

Academic Excellence

Banquet

2023-2024

April 24, 2024

Jo Young Switzer Center



Manchester
University

Program

Reception

6 p.m.

Beauchamp Balcony Lounge

Welcome

Celia Cook-Huffman

Vice President for Academic Affairs

Dinner

6:30 p.m.

Speicher/Hoff Rooms

Introduction of Students

Faculty and Staff Members

Congratulations students,

This achievement reflects your hard work, perseverance and resilience. You represent the best of Manchester; a commitment to learning, to scholarship and to building of new knowledge.

No one understands your personal journey at Manchester better than your faculty. In the pages that follow, please read the meaningful words these mentors have shared about you and your classmates. You have earned this moment, revel in it.

We wish you all the best on the next stage of your journey. Come back and visit often.

Celia Cook-Huffman
Vice President for Academic Affairs

Graduation with Distinction

To graduate with distinction and earn Latin honors, a candidate for the baccalaureate degree must have completed a minimum of 96 semester hours in residence at Manchester University and accumulated a grade point average (GPA) at or above 3.650. There are three levels of graduation with honors:

summa cum laude (with highest honors)	3.950 to 4.000
magna cum laude (with high honors)	3.850 to 3.949
cum laude (with honors)	3.65 to 3.849

Valeria Acosta Cadavid, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Psychology and Religious Culture

Valeria is remarkable intellect, a student in Psychology & Religious Culture, an accomplished artist, and one of the most profoundly empathetic people I've met. She has developed an exceptional ability to generate comfort in difficult conversations, and instill trust amidst controversy—and she always manages to do this with a tactfulness that is as graceful as it is truthful. The world needs this. Valeria has approached psychological and religious questions with unyielding passion in her many essays. I could always tell there was something at stake in the material for Valeria; especially because she could tell that there was something at stake for her peers. Behind her reserved demeanor hides an insatiable force for social justice, as her academic portfolio reveals. As I reflected on her many assignments, one particular theme stood out to me: her passion for what we don't know rather than what we do (or think we) know. This intellectual humility, in part, made her a profoundly open-minded thinker. I always looked forward to Valeria's contributions in class discussions. Among her many academic achievements, her interpretation of the Trinity in an original sculpture exhibits her signal way of expressing psychological and spiritual aspects of the imagination with enviable acumen and style. Valeria can write in a way that is approachable without sacrificing substance or mystery. She has a keen sense for what a person may not want to say. In her dialogue assignments, she demonstrated a masterful ability to listen to what was unstated without any suggestion of judgment. This is why students want to talk to her, and it is why she is so poised to engage the world with what she has learned here, the deep resources of her faith and devotion, and her service to others. Her integrity is uncompromising, as is her commitment to fostering diversity within our community. In this she not only represents Manchester's values, she lives them. In the last two years, Valeria has become especially adept at cultivating empathy in small group settings. She adamantly resists any inclination toward othering people, and it has been a force in her writing in the last year. Among her many virtues, I am most appreciative of her commitment to doing right rather than being right. She models this for me. For us. You will make us proud. You already have. Muchas felicidades, Valeria.

Dr. Justin Lasser

Kyla Andrews, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Arts

Digital Media Arts

It has been my privilege to know and work with Kyla for the last three years in the Office of Multicultural Affairs. She was an incredible help during my first year in this role at the University and knew everything about OMA and the events. Kyla's help was invaluable in keeping that office up and running through the transition. She has led many power hours, created numerous posters/flyers, planned events, painted rocks, and washed countless dishes that other students leave behind. And does so without a complaint. I am constantly impressed by Kyla and how she balances classes, outside activities, and all of the work that she does on campus. I may not know as much about Kyla in the classroom, but it is clear to me that she has the same dedication to her coursework that she has for the numerous jobs and extracurricular activities that she is involved in. She works multiple jobs, participates in different clubs, choirs, musicals, and the list goes on and on. And does all of these things while still maintaining a high GPA. To say that I'm proud of all that Kyla has accomplished in her time at MU is an understatement. It has been an honor to see her grow during her time here and I know that she'll be successful at anything she puts her mind to in the future. I can't imagine what OMA and the Intercultural Center would be like today without her input, advice, and creativity and she will leave behind some big shoes to fill for future MAPs.

Rudy Rolle

Brooke Elizabeth Batalis, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Business Management

As Brooke's friend and academic advisor, I can say that she has gone far during her years at Manchester. She started her time here as a shy, quiet young lady from nearby. Someone who rarely spoke in class, but who always sat in the front row. Boy did she change. She now sits in the back row, is not afraid to share her opinion when asked, and is willing to think through and answer the tough

question! Brooke's success comes from her persistence, organization, and planning skills and her desire to make sure everything is under control. I have seen Brooke grow both professionally and academically during her time at MU. Over the last 4 years she has become more confident in herself, both in class and in social situations. She is more willing and comfortable when she shares her personal beliefs and voices her own opinion. Don't let her small stature fool you, when Brooke talks, she commands the room. Most recently, in BUS 485 – senior seminar, Brooke shared her opinions on the most critical issues that you face in your twenties. As I sat in class along with her 38 classmates, it was obvious that her opinion was valued. Brooke and Angel Copeland along with 3 other students will be wrapping up our senior seminar class training the rest of us on Leadership. Brooke shared that she was asked to be a bridesmaid in 2 different weddings after graduation. Being given this honor by your peers is a testament to what a terrific friend she is. Brooke started working at Walmart in Warsaw when she was 16, during those 6 years she has had the opportunity to get practical experience in the retail industry. After graduation she intends to leverage that work ethic and her MU business management and professional sales degrees into a business career. Her long-term goals include getting married, raising a family, staying in the area, and pursuing her business career. With her work ethic, intelligence, kindness, and pleasant personality I am sure she will be successful achieving each of those goals.

Professor Joe Messer

Kaylee Blough, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Psychology

Kaylee has been a student whose academic discipline is excellent and in all the tasks she undertakes she is hardworking and industrious. She has managed the time demands of student and student athlete. She is exceptional at time management, conscientious and thorough. She is an excellent problem-solver and can negotiate a myriad of tasks effectively (and with a great attitude). She plans to go to graduate school and will be a valuable contributor wherever she decides to go. She has strong interests in Sports Psychology and will be an asset to any graduate program. A student only achieves the success she has by persistence, hard work, and dedication—even when things are difficult and the night is long! I look forward to seeing the impact of her dedication and hard work on the lives of those she serves! I wish Kaylee the very best in the coming years!

Dr. Rusty Coulter-Kern

Victoria Blough, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Psychology

Tori has been an excellent student-athlete who has engaged in her academic pursuits and persisted in spite of injuries. She is a quiet spoken force behind the scenes who works to make a difference wherever she is. Interpersonally, Tori has developed strong relationships with other students and enjoys the respect of faculty and peers alike. She is appropriate, considerate of others, and goes above and beyond what is required. Tori is persistent, has excellent insights into people, and works hard for herself and the good of her team. She has grit and is determined to make a difference wherever she goes. I look forward to seeing where she lands and puts her enormous talents and skills to work! Congratulations on your persistence and success!

