May 2, 2018

**MSU Engineering says good-bye to 729 undergrads, 43 master’s, and 52 PhD students**

Michigan State University will host commencement ceremonies for more than 820 graduates of the College of Engineering this weekend.

**Advanced degrees** -- The Advanced Degree Commencement is Friday, May 4, at 3:30 p.m. in MSU's Breslin Center. There will be 43 master's and 52 PhD candidates from the College of Engineering. The ceremony is 2 1/2 hours long. There are no admission tickets required. The Breslin Center has a policy of no bags, purses, umbrellas, or bottled water allowed.

**Undergraduates** -- The College of Engineering will host graduation services for 729 undergraduates on Sunday, May 6, at 12:30 p.m. in the Breslin Center. The ceremony is two hours long. There are no admission tickets required. The Breslin Center has a policy of no bags, purses, umbrellas, or bottled water allowed.

Leo Kempel, dean of the College of Engineering, will offer both the welcome and closing remarks at undergraduate graduation.

Drew Laske, a senior in applied engineering sciences, will sing the *Star Spangled Banner*.

Amanda Idema, assistant dean for Undergraduate Student Affairs, serves as commencement coordinator.
Undergraduate commencement speaker

Kelly Patterson, a senior in mechanical engineering with a concentration in biomechanics, will present “Engineering Builds Character” as the senior class address.

“I’ll be speaking about the ways we have developed character as leaders and innovators through our engineering experiences at MSU,” she said. “I want to give the graduates a chance to look back and celebrate the ways we have grown to get to this point and look ahead to the people we want to become moving forward.”

Patterson said her Spartan Engineering years were an incredible experience.

“The wealth of opportunities let me participate in research, grow as a leader in student organizations, and get hands-on technical experience in internships,” she said. “My message to incoming Spartans is to dive in and find what makes you excited about engineering. Remember to visit the Center for Spartan Engineering early and often for help with professional development.”

Patterson, of Lansing, graduated from Lansing’s Waverly High School in 2014. Since August 2015, she has been a student researcher and professorial assistant in MSU’s Biomechanical Design research lab. At MSU, she was president of the Society of Women Engineers and active in the MSU Dance Club, Spartan Christian Fellowship, and as a student ambassador for the Engineering K-12 Outreach office.

After graduation, she will work at General Motors as a vehicle safety engineer through GM’s rotational TRACK program. She begins in July.

Undergraduate keynote address

Jianchang “JC” Mao will offer the undergraduate keynote address as the 2018 Claud R. Erickson Distinguished Alumni Award Recipient. Mao will receive the honor at the College of Engineering Alumni Awards banquet on Saturday. The award is the highest honor presented to an alumnus by the college. It recognizes professional accomplishment, volunteer service, and distinguished service to the college and the engineering profession.
Mao, of Bellevue, Wash., received a PhD from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering in 1994. Today, he is a corporate vice president, Artificial Intelligence and Research, at Microsoft. He leads a global team of engineers, scientists, product managers, marketplace operators and analysts, responsible for building technologies and products, and running a multi-billion-dollar advertising marketplace that powers Bing, Yahoo!, AOL, and other syndication partners.

Mao joined Microsoft in 2012, and is responsible for defining Bing Advertising growth strategies, technical directions, product road maps, and operating cadence. In 2014, he was awarded the title of Distinguished Engineer, an honor conferred to less than 0.1 percent of Microsoft full-time employees. [More on JC Mao](https://www.egr.msu.edu).

**About MSU Commencement – 7,800 Spartans to graduate this weekend**

MSU is hosting 19 commencement ceremonies from Thursday, May 3, through Sunday, May 6. Spring Undergraduate Convocation is Friday, May 4, at 1 p.m.

MSU has 5,618 undergraduate degree candidates and 2,207 advanced degree candidates.

The undergraduate convocation will take place at 1 p.m. Friday. Wanda Herdon, the first senior vice president of global communications for Starbucks Coffee Co., will deliver the commencement address and receive an honorary doctorate of humanities. Fatema Alsaleh, a senior in computer science, will carry the Engineering banner during the undergraduate convocation.

Also at the convocation, Bethany Beardslee, an American soprano, will receive an honorary doctorate of fine arts. Albie Sachs, a judge and human rights activist, will be awarded an honorary doctorate of laws.

The advanced degree ceremony will take place at 3:30 p.m. Friday with Marcia McNutt, the 22nd president of the National Academy of Sciences, addressing graduates. In addition, at the advanced degree ceremony, Akinwumi Adesina, president of the African Development Bank Group, will receive an honorary doctorate of agriculture.

Both ceremonies will be livestreamed on the [commencement website](https://www.egr.msu.edu).
Bios of the speakers and honorary degree recipients may be found on MSUToday.

Twitter users: #MSUgrad18

Related Website: Communications contact: Patricia Mroczek

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