



2026

UNIVERSITY
OF NEW ENGLAND

COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE
GRADUATION CEREMONY



COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE
CLASS OF 2026
GRADUATION CEREMONY

Friday, May 15, 2026
9 a.m.

Girard Innovation Hall | Portland, Maine

ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

The University of New England is Maine's largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an uncommonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state's top provider of health professionals and home to Maine's only medical and dental colleges, a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs, and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.

THE DENTIST'S PLEDGE

I, (Dental Student's Name), as a member of the dental profession, shall keep this pledge and these stipulations.

I understand and accept that my primary responsibility is to my patients, and I shall dedicate myself to render, to the best of my ability, the highest standard of oral health care and to maintain a relationship of respect and confidence.

Therefore, let all come to me safe in the knowledge that their total health and well-being are my first consideration.

I shall accept the responsibility that, as a professional, my competence rests on continuing the attainment of knowledge and skill in the arts and sciences of dentistry.

I acknowledge my obligation to support and sustain the honor and integrity of the profession and to conduct myself in all endeavors such that I shall merit the respect of patients, colleagues, and my community. I further commit myself to the betterment of my community for the benefit of all of society.

I shall faithfully observe the Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct set forth by the profession.

All this, I pledge with pride in my commitment to the profession and the public it serves.

COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the UNE College of Dental Medicine is to improve the health of Northern New England as well as rural and underserved areas while shaping the future of dentistry through excellence in education, discovery, and service.

CORE VALUES

- Excellence
- Professionalism
- Patient-Centered Care
- Social Responsibility
- Diversity
- Scholarship
- Leadership

VISION

The College of Dental Medicine will:

- Be a premier institution in the United States for educating dental professionals who will fulfill their obligations to improve the oral health, overall health, and quality of life of people in their communities with integrity, compassion, and respect.
- Provide outstanding didactic and clinical education in a humanistic environment that embraces scientific and technological advances and supports patient-centered, evidence-based, comprehensive oral health care in a group practice model.
- Cultivate and support the richness of diversity in the development of professionalism, ethical behavior, communication, and leadership by encouraging and supporting diversity of faculty, students, and staff.
- Develop dental professionals who are leaders of their own oral health care teams and partners in the interprofessional health care delivery systems of the future.
- Educate dental professionals to understand and apply relevant clinical practices to the connections between oral health and overall health.
- Advance its commitment to community health and service of underserved populations.
- Promote scholarship, innovation, and lifelong learning for faculty, professional staff, and students.

THE POMP BEHIND THE CIRCUMSTANCE

Academic Regalia

THE GOWN

The history of the academic gown goes back to the 12th century. During this period, everyone – both men and women, royalty, lay folk, clerics, tradesmen, students – wore long flowing robes. The apparel varied in elegance according to the rank and wealth of the owner, from simple rough worsteds to rich gold brocades wrought with tassels and trimmed with colorful velvet and rich furs. It was in this period that the first organized bodies of learning were formed. From the gowns worn in the “universities” of the period have evolved the academic costumes of today.

The bachelor’s gown is a simple design falling straight from a rather elaborate yoke with long pointed sleeves. The gown worn by a master has long, closed, somewhat fuller sleeves, which reach nearly to the wearer’s knees. The arms go through slits at the elbow, giving the appearance of short sleeves. The doctoral gown is cut much fuller and has large bell-shaped sleeves. The gowns are usually, but not always, black, and those of bachelors and masters are generally devoid of ornamentation. The doctoral gowns are distinguished by the five-inch velvet panel around the neck and down both sides of the front as well as by three-inch velvet bars sewn on each sleeve. The color of the velvet trim may be black or may indicate the nature of the degree. For example, the color designating a Doctor of Dental Medicine is lilac.

THE HOOD

The hood seems to have had a somewhat practical origin. Medieval monks used their hoods for two purposes: to protect their shaved heads in the winter and as a container to collect alms.

Today, the hood serves as the most symbolic part of the academic regalia by which the observer can ascertain the wearer’s level and kind of degree. At three feet long, the bachelor’s hood is the smallest. The velvet trim along the edges, indicating the nature of the degree, is two inches wide. The master’s hood is six inches longer and bears a three-inch velvet trim.

The doctoral hood presented today is a full four feet long and exhibits a five-inch lilac trim, indicating the Doctor of Dental Medicine degree.

The colorful interior of the hood, visible from behind, indicates by hue the degree-granting institution. The University of New England’s colors are blue and gray.

THE CORDS AND STOLES

The cord in graduation ceremonies is used to signify a special designation or membership in an honor society. The origin of the cord is from the Catholic and Anglican churches, where cords were used to distinguish between the varying levels of clergy members.

