

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

2026

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

529 14TH ST NW, WASHINGTON, DC

MAY 22, 2026



BAU Bay Atlantic
University

WASHINGTON D.C.

A MESSAGE FROM BAY ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Dear Class of 2026,

As you prepare to graduate, we reflect on all you have accomplished and the mark you've left on our university. This milestone is a celebration of your achievements and an addition to our institution's legacy. Your dedication, character, and contributions have helped shape a community defined by learning, growth, and shared purpose. Our campus is better because of you.

As you take the next step in your journey, remember that you will always have a place here. Whether you wish to reconnect, seek support, or share your story, our doors will remain open.

Congratulations on your graduation.

We look forward to all that you will achieve in the years ahead!



BAU Bay Atlantic
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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Class of 2026,

It is with great pride and joy that I congratulate you on reaching this remarkable milestone. Today, you join the distinguished community of Bay Atlantic University graduates, and we celebrate the dedication, perseverance, and resilience that brought you to this moment.

Your time at BAU has been defined by hard work, curiosity, and the courage to pursue your ambitions. Earning your degree is a meaningful achievement and a reflection of the determination you have shown throughout your journey. While graduation marks the completion of one chapter, it also signals the beginning of many new opportunities ahead.

As you move forward, I encourage you to carry with you the core values of BAU: respect, integrity, academic excellence, and diversity. The impact you make, in your communities, professions, and the world, will define the true legacy of your education.

Please remember that wherever your path leads, you will always remain part of the BAU family. We will continue to watch your accomplishments with pride and confidence in the difference you will make.

Congratulations once again, Class of 2026.

With warmest regards and great anticipation,

Dr. Sinem Vatanartiran

President

Bay Atlantic University



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CEREMONY PROGRAM

BAY ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY
CLASS OF 2026

- ◇ DOORS OPEN AT 12:00PM
 - ◇ CEREMONY STARTS PROMPTLY AT 1:00PM
 - UNIVERSITY MACE PROCESSIONAL
 - FACULTY PROCESSIONAL
 - STUDENT PROCESSIONAL
-

- ◇ COMMENCEMENT SPEECHES
 - NICOLE IFILL, KEYNOTE SPEAKER
 - DR. AHU YILDIRMAZ, CHAIR OF THE BAU BOARD OF TRUSTEES
 - DR. SINEM VATANARTIRAN, PRESIDENT OF BAU
 - VALEDICTORIAN
-

- ◇ VALEDICTORIAN OF THE CLASS OF 2026 AWARD
 - ◇ SPECIAL RECOGNITION
 - ◇ FACULTY OF THE CLASS OF 2026 AWARD
 - ◇ DISTRIBUTION OF DIPLOMAS
 - ◇ STUDENT RECESSIONAL
-

- ◇ RECEPTION IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE CEREMONY



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KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Nicole Ifill

Deputy Director, Data - Gates Foundation

Nicole Ifill is a Deputy Director on the U.S. Program Data & AI Infrastructure strategy team at the Gates Foundation where she builds shared public-good data and AI infrastructure that provides timely, relevant, and actionable insights to K12 districts and postsecondary institutions, supporting cross-sector collaboration, and enabling rapid-cycle testing of AI solutions.

Ms. Ifill has devoted her career to removing barriers to success for learners, especially those historically underserved by our educational systems. Before joining the foundation in 2017, Ms. Ifill oversaw the development and release of several data and research initiatives, serving as analytic director of the 2012/14 Beginning Postsecondary Students Longitudinal Study and as project director of the annual data update of College Results Online, a web tool that makes critical graduation rates and labor market outcomes data accessible to practitioners, researchers, and policy makers.

Ms. Ifill holds a master's degree in statistics from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and a bachelor's degree in political science-statistics from Columbia University.

SYMBOLS OF THE BAY ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

THE MACE

The origins of the mace can be traced to medieval times when knights carried them as weapons during processions with their kings. As the tradition grew, the mace became a symbol of authority and was often decorated with elaborate embellishments and gems. Today, an academic mace represents the authority invested in the president by a school's governing body and is used only on formal academic occasions, including Commencement, Convocation, and presidential inaugurations, when participants are in full regalia and the president is in attendance. The new BAU mace bears the Coat of Arms on two sides, the acronym "BAU" on one side and the year 2014 (the year the university was established) on the other side.

CHAIN OF OFFICE

Accompanying the mace is the distinguished BAU chain of office, adorning the university president's academic regalia. Comprising interlinking circles inscribed with "BAU," the institution's charter year, the depiction of the coat of arms, and all the symbols on the coat of arms separately on each circle, this chain represents the trust and authority bestowed upon the president by the university's governing body. During inaugural ceremonies, the chain is ceremoniously placed around the neck of the new president by the chair of the Board of Trustees, signifying the transfer of leadership and authority. The president then wears it during the commencement ceremony and convocations with the gown.

THE PRESIDENTIAL GOWN

The presidential gown features four velvet chevrons adorning each sleeve—an honor reserved for university presidents—and is trimmed in a braided buff silk cord. The wool costume is completed with a tam in matching blue velvet and a gold bullion tassel. The gown is reserved for academic convocations, commencement ceremonies, and other formal occasions, symbolizing the authority and dignity of the university presidency.

THE SEAL

Central to the university's identity is its official seal, a circular emblem featuring the institution's name, location in Washington, D.C., and the year of its founding encircling a coat of arms. This seal serves as a hallmark of authenticity and tradition, embossed on official documents and university correspondence.