Dr. Rusty Coulter-Kern

Benjamin Bolduc, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Music: Instrumental Performance

I first met Benjamin in the fall of his senior year of high school when he came to MU for his music scholarship audition and visit. I was immediately impressed with his talent and accomplishments and, since then, it has been a joy to work with him and to witness his growth. For the past four years, I have worked with Benjamin in one-on-one composition lessons, and he has taken many other courses with me as well. Lessons with Benjamin have consistently been the highlight of my teaching week. Benjamin has been an excellent model for his peers in our department. His dedication to his craft, his maturity and professionalism and, most importantly, his kind and compassionate nature are evident in all that he does. In addition to working together in the classroom, Benjamin and I have shared a wide

range of experiences during his time at Manchester: composition lessons via Zoom during the pandemic, playing Beatles tunes together as background music for campus events, co-coordinating our Manchester New Music Festival, creating recording projects for his compositions and much more. The end of Benjamin's journey here at Manchester is a bittersweet. I am so excited for him as he begins his graduate school journey at Ball State, but will greatly miss his presence in our department.

Dr. Tim Reed

Lyssa Bowers, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Environmental Studies

Although I have only recently had the opportunity to work with Lyssa Bowers, she displays attributes that make her an exceptional person and student. Lyssa is genuine, dedicated, organized, respectful, dependable, and she shows concern beyond herself. Along with these qualities, her enthusiasm, preparation, and flexibility align well with the Environmental Studies major of which she is on the cusp of earning. In addition to the courses she has completed, this past summer she took the initiative to seek out and complete an internship within the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the DNR. The site supervisor spoke very highly of Lyssa; indicating that she is a quick learner of new skills, has great attention to detail, and was always willing to arrive early, stay late, and assist others. During her time at Manchester Lyssa has performed well academically and has positioned herself well for what comes next. I am glad that I had the opportunity to get to know Lyssa, and I am excited to see what the future holds for her.

Dr. Aron Costello-Harris

Tristen Jonathan Bronaugh, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Arts
Digital Media Arts

It is with great honor and from a deep place of respect I wish to add my tribute to honor this Digital Media Arts Major, Journalism Minor, Sports Information Assistant, MU Track & Field Athlete, Soccer Aficionado, Videographer/Photographer and Entrepreneur. Throughout Creative Writing and Professional Writing I enjoyed Tristen's quick wit, his dynamic and savvy astuteness to transform visual impressions into verbal compositions (and vice-versa) while adding yet another clever insight to class discussion or to his analyses. I am so glad Tristen joined our journalism program after producing impressive writing works in our Creative Writing class. Regardless of the task at hand, Tristen probes deeply, demonstrating that good could never be good enough also characterizing his spirit in humility. So, when he receives state-wide awards for his Oak Leaves publications or for excelling as a superb runner on our team, he merely smiles and carries on with silent pride. Balanced and calm, Tristen exercises mindfulness in action; his demeanor radiates and reaches those blessed to meet him. In addition to lead by example and his knack at writing, I imagine, led him to be chosen as co-editor of our student newspaper which, due to other cross-campus (Manchester and Fort Wayne) commitments, he could, however, not execute. As he concludes his studies at Manchester, I am fortunate to enjoy Tristen as a student one more time: for his excellent contributions as a current editorial staff member of Spectrum, our literary and art magazine. Innovator Tristen knows how to adjust his incisive lens to put matters into novel and radical focus, also allowing him to run his own digital media business while excelling academically and beyond. Tristen's passionate spirit along commitment, uncompromising self-discipline, mindful ethos, and his deep ambition to outperform at the highest will continue to energize his career. I wish you, Dear Tristen, all my best as you embark on your MBA studies; please keep in contact so I may learn more about the fascinating stories of the amazing tattoos and more to come, in ink or from your elegant and digital mind and caring soul. And please remember: Never Doubt Your Sparkle! Grateful, Beate

Dr. Beate Gilliar

Rebekah Brunner, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Exercise Science and Fitness

I have had the pleasure of getting to know Bekah both in and outside of the classroom over the last few years. In our time together, I have been continually impressed by her determination and academic

ability. Bekah is a leader in the classroom, often willing to answer questions or explain concepts to other students who are struggling with the material. Further, she engages with the content at a level that demonstrates her desire to apply it to situations in her future profession. Overall, Bekah has been a pleasure to work with and a very beneficial addition to my classroom. In addition to excelling in the classroom, Bekah is a bright light on campus. She regularly stops by my office, just to pop in and say hi. More often than not, however, these quick hellos turn into the best conversations. I love seeing her show up in my doorway, as I know that she will brighten my day with a funny story or update about daily life. Bekah's positive attitude is infectious, and she leaves smiles wherever she goes. I am certain that this outlook will serve her well in her future endeavors. Bekah, it has been a privilege to have been a part of your Manchester journey. I have seen you grow into a confident, capable woman who will make a positive difference in the world. Although I selfishly want to keep you here on campus, I know that you are ready for a new adventure. Remember that I am always in your corner and cheering you on no matter what path you choose. I am so immensely proud of you!

Dr. Cassie Gohn

Morgan M. Chupp, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Applied Mathematics

Like many students at the banquet, Morgan started at Manchester in the middle of the pandemic. Probably many people in this room would not be excited to take a calculus course, and much less excited to take it during the pandemic with a mix of in-person and online instruction. Morgan not only survived, but she thrived. This was the first hint to me that Morgan was going to be an outstanding student. And it was not just me, all the faculty in the department knew that she was going to be one of our stars. I reached out to some of the other professors in the department to give them a chance to share a few words. The responses I received carried the same themes, regardless of who in the department responded. Everyone says that Morgan is always a pleasure to have in class. The faculty in the department look forward to seeing her name on the roster. Morgan is always positive in class, even when the class is covering challenging topics and others are stressed out. Morgan is probably stressed out, too, but she keeps her positive attitude. All the faculty I reached out to responded that Morgan is very disciplined; you have to be to succeed during the pandemic years. Morgan always comes to class. She does her work. She keeps up in her classes. Morgan has to be disciplined to keep up with her work and with the other activities in which she is involved as well. She has been on the track and cross country team all four years. That might be why she always keeps a positive attitude when others are stressed; running helps her deal with the stress. It can be a challenge for anyone to balance their coursework with athletics, with the practices and missing classes for competitions. Morgan did it and did it successfully. But she had even more to balance. She also serves as the student assistant to the department, chosen because of the strong recommendations of the faculty in the department about her dependability. Morgan is also the main tutor for the Math Center, working four or five nights each week. When the departmental student club was resurrected after phasing out during the pandemic, Morgan was willing to take a leadership role. In our first few months of the club, Morgan helped mentor the other leaders in the club with planning activities.

Dr. Tim Brauch

Reece Colclessor, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Exercise Science and Fitness

Selfishly, one of the best things about being an educator is being inspired by your students. The common perception is that the teacher is the one inspiring the students. And while I certainly hope that I do that, I have to admit that there are those students that truly inspire me. That has certainly been the case with Reece. Reece was one of the first students that I met when I first started teaching here. She was a paragon of a student. She was kind and attentive, quiet but engaged, and always came to class with a smile on her face. It was easy to connect with her and fall into the usual professor/student relationship. However, this changed when I learned that we were both going to be trying to pick up a new professional certification. In the world of Human Performance, the National Strength and Conditioning Association's CSCS certification is the gold standard. Its pass rate is around 38% and it is well known for humbling even the most prepared candidates. It is not a test that inspires a lot of optimism. Around that time, I learned that Reece, too was planning to sit for the CSCS exam, only a

few weeks after me. Now I had a problem. I knew the time and effort that Reece would put into this. I also knew that I was going to have her in my classes in the spring. How could I face her in class if she passed and I didn't?!?! She made this seem like the likely outcome, as every time I passed the PERC lobby she would be sitting there studying. I would go to the fitness center and find her working the desk with her books out studying. Everywhere I saw her she was studying. Between all of her classes, work, workouts, and any other general demands, she was studying. Seeing her efforts engendered great pride and inspiration. I was proud of her effort and intentionality, but also inspired by her tenacity and the imposter syndrome I felt destined to experience. That would have made for a long spring semester. So, with Reece as my model, I dove deep into my efforts to prepare for the test. Given the great example that she set, I was lucky enough to pass the scientific test, which Reece promptly did as well just a few weeks later. The effort and resolve that she showcased was and is inspiring and contagious to all those that are lucky enough to see it. I have no doubt these skills and qualities will continue to serve her well as she moves on to the next chapter of her life. I'm forever grateful to have been a small part of her story and am excited to see how many people, like me, will be inspired and impacted by her in the future.

