



THE INAUGURATION OF  
**DR. TODD PFANNSTIEL**

**10<sup>th</sup>**  
**PRESIDENT**  
OF UTICA UNIVERSITY

---

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2023**

---



# OUR MISSION AND VALUES

## **Mission**

We empower learners to achieve their career and life goals through personally enriching experiences and outstanding educational pathways.

## **Values**

Utica University's mission rests upon a foundation of values that guide our decisions and actions:

- Individual attention
- Intellectual growth, creativity, and scholarship in the pursuit of knowledge
- Innovative and relevant approaches to teaching and learning
- Diversity of perspective, background, and experience in an equitable, respectful, and inclusive environment
- Freedom of expression and civil discourse
- Community engagement and service
- Ethical behavior and integrity
- Continuous pursuit of excellence

## **About Our Institution**

Founded in service to the families of the Mohawk Valley and its World War II veterans, Utica University has never veered from its original purpose. Since the first faculty member stood before the first student in the first class on Oneida Square, generations of Utica University faculty, staff, and administrators have distinguished themselves by the depth of their commitment to engaging students where they find them; reaching their imaginations, intellects, and hearts; and challenging their sense of what's possible.

Today's Utica University is a leader among educational institutions: a progressive, creative, and adaptive enterprise fully committed to the exploration of pedagogical and structural innovation. The University graduates fundamentally well-educated men and women, able to surely guide the course of their own lives and shape the contributions they will make in the world in which they live.



## DR. TODD PFANNESTIEL

10<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT OF UTICA UNIVERSITY

Dr. Todd Pfannestiel has 25 years of experience in higher education, as a faculty member, school dean, and senior administrator. Through the course of his tenure as Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Utica, he has led and collaborated closely with faculty on a variety of initiatives to raise the academic profile of the University and further its mission. Chief among these achievements was the recently implemented redesign of the University's general education curriculum, as well as the launch of a number of innovative academic programs designed to address emerging workforce and societal needs.

Drawing on his own experience as a first-generation college student at the University of Arkansas, Dr. Pfannestiel possesses a deep and abiding appreciation for the transformative power of higher education. Under his leadership, the University has met a rapidly changing undergraduate market with its first A.S. and B.B.A. degree programs, providing a greater variety of career pathways for students of all backgrounds.

Prior to joining Utica University, Dr. Pfannestiel served on the faculty of Clarion University of Pennsylvania for 20 years, earning the rank of Professor of History. During his time at Clarion, he also served as Dean of the College of Arts, Education, and Sciences, Interim Provost, and Acting President.

Dr. Pfannestiel earned his Ph.D. in History from the College of William and Mary, where he was a Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellow in the Humanities; completed post-graduate studies at Duke University as a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow in Economics, and completed his B.A. in History and Economics at the University of Arkansas as a Fulbright College Scholar summa cum laude.

A native of Sapulpa, Oklahoma, he is married to Dr. Aimee Zellers.

# THE INAUGURAL PROCESSION

## **Division I**

The Mace Bearer

## **Division II**

Student-Athlete Advisory Committee Leadership  
Academic Marshals

## **Division III**

Utica University Alumni Council

## **Division IV**

Representatives of Graduating Classes and Current Classes

## **Division V**

The President's and Provost's Cabinets

## **Division VI**

The Faculty and Staff

## **Division VII**

The Presiding Officers and Executive Council of the Faculty Senate, Professional Staff  
Advisory Council, and Student Government Association; and Leadership of the AAUP-Utica

## **Division VIII**

Elected Officials

## **Division IX**

Delegates from Other Colleges and Universities  
*Entering in Order of Founding Years*

## **Division X**

The Board of Trustees, Emeriti Trustees, and Emeritus Members  
of the Utica College Foundation Board

## **Division XI**

Platform Party

## **Division XII**

The President

# THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY

Jeremy Thurston '00, B.S.  
*Chairperson, Utica University Board  
of Trustees*

Thomas A. Rossi, D.B.A.  
*Mace Bearer*

## **Processional**

Narrator:  
Gary Leising, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of English*

## **National Anthem**

Rijah Judah '24

## **Invocation**

The Reverend Father Joseph Salerno

## **Opening Remarks**

Chairperson Thurston

## **Greetings from Constituencies**

Stephanie Nesbitt, J.D., M.B.A.  
*Interim Provost and Senior Vice President for  
Academic Affairs*

Kathi Jabe '25  
*President, Student Government Association*

Christopher Specht, G'23, M.B.A.  
*President, Professional Staff Advisory Council*

Adam Pack, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of Biology*

Elizabeth Bernabe '92, Ed.D.  
*President, Utica University Alumni Council*

Robert Esche  
*President, Mohawk Valley Garden, and  
Honorary Alumnus*

Anthony J. Picente, Jr. '94, B.S.  
*Oneida County Executive*

## **Presidential Installation**

Chairperson Thurston

## **Presentation of the Symbols of Office**

Chairperson Thurston

*Presentation of the Institutional Charter*  
Robert Brvenik '77, B.S.  
*Immediate Past Chairperson of the Board  
of Trustees*

*Presentation of the Presidential Medallion*  
Laura Casamento, Ed.D.  
*Ninth President of Utica University*

*Presentation of the Mace*  
Professor Rossi

## **Presentation of the Tenth President**

Ronald Nowaczyk, Ph.D.  
*President, Frostburg State University and Commissioner, Middle States Commission  
on Higher Education*

## **Inaugural Address**

President Todd Pfannestiel  
*Tenth President of Utica University*

## **Alma Mater**

## **Benediction**

Aimee Zellers, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor of Philosophy and Interim Associate Provost, Carlow University*

## **Concluding Remarks**

Chairman Thurston

## **Recessional**

*The audience will remain seated until the academic procession has concluded.*

# ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS IN THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY

## Flag Bearers

United States Flag  
Taylor Kraft '25  
*Co-President, Student-Athlete Advisory  
Committee*

Utica University Flag  
Nicole Fitzgerald '24  
*Co-President, Student-Athlete Advisory  
Committee*

## Academic Marshals

*School of Business and Justice Studies*  
Anais Jakissoon '24

*School of Arts and Sciences*  
Jacob Carissimo '24

*School of Health Professions and Education*  
Jack Serrano '24

*Utica University Alumni*  
Shayla Pominville '24

## Faculty Marshals

Lawrence Aaronson, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of Biology*

Luke Perry, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of Political Science*

David Chanatry, M.S.  
*Distinguished Professor of Journalism*

Terri Provost, Ph.D.  
*Professor of Biology*

Patrice Hallock, Ph.D.  
*Professor of Education*

Mary Siniscarco, M.S.  
*Associate Professor of Health Studies*

Zhaodan Huang, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of Finance*

Patrica Swann, M.S.  
*Distinguished Professor of Public Relations  
and Management*

Sharon Kanfoush, Ph.D.  
*Distinguished Professor of Geology*

## Student Marshals

Sarah Durost '25  
Leah Griffin '25  
Michelle Holland '25  
Alyssa Perez '24

Tohbii Raton '26  
Julianna Ryczek '25  
Julyanna Sauschuck '24  
Erin Taylor '25

## Dramaturg

Rachel Wolfe, Ph.D.  
*Associate Professor of Theater*



# ACADEMIC TRADITIONS AND SYMBOLS

## **Academic Regalia**

The academic procession is a pageant bright with the dress and ceremony inherited from the medieval universities of the 11th and 12th centuries. The caps, gowns, and hoods were worn to keep students and professors warm and distinguish clerical and academic groups from laity. Academic regalia is worn today by those who play an academic role at celebrations of scholarly significance.

The traditional costumes were used in few universities in America prior to the 1880s. With the growth in the late 19th century of institutions of higher learning, American universities in 1895 agreed on a definite system and set up a suitable code of academic dress for colleges and universities in the United States. In 1932 the American Council on Education presented a revised code, which, for the most part, governs the style of academic dress today.

## **The Gown**

The flowing gown comes from the 12th century. It has become symbolic of the democracy of scholarship, for it completely covers any dress rank or social standing underneath. It generally is black for all degrees, with pointed sleeves for the bachelor's degree; closed sleeves for the master's degree, with a slit for the arm; and round, open sleeves for the doctoral degree. Holders of doctoral degrees from some universities may wear gowns of bright colors agreed to by the granting university. For the bachelor's or master's degree, the gown has no trimmings. For the doctoral degree, it is faced down the front with velvet and has three bars of velvet across the sleeves, in the color distinctive of the faculty or discipline to which the degree pertains. Some of the colors most frequently seen and the fields of learning they represent are: blue—philosophy; purple—law; green—medicine; yellow—science; light blue—education; and red— theology.

## **The Cap**

When Roman law freed the slave, he won the privilege of wearing a cap. So the academic cap is a sign of freedom of scholarship and the responsibility and dignity with which scholarship endows the wearer. For the doctoral outfit, the tassel may be of gold bullion.

## **The Hood**

The hood is an inverted shield with one or more chevrons of a secondary color on the ground of the primary color of the college. The color of the facing of the academic hood denotes the discipline in which the degree is earned.

## **The Kente Cloth**

The kente cloth is a celebratory garment worn by some students at academic ceremonies. The cloth is made from richly patterned fabric principally produced in West Africa. It once was worn by African royalty to signify power, prestige, and high style. Woven of cotton, silk, and sometimes, gold thread, each color and some combinations woven into the kente cloth symbolize a concept. For instance, red and yellow combinations suggest life and its power over sickness; green and white represent bountiful harvest; and blue represents love and tenderness. Many people of African descent wear the kente cloth as a symbol of cultural pride and heritage.

## **The Mace of Utica University**

The mace is a symbol of the unique mission of Utica University, which is to provide a higher education that is accessible to all, liberal and humanizing, practical and purposeful.

The basalt foot is a symbol of our commonality and shared predicament as children of the Earth, mother of all living things.

Strength, endurance, and beauty are characteristics of the black walnut core. These characteristics are symbolic of the peoples who have come to share this culture. The inlays of woods from around the world are symbols of the interdependence of modern civilizations and the enrichment of the human life that results when we learn from one another.

Peaceful common endeavor and its bountiful harvest are symbolized by the shaft of the mace, which has the form of a sheaf of wheat.

Unity, totality, and perfection have been expressed by the sphere since ancient times. It was the shape of the cosmos, a symbol for the totality of vision that the seeker of wisdom pursues.

Four metals are found in the mace. In ascending order, they are iron, bronze, silver, and gold. They were for ancient poets and thinkers images of the capacities and of the perfectibility of man.

Beads of silver shot border the University motto. They represent the multiplicity of disciplines that are pursued in the modern university.

Love and transcending beauty are symbolized by the rose. It appears as a gratuitous asymmetry on the sphere. Made of gold, the most precious of the metals, symbolic of the loftiest aspirations of man, the rose symbolizes the ultimate goals of human activity, wisdom, goodness and love.

The mace of the University is a gift of the Class of 1989, an idea proposed by Richard Frank and Kay Hobaica from the Office of Student Activities. It was designed and made by James F. Caron, professor of philosophy, with the collaboration of professors Randall Huta, Edward Jones, Stephen Peek, Ralph Fimmano, and David Moore. The mace was adopted in 1990, just as Utica College was beginning its transition to an independent institution, and its origin as a College of Syracuse University can be seen both on the mace and on the stand.

## **The Presidential Medallion**

The medallion, with which the president is invested during the installation ceremony, is an emblem of office worn on official occasions of the University. It is hung on a chain, which is placed around the President's neck. The medallion, which bears the institution's original name Utica College, is a gift to the University from Trustee Lauren E. Bull '74.

The face of the medallion bears the corporate seal, which incorporates a number of symbols. The focal point of the seal is a shield, used in heraldry, that represents Utica's "family ties" to Syracuse University as well as the University community as a family. Its "U" shape stands for Utica and Utica University. The book represents learning and knowledge. The laurel symbolizes honor and achievement.

The peak on the bottom of the seal's shield is an abstract representation of the Frank E. Gannett Memorial Library, the center of learning on campus. The arch, formed by white space, represents the archway at Plymouth Church through which thousands of students passed to take classes on the original Oneida Square campus. The five bars, depicted as the five stripes of white space stemming from the peak, represent the five areas in which the University reaches out to students to educate and develop them: liberal arts, sciences, professional studies, extracurricular activities, and continuing education.

The dates on the seal mark four important years in the University's history: its first year as a college (1946), its origins as a Syracuse University extension site (1933), the year the University was chartered by the Board of Regents as an independent institution (1995), and the year the Regents awarded Utica university status (2022).

# THE UNIVERSITY ALMA MATER

## **“Our Utica”**

*Composed by George Wald Lyrics by Norman Nathan*

Our Utica proclaimed at birth that she was here to stay;

Her graduates in Mohawk's vale now everywhere hold sway.

While loyal students spread our fame both far and near we sing,

Our power lies in daily search for truth to which we cling.

Though college days are stirring days, for learning's fruit we sigh;

Commencement's thrill shines bright until the seniors say goodbye.

But wisdom crowned they venture forth still young in heart they'll sing,

Our power lies in daily search for truth to which we cling.

