University of Houston-Downtown

70th COMMENCEMENT

August 2021
Standing proud along the Bayou,
A Houston landmark true,
Is our noble Alma Mater,
Glorious to view.

Representing many cultures,
Races, tongues and creeds,
Confident we now go forth to
Serve our common needs.

Studies finished, now we’re leaving
New goals to pursue,
But our hearts to UH-Downtown
Ever will be true.

Come, let’s join and raise our voices,
Praising UHD.
May our lives forever honor
Thy dear memory.
University of Houston-Downtown

70th
Commencement

August 2021

Saturday, August 14, 2021
Dear University of Houston-Downtown Graduates,

Congratulations! This is the most memorable day of your college career. The degree you are receiving today represents the first-class education you obtained here at UHD. Moreover, it represents your hard work and preparation for a rewarding and successful career. One that will bring you satisfaction and make an impact in the lives of others.

Many factors contributed to your success. The support of your parents, families and friends, and the encouragement of your UHD faculty, advisors and staff played a significant part. But what truly made it all possible was the commitment, drive and resolve that helped you cross the finish line. Moreover, your endurance during this global pandemic is commendable. Staying the course during these trying times is a testament to your resilience and flexibility. I have no doubt these same attributes will serve you well as you make your mark in the world.

Go forward today as proud UHD graduates, confident you are the best-prepared, best-educated and best-equipped individuals of your generation. You are a special class. I know in my heart that you are now ready and able not just to compete but to succeed and be leaders in your chosen careers.

Your alma mater is a richer institution thanks to the example you have set for the next generation of students.

With my best wishes for a bright and rewarding future, Go Gators!

Renu Khator
Chancellor, University of Houston System
Message From The President

Dear Graduates,

I wish you heartfelt congratulations for a second time! You completed your degrees under challenging conditions, but now, you will celebrate your achievements with full pomp and circumstance.

Today’s event is very special for a number of reasons. First and foremost, all of us (friends, family, faculty and staff) can share in the experience of the conferral of degrees live and in-person. Secondly, this particular event is my very first face-to-face graduation ceremony at this institution since assuming the role of UHD President.

After a lengthy career in higher education, I can attest to the fact that few events are as special as commencement … and this one will be quite extraordinary.

Many of you have since moved on after completing your degrees either last year or this past spring. Your careers may have taken you outside of our great city or even elsewhere within our nation. To those who are returning to Houston, I sincerely thank you for traveling back to town for today’s event.

And to those who have remained in Houston, your UHD degree is indeed making a difference in our city. No matter your discipline, the knowledge gained at the University will strengthen our economic landscape and continue to elevate Houston to new heights.

While all of you already have started new chapters in your lives, let’s not close the book on your time at the University of Houston-Downtown. Stay connected with your alma mater and share your stories with students. Just as you no doubt benefitted from hearing from industry leaders and successful alumni, you too can inspire current and future generations of Gators.

And please know wherever your journey leads, you will always be a part of the University of Houston-Downtown!

Once again, I would like to commend each and every one of you for staying the course and completing your degrees! Congratulations and I wish you all the best in future endeavors!

Sincerely,

Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D.
President, University of Houston-Downtown
University of Houston-Downtown

Administration

Loren J. Blanchard, Ph.D., President

Akif Uzman, Ph.D.
Interim Senior Vice President and Provost
Academic & Student Affairs

Ivonne Montalbano, MBA
Vice President
Employment Services & Operations

Marty Baylor
Interim Vice President
Administration & Finance

Johanna Wolfe, M.Mus.
Vice President
Advancement & University Relations

Daniel Villanueva, Ph.D.
Vice President
Enrollment Management

University of Houston System

Administration

Renu Khator, Ph.D., Chancellor

Board of Regents

Tilman J. Fertitta, Chairman
Gerald W. McElvy, Vice Chairman
Beth Madison, Secretary
Durga D. Agrawal
Doug H. Brooks

Guadalupe “Alonzo” Cantu
Steve I. Chazen
Derek Delgado
John A. McCall Jr.
Jack B. Moore
In 1974, the University of Houston acquired the assets of South Texas Junior College and opened the University of Houston-Downtown College (UHDC) at One Main Street as a four-year institution. By the end of the 1970s, the Texas Legislature approved UHDC as a distinct university in the University of Houston System.

