



UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY'S

COLLEGE *of* HEALTH
and PUBLIC SERVICE
CONVOCAATION

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THIRD OF MAY, TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR



COLLEGE OF HEALTH & PUBLIC SERVICE

Message From the Dean

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Dear CHPS Graduating Class of 2024,

Congratulations on achieving your educational goals! You have excelled in your programs and should wear your caps and gowns proudly. You also share a common core of values, including the desire to make an impact and serve your community.

In many ways, your journey is just beginning. You've spent time focusing on your education and are now starting a new phase of your life. I'm so proud and honored to celebrate graduation day with you!

Thank you for choosing UVU and the College of Health and Public Service. You are now part of an outstanding alumni group that represents excellence through serving, protecting, and caring for our communities.

On behalf of our faculty and staff, we wish you personal happiness and professional success.

Best wishes,

Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz
Dean, College of Health and Public Service



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Lance

**CITY OF
FIRE RESCUE**

COLLEGE OF HEALTH & PUBLIC SERVICE

11:00 am, Friday, May 3, 2024
UCCU Center

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Processional

Welcome and Comments Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz
Dean, College of Health and Public Service

Introduction of Faculty Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz, *Dean*

Valedictorian Address Tiba Hasan
Bachelor of Science, Dental Hygiene

Valedictorian Address Samael Huante
Associate of Science, Criminal Justice

Presentation of Graduates Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz, *Dean*
Michelle Kearns – *Vice President, Student Affairs*
Kyle Reyes – *Vice President, Institutional Advancement*

Turning of the Tassel Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz, *Dean*

Recessional

Please remain seated until graduates have exited the arena.

VALEDICTORIANS

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TIBA HASAN

Valedictorian - Bachelor of Science, Dental Hygiene

Tiba Hasan is from American Fork, Utah, and previously obtained a bachelor's degree in finance and accounting in Iraq before coming to UVU. She is receiving a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene. Hasan said the best part about attending UVU is the supportive and inclusive community it offers. She has been employed by UVU GEAR UP for around four years and said she has come to deeply appreciate the culturally rich community that UVU fosters. After graduation, Hasan plans to work as a dental hygienist while preparing for dental school.



SAMAEL HUANTE

Valedictorian - Associate of Science, Criminal Justice

Samael Huante is from Salt Lake City, Utah, and attended Murray High School before coming to UVU. He is receiving an associate degree in criminal justice. Huante has maintained a 4.0 GPA during his two years at UVU. Huante has also served as a volunteer at the Utah County Children's Justice Center, working with child victims of abuse. He plans to go into law enforcement after graduation. He enjoys weightlifting and is proud of his recent record of bench-pressing 315 pounds.

STUDENT EXCELLENCE AWARDS

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BRIANNA MCDANIEL

Student Excellence – Allied Health, Dental Hygiene

Brianna McDaniel is from Mesa, Arizona, and attended Mountain View High School in Mesa and T.C. Roberson High School in Asheville, North Carolina. She is receiving an associate degree in dental hygiene. McDaniel said the best part of attending UVU has been the new people she has gotten to meet and the confidence she has gained through this program. She enjoys the connections she's made with her patients and hopes to continue learning while diving into her new career after graduation. McDaniel said she is grateful for the support and positivity from her husband, Paden, as well as from family and friends.



JERRIK H.T. AKINA

Student Excellence – Emergency Services

Jerrik H.T. Akina is from Laie, Hawaii, and attended Kahuku High School before coming to UVU. He is receiving a certificate of completion in paramedics. Akina is currently working for Murray City Fire Department and will work as a paramedic/firefighter after graduation while working toward a bachelor's degree. Akina earned placement on the dean's list in fall 2023. He and his wife, Courtney, have two boys and another due this year. He enjoys traveling, camping, and riding bicycles with family.



TIANA VAKAAFI WYNN

Student Excellence – Criminal Justice

Tiana Vakaafi Wynn is from Orem, Utah, and attended Mountain View High School. She is receiving a bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Vakaafi Wynn said coming to UVU was the best decision she has ever made, and she appreciates the patience and understanding her professors gave her as a first-generation student. Vakaafi Wynn has been the College of Health and Public Service senator this past year and was the department representative for criminal justice from 2022 to 2023. She also served as the president of the Criminal Justice Honors Club at UVU. She served an internship with Project Overwatch, a nonprofit organization focused on helping women first responders. Vakaafi Wynn is grateful for her husband, Keaton, and her parents, in-laws, and siblings for their support.



