

Convocation

BURMAN UNIVERSITY

*Friday, the Twenty-Fifth of April to
Sunday, the Twenty-Seventh of April,
Two Thousand and Twenty-Five*

*Presiding: Noble Donkor, PhD
Vice-President for Academic Administration*

*Venue: College Heights Seventh-day Adventist Church
on the Campus of Burman University*

Burman University is located within hereditary Indigenous land and acknowledges that the land on which we gather is Treaty 6 territory, established in 1876, the traditional home and meeting ground for many Indigenous peoples, including the Blackfoot, Dene, Cree, and Métis.

Burman University is committed to doing its part to address the legacy of broken promises and rebuild productive, partnership relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Peoples in Central Alberta and across Canada.

Class Officers

President	Kalee Befus
Vice-President	Mariese Emmons
Secretary.....	Kenny Ciceron
Treasurer	Ryan Rumambi
Pastor.....	Emmanuel-Olivier Jacques
Sponsors.....	Tim Buttler, Associate Professor of Education Julie Thompson, Assistant Professor of English

Graduation Motto

As we chart our paths with purpose and determination,
we acknowledge that our ultimate direction comes from God's guiding hand.

Graduation Aim

Stepping Forward in Faith

Graduation Bible Verse

"In their hearts humans plan their course, but the Lord establishes their steps."

Proverbs 16:9

Saturday Graduate Reception

Graduates and their families are invited to join with the faculty who deliver each graduate's degree program for fellowship and light refreshments at 5:30 pm in the College Heights Christian School gymnasium. Invited guests include families, faculty, administration, and board members. Please take the opportunity to mingle throughout the reception.

Commencement Announcements

Sunday's Commencement seating is for ticket holders only. Graduates' invited guests are encouraged to arrive early with their tickets. Doors will open at 9:00 am. Seating is not guaranteed for those guests that arrive late. Additional guests are invited to the McKibbin Centre where the service will be available through livestreaming.

Guests must remain behind the last row of graduate seating at all times so as to not interfere with the livestream. The class provides photographs of each graduate taken at the time of the degree presentation.

Convocation services are streamed live on the web at
www.burmanu.ca/graduation
www.youtube.com/@BurmanUniversity

Consecration

Friday, April 25, 7:30 p.m.

Prelude	Grace Landry
Song Service.....	Mariese Emmons, Taehee Kim, Julie Nembhard, Reashana Walters Terrence Previlon, Robert Remy, Boris Ruzindana
Invocation	James Mbewa
Welcome.....	Noble Donkor Vice-President for Academic Administration
Tribute to School and Teachers.....	Sarai Alvir-Hichez and Kalee Befus
Tribute to Families.....	Dana Rey and Ryan Rumambi
Address “Doors, Detours, and Direction”	Roberson Dorelus Director, Youth & Young Adults, Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Prayer of Dedication	Jake Choi (Korean) Kish Loriezo (Tagalog) Harivony Rakotomalala (French) Diyar Kazemimokri (Kurdish) Ingrid Ruiz (Spanish) Abel Safawo (Amharic) Ewan Nugent (English)
Musical Selection	Laura Dias de Souza Aguiar
Postlude.....	Grace Landry

Sabbath School

Saturday, April 26, 9:15 a.m.

Song Service..... Marie-se Emmons, Dana Rey, Daveon Tapper, Brandon Weibe
Boris Ruzindana, Krish Yagambrun

WelcomeKalee Befus

Prayer.....Brandon Weibe

Scripture ReadingJoshua Lange

StudyRecardo Thompson and friends

Benediction.....Emmanuel-Olivier Jacques

Baccalaureate

Saturday, April 26, 11:00 a.m.

Prelude “Lead On, O King Eternal”	arr. <i>Lani Smith</i>
Processional “March in G”	<i>H. Smart</i>
Invocation	Esmon Emmons Parent of Graduate
Welcome	Loren Agrey President
Musical Selection “Just As I Am”	arr. <i>M. McDonald</i> Yandira Campos, Mezzo-Soprano; Asia Hofsink, Soprano; Nicole Bartolay, Piano
Call for Offering	Gary Belhomme Parent of Graduate
Prayer.....	Troy Guderyan Parent of Graduate
Scripture John 1:14.....	Louise Manzi Parent of Graduate
Sermon “Step Forward Like the Woman at the Well”	John McDowell Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Burman University
Hymn “God of Grace and God of Glory”	<i>SDA Hymnal #607</i>
Benediction.....	Judith Lawrence Parent of Graduate
Recessional “All Creatures of Our God and King”	<i>H. Hopson</i>

Organist: Wendy Markosky, Professor of Music

The congregation will be seated during the recessional.

