

CENTER FOR INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE



# 9th Annual Intercultural Graduation Ceremony

CLASS OF 2024

MAY 3, FOY HALL, MORAVIAN UNIVERSITY



**9th Annual  
Intercultural Graduation Ceremony  
May 3, 2024**

**Processional**

*Lean on Me - Bill Withers*

**Moravian University Land Acknowledgement**

*Destiny Smith, 2024*

**Poetic Performance**

*Ms. Latrice Young, 2024*

**Welcome and Introduction of the Graduating Class**

G. Christopher Hunt, Ed.D

*Vice President and Dean for Equity and Inclusion*

**Thanking the Village**

Belinda Waller-Peterson, Ph.D.

*Associate Dean for Equity and Inclusion*

*Associate Professor of English*

**Dedication and Presentation of Sashes/Stoles**

Baru Roberson-Hornsby '19, M.S.

*Senior Career Development Strategist*

**Congratulations to the Graduates**

Dr. Bryon L. Grigsby '90 P '22

*President*

**Closing**

Jennika Borger '98, '01

*Chaplain*





*About*

# INTERCULTURAL GRADUATION

Intercultural Graduation is an intimate gathering that celebrates the diversity of our graduating seniors. Over the years, this program has brought students from historically underrepresented and marginalized communities together along with their families to honor the students' perseverance and acknowledge their journeys through Moravian University.

*Welcome and congratulations!*





## FROM VICE PRESIDENT FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION, DR. CHRISTOPHER HUNT

Today, we're here to celebrate a special milestone at Moravian University: Our 9th Intercultural Graduation Ceremony for the class of 2024. Let's not forget these students started their college experience when the world was learning to navigate through a pandemic—facing obstacles like contact tracing, masks, remote learning, and social distancing. Yet, they stuck together, adapted, and persevered. That is often what we do in our communities: We keep pressing and moving forward.

The Class of 2024 brought their diverse experiences into conversations, helping to bridge cultural gaps and build a more welcoming and equitable campus at Moravian. Their stories are about personal successes and the University's effort to be inclusive and ensure everyone feels heard and valued.

As we applaud the Class of 2024 today, we're not just celebrating their achievements. We're also recognizing what we like to call, their villages. We are saying thank you to moms, dads, brothers, sisters, cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, mentors, and everyone who provided support along the way. No one is successful on their own – we all need help and support to reach the finish line.

To our graduates and their families, thank you for trusting us on your educational path. As you move to your next adventures, remember that you're taking with you not just the knowledge and skills you've gained but also the lasting impact you've had on Moravian University. A big congratulations to the Class of 2024! May your perseverance and courage guide you in all your future endeavors.

G. Christopher Hunt, Ed.D.  
Vice President for Equity and Inclusion

## THANKING THE VILLAGE DR. BELINDA WALLER-PETERSON

Good afternoon. It is my honor to offer brief comments about thanking the village.

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

Every time I hear this proverb, I am reminded of what it means to have a strong support network that is invested in nurturing, educating, supporting, and uplifting our children.

This village typically starts with a child’s family (whatever that make-up looks like) and extends out to include close friends, community and church members, and teachers. And while each of the individuals in this village is charged with different aspects of raising the child, ultimately, the goal is to sow and nurture the seeds that will result in a healthy and whole adult.

Today, we welcome the villages that have gathered here to celebrate the incredible children you have watered and loved and prayed over. And we thank you for extending your village to include us.





## DEDICATION OF STOLES BARU ROBERSON-HORNSBY

Good afternoon everyone,

My name is Baru Roberson-Hornsby, and I am a Senior Career Development Strategist in our Center for Career & Civic Engagement. As an alum and former participant of this incredible ceremony, it is with gratitude that I lead us into the ‘dedication and presentation of the sashes and stoles’. This ceremony celebrates the diversity and inclusion of all cultures, backgrounds, and creeds. We celebrate our graduates today who have exceptional academic, social, and personal achievements. Through the ups and downs of their journey, they remain undefeated in the pursuit of success.