DANIELLE VIVIAN RODRIGUEZ

Student Excellence – Master of Public Administration

Danielle Vivian Rodriguez lives in Highland, Utah, after transplanting from Southern California 7 years ago. She graduated from Mt. San Antonio College 26 years ago before going back to finish her degree at UVU. She is receiving a Master of Public Administration from UVU after graduating with a school health education degree from UVU. Rodriguez is proud of the opportunities for women and minorities at UVU and the support she has received as a mother and nontraditional student. She has eight children ranging from 30 years old to a baby girl, Daniela Viviana, who lived last October for 23 days. Rodriguez will now use her UVU experience to start a nonprofit organization in Daniela's honor, supporting other loss families through their grief journeys. Rodriguez's 24-year-old identical twin boys, Andrew and Angel, will graduate from UVU alongside her, receiving business and engineering degrees.



JADEN JOHNSON

Student Excellence – Public Health

Jaden Johnson is from Layton, Utah, and attended Northridge High School. He is receiving a bachelor's degree in healthcare administration with a dual minor in biology and business management. Johnson earned the Outstanding Academic Merit Scholarship and was on the dean's list for several semesters at UVU. He also served as president of the Healthcare Administration Club at UVU. He has already been accepted to six medical schools. Johnson is grateful for the support of his wife, Madison Sinclair, and their daughter, Topanga Johnson.



SUJEON HWANG

Student Excellence – Nursing

Sujeon Hwang is from Provo, Utah, and attended Timpview High School before coming to UVU. She is receiving a bachelor's degree in nursing. Hwang said her peers and professors have made her time at UVU amazing. She said UVU has taught her how to grow and be passionate about her education. Hwang is currently working at Primary Children's Hospital in the intensive care unit. In her spare time, she enjoys trying new food.



MAELIN SORENSON

Student Excellence – Physician Assistant

MaeLin Sorenson is from Midway, Utah, and attended Wasatch High School. She is receiving a master's degree in physician assistant studies. Sorenson's father worked at UVU; she said she grew up on campus and dreamed of becoming a student. While at UVU, she led a team of interns to study and combat melanoma, developing an online course to help hair professionals identify suspicious lesions on their clients' scalps and necks. Sorenson plans to work in rural family medicine to encourage and educate others about caring for their bodies. Sorenson is grateful for the unwavering support from her husband, Nate Benyon, along with the steadfast encouragement from her family and the dream team – her best friends and study group – that consistently uplifted and motivated her throughout PA school.

FACULTY & STAFF AWARDS

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NOELLE TAYLOR

*Assistant Professor, Nursing
Dean's Award of Excellence, Faculty*

Noelle Taylor is from Saratoga Springs, Utah, and holds a bachelor's in nursing from UVU and a Doctor of Nursing Practice from the University of Utah. Before returning to UVU, Taylor worked as a family nurse practitioner and a nurse at Huntsman Cancer Hospital. She earned the Faculty Excellence in Mentorship Award from the Iota Iota Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau in 2021 and the Best Flexible Course Design award from UVU's Office of Teaching and Learning. Taylor said UVU has the very best students and faculty in the whole world, and she truly identifies with and believes in the idea that UVU has "a place for you."



KAREN PRESTON

*Associate Professor, Allied Health/Dental Hygiene
Dean's Award of Excellence, Service*

Karen Preston is from Springville, Utah, and holds a bachelor's degree in dental hygiene from Weber State University and a master's degree in education with an emphasis in adult education and training from the University of Phoenix. Preston has served on several university committees and organizations while at UVU, including Faculty Senate. She also started a study abroad program for students to provide needed dental health services for underserved children in Guatemala. Preston enjoys outdoor activities such as Nordic skiing, traveling, and scuba diving.



HEATHER F. THIESSET

*Assistant Professor, Healthcare Administration
Dean's Award of Excellence, Engagement*

Heather F. Thiesset is from Bountiful, Utah, and holds a Ph.D. in public health from the University of Utah and master's and bachelor's degrees in public health from Brigham Young University. Prior to joining UVU, Thiesset served as associate director of research and science and healthcare administrator in the Department of Surgery at the University of Utah. She is the author of 25 peer-reviewed publications, with seven as first author. Thiesset said the best part of working at UVU is her interactions with her intelligent, hard-working students. Her greatest accomplishments and joys are her husband, JB, and their three children. Thiesset enjoys cooking, reading, and traveling.