Commencement

Sunday, April 27, 10:00 a.m.

Processional “Grand March”	<i>L. Lebébure-Wely</i> Marshal Graduates Faculty and Administration Board of Trustees President and Platform Party
Invocation	Paul Llewellyn President, Seventh-day Adventist Church in Canada
Welcome	Loren Agrey President
Musical Selection “I’ll Bid My Heart Be Still”	<i>R. Clarke</i> Alyssa de Gier, Viola; Nicole Bartolay, piano
Address “Never Say Never”	Andrea Luxton Associate Director for Higher Education, North American Division
Presentation of Candidates	Noble Donkor Vice-President for Academic Administration
Conferral of Degrees.....	Loren Agrey
Presentation of Degrees	Loren Agrey Assisted by David Jeffrey, Registrar
Presentation of Presidential Medals of Excellence.....	Noble Donkor Loren Agrey
Presentation of Class Gift.....	Officers of the Graduating Class
Alumni Recognition	Lawrence Murrin President, Alumni Association
Alumni Award	Loren Agrey
Presentation of the Faculty Excellence Awards	Noble Donkor
Recognition of Emeritus Faculty	Loren Agrey
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Award Presentation	Wendy Markosky

Musical Selection “Intermezzo No. 2, Op. 118”*J. Brahms*
Joshua Lange, Piano

Benediction..... Samuel Pagán
Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

Recessional “Allegro vivo”*D. Bédard*

Organist: Wendy Markosky, Professor of Music
Marshal: Kwame Adom, Associate Professor of Business

Guests must at all times remain behind the last row of graduate seating

The congregation will remain seated during the recessional.

Family and friends may greet the graduates immediately following the service at the Alumni
Plaza in front of the Administration Building.

Candidates for Graduation

Certificate in Early Learning and Child Care

Eda Lucille Brown*

Monique Christine Clarke ‡*

Kamini Kamini ‡*

Lakhvir Kaur*

Sukhwinder Kaur*

Hailey Krider*

Saranya Ramesh ‡

Patience Shola Saiki ‡*

Madhvi Sharma*

Mandeep Singh ‡*

Lajveer Kaur Sran*

Certificate in Business Administration

Laura Ashley Dias de Souza Aguiar

Certificate in Health Sciences

Michael Thomas Arthur

Paul Puok Bany

Kevin Bilagot Grad

Bachelor of Arts (Three-Year)

Liswani Fred Mwilma (General Arts)

Shabana Rasouly (Business Administration) †

Reashana Adina Walters (General Arts) ‡

Bachelor of Arts (Four-Year)

Tyler John Borges (Behavioural Science) †

Yandira Alexandria Campos (Music) *cum laude*

Alyssa Evelina de Gier (Music) *summa cum laude Burman Advantage*

Emma Linnette Florence Guderyan (Adventure Based Counselling)

Emmanuel-Olivier Joseph Simon Jacques (Religious Studies: Youth Leadership Track) *cum laude*

Camille Junior Lima (Religious Studies) ‡

Shawna Lynn Lussier (Religious Studies: Pre-Professional Track)

Ewan Nugent (Religious Studies) *magna cum laude*

Harivony Nicolas Taimana Rakotomalala (International Studies: Law & International Relations)

Boris Gisa Ruzindana (Religious Studies)

Recardo Hugh Thompson (Religious Studies: Pre-Professional Track)

Bachelor of Business Administration (Four-Year)

Samuel Brewster (Management Track)

Shairahvel Conde (Accounting Track) †

Marcus Julianarta (Management Track) ‡

David Jeffrey Luke Kapiniak (Accounting Track) *summa cum laude*

Adena Brier Palmer (Accounting Track)

Ingrid Margarita Ruiz (Accounting Track) *summa cum laude Burman Advantage*

Dwight Ryan Rumambi (Accounting Track) *cum laude*

Bachelor of Education (Four-Year)

Sarai Esther Alvir-Hichez (Secondary Math) †

Brendan Jeffrey Aspenes (Elementary) *

Kalee Kenda Befus (Elementary) *summa cum laude*

Mariese Esrienne Emmons (Secondary Biology)

Cassandra Diane Hall (Secondary Social Studies)

Grace Elizabeth Landry (Secondary Biology) *summa cum laude*

Juliette Anita Nembhard (Secondary Music) †

Cheryl Lynn Nichols (Elementary) *cum laude*

Judea Anne Nichols (Elementary) *cum laude*

Amber Taylor Power (Elementary)