A stole is a scarf-like accessory worn draped around the neck. It can represent academic achievement, organizational affiliation, and even cultural significance. This is a personal touch on the traditional regalia worn during a commencement ceremony. Traditionally, many Black graduates will wear a Kente cloth stole representing heritage, culture, and ancestral lineage in relation to the African traditions of royalty. The colors and shapes of the Kente cloth all have symbolic meanings. Today our graduates will each receive the Perseverance Kente Stole which symbolizes achievement, honor, and overcoming many obstacles.

Graduates, these stoles should be worn with pride and enthusiasm as they represent the culmination of your dedication, perseverance, and an unrelenting desire to succeed. I wish you all positivity, love, and enlightenment in your future. This is only the beginning.

We will now move on to the main feature of this program, the graduates and their support networks. On the screen, you will see the individual name of the graduating senior followed by a tribute video that they recorded to thank their friends, family, and support system, also known as their village. Each graduating senior selected their introduction music. When that music begins, the graduating senior will come to the stage and be joined by the member or members of their party who will honor them.

We ask that each graduate have only 1 or 2 people speak and that you please limit your collective comments to two minutes to ensure that we have time for each of our graduates. There is a timer located at the base of the stage.

## DEDICATION OF STOLES



*And with that said, congratulations to the  
graduating class of 2024 and their  
families.*



## FROM PRESIDENT BRYON GRIGSBY

Welcome Graduates, Families, Guests, Faculty, and Staff,

I stand before you today with a profound sense of honor and excitement as we gather to celebrate the 9th Annual Intercultural Graduation Ceremony at Moravian University. This ceremony holds a special place in our hearts, as it not only commemorates the academic achievements of our graduating students but also underscores our unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In the spirit of Jon Amos Comenius, the visionary educator who believed that everyone deserves an education, we gather here today to reaffirm our commitment to inclusive excellence. Comenius, often regarded as the father of modern education, advocated for a system of schooling that was open to all, regardless of social status, gender, or background. His timeless principles serve as a guiding light for us as we strive to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment at Moravian University.

As we come together on this momentous occasion, I am proud to announce a significant milestone in our journey towards fostering a more inclusive learning environment. Effective April 1, 2024, our Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion transitioned to the Center for Inclusive Excellence. This transition marks more than just a change in name; it signifies a strategic shift in our approach, as we believe in the transformative power of inclusive excellence and our commitment to embracing diversity into every component of our institution.

It has been and will continue to be a guiding principle that permeates every aspect of our academic mission and campus life by supporting our students, giving them the resources and the opportunities to thrive.

We recognize that many of our students face unique challenges along their academic journey, and I'm sure you were no different, but we hope that Moravian empowered each and every one of you to reach your fullest potential and as our mission says, "prepared each of you for a reflective life, fulfilling career, and transformative leadership in a world of change."

As you embark on this new chapter, I urge you to embrace the richness of our diversity, celebrate our differences, and work together to create a community where all voices are heard, respected, and valued.

To our graduating students, I offer my heartfelt congratulations. Your achievements today are a testament to your hard work, resilience, and determination. As you step into the next chapter of your lives, may you continue to embody the spirit of inclusive excellence and serve as beacons of hope and inspiration to those around you.

In closing, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Center for Inclusive Excellence, for their tireless dedication and commitment to advancing our shared mission. Together, let us forge ahead with courage and conviction, knowing that the future we envision is within our reach.

Congratulations once again, and thank you for being part of this momentous occasion.







## FROM THE REVEREND JENNIKA BORGER, CHAPLAIN

Blessing:

Imagine a tapestry. Many strands of different colors and different textures woven together in intricate design to create something beautiful. Each strand is beautiful in its own right, its uniqueness cannot be denied and in fact its uniqueness is why it is there. And this beauty, this unique beauty becomes multiplied when it is placed side by side with other strands of equal value.

We are each a strand in this great tapestry of humanity. Maybe this tapestry, the tapestry we call the Class of 2024 was woven together by chance or maybe by divine purpose. Either way, this tapestry is a beautiful one to behold.

Will the class of 2024 please rise?

May the stoles you received today serve as a reminder of where you have been, of who you are, and the wonderful, beautiful person you have become through this college journey. Wear them proudly as a symbol of the tapestry of Moravian University to which you will always belong.

And may this day inspire us all to accept a challenge of taking the tapestry we have created in this community and adding more beautiful strands as we include more people into the story of this day and into our lives.

We are truly blessed to have shared the strength and diversity of this community. Go and be a blessing to others. Amen.





## PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS, CAROL TRaupMAN-CARR

Dear Soon-to-be Graduates,

As Provost, it fills me with immense joy and pride to extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every one of you on this monumental occasion of your graduation.

Today marks not only the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and perseverance, but also the beginning of an exciting new chapter in your lives. As you stand on the threshold of this important milestone, I want you to take a moment to reflect on your journey.


In so many speeches that will be spoken and heard all over the country at this time, people will tell graduates to cherish the memories you've made, the friendships you've forged, and the lessons you've learned. I doubt you need to be reminded to cherish the memories or the friendships. But when it comes to the lessons you've learned, I'd like to just pause on that for a second.

I am not asking you to remember a particular mathematical formula, or how to write a deceptive cadence, to administer medication -- well, yes, if I am your patient, please do remember that lesson. Instead, I am asking you to reflect on the lessons that I hope have made you an even better person as you leave Moravian than you were when you started here. Yes, time management. Yes to critical thinking, communication, leadership, teamwork, research skills and the like. All these are important in navigating the world of work and more. Use those skills, those lessons, that knowledge. But what I really want is for you to be a powerful force for positive change in the world.

As you step out into the world beyond these walls, know that you carry with you the knowledge, skills, grit and attitude to succeed. Whatever comes next, embrace the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead with confidence, courage, and determination. And find a way to make that community better as a result of your having been a part of it, just as you have made Moravian University a better place by sharing your presence, your voices, and your experiences with us. For that, I -- we -- are profoundly grateful.

You are the architects of your own destiny, and the future holds limitless possibilities for each and every one of you. So, dare to dream big, follow your passions, and never lose sight of the incredible potential that lies within you.

On behalf of the entire university community, I offer you my sincerest congratulations once again. May your futures be filled with boundless success, fulfillment, and happiness.





## FROM DEAN OF STUDENTS, DR. NICOLE LOYD

Dear Class of 2024,

I extend my warmest congratulations to each and every one of you on this momentous occasion of your graduation. Your journey to this day has been marked by hard work, dedication, and perseverance, and I am filled with pride to see you reach this significant milestone.

Your presence on our campus has enriched our community in countless ways, and your achievements serve as a source of inspiration for future generations. As you embark on this next phase of your journey, I encourage you to continue to strive for excellence, to pursue your passions with courage and conviction, and to never forget the strength and resilience that have brought you to this moment.

Remember, you are not just graduates of Moravian; you are ambassadors of change, advocates for equity and inclusion, and leaders in your respective fields. Your voice matters, your experiences are invaluable, and your contributions will shape the future of our society.

As you celebrate this achievement with your loved ones, know that you have the unwavering support and admiration of the entire Moravian community. We believe in you, we are proud of you, and we cannot wait to see the incredible impact you will undoubtedly make on the world.

Finally, when you encounter the world out there, I want you to walk right up to it, your head held high, and with an open heart, tell it Moravian sent you.

With heartfelt congratulations,

Dr. Nicole L. Loyd  
Executive Vice President for University Life, Chief Operating Officer & Dean of Students



# BIOGRAPHIES

**Jamaris Salinas** writes, “Ever since I was little, I have been working nonstop to get to where I am today. My mother raised me to be hard working, compassionate, and motivated. Before I went into school, I already knew how to read and write because my grandma and mother would work with me. When I was in kindergarten, I received a gifted IEP and was assigned elementary school work to complete. When I was in middle school I began college-prep courses, and when I graduated high school, I had an associate’s degree. Today I am graduating with an earlier class, and will be receiving my bachelor’s at 20 years old. I am so thankful for the friends I made here at Moravian, from BSU & The DEI house. I am thankful for my resources, I am thankful to be alive, and I am thankful to be blessed. This is only another chapter of my education journey. Knowledge is power.”

