

2020/2021 Commencement Ceremonies
May 12-14, 2021
Main Campus, Memorial Field

1. NATIONAL ANTHEM: introduced by DEAN WHEELER.

DEAN WHEELER approaches the podium; returns to seat after the playing of the National Anthem.

Please rise for the National Anthem.

After the National Anthem, DEAN WHEELER returns to seat.

WELCOME: President Julie E. WOLLMAN.

President WOLLMAN approaches the podium.

Good afternoon and please be seated.

Despite the pandemic and the enormous challenges of the past year, it is wonderful to be together. This is a day that we have long been waiting for! I'm so very proud of all of our graduates.

Trustee Antoinette Leatherberry, Provost Andrew Workman, Dean Tony Wheeler, faculty, and family and friends of the graduates,

"Welcome."

It is my great pleasure to be with you here today.

Graduates, I congratulate you on your graduation and encourage you, in the midst of all the excitement and frenzy of this day, to find a few calm moments to reflect on all you've done to earn this special moment.

Do you remember the first time you set foot on campus or in your online classroom as a Widener student?

Try to remember.

My guess is that you were filled with equal parts eagerness and anxiety—actually, probably more anxiety on that first day— as you wondered what the years ahead held for you.

On that first day, and maybe a few tough days since then, you might have questioned whether or not you would ever see your graduation day.

A lot has happened between then and now. Let me repeat that – a lot has happened between then and now! We have just lived through a year and a half that none of us could have anticipated or envisioned.

But even before the pandemic, at times the road to this day was a bit bumpy and the trip undoubtedly took unexpected turns.

Many of you juggled a range of campus activities with work and family responsibilities, not to mention the relentless pressures of the pandemic.

But you persevered, you trusted in professors and staff who saw your great potential, you believed in yourself, and you made it happen.

You made it to this momentous day!

Of course, there were other people who believed in you, too.

Your family and close friends loved and supported you, and sometimes even pushed you to do your very best.

And do you know what? Even when they didn't say anything, they were always quietly cheering you on. This is their day, too.

I think they deserve a big round of applause. (APPLAUSE)

Among your ranks are some of the most talented students I have ever met.

You used your education and leadership skills to address some of the world's most challenging problems and to seek common ground across diverse perspectives.

You stepped up whenever there was a need, rolled up your sleeves, or jumped into challenging conversations, and made a difference.

As you start the next chapter of your life, here's my assignment for you. That's right. The assignments are not quite over!

Your final assignment for your degree: DO EVEN MORE.

Don't be afraid to challenge yourself.

Ask the hard questions and continue showing the same grit and determination you've already demonstrated.

Continue to seek common ground to improve our communities, our country and the world.

There's always more to do, more to learn, more to achieve.

And yes, there are always more problems to solve.

The world needs leaders with the knowledge, courage, and compassion you honed here at Widener.

Be ambitious, keep your aspirations alive, and keep working toward them.

Your Widener education gave you the tools to be a game changer not only in your profession, but in your community, across the country, and around the world.

I know you will put these tools to work in ways that will continue to make us all exceptionally proud!

Just as Widener is now part of your personal life story, you are now part of the rich fabric of Widener's 200 year history. A history based on leadership and social responsibility.

Your Widener experience and all you've achieved is now interwoven with the generations of PMC and Widener alumni who came before you.

As new alumni, you will be part of a fiercely proud heritage. And always know that we are fiercely proud of you!

PRESIDENT WOLLMAN returns to seat.

2. PRESENTATION OF GRADUATES. DEAN WHEELER approaches the podium. DEAN WHEELER states:

President Wollman, shall we get to what everyone is waiting for!?

Will the candidates for all degrees please rise?

President Wollman, the students standing before you have successfully completed the courses of study prescribed for their degrees.

On recommendation of the faculty, I am pleased, therefore, to present them to you. [PAUSE]

Graduates, please come forward.

DEAN WHEELER APPROACHES THE TABLE WITH THE DIPLOMA TUBES AND PREPARES TO PLACE TUBES ON THE TABLE. THE TUBES SHOULD BE PLACED ON THE TABLE, AND THEN THE DEAN WILL TAKE A STEP BACK AS THE STUDENT PASSES THE TABLE SO THAT A MINIMUM SIX FOOT DISTANCE IS MAINTAINED.

GRADUATES CROSS THE STAGE.

DEAN WHEELER RETURNS TO SEAT.

3. **PRESENTATION AND CONFERRAL OF DEGREES: President WOLLMAN.**

After all graduates are seated, President WOLLMAN approaches the podium.

WOLLMAN reads:

Graduates, will you please stand?

Faculty, will you please stand?

Under the authority vested in me by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the State of Delaware and the Trustees of Widener University, I confer upon you the degrees for which you have successfully completed the prescribed courses of study, and for which you have been recommended by the appropriate college or school faculty.

This is signified by your diploma and is conferred with all the rights, privileges and immunities appertaining thereto.

[PAUSE]

WIDENER UNIVERSITY GRADUATES – I SALUTE YOU!”

And now, in recognition of your graduation, all baccalaureate degree recipients, please move your tassel from the right to the left!

[APPLAUSE!]

PRESIDENT WOLLMAN returns to seat.

4. DEAN REMARKS: DEAN WHEELER APPROACHES THE PODIUM

Good morning, graduates of the classes of 2020 and 2021. Today represents one of the few times in your lives where you can stop, look back, and say “Look at what I accomplished!” These are rare moments but moments that deserve celebration. What you have accomplished is significant, probably more so than you realize right now; but you will look back on these past years as the key years of your lives that developed the traits and skills needed to find success in your lives. You have demonstrated resiliency, as well as a commitment to care for those in your lives and communities. The way you have succeeded during the nearly unprecedented challenges of the past 18 months should make you proud. It surely makes your parents, guardians,

family, and friends proud of you. It certainly gives us at Widener the greatest sense of pride in you and in this wonderful community. Congratulations to you all! I cannot wait to see you again, perhaps at Homecoming or another School of Business Administration event! Take care and be safe!

DEAN WHEELER returns to seat.

5. PRESIDENT'S CLOSING REMARKS: President WOLLMAN

Again, it is my great pleasure to congratulate our graduates and wish you the very best in your future endeavors. I hope to see many of you back here as students and also at alumni events, Homecoming, and other campus activities. We'll be waiting for you!

This concludes our commencement ceremony. Please remain seated until the graduates have recessed. The audience should follow the graduates starting with the front rows of the audience. Families, friends, and graduates should reunite at their vehicles.

6. THE RECESSIONAL

Order of Procession: Faculty, Students, Guests. Platform Party should remain on the stage until the graduates have recessed. The Platform Party will not recess.