Josh Brock

Angel Copeland, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Marketing and Professional Sales

Angel is one of the rare students who will be graduating from MU with 2 degrees, a Bachelor of Science in Marketing and a Bachelor of Science in Professional Sales. Angel contributes her success at MU to becoming more self-aware. She has grown exponentially by understanding herself and her strengths along with what she needs to work on. During her time at MU her outlook on life changed. She credits this to being around a diverse group of students and different insights from various professors. Angel and Brooke Batalis along with 3 other students will be wrapping up our senior seminar class training the rest of their cohorts on Leadership. Angel's first year at MU was the year of COVID which made it difficult to connect with people. One of her first scary and rewarding in-person classes was BUS 209 – Professional Sales class. During the course of the semester, she realized that having to take the class, develop elevator pitches, improvise during sales calls, and negotiate with different individuals helped improve her self-confidence. Her decision to double major in both Marketing and Professional Sales came as a result of that class. Those two majors will give her incredible opportunities as her career and personal life progress. Her marketing skills are outstanding. Her caring personality, desire to understand people, team approach and the competitive drive to push herself will continue to make her an ideal member of any group. Angel's success at MU comes from two traits that really stand out, adaptability and determination. She is adaptable enough to focus on important issues while avoiding distractions. These two traits were put to use when she planned her wedding the summer of her junior year. However, this caused many at MU to wonder who the new student on their roster, Angel Copeland was and why Angel Wehrly no longer attended MU. Her most memorial event at MU was getting a 100% on a paper in Professor Ogden's case study class. She was amazed and her friends were too, they told her she should frame the page. Currently Angel is looking for a position where she can thrive by using her talents and passions in marketing.

Professor Joe Messer

Kodi Douglass, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Psychology, Religious Culture and Criminology

Kodi has tackled an incredible challenge as a college student. She has worked throughout her years at Manchester University, negotiated the demands of two different majors, and managed the stress of commuting, working, and college. It is no easy task to navigate the challenges brought on by this combination of responsibilities. Her graduation with honors is a testament to her grit, persistence, and determination! I look forward to seeing the good work she does in the future as she takes on new challenges and goes to make a difference in the lives of those around her!

Dr. Rusty Coulter-Kern

McKenzie Enright, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Criminology and Sociology

In the fall of 2020, first-year students began their undergraduate careers under unique circumstances. I distinctly remember meeting Kenzie as a first-year student in my Introduction to Sociology course that fall. At that time, we were wearing masks on campus and trying to figure out how to deliver classes in person and online, so I only knew her with a mask. Kenzie made it through my bumpy navigation of classroom technology and meeting in person and online each week that semester. She did quite well in that class and academically she has been on an upward trajectory since those uncertain early days of her time at Manchester University. I do not always get to know students like Kenzie who are independent self-starters. As a double major in criminology and sociology with a minor in psychology, Kenzie has taken on a lot academically. Additionally, she has served as the department assistant in the department of sociology, social work, and criminology for the past two years. Because of her ability to be organized and to manage her time, she has been successful with all of it. I hope the things Kenzie has learned in the classroom as well as outside of class at Manchester University will serve her well as she prepares for the next step in career in law. Next fall, Kenzie will be going to law school to begin preparation to ultimately become a prosecuting attorney. One of the things that confirmed her interest in criminal law was completing a 120-hour practicum with an attorney in her hometown. I speak for other faculty members in our department as well as myself when I say that I am proud of the work Kenzie has done and the person she is becoming. It is always a bit sad to see great students leave but I know that she is ready to take on the next chapter in her life and I wish her all the best as she graduates from Manchester University.

Dr. Jared Friesen

Jaela Faulkner, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Exercise Science and Fitness

Jaela Faulkner epitomizes the essence of academic excellence and multifaceted achievement, making her an exemplary person. Her exceptional accomplishments in Exercise Science underscore her profound understanding of the human body and its mechanics, demonstrating a dedication to scholarly pursuit and mastery of her field. Jaela's thorough preparation for occupational therapy school showcases her commitment to translating knowledge into meaningful action. Furthermore, her active involvement at Manchester University, particularly in admissions and athletics, highlights her remarkable leadership skills and dedication to service. Jaela's contributions both inside and outside the classroom exemplify the university's values of excellence, integrity, and community engagement. Recognizing her at the banquet demonstrates the profound impact of dedication, leadership, and academic passion on personal and professional growth.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Joshua Gorney, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
K-12 Human Performance Education

Josh Gorney's exceptional accomplishments in Human Performance and Teaching Education make him a standout candidate for recognition. His dedication to mastering his craft and honing his skills as an educator is evident in his exemplary performance throughout his academic journey. Notably, Josh's success in student teaching underscores his innate ability to connect with students and foster a conducive learning environment. His proficiency in time management, coupled with unwavering determination and effective communication skills, positions him as a promising future teacher. Josh's commitment to his academics and development serves as a testament to his passion for shaping young minds and making a positive difference. I wish Josh all the best in the future and remember we are always here for support.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Isabella Gregory, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Psychology and Religious Culture

Bella is the kind of student who shows up first to every class! She is present in multiple ways and is always a positive contributor to the common good. She has taken a rigorous program of study, frequently taking challenging classes to develop and enhance her skill set. She works well on a team and has been a diligent team member on two different research projects. Bella, along with her team, has twice won the outstanding research poster award at the Manchester University Research Symposium! This is a rare fete! In addition to her academic pursuits, she wakes early to work at Manchester Early Learning Center and provide positive care for young children in our community. She manages the challenging work of both student and employee and excels at both! It is always a delight to work with Bella, for she reaches out to others and is a positive force for good in any environment. Given her strong ability and positive presence wherever she is, I expect to hear she is a leader in whatever endeavors she pursues. For now, she is focused on graduate school in Mental Health Counseling. She will be a great person and mental health provider wherever she chooses to go! We wish her the very best and are thankful for her positive presence in the Manchester University Psychology Department.

Dr. Rusty Coulter-Kern

Peyton Horn, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Exercise Science and Fitness

Throughout her college career, Peyton Horn has exemplified academic excellence alongside her prowess as a soccer and basketball player. Her commitment to both sports and academics is truly commendable, showcasing her dedication, focus, and heartfelt determination. Peyton possesses a rare ability to lead by example, whether on the field or in the classroom, and she works exceptionally well both independently and collaboratively with her peers. Despite the demanding schedules of athletics and academics, Peyton has consistently maintained high marks, demonstrating resilience and unwavering determination. Her ability to balance these commitments while excelling in both realms serves as an inspiration to many. As Peyton embarks on the next chapter of her academic journey at Trine University's Doctor of Physical Therapy program, we have no doubt that she will continue to thrive and make a significant impact in her field. We wish her the very best of luck in all her future endeavors.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Madelyn Hosford, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Arts
History and English

If literature is time travel, then Madelyn Hosford has journeyed well during her four years at Manchester. She has surveyed works from the medieval to the modern and has spent many days venturing through the gas-lit streets of British mystery. As part of her course work here, she has read the entire canons of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Agatha Christie. Perhaps her favorite novel is Mary Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*. Madelyn's recent seminar paper in history explores Agatha Christie's reshaping of real-life, contemporary crimes in her iconic detective fiction. If you get a chance to talk to Madelyn, ask her about Agatha Christie! Madelyn will graduate *summa cum laude* with a double major in English and History, along with minors in Spanish and TESOL. She has been a superb student at Manchester, and I have been privileged to teach her in several courses. She is a joyful reader, a promising linguist, and an extraordinary talent.

