



Middlebury Institute *of*
International Studies at Monterey

WINTER COMMENCEMENT

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2025

**MIDDLEBURY INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
AT MONTEREY**

Commencement Exercises and Conferring of Degrees



PROCESSIONAL

Please rise for the processional

WELCOME

Jeff Dayton-Johnson

Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean of the Institute

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Hannah Ross

General Counsel, Chief Risk Officer, and Secretary of the Corporation

REMARKS

Michelle McCauley

Executive Vice President and Provost, Professor of Psychology

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Megan McKenna

Visiting Professor

STUDENT SPEAKER

Habiba Mickdad MANPTS '25

CONFERRING OF DEGREES

Provost Michelle McCauley

PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES FOR DEGREES

Patricia Szasz

Dean, Middlebury Institute Online

CLOSING REMARKS

Vice President Jeff Dayton-Johnson

RECESSIONAL

Please remain seated for the recessional

RECEPTION

Please join us for a celebration at the Samson Student Center



PLATFORM PARTY

Michelle McCauley

Patricia Szasz

Hannah Ross

Habiba Mickdad

Megan McKenna

Jeff Dayton-Johnson

GRAND MARSHAL

Scott Pulizzi

Professor and Program Chair,

Global Governance, Policy, and Development

FACULTY MARSHAL

Philip Murphy

Faculty Senate President and

Professor, Policy Analytics

MASTER OF ARTS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Kellsey Lauren Beal

Norwell, Massachusetts

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Robert Nelson Broom

Long Beach, California

Emma Grace Cooper*

Chalfont, Pennsylvania

Helen N. Day

Oakland, California

Teagan Felknor-Edwards

Davis, California

Bridgett Figueroa

Orange County, California

Lauren Ashley Gress*

Moorestville, North Carolina

Lydia Tyree Johnson

Cleveland, Ohio

Sydney Justine Low*

San Francisco, California

Nicolas Delacruz Paneto

Goshen, New York

Samantha Quintell-Lenzi*

Buffalo Grove, Illinois

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT

Yongyi Cao

Guangzhou, China

Qiqi Chen

Jinzhou, China

Hannah Vahey Flach

Marin County, California

Joseph T. Hebl

Eau Claire, Wisconsin

Luya August Jiang

Xian, China

Neshae Johnson

St. Catherine, Jamaica

Zhengyi Li

Tangshan, China

Reiwen Luo

Naperville, Illinois

Alaina R. Mariano*

Sand City, California

Anvar Nizamov

Almaty, Kazakhstan

Diego Olivieri

Ambika Rai

Dharan, Nepal

Kris Rose

Livermore, California

Stephen Douglas Schwendener

Hinsdale, Illinois

Daniel Eugene Shull*

Gooding, Idaho

Katelyn Mae Vorse

Oakdale, California

Jingwen Wang*

Qingdao, China

Xinyue Wen

Chengdu, China

Hang Yu*

Yancheng, China

MASTER OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE

| | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Rachel Chung* | <i>Cupertino, California</i> |
| Xuechun Du | <i>Wuhan, China</i> |
| Samuel E. Kostopulos | <i>Little Rock, Arkansas</i> |
| Sijing Lyu | <i>Nanchang, China</i> |
| Julian Isaac Newman | <i>Chicago, Illinois</i> |
| Stephen Douglas Schwendener | <i>Hinsdale, Illinois</i> |
| Jingyuan Yin | <i>Shandong, China</i> |

MASTER OF ARTS IN NONPROLIFERATION AND TERRORISM STUDIES

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Brooke Angel Bombien | <i>Raleigh, North Carolina</i> |
| Lyndsey Kristin Breksa | <i>Richmond, California</i> |
| Ying Li | <i>Beijing, China</i> |
| Hollis Liu | <i>Marina, California</i> |
| Chedly Allen Mgaith | <i>Hawaii</i> |
| Boke Habiba Mickdad | <i>Dar es Salaam, Tanzania</i> |
| Evans Nyamadzawo | <i>Harare, Zimbabwe</i> |
| John F. Riggie | <i>Exeter, New Hampshire</i> |
| Emma Lee Scherer* | <i>Towson, Maryland</i> |
| Grace Pauline Smith | <i>Redding, California</i> |
| Benjamin Eugene Waller* | <i>Santa Cruz, California</i> |