**Guanyu Wei** is a graduate student of Speech-Language Pathology. He affiliates himself with Chinese culture. As a multilingual student researcher, he presented multiple works at state and national conferences. He was also a member of the Minority Student Leadership class provided by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. He loves conducting research during his free time and has two publications in national and international journals so far. Additionally, though he rarely catches anything, he enjoys fishing. He believes that his family members are his most cherished treasure.

**Shayna Dover** writes, “I am a first-generation, Political Science major from Easton, PA. After my journey at Moravian, I plan on continuing my education at Law School in the Fall. During my time at Moravian, I had the opportunity to be a part of BSU and meet some of my forever friends.”



# BIOGRAPHIES

**Damian Almonte** (he/they) was born and raised here in Bethlehem, PA. They attended Bethlehem Area Public School and were the Freedom High School recipient of the BASD Superintendent Scholarship to attend Moravian University. Throughout Damian's time at Moravian, they have worked as a 26 Point Ambassador, participated on the Moravian Activities Council (MAC), served as a student representative on the United Student Government (USG), and actively worked as a Resident Advisor, since their sophomore year. Damian, who will be graduating with an undergraduate degree in Political Science, will be the first member of their family to graduate college with an undergraduate degree.

**Brooke Tulloch** writes, “I am a Nursing major of the 2024 class from New Jersey! My ethnicities are Sicilian and Syrian. I have been an EMT since high school and it has grown my love for healthcare and is a part of why I chose Nursing! I am involved in Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority Incorporated and the Student Nurses’ Association.”

**Pauline Francisco** (they/them) is graduating with a BA in Political Science. During their time at Moravian, they were the President of the Asian Student Union and won the Student Excellence in Leadership Award both terms. Pauline also received the The Ronald J. Stupak Award and The Albert Ferkel, Jr. Memorial Prize, given to a senior Political Science major for demonstrated service in raising awareness of social justice issues. As a December graduate, Pauline is now based in New York City and starting their career in PR.



# BIOGRAPHIES

**Neema Mburu** writes, “I am an International Student from Kenya and a Psychology major. My experience and journey in Moravian has taught me the value of service in the community, for we are all a product of the community around us. I have been a Resident Advisor for Jo smith for two years, a student research assistant under the History Department for three years despite being a Psychology major. I was a Student Fellow at Northeast Middle School under Civic Engagement.

‘Know all the theories, master all the techniques, but as you touch a human soul be just another human soul’. (Carl Jung).

**Melody Fermin** writes, “I am a first-generation student — the first of my family to graduate with a bachelor's degree. I moved to the United States at the start of my second year of high school, in 2017. I knew very little English, but my education meant a lot to me and my family, so I never gave up. My parents always told me that if there is something no one can ever take away from me, that is my education. Today, I am proud to say that all of their sacrifices were worth it. College has been a very challenging experience with many great memories, I am very proud of everything I have accomplished, and I plan on continuing to further my education.”

**Jean-Pierre (JP) Appel** is a Lehigh Valley native. They are involved in the local poetry scene, running a weekly workshop and monthly open mic. When they are not hosting events, you can find them programming or researching at local coffeehouses.



# BIOGRAPHIES

**Raphael Bien-Aime** writes, “I am a Psychology/Africana Studies major from Queens, New York. I am a second-generation college graduate and the youngest of three. I plan on taking a gap year then pursuing my master’s degree.”

**Ms. Latrice P. Young/Distinctly Unique**, lifts every voice and snaps, claps, and theatrical jazz-wraps intergenerational communities with cross-disciplined, playful modes of experimental expression. She encourages individual and collective narratives in order to shine the—once dimmed—light radiating deep inside of herself and others. Ms. Latrice facilitates brave spaces rooted in originality, inclusivity, curiosity, discovery, and DIY artistry. These spaces are for everybody and are an extension of who she is and aspires to be. She is proud to use her storytelling gifts to connect the world as an equitable, creative conduit for diverse voices to belong, cry, sigh, and fly!