Dr. Jonathan Watson

Sam Huffman, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Elementary school classrooms light up when Mr. Sam Huffman walks in the building. One might initially think his stature would cause children to pause, but the opposite happens. Sam's eyes and smile

speak of his passion for teaching. Children see him. Sam graduates this May with a degree in elementary education and will be a licensed teacher in both elementary and mild intervention. After a rigorous series of courses and clinical experiences, Sam will soon complete his final internship teaching one of our most vulnerable populations. He has approached the experience with resilience and determination. The classroom environment requires innovation and creative solutions to really tough situations. Sam believes that every child deserves to be seen and heard. He also wholeheartedly devotes his life to this vocation that provides access and the chance to thrive for every child. We are so grateful Sam chose the education profession, our schools need his vision and voice to support the ever-evolving realities of teaching. Sam lives in his vocation through his studious approach to coursework, attention to detail in curriculum development, mature wisdom in discussions, and engaged presence in all interactions. I have had the honor of learning beside Sam in many courses. He has taught me how a smile and a positive approach to even the hardest of topics can make learning life changing. Sam has led in the classroom and on the football field while here at Manchester. His peers look to him for that confident smile to let them know anything is possible with a devoted heart and spirit. Sam has devoted his efforts toward a vocation that will impact countless humans. We are thrilled to send him off into the world as a teacher of ability and conviction who will seek to improve the human condition. The Henney Department of Education is honored to celebrate Mr. Sam Huffman's academic career.

Dr. Stacy Stetzel

Bella Hurd, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Communication Studies

Bella is graduating with a major in Communication Studies and a minor in Public Relations. Since Bella was a student in my Media Literacy class in 2021, I have always been excited to see her name on my course roster. Bella brings an unforgettable sense of positivity everywhere she goes. She makes those around her better and makes everyone feel included and heard. Whatever challenges come her way are met with a smile and a sense of humor. She leaves silly animal drawings and inspirational messages on sticky notes which now hang in my office. She is compassionate, curious, and reliable. She easily perceives the bigger picture and the connections between ideas. In short, Bella is a whole vibe. I have been so grateful to work with her for the last 3 years as her academic advisor and to learn with her in several classes. Last summer she interned with Manchester Alive, and executive director Heather Cruz was effusive in her praise of Bella's work ethic and can-do attitude. This year Bella has taken on additional responsibilities as a junior admissions counselor, helping to bring a new class of Spartans to campus. She has the skills and talent to succeed no matter where she goes, and I am confident that she will find her way and continue to bring so much joy to those around her. I am so proud of all you have accomplished, Bella, and I can't wait to see what's next. I will miss you!

Dr. Michelle Calka

Valeria Jimenez, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Psychology

Val has done the whole "college thing" the right way. She has worked hard, made long-lasting friendships, all while making sure that having fun has always been a priority. I have always enjoyed Val's presence in my classes and seeing her confidence in herself grow. She has worked tirelessly to develop her research skills, presenting one study at the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference in Chicago and another at the IU Dialogos Conference. The latter project was part of her work as a summer intern with the Community Foundation of Wabash County, working with the Director of Diversity and Growth to conduct a needs analysis in the county. Val is a kind, generous, and loyal person who will make real the Manchester Mission in her future work with clients. I've been honored to get to cheer her on! All of us in the Psychology department are thrilled to wish her well during her next chapter, where she will work towards her M.S.Ed. in Mental Health Counseling from Indiana University.

Dr. KJ Kessie

Julian Keough, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Sport Management

I first met Julian Keough during his first year as his advisor in 2020. He is an exemplary student-athlete who can balance his athletic schedule as well as his coursework. As a soccer player, he made the academic ALL-HCAC and Dean's list every year at Manchester. This remarkable accomplishment was achieved as Julian always tried to be his best self. After exchanging multiple emails with him past midnight when he was trying to get his work done after practice, I realized how much he self-disciplined himself to be who he is today. During the four years, he matured intellectually, athletically, and as a person. In the classroom, he was attentive, but usually quiet until he was assigned to a debate. Julian at the debate table was a whole new Julian who was confident, yet aggressive. He made his points clear and made sure the opponent would not win over his statements. This was probably typical of Julian as a soccer player on the field, but not in a classroom setting. It was a joy to learn about different sides of Julian in and out of the classroom over the four years. He is exceptionally talented, smart, and understands the process of 'getting work done, on time', which is an essential skill for success. I always enjoyed and will miss his calm and collective manners and of course his detailed questions about his work. I do not doubt that his professionalism combined with his personality will make him successful. I can't wait to see what the future holds for you! Congratulations Julian!

Dr. Sun Kang

Natalie Kotlin, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Chemistry

I am so honored to be writing for Natalie this year. While I have worked very closely with her over her four years at Manchester, I had the pleasure of first meeting Natalie through tennis in her first year. I had just joined the team as a volunteer assistant coach and Nat was having her first practice as an MU student athlete. From the very first day, I found Natalie to be a curious, kind, and compassionate young woman. I also saw her grit and determination. During the first practice, Natalie slipped and reaggravated a knee injury that she had in high school. It was scary for the rest of the team – I can't imagine how she felt! Despite this interesting and scary first impression, she came back to practice the next day and has never stopped working hard for herself or her teammates. I have also had the pleasure of working with Nat as per professor, an academic advisor, a research advisor, and as her honors thesis director. I am so glad that she (apparently and hopefully) never grew tired of me! It has been such a joy to see her grow and mature as a woman in science to the future researcher she is today! One of my most proud moments was seeing her present our research together at the national conference of the American Chemical Society. Natalie represents all that Manchester inspires to put out into the world. As Nat moves on from Manchester for a PhD program in chemistry at the University of Notre Dame, I am filled with pride and joy at the prospect of sharing both of our alma maters with her! I am so grateful to have been able to help her along in her journey and I can't wait to see what she does in the future.

Dr. Kyle Watson

Logan Kurtz, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
K-12 Human Performance Education

Logan Kurtz epitomizes academic excellence and a profound dedication to the field of education, making him a standout student and ambassador of MU Throughout his journey in Human Performance and Teaching Education, Logan has consistently demonstrated outstanding academic achievements and a deep commitment to his future role as an educator. His exceptional ability to connect with students, foster meaningful learning experiences, and effectively communicate complex concepts has been his staple in education. Logan's remarkable aptitude for collaboration and independent work, coupled with his proactive approach to tasks and unwavering support for his peers, sets him apart as a future leader. His genuine passion for inspiring young minds to push their boundaries and strive for excellence, combined with his role as a great ambassador for Manchester University, solidifies his potential to make a significant impact as a teacher. I wish him all the best and know he will be a very impactful educator.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Mattias Livezey, cum laude

Bachelor of Science
Finance

Matty Livezey, a finance major from Shelbyville, Indiana, has been an active member of the Manchester community. He came to MU to play soccer, and after retiring early from that sport, he found many other opportunities to keep himself busy. He was selected by the business faculty to serve as a peer mentor, and he was elected by his peers to serve on the executive cabinet of the College of Business Club. When two of the cabinet members stepped down for personal reasons, he and the remaining member assumed even more responsibilities and did an outstanding job of leading the club. Matty has served in a variety of volunteer capacities including working with the Morristown Boys and Girls Club, serving as a volunteer coach and referee, and working with the College of Business for the past two years to host more than 200 high school students on campus for a DECA business competition. He has been a member of the MU Esports Team for four years and served as team captain for two years, and he has also served on campus as a peer tutor. In the spring of 2024 he led the senior business project in the College's capstone course Case Studies in Business. He was recognized as an outstanding finance student by the Fort Wayne Chapter of Financial Executives International, and he recently received the L.D. Ikenberry Award, presented by the faculty to the most outstanding student in the Gilbert College of Business. After graduation, Matty plans to work part-time on campus as a peer tutor and as a salesperson for his family's business while pursuing his MBA at Manchester.

