

DIPLOMA CEREMONY

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 2026
OLD CABELL HALL AUDITORIUM



UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

SCHOOL *of* DATA SCIENCE

***“DATA SCIENCE IS THE
FOUNDATION OF AI. AT THE
SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE WE
DO NOT JUST BUILD MODELS –
WE QUESTION, EVALUATE,
AND APPLY AI RESPONSIBLY
FOR THE COMMON GOOD.”***

*–Jeffrey Blume,
Interim Stephenson Dean,
Professor of Data Science*

PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL

WELCOME

Renée Cummings, Assistant Professor of Practice in Data Science

GRADUATE SPEAKER REFLECTIONS

Timothy Rodriguez, M.S. in Data Science 2025

WOOD FAMILY AWARD

*Oscar Wood, Founder and CEO of NNData,
Advisory Board Member 2015-Present*

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Kemi Jona, Vice Provost for Online Education and Digital Innovation

PH.D. HOODING CEREMONY

*Thomas Stewart, Associate Professor of Data Science and
Program Director, Ph.D. in Data Science*

DEGREE CONFERRAL

*Jonathan Kropko, Quantitative Foundation Associate Professor of Data Science
and Program Director, M.S. in Data Science Online*

EDGAR F. SHANNON AWARD

*Gifted by the Z Society, Presented by Jeffrey Blume,
Interim Stephenson Dean, Professor of Data Science*

CLOSING REMARKS

Jeffrey Blume, Interim Dean

GRADUATES

PH.D. IN DATA SCIENCE

Jack Thomas Beerman

Advisor: Stephen Baek

Dissertation Title: Adaptive Discretization in Physics-Aware Deep Learning

Bryan Richard Christ

Advisor: Tom Hartvigsen

Dissertation Title: Advancing Methodology for Artificial Intelligence for Math Reasoning and Education

Dongliang Guo

Advisor: Sheng Li

Dissertation Title: Towards Trustworthy Multi-Modal Learning with Large Foundation Models

Mengxuan Hu

Advisor: Sheng Li

Dissertation Title: On the Safety Alignment of Large Language Models

Zachary Jacokes

Advisor: John Darrell Van Horn

Dissertation Title: Mapping Autism Heterogeneity: Topology-Aware Methods for Sex-Moderated Neural Phenotypes

Daiqing Qi

Advisor: Sheng Li

Dissertation Title: On the Alignment of Multimodal Foundation Models

M.S. IN DATA SCIENCE

Isabella Francesca Agnello

Rebekah Ruth Allan

Michael Chigoziem Amadi

Rheyan Pausal Ampoyo

Isha Anand

Eric Scott Arnold

Jett Badalament-Tirrell

Darreion Robert Chase Bailey

David Asido Baisas

Camisha Belle

Clarissa Benitez

Seth Bitney

Chelsey R. Blowe

Devlin Lee Bridges

John Paul Burke

Olivia Claire Byram

Jimmy Ray Carter

Bingzhe Chen

Pratham K. Choksi

Louis Mason Cocks

Dalila Cuevas Rodriguez
Elisa de la Vega Ricardo
Samuel Evans Delaney
Alexander Vincent DeLuca
Liam Roger Donoghue
Nicolas Guy Edier
John Michael Epperson
Mary Catherine Evanston
Patrick Reilly Foster
Joshua Caldwell Hall
Sarah Elizabeth Hall
Thomas Hammons, V
Robert Clay Harris
Harold Alfred Haugen, Jr.
Alanna Rae Mauer Hazlett
Ryan Arthur Healy
Zachary Stephen Holland
Zoha Husain
Dae Hwang
Karunya Iyappan
Etienne Jimenez Soza
Olivia Lee Kong Kantor
Katherine Brennan Kelleher
Samuel Charles Knisely
Nathan Koh
Matthew Lang
Emmanuel Deogratias Leonce
Thomas Scott Lever III
Margaret Henderson Lindsay
Hai Liu

Shaival Mandavgade
Bruce Alexander McGregor
Lionel Medal
Sareena Elizabeth Miley
Maheen Mubashar
Hamsini Muralikrishnan
Brian William Natale
Bardia Nikpour Farokh
Brian Nolton
Christian Dane Ollen
Victor Ontiveros
Alexander Owens
Alec Pixton
Cameron Preasmyer
Veda Shikaripur Raghu
Trenton Gregory Ribbens
Hannah Moriah Richardson
Timothy Austin Rodriguez
Austin Robert Samhric
Serita Seright
Charanpreet Singh
Tajwinder Singh
Daniel Stornetta
Karmen Victoria Tran
Rebecca L. Van Nostrand
Venkatramanan Viswanathan
Christopher David Wikoff
Nathaniel Auriel Wiradiradja
Heejeong Yoon

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

KEMI JONA

*Vice Provost for Online Education and Digital Innovation,
University of Virginia*

Kemi Jona collaborates with internal and external partners to refine and implement the University's digital education strategy, helping shape UVA's vision for online education and cultivating seamless, lifelong learning pathways for all learners. Jona has worked at the forefront of the learning sciences and learning technologies fields for over 25 years.

He is a thought leader in applying insights from cognitive and learning sciences to the design of technology-mediated learning environments and in developing innovative partnerships and pathways to increase access to opportunity.



GRADUATE SPEAKER

TIMOTHY RODRIGUEZ

M.S. in Data Science 2025

Machine Learning Operations Engineer, LMI Solutions

Timothy Rodriguez is an experienced data scientist currently based in Northern Virginia. He works for LMI as a machine learning operations engineer supporting the Army Special Operations Command. He is a "double Hoo," holding both a B.A. in Economics and Foreign Affairs as well as an M.S. in Data Science from the University of Virginia. Outside of work he serves on the board of the Virginia Future Business Leaders of America Foundation, which helps develop high school and college students into the next generation of business leaders. Rodriguez is a data nerd through and through who enjoys tracking everything from his workout stats on Strava to his budget on Excel and even his fuel economy statistics over time! He is also an avid road biker, mountain biker, rower, runner, and rock climber who seldom passes up an opportunity to get moving!





IN MEMORY OF PHILIP E. BOURNE

1953-2026



Philip E. Bourne served as the founding dean of the University of Virginia School of Data Science and helped establish a new kind of academic enterprise — a School Without Walls — dedicated to advancing discovery, sharing knowledge, and making a positive impact on society through responsible data science. A world-renowned biomedical and data science researcher, Bourne authored more than 400 papers and five books, launched four companies, and ranked among the most cited scholars in UVA history, with more than 100,000 citations.

Bourne believed exceptional faculty are the foundation of meaningful education and lasting impact. The Bourne family invites you to honor his legacy with a gift to the Data Science Faculty Excellence Fund, which supports the recruitment, retention, and recognition of outstanding educators and researchers. Your support will help inspire, mentor, and prepare the next generation of data scientists while advancing the School's mission to practice and teach data science for the common good.

**MAKE YOUR
GIFT TODAY**



Responsible Data Science for the Common Good