Michell Grines Villalobos Romero (Elementary) *magna cum laude*

Bachelor of Education After Degree (Two-Year)

Riley Victor Appleyard (Elementary)

Taylor Morgan Attema (Secondary) *magna cum laude*

Alexander Roger Dye (Secondary) * *summa cum laude*

Owen David Trevor Feragen (Secondary) * *summa cum laude*

Susan Marie Haggas (Elementary) *summa cum laude*

Daniel Seth Hunter-Owega (Secondary) *summa cum laude*

Andrew Michael Kartusch (Elementary) * *summa cum laude*

James Oyola Mbewa (Secondary) *magna cum laude*

Paige Elizabeth Garnett Miller (Elementary) *summa cum laude*

Jenise Ulando Mowatt (Elementary) *cum laude*

Matthew Stephen Williams (Elementary) *summa cum laude*

Krishna Yagambrun (Elementary)

Bachelor of Music

Joshua Junior Matias Lange Velazquez (Performance) *summa cum laude Burman Advantage*

Bachelor of Science (Three-Year)

Faith Gabrielle Belhomme (General Science) †
Sung Kwon Choi (Biology) *cum laude*
Meiying Doubinin (General Science) ‡
Jaina Mackenzie Druitt (Wellness) *cum laude*
Mohammad Reza Kazemimokri (General Science)
Taehee Kim (Biology) *summa cum laude Burman Advantage*
Kyrianna Joy Atasha Reimer (General Science) *summa cum laude*
Dana Julianne Rey (Biology) *cum laude Burman Advantage*

Bachelor of Science (Four-Year)

Carla Bennett (Psychology) *cum laude*
Kenny Junior Ciceron (Psychology)
Melisa Janeth Duarte Penna (Wellness)
Francesca Candace Etinoff (Biology) *cum laude*
Kish Dayanara Gonzales Loriezo (Psychology) *cum laude*
Ramone Chez Matiba (Biology) †
Marvin Earl McClellan (Psychology) * †
James Opere Otieno (Biology: Bio-Medical Track) †
Karla Pallares (Biology) * †
Kate Ruth Chloe Pruneau (Psychology) †
Abel Fetene Safawo (Biology) *cum laude*
Davia Pamel Saunders (Psychology) * *summa cum laude*
Daveon Tapper (Biology: Bio-Medical Track) *cum laude*
Irene Ling Yu Toop (Biology) * ‡ *summa cum laude*
Brandon Paul Kenneth Wiebe (Biology) *summa cum laude*
Xi Ying Zhou (Biology)

* In Absentia

† August, 2025 conferral

‡ December, 2024 conferral

Speaker

Roberson Dorelus, BA

Director, Youth & Young Adults, Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Edmonton, Alberta

Born and raised in the sunshine state of Florida—Palm Beach to be exact—Pastor Rob felt a call to ministry that led him north to Canada. He traded palm trees for snowflakes and earned a degree in Religious Studies from Canadian University College (now: Burman University).

From the start, Pastor Rob has been deeply involved in ministry. In Florida, he served in Pathfinder Ministries, led weekly community service projects, and organized humanitarian efforts in Haiti through his non-profit, Men Anpil Chay Pa Lou (“Many hands make the load lighter”).

For the past 11 years, he has served in the Alberta Conference, pastoring at Edmonton West, Edmonton Central, African Fellowship, and most recently, Sherwood Park SDA Church. Now, as the Youth & Young Adult Director, he’s on a mission to uplift and empower the next generation of leaders.

When he’s not preaching or leading, you’ll likely find him at the gym, lost in a good book, or enjoying the lunch special at Padmanadi.

Pastor Rob is passionate about leadership, personal growth, and youth ministry. He is married to his best friend, Thaksheela, and together, they are committed to keeping the gospel real, relevant, and at the heart of everything they do.

Speaker and Emeritus Faculty

John McDowell, PhD

Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Professor of English

Lacombe, Alberta

Dr. John McDowell began his teaching career at Burman University in 1980 after earning an MA in English from La Sierra University. Following two years of teaching, he was retrenched due to low enrollment—a challenge that turned into an opportunity, allowing him to pursue a PhD at the University of Calgary. He returned to Burman in 1985 and worked on completing his dissertation during the summers.

