



THIEL COLLEGE
Office of the President

President's Commencement Remarks
Saturday, May 9, 2026 @ 11:00 am
Passavant Center
Susan Traverso, President

Let me join Board Chair Bob Burns in extending a warm welcome to this joyous day at Thiel College. Hearty congratulations to the undergraduates and graduate students, who will be receiving their degrees today.

It's a joyous day at Thiel College as we gather together—students, faculty, members of the Board, families, friends, and the larger Thiel community. Today, we celebrate the accomplishments of the Class of 2026, undergraduates and MBA candidates.

On this special occasion, we are also celebrating Dr. Shane Snyder, who will be awarded an honorary degree in recognition of his scientific expertise and research in the field of water chemistry. As a member of the Thiel class of 1994, Dr. Snyder was a student of Dr. Ji Khalsa who, today, will be recognized as professor emerita for her 46 years of dedicated service to Thiel.

And so, this day is a day of beginning (commencement) for our graduates, but also a reminder of how life is so often a series of beginnings and endings that often circle back from beginnings to endings, endings to beginnings. T.S. Eliot, renowned British poet and Nobel Laureate, captured this aspect of life, writing in his famous

Four Quartets, writing: “What we call the beginning is often the end/And to make an end is to make a beginning/the end is where we start from.” (Little Gidding, Part V)

Today as we celebrate our graduating students, a remarkable alumnus come home, and the conclusion of a distinguished career of teaching at Thiel, Eliot’s observations about beginnings, endings, and new beginnings ring true.

Families and friends of the graduates, thank you for joining the journey that these students – soon graduates – have taken at Thiel. We share your pride in their accomplishments. We are grateful for the partnership we have enjoyed with you in guiding these students, encouraging them, and keeping them focused on their educational goals. Your belief in them and trust in Thiel have supported their success.

As you walked up Brother Martin’s Walk this morning, you circled back to the start of your journey at Thiel on your way to First-Year Convocation with all of college ahead of you. Today, you are ending your time at Thiel, facing a new beginning - life after Thiel. Still, I urge you to continue to circle back to campus, attending Homecoming, and staying in touch with your faculty, coaches and others on campus. You will grow and change as your lives unfold, and Thiel will also grow and change. And so, when you return to campus, it will always be both familiar and new to you, just as today’s walk up Brother Martin’s Walk was both familiar and yet new.

It's been a joy to see you grow, to witness your impact on the Thiel community, and to share your aspirations as you look ahead. As we celebrate today’s

Commencement, I am proud of all you have accomplished and grateful, as I know you are, for the Thiel community and the support of your families, in nurturing your growth and success. Well done, Class of 2026. It's time to celebrate.