JAMIE WINN

*Project Manager, Healthcare Expansion
Dean's Award of Excellence, Staff*

Jamie Winn is from Lehi, Utah, and holds an associate degree in early childhood education from UVU. Winn began working at UVU when it was known as Utah Valley Community College and has been employed with UVU for over 35 years. She has received multiple Awards of Excellence and PACE recognitions in her time at UVU. Winn said she finds personal fulfillment in helping students navigate through their experiences here at UVU to reach their career and personal goals. She has been married to her husband for 37 years, and they have two children and three grandchildren.



PATRICE BOLEN

*Administrative Support, Law Enforcement Academy
Dean's Award of Excellence, Part-Time Staff*

Patrice Bolen is from Springville, Utah. She has worked as a medical assistant and an adjunct instructor prior to starting administrative responsibilities with the Police Academy at UVU. Bolen earned the Dean's Award of Excellence in 2017 and the PACE Distinguished Part-Time Employee Award in 2016. She enjoys working with students to show them they can push themselves to be the best they can be in a field that takes such commitment and dedication. Bolen has been married for 46 years and has five children, 11 grandchildren with two on the way, and two great-grandchildren. She loves traveling and working as a USA track and field official.



ANDY BYRNES

*Professor, Firefighter Recruit Candidate Academy
Dean's Award of Excellence, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

Andy Byrnes is from Salem, Utah, and holds a bachelor's degree in emergency services management from UVU and a master's degree in education from Utah State University. He also holds executive fire officer status from the National Fire Academy. Byrnes spent 11 years as a fire officer, 18 years as a law enforcement officer, and 16 years as a paramedic. He earned the Dean's Award of Excellence in 2020 and has published numerous papers and articles. He is a nationally recognized researcher and expert in hazardous materials response, has designed courses related to hazardous materials, and is a frequent subject matter expert for the National Fire Academy. Byrnes said he would not be successful without the support of UVU's Department of Emergency Services and the CHPS dean's office.



ROBERT W. BROWN

Adjunct Faculty

Dean's Award of Excellence, Adjunct Faculty (Criminal Justice)

Robert W. Brown is from Saratoga Springs, Utah, and holds a bachelor's degree in political science and a juris doctorate from Brigham Young University. Brown practiced law in Wyoming at Lonabaugh and Riggs for 33 years and was a partner at the firm for 31 years. He served on the Wyoming State Board of Commissioners from 2008 to 2011 and was the president of the Sheridan County Bar Association from 2006 to 2007. Brown has been married to his wife, Cynthia, for 46 years. They have four children and 17 grandchildren.



MELINDA BARBER

Assistant Professor, School of Health Education

Faculty Senate Award of Excellence

Melinda Barber is from Spanish Fork, Utah, and is an assistant professor for the UVU Department of Health Science. She holds a Bachelor of Science in school health education from UVU and a Master of Science in health promotion and education from the University of Utah. Prior to teaching at UVU, Barber taught health at Diamond Fork Jr. High and was the dean of students for Mt. Nebo Jr. High. Her favorite part of working at UVU is learning from students and colleagues. Barber is the proud aunt of two nephews and one niece and loves to travel.



TINA HOMOLIK

*Adjunct Instructor, Public Health
Faculty Senate Excellence Award*

Tina Homolik is from Cedar Hills, Utah, and is an adjunct instructor for the UVU College of Health and Public Service. She has a Bachelor of Science in school health education and is a level II licensed Utah educator and a NASM-certified personal trainer and nutritionist. Homolik works at Vivint full-time and has been teaching health and nutrition for 13 years. Her favorite part about working at UVU is how the university works to hear student feedback to create a high-quality educational experience. Homolik has been married for 13 years and has three children with whom she loves to watch Disney movies.

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

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COLLEGE OF HEALTH & PUBLIC SERVICE DEAN'S OFFICE

Dr. Cheryl Hanewicz
Dean

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Associate Dean, Health

Tom Sturtevant
Associate Dean, Public Service

Barbara Burr
Assistant Dean

Mario Markides
Assistant Dean

Jennyfer Gaede
Assistant to the Dean, Finance

Donna Cornia
Admin IV

Jamie Winn
Project Manager, Healthcare Expansion

Sabine Berlin
*Director, Healthcare Curriculum
Accreditation Assessment*

Ambar Haro
Coordinator - Finance

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Criminal Justice

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