



THE INAUGURATION
OF
ANTONIO MERLO, PHD
SIXTEENTH PRESIDENT OF DREXEL UNIVERSITY



April 16, 2026
Daskalakis Athletic Center
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



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Please visit drexel.edu/inauguration for
more details about today's event.....





Antonio Merlo, PhD, became Drexel University's 16th president on July 1, 2025. An accomplished higher education leader, scholar and professor, Dr. Merlo joined Drexel after most recently serving as the Anne and Joel Ehrenkrantz Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science at New York University, the institution's largest academic unit comprising 1,600 faculty and staff members, three schools, dozens of departments, research centers, institutes and cultural houses. He has also served in teaching and administrative

roles at the University of Minnesota and Rice University, and for 14 years was a named professor, director and chair of various departments and programs at the University of Pennsylvania.

Originally from Italy, Dr. Merlo, a first-generation college graduate, attended Bocconi University in Milan, earning a Laurea *summa cum laude* in economics and social sciences before completing his doctoral degree at NYU, where he earned the Dean's Outstanding Dissertation Award. He also received an honorary Master of Arts degree from Penn in 2000.

His scholarship fuses economics with politics, and he has been cited most for his research involving the career decisions of politicians and bargaining theory in a stochastic environment. He has published numerous articles in the leading economics journals, including the *American Economic Review*, *Econometrica*, the *Journal of Political Economy* and the *Review of Economic Studies*. In 2018, he authored an innovative political economy textbook for undergraduates, "Political Economy and Policy Analysis" (Routledge). His numerous awards and honors include being elected a Fellow of the Econometric Society; the Pareto Lecture in Economics and Social Sciences; being a Peden Senior Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge; and the Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching. In addition, he has been the recipient of the Coach of the Year Award for the Collegiate Water Polo Association in 2013 (Men's Mid-Atlantic Division), 2017 (Women's Texas Division) and 2018 (Men's Texas Division).

Since his Drexel appointment, Dr. Merlo has reaffirmed his dedication to experiential education, in which the University is a global leader, and has prioritized enhancing the student experience in every dimension. Dr. Merlo is committed to continuing the strong Drexel legacy of graduating Dragons each year with the skills, knowledge and adaptability to meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

ORDER OF PROCESSION

DREXEL UNIVERSITY ROTC COLOR GUARD

GRAND MARSHAL AND MACE BEARER

DREXEL UNIVERSITY FACULTY

DELEGATES AND DISTINGUISHED GUESTS

DREXEL UNIVERSITY TRUSTEES

STAGE PARTY

MARSHALS

GRAND MARSHAL AND MACE BEARER

Kevin G. Owens, PhD
Chair, Faculty Senate; Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences

STAGE PARTY MARSHAL

Subir Sahu, PhD
Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Success

CHIEF MARSHAL

Melissa M. Englund
Director of Academic Operations, College of Computing & Informatics

CEREMONY MARSHALS

Erin Durkin
Executive Director for Student Events and Engagement, Dana and David Dornsife School of Public Health

Kevin D. Egan, PhD
Director of Outreach, Pennoni Honors College

Mary Gallagher Gordon, PhD '13
Vice President of Clinical Operations, Drexel Health; Clinical Professor, Graduate Nursing, College of Nursing and Health Professions

Christopher M. Weyant, PhD
Associate Dean of Undergraduate Affairs; Teaching Professor, Materials Science and Engineering, College of Engineering

Katie P. Zamulinsky, EdD
Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life, Enrollment Management and Student Success

PROCESSIONAL

“Marching Song, Songs Without Words No. 2”
by Gustav Holst
Drexel University Concert Band under the direction of
Domenic Pisano, EdD
*Director, Concert Band and Pep Band, Antoinette Westphal
College of Media Arts & Design*

PRESENTATION OF COLORS

Drexel University ROTC Color Guard

THE NATIONAL ANTHEM

WELCOME

Paul E. Jensen, PhD
Executive Vice President and Nina Henderson Provost

GREETINGS FROM THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

The Honorable Cherelle Parker
Mayor, City of Philadelphia

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Denis P. O’Brien ’87
*Vice Chair, Drexel University Board of Trustees; Immediate
Past Interim President*

GREETINGS FROM THE DREXEL UNIVERSITY STUDENT BODY

Kayode Oluwasegun
*President, Graduate Student Association; College of Arts
and Sciences, Mathematics, PhD Candidate, 2026*

Sanjna Srinivasan
*Student Body President, Undergraduate Student
Government Association; School of Biomedical
Engineering, Science and Health Systems, BS/MS
Biomedical Engineering, 2027*

GREETINGS FROM THE FACULTY

Kevin G. Owens, PhD
*Chair, Faculty Senate; Associate Professor, Department of
Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences*

INTRODUCTION OF THE HONORED SPEAKER

Paul E. Jensen, PhD

HONORED SPEAKER

Daniel Diermeier, PhD
Chancellor, Vanderbilt University

INTERLUDE

University Chorus under the direction of
Daniel Spratlan, DMA
*Director, University Chorus and Chamber Singers,
Antoinette Westphal College of Media Arts & Design*

“Quando m’en vo” from “La Bohème” by Giacomo Puccini
Performed by Rebecca Siler
*Vocal Faculty, Antoinette Westphal College of Media
Arts & Design*

REMARKS FOR THE OCCASION

Paul E. Jensen, PhD

INVESTITURE

Presentation of Chain of Office, Hood and Cap

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Antonio Merlo, PhD
President

RECESSIONAL

“Triumphal March” from the opera “Aida”
by Giuseppe Verdi



An internationally renowned political scientist and management scholar, Daniel Diermeier, PhD, is the ninth chancellor of Vanderbilt University. Since stepping into the role in 2020, the university has risen in stature, topped the \$1 billion mark in research funding, invested over \$100 million in bringing leading faculty to Vanderbilt and successfully launched a \$3.2 billion capital campaign. Under Dr. Diermeier's

leadership, Vanderbilt has been recognized as a leader on free speech, institutional neutrality and civil discourse.

In addition to his role as chancellor, Dr. Diermeier is University Distinguished Professor in the Owen Graduate School of Management and Distinguished University Professor of Political Science in the College of Arts & Science. He is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Guggenheim Foundation. He has published six books and more than 100 research articles in academic journals—mostly in the fields of political science, economics and management, but also in linguistics, sociology, psychology, computer science, operations research and applied mathematics.

Prior to Vanderbilt, Dr. Diermeier served as the provost of the University of Chicago, where he was previously the dean of the Harris School of Public Policy. Before that, he was a chaired professor at the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University and an assistant professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

A first-generation college graduate, Dr. Diermeier earned a PhD in political science from the University of Rochester. He also holds master's degrees in political science from the University of Rochester and the University of Munich, and he earned a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Southern California.

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Senior Vice President, University Marketing & Communications

THANK YOU

On this special day, we want to say thank you to today's speakers for their presence and inspiring words. We also thank our planning committee and the staff who organized and coordinated the ceremony. Furthermore, we express our appreciation to our donors, trustees, supporters, and all who have an unwavering commitment to Drexel's vision, making our mission possible.

We also want to thank the following partners for their generous support of the Inaugural activities:

- Allied Universal Security Services
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- Rally House
- The Summit at University City
- University Crossings
- Wexford Science & Technology

And finally, a special thanks to our attendees and community, whose presence adds to the joy and significance of this auspicious occasion.





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