Omicron Kappa Upsilon Honor Society

The Omicron Kappa Upsilon National Dental Honor Society (OKU) is a merit-based, national dental honor society recognizing dental students with exceptional academic achievement, integrity, and ethics. OKU members wear a navy blue stole with lilac trim and the gold OKU insignia.

Interprofessional Honors Distinction

Graduating students who have earned the Interprofessional Honors Distinction, a nationally recognized credential celebrating intentional cross-disciplinary collaboration and the development of essential communication and teamwork skills, wear orange and blue cords.

Military Service Honors

The University is proud to recognize students serving or who have served in the various military branches of the United States of America. Graduating students currently serving in the U.S. military, who have provided military service in the past, or who will commission upon graduation, will wear a red, white, and blue cord.



GRADUATION SPEAKER

MATTHEW LAWLER, D.M.D., M.D.
President of the Maine Dental Association

Matthew Lawler, D.M.D., M.D., has been practicing at Oral Surgery Associates in South Portland, Maine, since completing residency. He is a native of Sedona, Arizona, and graduated from the University of Arizona Summa Cum Laude in 2007, double majoring in biochemistry and molecular biophysics and molecular and cellular biology. He attended dental school at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, graduating with honors in 2012. While in dental school, he established a love for oral surgery and completed a one-year research fellowship in pediatric oral surgery at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He completed his medical degree at Harvard Medical School in 2015 and completed his Oral Surgery Residency in 2018 where he served as chief resident at both Massachusetts General Hospital and Boston Children's Hospital. During his residency, he served as program liaison and district representative for the resident organization of AAOMS and developed a passion for research, publishing multiple peer-reviewed articles and book chapters on facial trauma, orthognathic surgery, and advanced imaging techniques.

Lawler is a member of the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) and the American Dental Association (ADA), and is the current president of the Maine Dental Association (MDA).

ORDER OF CEREMONIES

PROCESSIONAL

Platform Party, Faculty, and Graduate Class of 2026

OPENING REMARKS

Nicole S. Kimmes, D.D.S., *Dean, College of Dental Medicine*

UNIVERSITY WELCOME

James D. Herbert, Ph.D., *President*

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Matthew Lawler, D.M.D., M.D., *President of the Maine Dental Association*

HOODING PROCESSION

Reader of Candidate Names: Karen Hall, D.M.D., *Assistant Clinical Professor*

Caribou Group Practice

Hooder: William T. Benson, D.M.D., *Associate Clinical Professor*

Denmark Group Practice

Hooder: Joel Doyon, D.D.S., MAGD, *Assistant Clinical Professor*

Eastport Group Practice

Hooders: Jeffrey B. Finegold, D.M.D., *Associate Clinical Professor*
Oliver Keefer, D.D.S., *Associate Clinical Professor*

Farmington Group Practice

Hooder: Kelly Holst, D.M.D., M.Ed., *Assistant Clinical Professor*

CLASS PRESIDENT REMARKS AND THE DENTIST'S PLEDGE

Gisselle McWhorter, D.M.D. *Candidate, President of the Class of 2026*

CLOSING REMARKS

Nicole S. Kimmes, D.D.S., *Dean, College of Dental Medicine*

RECESSIONAL

Platform Party, Faculty, and Graduate Class of 2026

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Travis Erickson, Ph.D., *Associate Dean of Student Affairs and Alumni Relations*

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William T. Benson, D.M.D.

Brenda D. Berkal, D.M.D.

Juan Bugueno, M.S., Dentist

Jennifer Caplin, M.S., D.M.D.

Molly Cohen, D.M.D.

Kristen Columbus, M.S.D.H., RDH

Kristopher Cooper, D.M.D., M.D.

Curt Cyr, Ph.D., RPh

Jeffrey Doss, D.D.S.

Joel Doyon, D.D.S., MAGD

Eileen Dunfey, M.S., RDH

Syed Fahd, D.D.S.

Jeffrey B. Finegold, D.M.D.

Anna Fisher, D.M.D.

Elizabeth Franco, D.M.D.

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Nicholas Herz

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Gisselle Marie McWhorter

Hannah Grace Miller

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Jared James Neville^o

Sean William Noll

Shreena Rajesh Patel

Ashley Sapra

Jamie Michelle Shrader

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FOOTNOTE

^o Omicron Kappa Upsilon Honor Society, recognized by a stole featuring navy blue with lilac trim and the gold OKU insignia

[^] Interprofessional Honors Distinction, recognized by orange and blue cords

[‡] Military Service Honors, recognized by red, white, and blue cords

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UW

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UNIVERSITY OF
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INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET