar board caps as they are not informative as to the highest degree earned. However, those having earned the doctoral degree don a gold tassel atop the mortar board caps. As is tradition, members of our esteemed faculty that have achieved tenure at the University and members of the administration are afforded the opportunity to wear tams.

INTEGRATIVE HEALTH PROFESSIONAL OATH

I solemnly pledge before God and these witnesses to consecrate my life to the service of humanity;

I will give to my teachers the respect and gratitude that is their due;

I will apply the art and science of my discipline with compassion, personal accountability, professionalism, and respect for the people I am privileged to serve;

The health of my patient will be my first consideration;

I will respect the secrets that are confided in me, even after the patient has died;

I will maintain by all means in my power, the honor, and the noble traditions of the healing professions;

My colleagues will be my sisters and brothers;

I will uphold my duty to honor the doctor/patient relationship, ensuring unbiased patient care regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, education, ideology, or any other personal characteristic;

I will maintain the utmost respect for human life and always remember to "First, Do No Harm";

I will not use my medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity, even under threat;

I make these promises solemnly, freely, and upon my honor.

■ **STAR SPANGLED BANNER** ■

O*h, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,*

W*hat so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?*

W*hose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,*

O*'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?*

A*nd the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,*

G*ave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.*

O *say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave*

O*'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?*