UHDC focused on meeting the needs of Houston’s diverse and dynamic workforce. The first four-year degree was a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, and resident students paid $4 per credit hour. By the early 80s, it was clear that UHDC was more than a college. It was officially renamed as the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD).

In the 90s, UHD was the state’s third-fastest-growing university, appealing to traditional and nontraditional students, as well as working professionals.

UHD earned full approval from the Texas Legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to offer graduate programs, beginning with a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice. The University also expanded its partnerships with Lone Star College (LSC) to offer select degrees and courses at UHD-Northwest, LSC-CyFair and LSC-Kingwood to create pathways for more transfer students to earn UHD degrees.

In 2016, a 26,000-square-foot Welcome Center opened, and the O’Kane Gallery received a new home for exhibitions featuring local and national artists. In 2017, the College of Business received a historic $10 million endowment from native Houstonian Marilyn Davies to support the College’s growing programs, exceptional faculty and student resources. In recognition of the gift, the College is now the Marilyn Davies College of Business.

With the addition of more than 17 acres, UHD expanded its campus footprint with the award-winning, state-of-the-art $73 million College of Sciences & Technology Building in 2020. A special groundbreaking celebration was held in fall 2020 for the new Student Wellness & Success Center—scheduled to open in 2022.

UHD introduced its Bachelor of Science in Data Science—the first of its kind in Texas—to fill the demand for data science professionals. The University’s MBA program maintains its status as the largest MBA in Texas for the sixth consecutive year. Recently, UHD launched a Master of Public Accountancy in the Davies College of Business meeting the growing need for professionals with Certified Public Accountant (CPA) certifications and graduate degrees.

Today, UHD enrollment is more than 15,000 students and boasts more than 57,000 alumni and is the second largest University in the city. UHD is recognized nationally as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, Minority-Serving Institution and Military-Friendly School—indicators of a diverse and vibrant student body—just like the city we call home.
The Seal

The University of Houston-Downtown’s official seal reflects the history of the community. It is an adaptation of the coat of arms of the family of Sam Houston, the hero of San Jacinto. The Houston coat of arms is centered by a shield that dates back to the 11th century when William the Conqueror invaded England.

The Procession

Bearing the official mace of the University, the Grand Marshal leads the procession of candidates for graduation, along with the Associate Marshal, bearing the banner of the University. The faculty follow the candidates, accompanied by Assistant Marshals. The official platform party then takes its place, including the Board of Regents and the Chancellor of the University of Houston System or a designee, the President of UHD, and other officers and friends of the University.

The Mace

A ceremonial symbol of the Office of the President of UHD, the mace derives from medieval England when officials taking office or opening a court needed a bodyguard for protection. On such occasions, the bodyguard carried the mace as a weapon to assert authority for the court.

In university ceremonies the mace is carried by a distinguished member of the faculty. The UHD mace was designed and crafted by Roger Deatherage, a noted Houston designer and craftsman. The wood used in the mace is black walnut; etched bronze seals of the University are recessed into the orb atop the mace.

Academic Dress

The attire worn in the academic procession reflects symbolism dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries. Medieval scholars resembled the clergy of the era in dress and in some practices, such as taking vows and shaving heads. Standard costumes in academic settings included hoods and long gowns, perhaps worn for warmth in drafty buildings.

Academic institutions in the United States in 1895 first adopted a code of academic dress, which has been revisited at various times by the American Council of Education, the major coordinating body for the nation’s higher education institutions.
While most universities and colleges adhere to the most basic elements of the academic costume code, the guidelines can be adapted for individual institutions. At UHD, for example, bachelor’s candidates do not wear hoods. A black mortarboard is worn with a tassel hanging over the right front quadrant of the cap. Traditionally, the tassel is shifted to the left after degrees are conferred.

The gowns worn by master’s candidates have a slightly different style than those worn by undergraduates. All master’s graduates receive a hood from a representative of their college or academic department. The colors in the satin lining of these hoods traditionally represent the colors of the university. For UHD, the colors are dark blue and red.