In 1998, Dr. McDowell was appointed Vice President for Academic Administration at Burman University. Seeking broader professional experience, he transitioned to Pacific Union College in 2001, where he taught English and served as Director of the Honors Program. In 2011, circumstances aligned for him to return to Burman University, where he has since served as Dean of Arts and Social Sciences.

Dr. McDowell has played a significant role in academic accreditation efforts, serving on Alberta's Private Colleges Accreditation Board (the precursor to the Campus Alberta Quality Council) from 1993 to 1999—a period during which Burman achieved accreditation for several programs. His dedication to the arts is evident in his time spent at The Banff Centre for the Arts, where he studied under prominent Canadian writers, and as editor of the national literary magazine *Dandelion*.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. McDowell is an accomplished visual artist and a juried member of both the Alberta Society of Artists and the Canadian Sculptors Society (website: jmcdart.com). His scholarly publications include articles on topics such as Vincent van Gogh, South African photographer Pieter Hugo's portraits, and Doris Lessing's African Stories.

Dr. McDowell is passionate about teaching and views students as individuals with immense potential. He strives to help them realize their capabilities by fostering critical thinking and intellectual curiosity. Known for answering questions with questions, he draws inspiration from Northrop Frye's observation in *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*:

"The Teacher...is not primarily someone who knows instructing someone who does not know. He is rather someone who attempts to re-create the subject in the student's mind.... To answer a question...is to consolidate the mental level on which the question is asked. Unless something is kept in reserve, suggesting the possibility of better and fuller questions, the student's mental advance is blocked."

Dr. McDowell is married to Lynn McDowell, who works for the Alberta Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, and they have two grown children, Myken and Aran.

Speaker

Andrea Luxton, PhD

Associate Director for Higher Education

North American Division of Seventh-day Adventists

Andrea Luxton retired as President of Andrews University in July 2023, having served as an educator in the church for 41 years. In her retirement she is working part-time for the North American Division, responsible for higher education.

Luxton has been a teacher and principal at secondary level, and a faculty, academic administrator and president in higher education. She was the first woman to serve as president at Newbold College, England; Burman University, Canada; and Andrews University, Michigan, United States.

She has also worked in positions at Union and General Conference levels (and now division level). In the British Union she was Education Director and held additional responsibilities in Sabbath School and Women's Ministries. At the General Conference she was the Secretary of the Adventist Accrediting Association and Associate Education Director, with particular responsibilities for the North American Division, the South-Pacific Division, the Trans-European Division, and the West-African Division.

Awardee

Excellence in Teaching

Jonathan Campbell, PhD

Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies

Jonathan Campbell is from Seattle, Washington. He is married to Kathleen, and holds degrees in Theology, Biblical Languages, Linguistics, and a PhD in New Testament studies. He has published on the interpretation and application of several New Testament books, and much of his research focuses on Greek New Testament manuscripts.

Most of all, Dr. Campbell is passionate about teaching and studying the Bible as God's inspired and inspiring message to his beloved people. He humbly accepts this award in honour of the many teachers who have inspired him, and with thanks to the Burman University community.

Excellence in Scholarship

Oktavian Mantiri, PhD

Associate Professor of Education

Dr. Oktavian Mantiri is an Associate Professor of Education at Burman University. He earned his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Education from the University of Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia. He also holds a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree from the University of Sydney, and a Bachelor of Education from Universitas Klabat, Manado, Indonesia.

Dr. Mantiri previously served as an Associate Professor at Universitas Klabat, Indonesia, and as a Senior Lecturer at Asia-Pacific International University, Thailand. With over three decades of teaching and research experience in higher education institutions across Southeast Asia and Australia, he has made significant contributions to the academic community. He has supervised and examined master's and doctoral theses at various universities in Indonesia, Thailand, and Australia.

His scholarly work includes the publication of numerous peer-reviewed journal articles and a book chapter. His current research interests lie in the areas of classroom management, social and emotional learning (SEL), and teacher preparation programs. Dr. Mantiri is deeply committed to fostering a culture of inquiry among pre-service teachers, encouraging student engagement in research as a fundamental component of professional development. He strongly believes that research constitutes the core of the higher education enterprise, shaping its practices, informing its pedagogy, and enriching its academic culture.

Excellence in Service

Tennyson Samraj, PhD

Professor of Philosophy

Tennyson Samraj was born in India where he completed his studies. He earned a BA in Religion from Spicer College, followed by an MA in History and PhD in Philosophy from Pune University. He worked at Spicer College and Hume McHenry School before coming to Canada to teach at Burman in 1990. At Burman, Dr. Samraj served as the head of the History department. Currently, he leads the General Arts Department as the program chair.

