



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

EXECUTIVE MBA COMMENCEMENT  
CLASS OF 2026



# EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

University of Colorado Denver



*Saturday, seventh of March  
Two thousand twenty-six  
Half past ten o'clock  
King Center Concert Hall*

**CLASS OF 2026  
COMMENCEMENT**

# TO THE 2026 GRADUATES OF THE EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM

**March 7, 2026**

Congratulations, graduates! It took hard work and grit to reach this moment, and you did it! The entire University of Colorado community celebrates your achievement and stands behind you, rooting for your continued success.



With your CU degree and the many things you've learned during your time here, you're well-positioned for the future, no matter where life takes you. You're now part of an extraordinary network of CU alumni making significant contributions to their communities, the state of Colorado, the nation and the world. My own CU education has served me very well over the years. I know yours will too.

As you worked to reach this milestone, you undoubtedly received support from others along the way. I urge you to pay it forward as you make your way in the world. You'll discover – if you haven't already – that helping others is one of the most rewarding and important things you'll do in life.

On behalf of the CU community, I wish you great success and fulfillment now and in the years to come. Again, congratulations!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Saliman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd Saliman  
President, University of Colorado

**March 7, 2026**

Dear Graduates:

Many congratulations to you, your families, and the community that supported you on your journey to graduation. Your drive toward excellence, reflected in your years of hard work, is at the core of our mission: to make education work for all. On behalf of our faculty and staff, we celebrate your achievement, encourage your continued growth, and welcome you to our network of more than 120,000 alumni.



At the University of Colorado Denver, our commitment to you does not end at commencement. We aim to foster a community that not only supports you while you are here but welcomes your return. Wherever your degree takes you, I encourage you to stay connected. To increase access to the cutting-edge innovation on our campus and make education work for all, we must lead by example, meeting learners wherever they may be in the future, and that includes you.

Whether you return to complete graduate coursework, a microcredential, or to serve as a mentor or campus volunteer, I challenge you to be present and help us to continue building a forward-thinking CU Denver—one that positively impacts students from all walks of life, the way it has for you.

You are now, and always will be, part of our Lynx community. Your future is bright, and we cannot wait to hear about the great things you accomplish—both personally and professionally!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken T. Christensen". The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Kenneth T. Christensen Ph.D.  
Chancellor

# COMMENCEMENT THE EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

## THE REGENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Callie Rennison, Chair  
2nd Congressional District

Ken Montera, Vice Chair  
5th Congressional District

Nolbert Chavez  
7th Congressional District

Elliott Hood  
At Large

Wanda James  
1st Congressional District

Frank McNulty  
4th Congressional District

Ray Scott  
3rd Congressional District

Ilana Dubin Spiegel  
6th Congressional District

Mark VanDriel  
8th Congressional District

## ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Kenneth Christiansen,  
Chancellor  
University of Colorado Denver

Todd Saliman, President  
University of Colorado  
Karen Marrongelle, Provost  
University of Colorado Denver

Scott Dawson, Dean  
School of Business  
University of Colorado Denver

## 2025-26 FACULTY OF THE EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM

Jeffrey Brooks  
Thomas Eppel  
Steve Lawrence  
Michael Leiblein  
Jill Lohmiller

Mary Malina  
Gideon Markman  
Brian McCarthy  
Adriana Medina  
Ramiro Montealegre

Jung Park  
Jeffrey Reuer  
John Shaw  
Kelly See  
Kate Watkins

# ORDER OF EXERCISES

10:30 a.m.  
King Center ~ Concert Hall  
Auraria Campus

Professor David Chandler, Associate Dean of Executive Programs, Faculty Marshal

Juvie Varela, Cohort 44 Commencement Speaker

William Sauerland Jr., Cohort 44 Commencement Speaker

Processional



Welcome



Introduction of Official Delegation



Cohort Commencement Speech



Presentation of Cohort Leadership Award



Presentation of Thoughtful Leader Award



Presentation of Faculty Excellence Award



Conferring of Degrees



Conferring of Degrees



Closing Remarks



The Norlin Charge to the Graduates



Recessional

*Reception to follow the commencement ceremony.*

# THE EXECUTIVE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION DEGREE

## 2026 CANDIDATES

Jordan Alexander Aguilar

Vedanta Barooah

Emma Lauren Bernard

Catherine Bishop

Aaron James Brugman

Christopher Carlton

Rachel Liana Cornett

Jonathan Cross

Lucy Monica Donaldson

Kimberly D. Gustafson

Ryan A. Hackbarth

Sarah Hegge

William O. Hoffman Jr.

Blaine Weston Horner

Erika Lokander

Jim McGuirk

Jeannette M. Nelson

Robert Evan Newsome

Sara A. Oberg

Cami Ann Marsh Page

Dr. Joanna Lopez Pavlik, PharmD

Michael Penland

Bruno M. Ramirez Romero

Amanda P. Sandoval

William Robert Sauerland Jr.

Sam Scanlon

Christian M. Spears

Alexander Torres Julian

Corey James Trojanovich

Aurelija Ažaneckaitė Vang

Juvie Ignacio Varela

Daniel Wright

Kiersten O'Neil Yakobian

Amy Nie Zhong

## THE NORLIN CHARGE TO GRADUATES

*“You are now certified to the world at large as alumni of the university. She is your kindly mother and you her cherished sons and daughters.*

*This exercise denotes not your severance from her, but your union with her. Commencement does not mean, as many wrongly think, the breaking of ties and the beginning of life apart. Rather it marks your initiation in the fullest sense into the fellowship of the university, as bearers of her torch, as centers of her influence, as promoters of her spirit.*

*The university is not the campus, not the buildings on the campus, not the faculties, not the students of any one time-not one of these or all of them. The university consists of all who come into and go forth from her*

*halls, who are touched by her influence and who carry on her spirit. Wherever you go, the university goes with you. Wherever you are at work, there is the university at work.*

*What the university proposes to be, what it must always strive to be, is represented on its seal, which is stamped on your diplomas-a lamp in the hands of youth. If its light shines not in you and from you, how great is its darkness! But if it shines in you, today and in the thousands before you, who can measure its power?*

*With hope and faith, I welcome you into the fellowship. I bid you farewell only in the sense that I pray you may fare well. You go forth, but not from us. We remain, but not severed from you. God go with you and be with you and us.”*

## TO THE 2026 GRADUATES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER EXECUTIVE MBA PROGRAM

Congratulations to each of you from the Executive MBA Program faculty and staff at the University of Colorado Denver upon the successful completion of your degree. We are honored to have helped you achieve your educational goals. In addition to the value you have created for yourself and your peers during your time in the program, we hope you have also gained a commitment to lifelong learning that will assist you professionally and personally throughout your career.

In 1935, President George Norlin stated that the commencement exercises should denote, not your severance from the university, but your union with her. In this spirit, we invite your continued engagement with the Executive MBA Program as alumni of the University of Colorado Denver.

Our congratulations, again, and best wishes to each of you and your families on this celebration of your achievement.

David Chandler  
Associate Dean  
CU Denver Executive Programs

Bethany Cape  
Director of Operations and  
Alumni Engagement  
CU Denver Executive Programs

Karen Freidhof  
Assistant Director of Operations  
CU Denver Executive Programs

Joseph Hogan  
Finance Director  
CU Denver Executive Programs

Shamsiah Ebadi  
Student Assistant  
CU Denver Executive MBA Program

Scott Dawson  
Dean  
CU Denver Business School

Mary Ann Skadow  
Director of Recruiting and Marketing  
CU Denver Executive Programs

Paul Wood  
Assistant Director of Recruiting  
CU Denver Executive MBA Program

Isabel Soto  
Student Assistant  
CU Denver Executive MBA Program

## COMMENCEMENT HISTORY AND INFORMATION

### COMMENCEMENT NOTES

The first Commencement of the University of Colorado was held for six graduates on June 8, 1882, in the Chapel of Old Main. However, it was not until 40 years later, on September 4, 1922, that the first Summer Commencement was held. The now-traditional Norlin Charge to the Graduates was first read by President George Norlin to the June 1935 graduating class.

### THE UNIVERSITY SEAL

In its history, the University of Colorado has used three different seals. The current seal, adopted in 1908, depicts a male Greek classical figure sitting in front of a pillar and holding a scroll. Next to the figure, laurel branches frame a burning torch. The inscription in Greek reads "Let Your Light Shine." The seal's designer, Henry Read of Denver, chose the classical motif because Greek civilization "stands as the criterion of culture." The laurel symbolizes honor or success; the youth suggests the "morning of life"; and the scroll represents written language.

From 1893 to 1908, the university seal was a copy of Wyon's medallion, "Science Trims the Lamp of Life." In this version, a Greek woman knelt before a lamp, and stalks of mariposa lilies decorated the border. Before 1893, an adaptation of the Colorado State Seal was used, but it was never adopted by the Board of Regents.

The seal is used primarily on official documents such as diplomas and transcripts that have been issued on behalf of the university. The Board of Regents uses the seal on its official documents and publications. The seal also appears on the President's Chain of Office, the University Mace, Regent regalia, and various formal publication.

### ACADEMIC DRESS

The tradition of the academic costume began during the 12th or 13th century in the early European universities. Since the clergy composed most of the educated class, academic dress is an adaptation of the cope or mantle, which was usually made of silk or wool and worn by church dignitaries in religious processions. Through the years, great diversity developed in color and style of the cap, gown and hood. In 1896, colleges and universities in the United States adopted a uniform code governing academic dress. In 1976 the university inaugurated an exclusive gold and silver commencement regalia for its graduates.

The gowns worn by the recipients of the various degrees vary in design. The sleeves of the gown worn by the master's degree recipient are square at one end with a slit at the elbow, while the doctors' gown have flowing sleeves with three bars of velvet and a facing of velvet down the front of the gown. Those who are receiving a master's degree from the University of Colorado wear hoods lined with the school colors, silver and gold. The royal blue hood and tassel represent a degree conferred by the College of Business.

# CELEBRATING IDENTITIES

In addition to the traditional cap and gown regalia, graduates may wear braided cords, stoles, and other cultural elements to honor their diverse identities and/or service to the military.

## BRAIDED CORDS

Asian Pacific Islander Desi American	Red-White
Black/African American	Black-Gold-Green-Red
Disabled	Blue-Gold-White
First-Generation	Blue-Gold-Red
Hispanic	Gold-Red-White
Indigenous	Red-Red-Royal
Veteran	Blue-Red-White

## STOLES

Black/African American	Kente
International Travel	Argentina/Uruguay
Osage Nation	Deep purple





University of Colorado

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