

# MISSION STATEMENT

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Rocky Vista University  
provides quality healthcare education  
while inspiring students to serve with  
compassion, integrity, and excellence.



**ROCKY VISTA UNIVERSITY | COLORADO**

**MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES**

Class of 2024 Commencement

EIGHTEENTH OF MAY  
TWO-THOUSAND TWENTY-FOUR



# COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

PROCESSIONAL

NATIONAL ANTHEM  
Joel Roberts, MD  
MSBS Assistant Program Director

INVOCATION  
Rachel Linger, PhD

WELCOME, ANNOUNCEMENT OF PURPOSE, AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S CHARGE  
Francina Towne, PhD  
MSBS Program Director  
Associate Professor of Immunology

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
Maha Sallam, PhD

CLASS PRESIDENT COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
Elena Granados

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS  
Arthur J. Armijo, DO, MS, MPH

CLASS AWARDS  
Vickie Roettger, PhD

PRESENTATION AND HOODING OF THE MSBS CLASS

CONFERRAL OF MSBS DEGREE AND TASSEL CEREMONY  
Ed Bilsky, PhD  
Provost and Chief Academic Officer

CLOSING REMARKS  
Ed Bilsky, PhD

RECESSIONAL

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear MSBS Class of 2024,  
Families, Faculty, and Members of the RVU Community,

Today is a celebration, not only for the students, but for everyone who has played a foundational role in their lives. They would not be here today if not for your support, love, and confidence.

Graduates, thank you for the trust you have placed in us. You have worked hard and have overcome obstacles to be one step closer to achieving your professional goals. We look forward to seeing the wonderful things you will accomplish.

As you transition from RVU Students to Alumni, remember to express gratitude to those who have helped you on your journey; your family, friends, faculty, and staff – all of whom stood with you to cheer you on during the good times as well as those challenging moments and now share the sense of pride and accomplishment with you. Remember that you are always a part of the RVU Family. Never stop learning, growing in mind, body and spirit and become an integral member of the communities you will serve.

We look forward to your future accomplishments and know that you will make us proud!

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David A. Forstein, DO". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David A. Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.)  
President and CEO  
Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology

# KEYNOTE SPEAKER

## **ARTHUR J. ARMIJO, DO, MS, MPH**

Dr. Armijo is a graduate of Rocky Vista University College of Osteopathic Medicine Class of 2023, as well as a graduate of the RVU Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences Program's Class of 2018. During his time at RVU, Dr. Armijo was a member of the Rural and Wilderness Track and was the recipient of the Community Service Award. He is currently finishing his transitional internship with the HealthOne Hospital system based in Denver, Colorado, and will begin his advanced Anesthesiology Residency at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine in Albuquerque, New Mexico next month.



## MSBS CLASS OF 2024 GRADUATION AWARDS

### PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The MSBS President's Award recognizes a graduate who embodies the University's core values of integrity, collegiality, compassion, diversity, excellence, service, and innovation.

### ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AWARD

The MSBS Academic Excellence Award recognizes a graduate who has demonstrated academic excellence.

### HUMANITARIAN AWARD

This MSBS Humanitarian Award recognizes a graduate who exemplifies the qualities of graciousness and humility, advocates for social justice, and works for the betterment of all members of their community.

### SERVICE AWARD

The MSBS Service Award recognizes a graduate who demonstrated involvement, leadership, and contributions to service efforts.

# MSBS FACULTY AND STAFF

COURTNEY CAMPBELL  
Program Coordinator

KELLY OSTROFSKY, PHD  
Assistant Professor, Anatomical Sciences

QAMRUL CHOUDHURY, PHD  
Associate Professor of Physiology;  
Director of Religion in Medicine

JOEL ROBERTS, MD  
MSBS Assistant Program Director;  
Assistant Professor of Physiology

AN DANG, PHD  
Assistant Professor of Anatomical Sciences;  
Co-Director of the Medicine in Film Elective

VICKIE ROETTGER, PHD  
Associate Professor of Physiology;  
Co-Director of the Global Medicine Track

JENSEN FISHER, MLIS, AHIP  
Assistant Director of Library Services;  
Assistant Professor of Medical Humanities

REBECCA RYZNAR, PHD  
Associate Professor of Molecular Biology;  
Director of the Physician Science Track

ASHLIE FRANK  
Administrative Assistant

JILLA SABETI, PHD  
Associate Professor of Pharmacology

IAN GEORGE, PHD  
Assistant Professor of Anatomy;  
Chair; Anatomical Sciences

BRIAN SCHWARTZ, PHD, MLIS  
Director, Frank Ritchel Ames Memorial Library;  
Associate Professor of Medical Humanities

DAWNETT HANN  
Program Coordinator

JANÉE TERWOORD, PHD  
MSBS Assistant Program Director;  
Assistant Professor of Physiology

RACHEL LINGER, PHD  
Associate Professor of Pharmacology;  
Co-Director of Integrative Pain Management  
Elective

FRANCINA TOWNE, PHD  
MSBS Program Director;  
Associate Professor of Immunology

ELIZABETH MOFFETT-GEORGE, PHD  
MSBS Assistant Program Director;  
Associate Professor of Structural Medicine