HONOR CORDS

Honor cords recognize graduates who have achieved distinguished academic excellence, as measured by cumulative GPA. Cum Laude (gold and white cords) is awarded to undergraduate students earning a GPA of 3.50 or higher and graduate students earning 3.70 or higher. Magna Cum Laude (royal blue and gold cords) recognizes higher distinction, with a GPA of 3.70 or higher for undergraduates and 3.80 or higher for graduate students. The highest honor, Summa Cum Laude (gold cords), is reserved for those with exceptional academic achievement, requiring a GPA of 3.85 or higher for undergraduates and 3.90 or higher for graduate students.



GRADUATES

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

LUIS LAZO
TRIEU NGOC HAN NGO
SINEM EMRE
SALMA SOYAH
UPENDRA PANCHAL

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

JAEN KENY FLACO VANEGAS

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN POLITICAL SCIENCE AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

NANULI JAPARIDZE
YABSIRA KURAZ MEKONNEN *MINOR IN BUSINESS*
BATUHAN KOCAOGLU
CAMILA QUINTEROS ARNEZ



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GRADUATES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

ABOOZER KAREEM MOHAMMED
ASHRITH SIMHA RAO VELMULA
KALEB SELAMU
SMRITEE BASNET
BACHAR EL SAMAD

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

TEM KLATAE
TSOGZOLMAA BAYANSAN
IVSHINKHOROL NYAMSAMBUU
MEMUNATU TURAY
WAZHMA KHALILI RAHEEM
MANUEL DAVID GALINDO PEREZ
URANZAYA BATSUKH
HALIL ERAY KILINC
ALLAHRI D`EMMA TERRASI **SUMMA CUM LAUDE**



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GRADUATES

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

PREET BAINS

MIHRINUR PAMUK *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

MERT AKSOY *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

INGRID CAROLINA RANGEL TABARES *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

MAURICIO GIAN LUCCA CABRERA OCHOA

ZEYNEP GOZUKARA *CUM LAUDE*

ABEER ALSHEBANI

AHMED HAZGUI

CAMILA VESGA FIGUEROA

YULIANA PAOLA COTE URIBE

LIZETH DANIELA VELANDIA GONZALEZ

ANGIE ALEXANDRA ANGARITA VELASQUEZ

LIZ SIDNEY ALACOMA PAZ

BEATRIZ ELENA CONTO SANTANA

LAURA GAMEZ ARIZA

ADITYA NAIR

AHMED DIAAELDIN ABDELHADY ABDELAZIM

AHMAD MUSTAFA NAZAR

DI THAR MYINT



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GRADUATES

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

MARIAMI SHENGELIA

DIDEM KAYMAK

MOHAMMAD Y. GHAMAI

EULALIE ARMEL

DAMLA YILMAZ

YAZID ALERYANI

HIKMAT ISAYEV

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ENGINEERING

FURKAN SERHATLIOGLU

HRUTHIK NITCHAL RAO NIMMANENI

DHRUV MAHADEV LAL AGRAWAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIG DATA ANALYTICS

OYUNBILEG BATKHUU *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

NESLIHAN SEDEF TORA *CUM LAUDE*

JESSICA MUNOZ ANGEL *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*



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GRADUATES

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIG DATA ANALYTICS

SAZZADUL ISLAM *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

CESAR ALEJANDRO CALDERON ROJAS *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

HAKTAN CURGUL *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

CAHID INCE *CUM LAUDE*

SONAL AGARWAL *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

AAKASH REDDY NERAVETLA

ABUBAKARR KARGBO *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

GEYNER ROJAS TORRES *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

YEIDY VIVIANA AYALA GUTIERREZ *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

ALI FAIK CELIK *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

BENAZIR KANYBEK KYZY *CUM LAUDE*

HELIN NUR CIRIT

ANTHONY MARFO

DHRUVIN MIYANI

MELIH CANGUNES

FERNAND MUGWIZA

CAN SAGLAM

NOMATHAMSANQA SIBANDA

SERRA NUR BAYRAK



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GRADUATES

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIG DATA ANALYTICS

MOHAMED BOUSSARSAR
TAHSINA KHANAM
THANCHANOK AUNPONGPUWANART
MUSASA MULANGU FRANCK
ASMITA BOGATI
DISAWAT MANOP
UDOKA IGBOANUGO
INGRIT DIAZ ESTUPINAN
SEMIH KIRIM
SRIVANYA KONDEPUDI
DAMLAYILMAZ
YAZID ALERYANI
HIKMAT ISAYEV

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CLOUD COMPUTING ENGINEERING

MERT YERLIKAYA



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GRADUATES

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN CYBERSECURITY

BILYAMINU DANLAMI SULEIMAN
MAHIMA BHUSHAN *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

KANIJ FATEMA RITU

ELYES BOUREZEK *CUM LAUDE*

AYBALA KARACABEY

ALMENDRA PAOLA CABRERA OCHOA *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

LISNEY LORAINÉ ZARACHE MARTINEZ *MAGNA CUM LAUDE*

DILAN AKGUL *SUMMA CUM LAUDE*

SERRA OKTAY

MUHAMMAD ARSALAN

NAHIN AHMED

KARTIKE

PRINCE ADOM ADJEI

MOHAMED MANSARAY

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

GAURAV PANDEY



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Dare to Dream



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