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sophie E. Auvin | <i>Minneapolis, Minnesota</i> |
| Kaylie Beth Keteltas* | <i>Medfield, Massachusetts</i> |
| Abigail Lynn Rogers* | <i>Hollis, New Hampshire</i> |
| Michael D. Scoble | <i>Albuquerque, New Mexico</i> |

MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Devlin Cook-Hines | <i>Coventry, Rhode Island</i> |
| Molly C. Drane* | <i>Falmouth, Massachusetts</i> |
| Loraine Ruiz Vera | <i>Utua, Puerto Rico</i> |
| Arvin Tsai | <i>Dallas, Texas</i> |
| Yueyao Zhao | <i>Beijing, China</i> |

MASTER OF ARTS IN THREAT INTELLIGENCE

| | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Arthur Churchwell | <i>Nashville, Tennessee</i> |
| Matthew Lucas Freeman | <i>Panama City, Florida</i> |
| Anastasia Nina Hahnen | <i>Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania</i> |
| Fawad Hussain | <i>Larkana, Pakistan</i> |
| Trevor Madden | <i>Carlsbad, California</i> |
| Amanda James Pollem | <i>La Mesa, California</i> |

MASTER OF ARTS IN TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION MANAGEMENT

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Melissa Martinez | <i>Paso Robles, California</i> |
|------------------|--------------------------------|

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SOCIAL CHANGE

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Hannah Vahey Flach | <i>Marin County, California</i> |
| Ryan James Hayes | <i>Plymouth, Michigan</i> |
| Logan L. Jensen | <i>Victorville, California</i> |
| Neshae Johnson | <i>St. Catherine, Jamaica</i> |
| Carolyn Goodrich Meyers | <i>Ashburn, Virginia</i> |
| Sarah Elizabeth Slade | <i>Carmel, California</i> |

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN SUSTAINABILITY

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Shawn William Cronin | <i>Carmel Valley, California</i> |
| Khayla Salangsang Elias | <i>Pinole, California</i> |
| Omari J. Hines | <i>Riverside, California</i> |
| Daniel Lesser * | <i>Orono, Maine</i> |
| Adrienne Mushiya Kalamba | <i>Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo</i> |

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL POLICY

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| Logan L. Jensen** | <i>Victorville, California</i> |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|

* *With distinction*

** *Summa cum laude*

FLAGS OF MANY HOMELANDS

Today's flags represent 72 graduates from 11 homelands.

Canada

China

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Jamaica

Kazakhstan

Nepal

Pakistan

Puerto Rico

Tanzania

United States of America

Zimbabwe

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We pause to acknowledge that the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS) sits in the Village of Achasta on the ancestral and unceded land of the Ohlone (Costanoan) Rumsen/Rumsien people, a Rumsen speaking group. Several contemporary tribes, including Esselen, call this land home today. The surrounding Monterey Bay region includes lands traditionally inhabited by the Esselen (to the south), Chalon (to the south), Mutsun (to the north), and Salinan (to the east) groups. We honor these groups' experiences in the past, present, and future, as we work collaboratively with them to protect the land and its inhabitants. Let us take a moment of silence to honor these Indigenous communities, past and present. We give thanks for the opportunity to respectfully share in the bounty of this place and are working collaboratively to protect it. We are all one in the sacred web of life that connects people, animals, plants, air, water, and earth.

FACULTY COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

MEGAN MCKENNA, VISITING PROFESSOR



Dr. Megan McKenna is a marine scientist, educator, and policy expert with extensive experience working at the intersection of ocean science, conservation, and public policy. Megan earned her PhD from the Scripps Institution of Oceanography and began her policy career in Washington, D.C., with the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. She later served as a lead scientist with the U.S. National Park Service, where she worked to integrate remote sensing into natural resource management. Returning to California, she continued her research supporting ocean conservation and sustainability through big data analytics and by leading and contributing to cross-sector collaborations that drive sustainable ocean solutions from local to global levels.