Professor Tim Ogden

Alex Llewellyn, magna cum laude

Bachelor of Arts
History

I first encountered Alex as a Junior in the Fall of 2022 in the research methodology class I teach for History majors. As a transfer student who came to Manchester in the Spring semester of the previous year, Alex had not yet taken any classes with me. I was immediately struck by his intellectual brilliance as he engaged deeply with the theories we discussed as well as with the experiential learning requirement of the class which is the first step toward completing the four-semester-long History SCE. To do this, students choose a research topic, formulate a research question, make an argument, find sources, analyze and interpret evidence, and arrive at conclusions. Alex's choice of topic itself – King John and thirteenth century English history - demonstrated his intellectual prowess as he, unlike most students who choose a U.S. history topic due both to familiarity and the relative ease of finding sources, was willing to venture outside the comfortable confines of U.S. history to explore a difficult period in English history. Alex explored the complex historical legacy of King John and wrote a paper of considerable heft on the topic, producing the first and second drafts as part of the requirements of the class. His sophisticated writing made them a pleasure to read. I now look forward to reading his final revised version and discussing it with him at the oral defense scheduled for later in the semester. I had the great pleasure of having Alex as a student in three other classes in the following semesters ranging from the history of British India to modern China to the British Empire. In each of these classes, he elevated the quality of class discussions through his thorough preparation which included close and critical reading of assigned material, sharing his critical interpretations of it, and asking deep questions of the material. As he consistently did this, I often noted with amusement his peers looking to him for guidance when difficult questions were posed. Humility being a hallmark of his personality, Alex gracefully helped them along, although at times he was embarrassed by this attention. At other times, he graciously held back his responses to give his peers a chance to answer the questions. Both his oral and written outputs were consistently of high quality. His intellectual prowess was matched by his work ethic of hard work, diligence, regularity, and punctuality, making him an absolute pleasure to have in class. More than a few times, he challenged me to think differently and more deeply about the material as well. I wish Alex the very best as he embarks on life after Manchester wherever that might take him and look forward to his continued success.

Dr. Uma Ganesan

Kathryn Manuel, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Accounting, MACCT

Kate is a remarkable person and student. Her resiliency during a pandemic is evident as she quickly excelled in all courses. Her success is a testament to her strengths: strong analytical skills, professionalism, and positive attitude. These skills were observable class after class. Kate's course work was always rigorous, completing 150 credit hours in four years, yet she succeeded and was named to the Dean's List each semester she was a student at Manchester.

Kate's dedication does not end in the classroom. She has worked for Manchester's Office of Financial Services (OFS) for the past three years and interned with FORVIS, LLP the winter and spring of 2023. After her internship, Kate was offered a full-time position with the firm. She will begin her career as a tax staff accountant this summer in the Fort Wayne, FORVIS office.

Kate has received many awards through her journey at Manchester. She joined Manchester as a recipient of the Presidential Scholarship and has been recognized countless times for her achievements throughout her time at Manchester. Kate was awarded the Crowe LLP Outstanding Sophomore Accounting Scholarship and Most Promising Young Leaders Award in sophomore year; the Lola V. Sanger Accounting Award her junior year; co-recipient of the Arthur L. Gilbert Award for Excellence in Accounting and earned the highest score on the Educational Testing Services Major Field Test in Business, naming her the Senior Comprehensive Evaluation Award recipient this year. Kate's academic accomplishments over the past four years are truly amazing!

Kate will be planning a wedding, settling in a new home (hopefully), and starting her accounting and preparing for the rigorous four-part, 16-hour, CPA exam all this summer. Although I will miss Kate and her numerous contributions on campus, I am excited to see her career progression and the great successes she will have in her personal and professional life.

Heather Twomey

Rebekah Milburn, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Biology-Chemistry

Rebekah is a talented student and is going to be an amazing veterinarian in the future! I have had the pleasure of working with Rebekah during all three years she has been at Manchester. I have been her academic advisor from the beginning, and had her in my FYWS course during her first semester at Manchester. She always contributed to our discussions, and while she is quiet by nature, she provided great insight! From that first year, I have had her in several classes and have seen her grow and mature into the competent and compassionate young woman she is today. I have found her to be resilient and to have a fighter's spirit – she is graduating an entire year early! I am so excited to see where she goes from here and what she does to improve her future community!

Dr. Kyle Watson

Elizabeth Miller, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Arts
Digital Media Arts

Unluckily for me, I never had a class with Elizabeth, although I have been her advisor for 3 years. Elizabeth came to MU in 2021 and is now graduating early with a degree in Digital Media Arts, a minor in Business, and the highest academic honors. Anyone who knows Elizabeth is probably thinking, "Of course she is!" Elizabeth never backed down from a challenge or took the easy route. Professor of Art Jeff Diesburg said, "Her work was always among the best in the class. Even when we were working on projects that were not her natural strength she worked diligently putting in the time to understand and apply new concepts." When Elizabeth came to advising meetings, she always had a plan ready to discuss - usually several possible plans. She had a clear sense of what she wanted to do and why, and it was not just about playing to her strengths but building her capacities and skills in other areas. I am in awe of her organizational skills and ability to connect the dots. When we realized that she could graduate early and planned to do so, I was a little sad, only because it meant I would not get to have

her in one of my courses. Elizabeth has a clear sense of who she is, and I know she will be successful in whatever path she chooses. She is kind, perceptive, and whip-smart. It has been so gratifying to work with her, and I am honored to have a small role in helping her become her best self at Manchester.

Dr. Michelle Calka

Evelyn Minton, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Biology-Chemistry

Evelyn is one of the hardest working students I have had the pleasure of working with during my time at Manchester. Evelyn entered Manchester as a first year with a lot of enthusiasm and personality. I have had the honor of working with Evy in many capacities at MU: I have served as her academic advisor, research mentor, and tennis coach. Academically, she has continued to excel – always going above and beyond what is required of her. She has consistently worked hard in her classes and is graduating in three years. In addition to her coursework excellence she has done research with me and at IU School of Medicine over the summer. I was honored to write recommendations for her graduate school applications and I am so pleased that she is planning on attending The Ohio State University for a Chemistry PhD program next fall. Some of my fondest memories of Evy have been related to tennis and the spring musical. She has an infectious energy on the tennis court for the team and can always be counted on to cheer on and gas up her teammates. We refer to her affectionately as “our menace.” I have always known that Evy could sing as she has been a consistent member of the acapella choir, but seeing her shine in the musical this spring as one of the leads was amazing. I hope that she continues to share her talents with her community. While I am saddened that MU only had her for three years, I am so excited to see what big and better things Evy gets to experience in the coming years. I am so proud of her and am honored that I was able to be a mentor to her.