Dr. Samraj teaches the philosophy classes at Burman, and his approach to teaching is guided by the principle, “If a teacher cannot teach without a textbook the teacher cannot expect students to write exams without a textbook.” His students would agree that he places them first in his life, and he believes that the classroom is the best place in the world.

Dr. Samraj is known for his service around the community. He is a lead teacher for a Sabbath school class at College Heights SDA church and is invited to speak at many churches. He welcomes students or faculty who need a place to stay into his home and is a regular contributor to the choir, orchestra, and mission trips.

Beyond his academic work, Dr. Samraj has a deep passion for painting, particularly portraiture. His subjects often include those who have made significant contributions to society. Over the years, he has hosted numerous exhibits with different themes including Philosophers, Scientists, Politicians, and Great Lives. He believes that when we see God’s hand in everything that happens in life such a life is worth living.

Board of Trustees

2021 – 2026

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Administration of the University

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Academic Costume

The pageantry and costume of commencement have been inherited from the European universities of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Academic life as we know it today began in medieval times, first in the church and then in the guilds. The teaching guild was the Guild of the Master of Arts where the Bachelor was the apprentice of the Master, and the dress was the outward sign of privilege and responsibility. Rather early it became necessary for colleges and universities to set rules to preserve the dignity and meaning of academic dress. Today, most institutions adopt a distinctive design for academic attire.

GOWN: Academic gowns come in a variety of designs and colours. These designs, particularly the sleeves, reflect the level of the academic degree of the wearer. While most gowns are black, many universities use gowns of other colours for doctoral degrees.

HOOD: In general, the size and complexity of the hood reflect the level of the degree of the wearer ~ the longer and more complex the hood, the higher the degree. The interior colours of the hood are generally the colours of the degree-granting institution, while the border colours represent the academic discipline.

CAP: Traditionally, the cap has had a square, solid design and is known as a “mortarboard.” Some universities use a round or octagonal tam for doctoral degrees. Sometimes, the colour of the tassel indicates the academic discipline. A gold tassel is often used for doctoral degrees.

Honours

Where merited, Burman University confers degrees with three levels of academic honours: cum laude for honours (red cords), magna cum laude for high honours (red and gold cords), and summa cum laude for highest honours (gold cords). The academic honours published and announced during the convocation ceremonies are based on the graduate's academic record as of January 1 of the year of convocation. The academic honours, as printed on the official transcript and parchment, include all course work completed during the term of study immediately prior to the convocation ceremonies and, therefore, may be different from the previously announced designations.

Burman University Scholars is a competitive program offered as an alternative to the general or breadth education requirements for Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degrees. Scholars is geared towards students that are intellectually curious and who wish to engage with others in cultivating the life of the mind. Established on the belief that knowledge is profoundly interconnected, Scholars is committed to integrated, interdisciplinary education designed to transcend the barriers between such traditionally separate fields as art, history, science, theology, and philosophy. Courses are team-taught by faculty from differing disciplines.

Burman Advantage is a non-academic program that recognizes student involvement in their volunteer and co-curricular activities from their time as a Burman University student. This program is designed to encourage students to create, lead, and support other students and programs both on and off campus. Burman Advantage recognizes that the student experience is encapsulated by more than classroom activities and acknowledges participation in leadership and service efforts that help shape and develop students throughout their time in university. Graduates with the Burman Advantage designation will receive an official certificate that can be linked to their resume and added to their professional portfolio.

University Mace

The Burman University mace was commissioned to honour the May 1, 2015 institutional name change. Former university registrar, Mr. Lawrence Murrin, designed the mace, while Mr. Gerald Whitehead, a retired Canadian Union College and Parkview Adventist Academy instructor, translated the design into a black walnut and brass work of art. The disc at the top of the mace holds on both sides the crest of Burman University. The brass holder of the disk bears the symbol of the Seventh-day Adventist church. The four-sided head of the mace bears medallions that trace the history of the university. Three brass rings encircle the shaft, each engraved with one clause of the university's mission statement: think with discernment; believe with insight and commitment; act with confidence, compassion, and competence.

In medieval times, the mace symbolized authority over life and death and was held by a dignitary's bodyguard at ceremonial functions. Today the mace represents the power of knowledge.

The Burman University mace symbolizes the university's contributions to the creation and dissemination of knowledge. It also marks the university's values of excellence, service, spirituality, integrity, and community. During formal university convocations, the marshal carries the mace before the university president and places it in full view of the assembly during the proceedings. Between convocations it is kept in a display case in the President's Office.