The honors cords draped across the shoulders of a gown indicate academic honors. Graduation with the highest distinction—a grade point average (GPA) of 3.80 or higher—is summa cum laude and is represented by combined red and white cords. Red cords indicate graduation with great distinction—a GPA of 3.6–3.79—or magna cum laude. White cords indicate cum laude honors or graduation with distinction—a GPA of 3.4–3.59.

Academic dress for faculty is distinctive. The doctor’s gown is trimmed in velvet, and hoods are worn with colors that hold significance. The hood lining is in the colors of the college or university conferring the degree, and the color of the binding indicates the degree subject.

### Faculty Hood Colors

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color</th>
<th>Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Fine Arts, including Architecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Citron</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Copper</td>
<td>Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crimson</td>
<td>Journalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dark Blue</td>
<td>Philosophy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drab</td>
<td>Commerce, Accountancy, Business</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden Yellow</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Blue</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peacock Blue</td>
<td>Public Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salmon Pink</td>
<td>Public Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>Arts, Letters, Humanities</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Academic Degree Programs

#### College of Humanities & Social Sciences

- Bachelor of Arts
  - Communication Studies
  - English
  - Fine Arts
  - History
  - Humanities
  - Philosophy
  - Social Sciences
  - Spanish

- Bachelor of Science
  - Health and Behavioral Science
  - Political Science
  - Psychology
  - Social Sciences
  - Sociology
  - Technical Communication

- Master of Arts
  - Non-Profit Management
  - Rhetoric and Composition

- Master of Science
  - Technical Communication

#### College of Sciences & Technology

- Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences
  - Safety Management

- Bachelor of Arts
  - Mathematics

- Bachelor of Science
  - Applied Statistics
  - Biological and Physical Sciences
  - Biology
  - Biotechnology
  - Chemistry
  - Computer Science
  - Data Science
  - Geosciences
  - Mathematics

- Bachelor of Science in Engineering Technology
  - Control and Instrumentation Engineering Technology
  - Structural Analysis and Design Option in Engineering Technology

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing

- Master of Science
  - Data Analytics

#### Marilyn Davies College of Business

- Bachelor of Business Administration
  - Accounting
  - Finance
  - General Business
  - Insurance and Risk Management
  - International Business
  - Management
  - Management Information Systems
  - Marketing
  - Supply Chain Management

- Master of Business Administration

- Master of Professional Accountancy

- Master of Security Management

#### University College

- Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences
  - Applied Administration

- Bachelor of Science
  - Interdisciplinary Studies

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* Accredited by AACSB International – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business

** Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education

*** Accredited by the Engineering Technology Accreditation Commission of Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
Guest Speaker

Dr. Antonio D. Tillis
Chancellor, Rutgers University–Camden

Dr. Tillis serves as Chancellor of Rutgers University–Camden—the southernmost campus of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. The R2 research university—a prominent anchor institution in Camden and the metro Philadelphia region—is home to more than 7,200 students enrolled in 39 undergraduate and graduate programs.

Prior to joining Rutgers, Tillis led the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) as Interim President. In this capacity, he worked collaboratively to promote student and faculty development, engage the community, and advance the strategic vision for the second-largest campus in the University of Houston System.

Before joining UHD, Tillis served as Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences—the largest of the 15 academic and professional colleges at the University of Houston. Under his leadership, he successfully led a $60 million fundraising campaign while developing new opportunities for student learning experiences and creating partnerships with community organizations in the city and throughout the region. In 2017, the University of Houston named Tillis, who is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese, as M.D. Anderson Professor in Hispanic Studies.

Previously, Tillis was dean of the School of Languages, Culture, and World Affairs at the College of Charleston in South Carolina, where he instituted numerous initiatives, including the Wells Fargo International Scholarship for Study Abroad for low-income, in-state students; the Dean’s Collaborative Interdisciplinary Summer Research Award for International Engagement; and the Summer International Internships for students in India, Brazil, and Ghana. Additionally, he chaired the Department of African and African American Studies at Dartmouth College and served as the inaugural director of the Latin American and Latino Studies Program at Purdue University.

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner declared March 7, 2017, as “Dr. Antonio D. Tillis Day.” Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland proclaimed a similar honor in that city on June 19, 2021. In 2018, Tillis was selected as one of 30 national participants for the Joint Civilian Orientation Conference hosted by the U.S. Secretary of Defense.