Dr. Kyle Watson

Alyssa Pfeil, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Maya Angelou is credited with saying “We delight in the beauty of the butterfly, but rarely admit the changes it has gone through to achieve that beauty.” Watching Alyssa Pfeil lean into her strengths and talents as well as hone her natural propensity to nurture capacity and vision in others has been a gift. Alyssa arrived at college with a deep sense of purpose and a firm academic foundation; however, in this new academic space, this institution that requires students to take ownership of their understanding, Alyssa’s wings unfurled. Alyssa is a natural leader, a warm demander, and this disposition quickly emerged in all facets of her life. In the college classroom as a student, in the elementary classroom as the educator, and on the basketball court as the captain of the Spartan Women’s Basketball team, Alyssa creates space for others to lean in, to take risks, to offer insight. More importantly, she nurtures others to believe in themselves – a rare gift indeed. Watch closely, Alyssa will model how to differentiate this nurturing based on the needs of others – gentle reminders, goal setting, open-ended questions, or direct requests. As a student athlete, Alyssa has successfully managed the demands of completing a rigorous curriculum, the passing of her teaching licensure exams, a full semester of student teaching, along with the expectations of competing on the collegiate basketball court. The beauty in Alyssa, though, is not her ability to successfully juggle all the demands but rather to do it with grace, humility, a sense of humor, and a realization that she has one shot at every day. Alyssa’s wings have just begun to flutter, and as she takes flight, she goes confidently with a clear vision of who she is, a firm voice that advocates for others, and a clear understanding of her vocation. What a beautiful offering she has given us.

Dr. Heather Schilling

Rachael Pickett, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Chemistry

Rachael transferred to Manchester as a junior and had been a joy to work with over the last two years. Transferring to a new university late in your academic career can be quite daunting, but Rachael handled

the transition so well! I was so impressed with her ability to join in on one of the toughest classes that I have ever had (Physical Chemistry) and not only survive, but go on to do research with Dr. Davis on ways to incorporate new instrumental methods in our teaching labs. She has seamlessly joined our community by joining the marching band as a member of the color guard and the acapella choir as a section leader! She was also in the musical recently where it was great to see her talent! I am sad that we only had Rachael for two years, but I am so proud that we get to claim her as an alumna of our university!

Dr. Kyle Watson

Harrison Pittsford, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Sport Management

Harrison Pittsford will graduate with a major in Sport Management and minors in Professional Sales and Public Relations, and he has balanced this heavy academic load with four years of competition in NCAA Division III baseball. Baseball is a big part of his life. His teammates chose him as a team captain, and he also has experience coaching the sport. But his devotion to the game he loves has not limited his involvement in other activities or his commitment to his studies. He was selected by the business faculty to serve as a peer mentor, a capacity in which he has served for two years. He has also been a member of Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow for two years. He has volunteered to help with MU's Spartan Smash as well as its Giving Day, and he has served as a member of the College of Business Club's Professional Development Committee, where he has helped other students with their résumés and with their LinkedIn pages. And when the College of Business hosted more than 200 high school students for a DECA business competition, Harrison was there to help. In fact, one colleague in the College stated that he stayed well into the night providing assistance and refusing to leave until all the work was done. Most recently, he was honored by the business faculty with the Outstanding Sport Management Major Award. Harrison is still working on his post-graduation plans. He is exploring opportunities with a scouting agency for high school athletes, and he will definitely be coaching baseball again this summer.

Professor Tim Ogden

Ruby Rusk, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Biology-Chemistry

Time flies when you're having fun. That must be the case for Ruby because three years after she set foot on the MU campus, she is already graduating and with high honors at that. Ruby never does anything halfway. Her accomplishing so much in so little time speaks not only of her fervor in pursuing the health sciences, but also of her academic abilities, motivation, and love of learning. As a First-Year student, she was chosen by Young Leaders of Northeast Indiana to participate in their Next Gen Leadership Institute. In General Chemistry II lecture, Ruby was incredibly organized. She was usually the first person to take the daily online quiz over the assigned reading. On a couple of occasions, she noticed significant typos and I was able to fix them before anyone else in the class had the same issues. The Chemistry Center is a great resource for students mostly because of amazing tutors like Ruby. The Chemistry Department depends on lab assistants like Ruby who are essential in helping our labs run smoothly. Though lab assistants work alongside lab instructors, I would be confident in leaving Ruby in charge if needed. I am particularly impressed with Ruby's initiative and motivation in seeking out experiences in the health sciences. She was a Friends of Taiwan Undergraduate Research Fellow at National Chung Cheng University in Taiwan in the summer of 2023 using molecular biology techniques to analyze animal tissues. She participated in the Medical Practicum experience in Guatemala and was a volunteer with the Hospital Elder Life Program at Community Hospital North in Indianapolis. She was chosen to be the 2024 MU Student Research Symposium keynote speaker and will be presenting her Honors thesis, "Essential Oils and Antibiotics: Synergizing to Combat Bacteria". Ruby is highly involved at MU in the Honors Program, American Chemical Society, TriBeta Honors Society, Zoology Club, as a Spartan Ambassador, and as a cellist in the Manchester Symphony Orchestra. Ruby most certainly has a bright future ahead and plans to attend medical school.

Dr. Terrie Salupo-Bryant

Enrique Emanuel James Salazar, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Criminology

Enrique is a passionate, dedicated, driven, and high achieving student-athlete at Manchester. Academically and athletically, he has led his teammates in what the true meaning of what the term student-athlete embodies. He will leave our program as the greatest male distance runner in the history of the school and the HCAC. He will also go forward as one of the best ever in NCAA D3 history. These accomplishments are a direct reflection of his goal-oriented mindset and competitive nature. I am proud of what he has achieved during his time at Manchester, and I look forward to the successes he will have in the future.

Brian Cashdollar

Brayden Sayre, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Marketing

Brayden will be graduating with 3 degrees, a Marketing major and Digital Media and Professional Sales minors. Brayden's success at MU has come from his thirst to capitalize on every opportunity available and an understanding that life is a balance of many things. His intelligence is not limited to his academic success, he also understands that college is a unique time for students. He was a member of the College of Business Club, was in the MU honors program, was on the College of Business Marketing committee, volunteered for the DECA competition held on campus, was the VP of Marketing for his senior capstone class, interned with Parkview health in Fort Wayne, and was a finalist in the National Collegiate Sales Competition! With all of that going on, he still found time to take a January trip to Hawaii for two weeks with his Social Psychology class, which he identified as his most memorable time at MU. After graduation Brayden intends to continue working at Gannett / USA Today in post-sales. He has interned with them assisting the sales team with industry research, campaign management, and data analysis to support digital marketing strategies. He also designed compelling digital ad copy, ranging from display, social, and video ads for clients in law, retail, and healthcare industries. Ultimately he contributed to the implementation of over 10 successful campaign launches on the USAT network. Brayden was able to earn such a prestigious opportunity partly due to the many certifications he earned. Google Analytics - Google Digital Garage, Google Search Ads, and AI and ChatGPT: Impact and Possibilities Certificate were just a few of them. When asked what his family thought about his time at MU Brayden stated; "My parents would express how sincerely proud they are that their youngest graduated and is moving on to his next journey. My older brother would definitely say he's proud of me but make a joke about how I'm nowhere near as smart as he is." MU and the Gilbert College of Business are just as proud to have such an accomplished, driven, and well-rounded graduate.