At the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, Megan teaches across several interdisciplinary programs, including the graduate Environmental Policy and Management program, online Master of Public Administration in Sustainability, and undergraduate California Coast and Climate Semester and Middlebury School of the Environment. Her teaching emphasizes applied science, systems thinking, and the connection between local action and global change. In 2025, she received the Faculty Excellence Award at MIIS in recognition of her teaching.

STUDENT SPEAKER

HABIBA MICKDAD MANPTS '25



Habiba Mickdad graduates today with a Master of Arts in Nonproliferation and Terrorism Studies, with a certification in Financial Crime Management. Born and raised in Tanzania and having spent 10 years studying in Uganda, her commitment to peacebuilding, dialogue, and youth empowerment has shaped her academic and professional journeys.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts in history and political science from the University of Dar es Salaam, where she earned multiple leadership honors, including the Presidential Honorary Medal for excellence and service. She later completed her first master's degree in international peacebuilding at Hartford International University, where she was awarded the Celie J. Terry Prize, a distinction reserved for the student demonstrating exceptional academic excellence and transformative community engagement. She was also given the Peace and Leadership Award.

At the Middlebury Institute, Habiba continued to lead with purpose. She served as a graduate assistant for the Student Services Office and Cyber Collaborative, a student advocate, and both a Kathryn Wasserman Davis Conflict Transformation Fellow and a Conflict Transformation Pedagogy Fellow. Her MIIS policy work includes two DoD-affiliated projects on domestic drone threat mitigation and proliferation-financing risks.

Beyond campus, Habiba founded USAIC, a youth-led platform connecting students across more than 20 universities in East Africa. She collaborates with youth representatives across African regional blocs, including the East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and others to strengthen African engagement in global nonproliferation dialogues, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review process.

She carries forward a belief that peace must be both structural and personal, grounded in dignity, cooperation, and shared responsibility.

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Ian B. Baucom

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A FEW NOTES

GRADUATION WITH HONORS

Undergraduate students completing all degree requirements with a record of high academic achievement are awarded traditional Latin honors: cum laude (3.50–3.74), magna cum laude (3.75–3.89), and summa cum laude (3.9–4.0). Master's degree recipients completing with a cumulative GPA of 4.00 graduate with distinction. Recipients of summa cum laude and distinction honors are awarded honors cords.

COMMENCEMENT RECEPTION

The Middlebury Institute has a long tradition of sustainable practices and innovative initiatives. In 2015, we adopted a policy of featuring at least 50 percent plant-based food at all official Institute events where food is served. In that spirit, and in an effort to meet our sustainability policy goals, we are proud to serve 100 percent plant-based foods at today's Commencement reception.

PHOTOS

For safety reasons, please remain in your seats during the ceremony. We have arranged for a photographer to take photos as each graduate crosses the stage.

The Office of Communications is pleased to offer complimentary Commencement ceremony photographs to our graduating students. Details will be provided via email once photos become available.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Special thanks to Professor Mike Gillen for playing the bagpipes leading the processional.

SUPPORTING THE MIDDLEBURY INSTITUTE ANNUAL FUND

We are grateful to the generous alumni, students, faculty, staff, and friends who support the many facets of an Institute education by donating to the Annual Fund. Your contributions allow future students the opportunity to pursue their dreams and lead purposeful lives. Visit go.miis.edu/give to learn more about how to make a gift.

MIDDLEBURY INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

The Middlebury Institute of International Studies educates professionals to advance understanding, promote peace, and drive change in pursuit of a more just world. The Institute's students join faculty and a global network of alumni who are actively addressing some of the most critical issues of our time—including climate change, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation. Through a range of both in-person and online degree programs, students build critical in-demand skills in public policy, intercultural communication, mixed-methods and open-source data analysis and research, leadership and administration, education, and translation, interpretation, and localization.

The Institute is also home to a wide range of research centers and initiatives, including the renowned James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, the Center for the Blue Economy, and the Center on Terrorism, Extremism, and Counterterrorism, as well as the Monterey Initiative in Russian Studies.

Middlebury is anchored by the undergraduate college in Vermont, which was founded in 1800 and has long been recognized as one of the finest liberal arts colleges in the country. Founded in 1955, the Institute became affiliated with Middlebury College in 2005 and was fully integrated as a graduate school of Middlebury in 2010.



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International Studies at Monterey