A noted scholar in the field of Afro-Hispanic studies, he received a Fulbright Fellowship to Brazil and has presented his scholarship at lectures and conferences across the United States and around the world. Tillis has served on numerous boards, including Houston Habitat for Humanity, the Houston Arts Alliance, the International African American Museum in Charleston and the Hemispheric Institute for Performance Studies. He is a founding board member of the International Institute of Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Leadership.

A former first-generation college student, Tillis holds a bachelor’s degree in Spanish from Vanderbilt University and a master’s degree in Spanish literature from Howard University. He earned his Ph.D. in Latin American literature (with an Afro-Hispanic emphasis) from the University of Missouri at Columbia.
Marilyn Davies understands the value of higher education in today’s workforce.

The native Houstonian is CEO of Bailey Banks Seismic, L.P., a proprietary seismic data company. She graduated from Texas Tech University in 1970 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics. Her initial career interests focused on the computer sales business, but in 1980 she found her way into the booming oil and gas industry. She survived that industry’s decline in the early 1980s and purchased the assets of Bailey Banks Seismic from a former employer. In 1991, Davies started her own data brokerage business to market seismic data to energy companies. The company is the proprietor of Professional Geophysics Inc. database that includes 25,000 miles of data related to exploration areas and basins across the U.S.

Her familiarity with the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) stems from her summer school classes at South Texas Junior College (located in the One Main Building). Later, she grew to admire the institution when her son Taylor Davies attended UHD, ultimately earning his bachelor’s degree in political science. Her brother Kelly Davies also attended the University, earning a bachelor’s degree in computer information systems and graduating in 2021 with a master’s degree in Security Management.

“When my son enrolled at UHD, I knew that its students valued the education they were receiving,” Davies said. “I saw Taylor attending class with many students who managed jobs, families and academic studies as they worked toward their degrees. These were clearly ambitious, hardworking students who are dedicated to success.”

Her passion for excellence in both business and education served as motivation for a gift of $10 million to UHD’s College of Business—the largest gift in the institution’s history. The endowment supports the college’s growing programs, exceptional faculty and student resources. In recognition of the gift, the college was renamed the Marilyn Davies College of Business creating the first named college at UHD, the first college of business in Texas to be named for a woman and the fourth nationally to hold this distinction.

She also recognizes the role UHD plays in helping both students and professionals achieve success.

“Higher education opens doors,” Davies said. “It exposes students to new ways of thinking and learning. I value a college education, and I pushed my own kids to go beyond their bachelor’s degrees and earn master’s degrees. My hope is that this gift encourages others to invest in the University of Houston-Downtown, and that it will encourage UHD students to aspire to greater and greater heights.”

Davies is a member of the Houston West Business Breakfast Club and is a 35-year-plus member of the Society of Geophysicists.
August 14, 2021
9 a.m.

University College

College of Humanities & Social Sciences

College of Public Service
9 a.m.
Ceremony Program

Prelude
Mariachi Performance

Opening
Grand Marshal – Dr. Windy Lawrence
Associate Grand Marshal – Dr. Hsiao-Ming Wang

Welcome
Dr. Loren J. Blanchard

Star Spangled Banner
Ms. Christina Wells

Introduction of Guests
Dr. Akif Uzman

Regent’s Remarks
The Honorable Derek Delgado
University of Houston System Board of Regents

President’s Remarks
Dr. Loren J. Blanchard

Awarding of UHD Presidential Medallion of Honor

Guest Speaker
Dr. Antonio D. Tillis

Introduction of Candidates
Dr. Akif Uzman

Dr. Scott Marzilli
University College

Dr. Jonathan Schwartz
College of Public Service

Dr. Wendy Burns-Ardolino
College of Humanities & Social Sciences

Conferring of Degrees

Awarding of Diplomas
Dr. Susan Henney
Dr. Timothy Redl

Commencement Closing
Dr. Akif Uzman

Recessional
Mariachi Performance
August 14, 2021
2 p.m.
College of Sciences & Technology
Marilyn Davies College of Business
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<td>Dr. Charles Gengler</td>
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