Professor Joe Messer

Sydney Sluys, *summa cum laude*

Bachelor of Science
Exercise Science and Fitness

Sydney Sluys epitomizes excellence both in academics and athletics, making her a standout individual poised for success. Her remarkable journey has led her to the prestigious Manchester University Master of Athletic Training program, a testament to her dedication and talent. Sydney's outstanding academic achievements reflect her responsible and driven nature, demonstrating her capacity for success in her chosen field. Over the years, she has exhibited notable growth in the classroom, continuously striving for improvement and embracing challenges with tenacity. Equally impressive is her ability to collaborate effectively with others while also excelling in individual endeavors, showcasing her versatility and leadership qualities. With her exemplary qualities and unwavering determination, Sydney is undoubtedly destined for great accomplishments, and I am immensely proud to witness her journey towards success.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Austin Snider, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Exercise Science and Fitness

Austin Snider is an exceptional candidate deserving recognition by MU and Exercise Science for his outstanding achievements. His dedication and passion for the field have propelled him to excel academically, demonstrating a profound understanding of the intricate mechanisms of the human body and its response to exercise. Moreover, Austin's meticulous preparation for physical therapy school sets him apart as a determined and ambitious individual. Through his rigorous coursework, hands-on experience, and involvement in extracurricular activities, he has exhibited remarkable leadership and a commitment to his future profession. Austin's unwavering commitment to excellence makes him an ideal candidate for recognition, serving as an inspiration to his peers and a testament to the value of hard work and determination in pursuing academic and professional goals.

Dr. Jeffrey Beer

Justin Szelis, *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Arts

English

Justin Szelis enjoys the way literature “transforms” the way he sees the world. Among English majors, he is known for long library hours and an articulate, reflective style in the classroom. It has always been a pleasure to teach Justin and to see the way he “inhabits” story. He has been fascinated with works as varied as Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Tommy Orange’s *There, There*. When he’s not in the library, Justin is commuting from Huntington, volunteering at charities such as the Forks of the Wabash, or serving as President of the Yoga, Mind, and Soul Club at Manchester, among other impressive activities. He will graduate *magna cum laude* as an English major with a minor in business.

Dr. Jonathan Watson

Braden Thompson, *cum laude*

Bachelor of Science

Accounting, MACCT

Braden is a doer and exemplifies Manchester’s mission of graduating persons with ability and conviction. Braden’s work ethic is unparalleled: he began working for a tax firm his first year and never looked back, contributing countless hours preparing tax returns and excelling in all his course work. There has not been a time that I have known Braden that he has not been working over 50 hours a week and taking more than a 15-credit hour course load. It is apparent that Braden’s incredible success would not be possible without his strong acumen and ability to multitask.

His resiliency as a student and employee during a pandemic are evident as he is graduating as one of the top students in his major and buying the business that he has worked for since he was a first-year student. In my 25 years in higher education, I have never observed a student buying the firm for which they were an intern, running a second successful business they started and graduating near the top of their class – truly remarkable!

Braden’s strong analytical skills, professionalism, and positive attitude have contributed to the many awards he has received as a student. Braden was selected by faculty as the recipient of the Most Promising Young Leaders Award his sophomore year, the Culp CPA Group Accounting Scholarship his junior year, and co-recipient of the Arthur L. Gilbert Award for Excellence in Accounting this year.

Braden has big plans this summer, he will be preparing for the rigorous four-part, 16-hour, CPA exam; and buying Kates Tax Services and moving the office from Akron to Warsaw, Indiana. Braden will also continue expanding his own pier business at Lake Maxinkuckee. Although I will miss Braden (and his

smile) around campus, I am excited to learn of his many accomplishments both personally and professionally in the coming years.

Heather Twomey

Caroline Thompson, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Early Childhood and Elementary Education

Caroline Thompson is quite likely the coolest person I have ever known. Even behind the pandemic masks in the vast space of ACEN 101 for our first class together, I could see Caroline. Knowing Caroline means loving Caroline. A human of ability and conviction, Caroline knows her vision and lives it genuinely. Her years in the Manchester curriculum have supported the development of a voice that simply demands attention. When Caroline speaks, we stop and listen to the wisdom filled with compassion and hope. I believe Caroline has been living her life in the vocation of education since childhood. It is a natural fit that beckons others to sit in her presence. Through passionate exchanges, Caroline has grown into a qualified professional who knows what is just. I am confident that she will not merely go through the motions as she lives in the vocation. She will be the person who pauses and asks why. The humans in her life have nurtured her to be curious and my hope for her is for that curiosity to remain. Keep asking why, Caroline! Fill our world with color! Seek justice and amplify the voices of others! The Henney Department of Education stands beside Teacher Thompson as we offer appreciation and congratulations.

Dr. Stacy Stetzel

Hannah Thomson, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Psychology and Religious Culture

I have had the privilege of watching Hannah Thomson transform from a first-year college student to a highly competent colleague who brings enormous value to the psychology department. She has proved herself to be a focused student, dependable department assistant, energetic student leader, trusted associate, and true friend.

In many of my classes I require group research projects that involve students working together toward common goals. Hannah is always an excellent group member and has helped many of her peers further their collective research goals while achieving high grades in her own work. She is a self-starter and genuinely cares about classmates and those around her. She is always efficient and competent in the work she does, extremely thorough, and demonstrates a positive attitude and persistence that is unparalleled by most students I have observed.

Hannah is an excellent writer and researcher. She has presented research projects at Manchester University Research Symposium and Midwestern Psychological Association (MPA). She is currently working on a mixed-methods project based on Catherine Price's work about defining fun. Hannah's project is titled True Fun and Fake Fun in a University Setting. Last summer Hannah and I worked together to co-write a lab manual for teaching undergraduate students about qualitative analysis using NVivo. We presented this manual at the Lumivero Virtual Conference in September and Midwestern Psychological Association earlier this month.

As the lead student assistant in our department, Hannah has developed skills in Canvas, IBM SPSS, NVIVO, Qualtrics, tutoring, and in coordinating student workers. In fact, Hannah's expertise in many of these areas makes her an invaluable member of our departmental team. She is the kind of student who can hit the ground running with most any task she is given and contribute value.

From the beginning Hannah consistently gravitated to Industrial Organizational Psychology and has presented several research projects in this area. She was recently accepted into a fully funded PhD program in Industrial Organizational (I-O) Psychology at Bowling Green University. This is one of the top I-O programs in the U.S. We are so proud of you Hannah and we are impressed by your persistence in working hard, producing excellent work, and helping others do the same. Your presence and Manchester and especially in the Psychology Department will be missed.

Dr. Marcie Coulter-Kern

Sophie May-Ann Updike, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Early Childhood and Elementary Education

An accomplished scholar, creative designer, and organized leader – Sophie Updike exhibits qualities of a world changer. Her vision of supporting the growth and development of children through teaching has been sharpened while studying at Manchester. Sophie amplified her voice through leadership roles, where she charged forward through action and words. The work she produced for courses and clinical experiences was advanced, having the likeness of a veteran educator. Curricular materials and scholarly papers modeled for others what could be accomplished with focused effort and intent. The vocation she has been called to yearns for her presence. In this journey we call the undergraduate experience, Sophie was fearless, and she found out who she was supposed to be. Throughout the journey, Sophie navigated campus life as a commuter, led our student education association, worked in the Henney Department of Education, completed a rigorous honors program, and added a history minor to her already packed elementary education program, all while earning impressive academic records. I consulted Sophie often during her tenure for perspective on projects, research, assignments, and curricular issues. She was confident and always willing to engage in professional dialogue. Sophie was made for the education profession. I was recently reminded of her advanced academic skills when I listened to her honors defense, ADHD in Education: Are Students with ADHD Supported in Special Education Law. Sophie will lead in her classroom, her school, and her district. She devoted herself to the vocation. Community members will look to her for guidance and a voice of reason. The Henney Department of Education looks forward to future collaborations with Sophie as we continue to provide a place for students to walk in the pathway Sophie built. We are grateful for you, Sophie. Today, we honor you.