**Melanie Pagan** writes, “I am a Public Health major. I have participated in 26 Points, United Student Government, the Public Health Club, Residence Life and I have held multiple on-campus jobs. After graduation, I plan to continue my education working towards a master’s degree in Clinical Counseling.

**Sophia Z. Rivera** writes, “I am from Easton, PA, but went to high school at Lehigh Valley Academy in Bethlehem. On campus I am a Senior Resident Advisor in Rau-Hassler, a Student Trustee, 26 Point Ambassador, President of Omicron Delta Kappa, a member of Zeta Tau Alpha, a Student Alumni Representative, GOALS Peer Mentor, a member of the Center for Inclusive Excellence Advisory Board, as well as a member of a multitude of clubs and honor societies. I will be graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Health Science with a track in Physical Therapy. I will be attending Moravian's Doctor of Physical Therapy program in May (G'26). I am super excited to see what the future holds for all of us! Class of 2024, we made it!



# BIOGRAPHIES

**Nahum Pradhan**, originally from Kathmandu, Nepal, is graduating from Moravian University with a Master of Arts in Clinical Counseling. Nahum is specializing in interpersonal relationships, sexual addictions, and family systems. Nahum will continue to work towards obtaining his licensed professional counselor credential post-graduation, working in both private and medical fields. Mahaan Shristi Karta.

**Courtney Gordon**, originally from East Stroudsburg, PA, majored in Nursing with a minor in Music. During her time at Moravian, Courtney has been an active student leader on campus. She is a sister of Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority, Inc., a member of the Black Student Union, Student Nurses' Association, Moravian University Marching Band, Prom Planning Committee, Tri Beta Honor Society, Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society, and Gamma Sigma Alpha Greek Honor Society. Courtney has served on the executive board of both the Black Student Union and Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority, Inc. In addition, Courtney has partaken in research through the Summer SOAR program and the Honors program. She has also been a Resident Advisor, Knack Tutor, and a Homecoming Ambassador. After graduation, she will be working as a registered nurse in the Intensive Care Unit. Courtney is very grateful to be graduating and wishes congratulations to the Class of 2024!

**Destiny Smith** writes, “I am an English major with a Writing Arts concentration. I am a first-generation college student and I have a passion for Black feminist literature. I transferred to Moravian after two and a half years at community college and a two-year break from school entirely. I was nervous to start my next chapter at a new school as a transfer student/commuter. But after a few months, I felt comfortable on campus and can honestly say I enjoyed my time at MU. I value the education I received here and am grateful for the opportunities I have been given. I can't wait to start the next chapter of my life, but I will always carry the memories I made here with me.





# BIOGRAPHIES

**Ebony Smith** writes, “I am a Marketing Management major and a first-generation college student and graduate alongside my sister. I have a passion for sports and fashion marketing and content creation. My dream is to work for the marketing department for The Philadelphia Eagles. Go Birds! But I am excited to see the journey life takes me after graduating here at Moravian University.”

**Nichelle Burt** writes, “I’m happy to be receiving my bachelor's degree in Psychology with a minor in Peace & Justice Studies. Throughout my time at Moravian, I was actively involved in the Black Student Union, SPECTRUM, and other DEI events that provided me a safe space to express myself. These last four years have shown me that I am more resilient than I thought and that I’m able to persevere through the obstacles that I may face. During my internship at Promise Neighborhoods of the Lehigh Valley, I got the chance to see what it was like to give back to the community, work with the youth, and brainstorm different methods of handling violence. My experience has inspired me to further my education and go to graduate school to receive a master's degree in social work, which will help me advocate for vulnerable populations that need support.”

# GALLERY



# GALLERY





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take a moment to thank everyone who contributed to the behind-the-scenes work of this year's Intercultural Graduation Ceremony. We are especially grateful to Britt Yenser and her AV Services team as well as BlueChip for the technology, to the Center for Global Education for their collaboration, to our student volunteers, and to Gavin Kemery for his tireless efforts. Last but not least, we thank the graduating seniors and their families for being part of this wonderful day. Congratulations! We are honored to be a part of your story at Moravian University.