LON WAN WINKLE, PHD  
Professor of Medical Humanities

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES CLASS OF 2024



**ISABELLA GRACE ALESSI**  
Bachelor of Science - Mathematics  
University of Missouri - Columbia

**STEFANO S. CENA**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOTECHNOLOGY  
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY - IDAHO

**TABITHA AUSTIN**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS - SAN ANTONIO

**SYDNEY D. CRABB**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

**YASH M. BHAKTA**  
BACHELOR OF ARTS - MOLECULAR AND CELL BIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - BERKELEY

**COURTNEY CRANMER**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA - UPSTATE

**MATTHEW BRANNEY**  
BACHELOR OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**KATIE CROOK**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - DENVER

**SCOTT BRUNDAGE**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

**JOSEPH G. DANTIN**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
MISSOURI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**DANIELA CABALLERO HERRERA**  
MASTER OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO - GREELEY

**JHORLENY FAMILIA DE LA CRUZ**  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE AND BACHELOR OF ARTS  
WELLS COLLEGE

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES CLASS OF 2024

SARAH CONLIN GOETZ  
BACHELOR OF ARTS - BIOLOGY  
OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

CHAZ GOODMAN  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - FINANCE  
VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

ELENA GRANADOS  
BACHELOR OF ARTS - ENGLISH  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - PSYCHOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA-DAVIS

GRACEE JOHNSON  
BACHELOR OF HEALTH AND EXERCISE SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

AMANDA CATHERINE KARIMKHANI  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - DENVER

KARLINA KEGECIK  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

SANDRA KIM  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

JOSEPH LEE  
BACHELOR OF ARTS - HISTORY  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

TAEYR M. LIEBERG  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY - BOZEMAN

ALYSSA BETH LITTLE  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - PUBLIC HEALTH  
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA, TUCSON, AZ

JOHN FRANCIS LYNCH III  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
LAGRANGE COLLEGE

SYDNEY MATTOX  
BACHELOR OF ARTS - INTEGRATIVE PHYSIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO- BOULDER

ERICH NUSS  
BACHELOR OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS - MN

ALMA OCHOA  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOLOGY  
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN MODERN LANGUAGES

ALEXANDRA ORAHOVATS  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY - FORT COLLINS

VINCENT PHAM  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - CHEMISTRY  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

IZABELLA ROSS  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

IMAN SALHI  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOCHEMISTRY  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

AMIROOP SINGH SANDHU  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOLOGY  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

SAILY SARDINAS  
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH  
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

REBECCA SHENODA  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON- HOUSTON TEXAS

RYAN SKIDMORE  
BACHELOR OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER

# MASTER OF SCIENCE IN BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES CLASS OF 2024

LAI JING SU

BACHELOR OF ARTS - UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH - UNIVERSITY OF  
MINNESOTA - TWIN CITIES

SURYA SUSARLA

BACHELOR OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER

MAKENZIE THORNLEY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY

KYLE E. THURMANN

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

KAYLA TORRES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - PHYSIOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA - SAN DIEGO

TIFFANY TRINH

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

JAQUELINE VALENCIA

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE - BIOCHEMISTRY  
COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

ANNA WEINSTEIN

BACHELOR OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO - BOULDER

# THE UNIVERSITY MACE

Historically, the mace has been used as a symbol of authority in the military, first originating as a weapon to protect the king.

As the custom of carrying a mace into war disappeared, it became popular to use in governmental ceremonies. The mace made its way into the university setting in the 15th century, primarily associated with commencement ceremonies. With the Class of 2012 Commencement on the horizon, a search was launched for the perfect mace to represent Rocky Vista University. All options were made of metal, looked generic, or didn't reflect who we are. Instead, RVU decided to commission the creation of something special.



Chuck Hunsberger, husband of Katy Hunsberger, previous Associate Director of Admissions, was asked to carve the mace from wood. A skilled woodworker, Chuck used over five kinds of Colorado wood, creating an elegant yet rustic mace that was RVU through and through. The mace has been present at every commencement ceremony, starting with its first appearance at the inaugural class graduation in 2012.

# THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDALLION



The Presidential Medallion of Rocky Vista University is made of brass and weighs 24 ounces. It displays the seal of RVU in blue and gold. The chain consists of two plates depicting the Rod of Asclepius (a snake encircling a staff) — the symbol of medicine and healthcare in the United States. There are nine plates that display each of RVU's core values: Collegiality, Compassion, Diversity, Equity, Excellence, Inclusivity, Innovation, Integrity, and Service. Above the seal, there are four plates displaying the current President, David A. Forstein, DO, FACOOG (dist.), as well as three previous Presidents; Clinton E. Adams, DO, Cheryl D. Lovell, PhD, and Robert R. Roehrich, PhD. The Medallion is worn by the sitting President during commencement and, when not in use, is displayed in the President's Suite.

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The Rocky Vista University Alumni Association was founded in 2012 as a way to provide graduates with an active and united organization, dedicated to the advancement of osteopathic medical education and related health and biomedical sciences. The Association members mentor current students, interview prospective applicants, and attend networking events. The Alumni Association identifies sources of—and educates the public on the need for—clinical rotations, internships, and residency programs for students and graduates. Additionally, the Association offers scholarships to incoming students of Rocky Vista University.