Dr. Stacy Stetzel

Evangelina Vega, *summa cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Social Work

It has been my privilege and pleasure to be one of Evangelina Vega's social work professors. She is everything that a professor would want in a student! She comes to class ready to learn, willing to participate, and is always respectful and conscientious. There have been very few students who have "wowed" me with their academic skills, but Evangelina is one of them! She wants to do each assignment perfectly and I remind her that her personal standards often surpass the expectations of the assignment! Evangelina understands the importance of functioning as a social worker in micro (individuals and families), mezzo (small groups), and macro (social justice) levels of practice.

As a non-traditional student, Evangelina has juggled marriage, family, and education. She states, "My family has been a big part of my academic experience. Returning to school has also given me a new way to connect with my children. My children often joke with me and ask, 'Mom, have you done your homework yet?' as if they are the parents. However, earlier on, I had to learn how to prioritize my responsibilities and remind myself that I shouldn't allow school to distract me from giving my children the attention they need. School allowed me to find some balance, although it can still be a struggle. My husband and our family have been my biggest supporters. They genuinely believe in me and my journey, even when I doubt myself."

As persons of color, Evangelina and I have had conversations about barriers and biases we experience in our lives. In classes and at the senior anti-racism retreat, we have also discussed some of the policies that negatively impact Mexican Americans. She loves her heritage and knows how to make her voice heard against prejudice and discrimination.

Growing up, Evangelina had always believed that college was not for her and that she did not need a degree. "Now," she states, "I understand the power of a degree and could not imagine how life would look without my college experiences these last four years. While it has been challenging, every moment has been worth it."

One of Evangelina's "moments" has been as an intern at Cancer Services Northeast Indiana. She had the opportunity to learn alongside the client advocates who work directly with clients impacted by

cancer daily, providing them with financial assistance, emotional support, access to outside resources, and many other services. She also assisted with program development, focusing on creating a space of support for young adults directly impacted by cancer.

Evangelina plans to attend graduate school in the fall to pursue her Master of Social Work (MSW) degree online through IU and then obtain her MSW license after graduation. I congratulate her on her achievements and expect to hear about many more!

Dr. Alicia Dailey

James Walsh, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
English/Language Arts Education

James Walsh English/English Language Arts From the moment I met James at the entry of his MU career I was impressed. He engaged deeply with creative, expository, and argumentative texts, and regardless of the task demands in the honors course on Leadership and Creativity, his work ranked consistently superb across the semester. This young man, astutely alert about pedagogical paradigms, circumspect about the realistic parameters, such as ISTEP conditions, is a fantastic thinker, writer and else communicating force who marks the profile of a very promising Exceptional Progressive Educator. In addition to his academic and didactic excellence, James is very passionate about his substitute teaching, a commitment he has pursued since he was 18. Guided by an impeccable vision, focused, and grounded by his drive to self-challenge, he cares to impact others through his charismatic and incisive educational mission, An indomitable spirit, coupled with a sharp and dry sense of humor characterizes James's flexibility along adjusting, calmness within chaos, and a witty smile accompanying how to keep one's consistent cool. James adapts well to his environment, best illustrated in his role as a superb member on MU's Esports team. Mr. Walsh's uncanny strategic play outwitted one game character whose role he can no longer play since it would remain defeated. Why doesn't this surprise me? As an honors student, James has been interpreting data he collected to examine correlation points between book banning and suggested impact by/on mental health. Serving on many excellent Honors Thesis committees, I have enjoyed working with James on his quantitative honors project, "A Dangerous Book for a Dangerous Mind: A Study on the Effects Banned and Challenged Material has on Mental Health," a much-needed analysis in scholarly contribution in these times of ours. Dear James—I very much look forward to the ways in which you will transform teaching as a way to let classics and other voices ring true, necessary, and empowering for your future students. And please remember: Never Doubt Your Sparkle! Grateful, Beate.

Dr. Beate Gilliar

Morgan Wozniak, *cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Accounting and Finance

Morgan gets things done. Since the first day that Morgan stepped on campus, she became an active member of the Manchester community. She quickly got involved in sports, clubs, and contributed to service projects. Morgan's ability to exceed academically and professionally was apparent. Morgan is gifted with a strong analytical mind and has excelled in all academic endeavors. Her love for learning, positive attitude, and her ability to multitask has served her well as she completed the requirements for her two majors: accounting and finance. These gifts further enabled her to land an accounting internship position with CLH, CPA's and Consultants in Michigan City, Indiana.

Morgan's breadth of personal strengths not only make the classroom better they make the university better. Morgan has served Manchester well by sharing her strengths with others: she has served as the Director of Mentors for the Gilbert College of Business (2023-24), as a member of the Community Outreach Committee of the College of Business Club for the past three years and Manchester's Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow Club for the past four years. Morgan also participated on the Manchester girls' basketball and softball teams.

Morgan's many talents are also recognized by faculty, she was selected as the recipient of the KSM Accounting Excellence Scholarship last year and the recipient of the Financial Executives International (FEI) Award and the Outstanding Finance Major Award this year.

Morgan plans to take a trip with her family in celebration of graduation this summer and return to Manchester to complete an MBA after already completing 150 credit hours at the university in four years. (We are glad that Morgan loves Manchester as much as we love her.) I am excited for the opportunity to work with Morgan one additional year and look forward to learning of her many future accomplishments both in her personal and professional life.

Heather Twomey

Chloe Yoder, *magna cum laude*
Bachelor of Science
Biology-Chemistry

Chloe Yoder is a hard-working, level-headed, sharp, get-things-done person who thrives in interacting with people. A student on the January Session 2023 Medical Practicum, a short-term global health experience course that I led to a Maya community in the Guatemala highlands, she showed an exceptional ability to organize during unscripted situations and communicate across cultures. The physicians and dentist pointed out that Chloe was an obvious choice (among the group of strong students) to set up our testing lab for the first day of clinic, which she did calmly and effectively. She then taught the other students how to perform the tests. A natural teacher who seeks continual improvement, her interpersonal awareness and communication abilities suggest she could thrive as a physician, which is one of her possible paths. Soon after we arrived in Guatemala, as I was talking in Spanish with several physicians in our group and local partner leaders, Chloe joined our conversation. The quality of her understanding and speaking, as well as the ease with which she engaged, were stunning, given her three years of high school Spanish. Upon returning to North Manchester, she interpreted medical Spanish at 85 Hope, the local free health clinic. Her practical desire to understand, communicate, and interact cross-culturally is grounded in a strong sense of cultural humility and realistic, engaging empathy. On the last day of our Guatemala trip, the students had a free day to explore the small, walkable city of Antigua. In addition to hanging out with her peers, exploring cathedrals, and negotiating in the main market, Chloe also explored on her own, eventually finding someone to lend a guitar that she used for some solo busking. The money she had made performing showed she was both a musician and spirited. Weeks later, as I was reading her insightful, profound entries from the daily guided journaling assignment, the original, moving poems sprinkled throughout revealed that she is also a poet. Her interaction with the human condition in that new context of Guatemala was superior. Further, Chloe's ability to provide timely observations and discussion in learning environments that she finds both in and out of classrooms makes learning better for everyone. During her summer 2023 research experience at the University of Nebraska Lincoln, funded by the National Science Foundation, she analyzed how community-level water treatment can remove polyfluorinated alkyl substances from drinking water, which is a wicked problem. Her resulting poster received podium awards at both university-wide and national conferences; she continues analyzing data this spring, working towards the type of journal publication appreciated by Ph.D. programs, which is another one of her possible paths. Chloe exhibits an exceptional combination of high-level reasoning, creativity, and a sense of self that indicates great things to come, whether in north-central Indiana, Central America, Africa, or any other community fortunate enough to have her join.

Dr. Jeff Osborne