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Pomp and Circumstance

University of Dayton

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NEWS

Monday May 2, 2016

Pomp and Circumstance

The University of Dayton is poised to send a record-setting number of Flyers into the world ready to learn, lead and serve.

Nearly 2,000 University of Dayton students will receive degrees when they cross the stage in three separate ceremonies this weekend. Combined with degrees granted in August and December, about 2,940 Flyers will earn degrees this academic year, eclipsing the record of approximately 2,900 set in 2011-12.

A projected 1,500 students will receive undergraduate degrees at 9:45 a.m. Sunday, May 8. Nearly 390 students will receive graduate degrees at 12:45 p.m. Saturday, May 7, following the 9 a.m. commencement ceremony for nearly 90 law school graduates. Each ceremony will be in University of Dayton Arena and available live online through the related link.

A White House guest, a Yale Law School-bound student who achieved a nearly perfect score on the Law School Admission Test, a mother-son duo and two non-traditional students who overcame significant obstacles will be among the record-setting class.

A week before crossing the stage and receiving his degree, Dominic Sanfilippo crossed the threshold of The White House for an opportunity to participate in a press conference with the President of the United States. Sanfilippo was one of 50 student reporters invited to the first College Reporter Day. At the White House, Sanfilippo discussed issues facing college campuses with senior administration officials, participated in a press briefing with Press Secretary Josh Earnest, which included an impromptu visit from President Barack Obama, and networked with members of The White House press corps.

"You're bound to learn a lot in college, but the heart of my UD education is simple: treat every single person you encounter in life with compassion, care and respect, no matter if that person's a stranger on the street or the leader of the free world," said Sanfilippo, who starts a year of service at Chaminade Julianne High School in Dayton in the fall through the new Marianist PULSE program. "We're called to be community builders from beginning to end, and as long

as we leave our little corner of the world a bit more just, equitable and joyful than we found it, we'll have done well by one another."

After graduation, Gurjot (GUR-joh) Kaur (CAR) will head to Yale Law School, which U.S. News & World Report rated as the nation's top law school. Her family emigrated to the U.S. from India when she was 2-years-old and she's the first in her family to go to college.

"My parents are very excited and proud. I found out I got admitted on a Saturday and my dad wanted me to send my deposit that Monday. Our family never thought we'd have this opportunity," said Kaur, who is graduating in three years with a degree in business economics and finance, a minor in political science and an LSAT score of 177 out of 180. "I've loved the University of Dayton. I've had great opportunities like interning in Washington, D.C., and doing a thesis. All my experiences have given me a foundation and skillset moving forward, and I'm so thankful to everyone here who's helped me along the way."

A year ago, mom and son Ginger and Christian Stuck discovered their academic paths were aligned to graduate this May. She had the option of walking in May or December because of a pending senior summer project, and was considering December to keep the focus on Christian. But he wouldn't have it.

"He was like 'Noooo.' He wanted to walk at graduation together. We went to the grad fair together. We had our senior pictures together. It's been really cool to experience this together," said Ginger, who is earning a degree in sociology with a minor in women's and gender studies. "It's been especially great because he has conquered dyslexia. When I think about his struggles to get into and then to graduate with a degree in industrial engineering, I get emotional and excited."

April Graham, who will receive a degree in communication management major, and Kissima Bojang, who will receive a general studies degree, are the University's Nora Duffy award winners. The University presents the award annually to an adult learner who overcomes significant obstacles to achieve a baccalaureate degree and reflects the spirit of the University's Marianist tradition.

Graham juggled family life and overcame the unexpected loss of her grandmother, who helped raise her, to reach graduation.

"She is an excellent example to her daughters. April's dedication to the University of Dayton is seen in her commitment to supporting the students and staff while working with new student programs, student development IT and student leadership programs. She did all of this and carried a full course load," said Cari Wallace, assistant vice president for student development. "She is a very special person. She is always smiling and maintains a positive attitude throughout the busiest times in her life."

Bojang, whom men's soccer coach Dennis Currier calls "peace-loving, honest, loyal and hard-working," made his way to Dayton from Gambia after stops in Syracuse, New York, where a serious knee injury detoured his soccer career and Seattle, where he worked odd jobs and rehabbed his knee. Fate reunited Bojang with Currier, who helped arrange Bojang's tryout in Syracuse and had a spot on his Flyers squad so Bojang could resume his career.

Job prospects for this year's University of Dayton graduates, as well as those for graduates nationally, are looking up. Employers responding to the National Association of Colleges and Employers 2016 Job Outlook Spring Update say they

expect to hire 11 percent more new college graduates from the class of 2016 for U.S. operations than they did from the class of 2015.

If this year is better than last year, the news is outstanding for University of Dayton graduates. Ninety-seven percent of University of Dayton undergraduates in academic year 2014-15 responding to a University of Dayton Office of Career Services survey reported being employed, pursuing an advanced degree or participating in a service program within six months of graduation. Each of the University's four schools offering undergraduate degrees — engineering, education and health sciences, business, and arts and sciences — had a 95 percent success rate or better.

For complete information on University of Dayton's undergraduate, graduate and School of Law ceremonies, visit the related links.

For more information, contact Shawn Robinson, associate director of media relations, at 937-229-3391 or srobinson@udayton.edu.