



Convocation, August 2024

Welcome home to the Class of 2028! Welcome to Sister of the Caldwell Dominican order

All of us — sisters, faculty members, staff, administrators, our Board, and other members of the Caldwell University community — are thrilled to see you here this fall

Hello, as well, to all of the parents and family members who are here.

- You, too, are valued members of the University community.
- Our students are who they are in large part because of the love, guidance, and attention you devoted to them

I fully anticipate we will assemble again with your family to watch with pride as you walk across the stage in Newman Center in May 2028 to shake my hand when I present you with your degree. Indeed, this is the goal! In four years!

Caldwell University is a beautiful setting in which to study and engage with each other, with historic buildings such as Rosary Hall and the Jennings Library. Alongside newer buildings like Werner Hall or Newman Center. As you have all seen, our campus has gracious open spaces and a wonderfully vibrant and safe location . . . we are in the top rankings in the North for:

- Undergraduate teaching
- Best Value
- And in promoting social mobility

Buildings and settings are only a small part of the story of universities. Indeed, we are a teaching and learning university, and the faculty and staff are what makes a university special, as are the students. Harvard is Harvard because of its faculty, staff, and students . . . not because of its buildings. So, too, Caldwell is Caldwell because of its faculty, staff, and students. Please, I would ask all faculty to stand . . . students, please recognize these academic leaders who are here for you

Thank you. Be seated

I can tell you that the University is filled with faculty who care about the students they teach. Staff . . . please stand. Students, please recognize this team, which is so ready to help and support you. Thank you. Please be seated. Staff are no less important to you and are committed to helping you succeed both in your academic work and your life outside of the classroom.

Caldwell University is beautiful . . . and the faculty and staff are wonderful, but our campus lacks the vitality that only students can bring. So, we are so very pleased to have you back on campus.

The beginning of college marks one of the most important times of your life. Take my word for it—it will go by in an instant when you look back on it! I want to emphasize this point by presenting your class timepiece.

Dr. Abaunza, our Vice President for Academic Affairs, presents your class watch. Your watch will be placed on our Mace today . . . to demonstrate your beginning with us.

- Chaucer once said, "Time and tide wait for no one."
- Our action signifies to you and to us that your time has begun and for you to use it well
- The watch will appear on the university mace when it is used at official university ceremonies along with the other classes' watches
- You will see it again at commencement for the last time when your time ends with us
- I don't mean to discourage you from continuing on to graduate school with us, but that is a new timeline!
- I do this to impress upon you that Indeed
- . . . our time together is limited . . .
 - Make the best of it
 - Make yourself proud of what you accomplish
 - Make a difference here

Over the next four years or less, you will learn & experience a great deal
I hope and trust that your development will not be confined to academics.

That is, I hope you will also grow as artists, athletes, musicians, and socially engaged citizens of this community and the world . . . I hope you will gain friends . . . and lifelong colleagues.

I hope you will have fun!

Learning in the Caldwell University community is enriching . . . your fellow students are likely going to have ideas and backgrounds different from your own . . . Celebrate that it can enrich and broaden your understanding of the world and can help you define the place that you want to take in society or your profession. I can guarantee you that the growth you see in yourselves will be amazing if you dedicate yourself to improving. However, one of the most important aspects of moving into adulthood is the development of responsible and mature judgment that can . . . yes, CAN . . . only come with independence. Professional maturation "can occur" rather than "will occur" because not all students make the difficult leap from student to professional.

All students will get a college diploma for completing the requirements. Learning and change are not sprints but marathons. Humans learn best together when they are engaged and when they want to learn. You are responsible for your learning and experience from today forward! Einstein once said, "The measure of intelligence is the ability to change." If you leave here merely having mastered a set of facts, the value of your college education will have a very short shelf life. But, if you leave Caldwell University having learned how to drive your own

intellectual and professional development, . . . build on your creativity and critical thinking abilities . . . the value of your education will be strengthened throughout your lifetime

That is what we truly want for you!

Although you are being asked to take responsibility for your education, we do not expect you to do this without assistance. Your advisers, counselors, coaches, and professors stand ready to provide guidance and support, as do all staff. Use these resources fully and wisely.

If you do, I am sure that your experience at Caldwell University will be even better than you anticipated when you decided to join the Class of 2028!

Welcome to Caldwell University!

May God bless you all!

Thank you.

Dr. Jeffrey D. Senese
President