# DELEGATES FROM INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

1787  
University of Pittsburgh  
**Susan O'Rourke '99**

1797  
Hartwick College  
**Aaron Tolbert**

1812  
Hamilton College  
**Richard Tantillo**

1829  
Rochester Institute of  
Technology  
**Ryne Raffaele**

1846  
University at Buffalo  
**Walter Kunz '60**

1853  
Mount Aloysius College  
**Jacob Yale**

1855  
Elmira College  
**Travis Hill**

1856  
St. Lawrence University  
**Barbara Knauf P'23, P'25**

1868  
State University of New York  
at Cortland  
**AnnaMaria Omilanowicz '10**

1870  
Syracuse University  
**Michael Frasciello**

1878  
Duquesne University  
**Aimee Zellers**

1883  
Houghton University  
**Matthew Webb**

1887  
Nebraska Wesleyan  
University  
**Frederik Ohles**

1898  
Frostburg State University  
**Ronald Nowaczyk**

1908  
State University of New York  
at Morrisville  
**Suzan Harkness**

1946  
Le Moyne College  
**James Suriano**

1946  
Mohawk Valley Community  
College  
**Jennifer DeWeerth**

1947  
Texas Southern University  
**Brenda Dede**

1961  
Onondaga Community  
College  
**Denise Valdes '02**

1963  
Fulton-Montgomery  
Community College  
**Catherine Geniti '13**

1966  
Herkimer College  
**Nicholas Laino**

1966  
State University of New York  
Polytechnic Institute  
**Andrew Russell**

1971  
Excelsior University  
**Scott Dolan**

# DELEGATES FROM THE UTICA UNIVERSITY ALUMNI COMMUNITY

Michele Ford Adams '01	Shannon Cool '19, G'22	Joel Kaigler '20
Keron Alleyne '12	MaKenna Cooley '18	Susan Keehle '07
Maria Araujo '99	Christopher Cooper '12	Jacqueline Klotzbach '10
James Asher '70	Eunice Cruz-Cales '03	Walter Kunz '60
Tracy Balduzzi '14	Ricardo Cumberbatch '83	David Lamb '76
Kevin Balduzzi '17	Hollie David '23	Martha Sutton Lamb '77
Christopher Bandura '99	Laura DeStefanis '98	Luke Lambert '86
Kenneth Barneys '87	Kyo Dolan '98	Cory Lavalette '99
Allen Berger '57	Hamza Ditta '19	James Leach '67
Elizabeth Bernabe '92	Anne Dunn '65	Melissa Lomanto '06
Michael Betrus '74	Violet Eagan '73	Dominick Mattia '64
James Boehlert '58	Jaime Evanoff '11	Frank Maurizio '77
David Bonacci '72	Anthony Fabbio '56	Isabella Mesturini '20
Matthew Breault '22	Christine Farley '92	Janice Miles '74
John Burkholder '75	Jonathan Fiore '16	Lourdes Miranda '94
Anne Burton '63	Sara Furlong '06	Frank Mondì '62
Joseph Calabrese '73	Anthony Garramone '61	Mariann Munson '85
Alfonso Cales '04	Judith Gorman '64	Robert Munson '85
Greg Caloia '12	Anna Green '73	Ronald O'Brien '82
Thomas Caputo '22	Jennifer Herzog '97	Paula O'Brien '82
Dana Christofferson '14	Mark Hobaica '80	David Palmer '96
Ann Ciancia '18, G'21	Amber Jenkins '21	Jean Palmer '02
Timothy Coakley '59	Robert Julian '71	Michael Pandolfo '78
Randolph Collins '83	Eric Kahl '10	Frank Perretta '66

Oliver Perry '74	Valerie Smith '09
Karen Pezzulo '98	Courtney Souvenir '95
Richard Pratt '90, P'25	Sukeena Stephens '95
Doris Rice '68	David Suuronen '69
Eric Rightmier '15	Ann Tabrizi '94
Brooke Riscica '23	Ericka Tate-Souvenir '95
Jolene Riscica '92	Shawntay Thompson '16
Leanne Rorick '93	Tracy Tolles-Rueckert '90
Anthony Rorick '93	Jenna Urbanke '13
Leah Scalise '21	Steven Urbanke '17
Judith Sheehan '83	Kenneth Visalli '08
Joan Shkane '75	Alfonzon Whitehurst '18
Louis Shkane '87	Courtney Witherspoon '08
Richard Short '88	Stephanie Zimmer '96
Wendy Short '81	

# HISTORY OF LEADERSHIP

**Ralph F. Strebel**

*Dean of Utica College*

1947-1959

**Dr. James W. Harrison**

*Dean of Utica College*

1959-1962

**Dr. J. Kenneth Donahue**

*President of Utica College*

1963-1970

**Ambrose J. deFlumere**

*President of Utica College*

1970-1976

**Dr. Harold J. Rankin**

*Acting President of Utica College*

1976 -1977

**Dr. Thomas D. Sheldon**

*President of Utica College*

1977-1982

**Dr. Lansing G. Baker**

*President of Utica College*

1982-1987

**Dr. Michael Simpson**

*President of Utica College*

1988-1997

**Dr. Thomas G. Brown**

*Interim President of Utica College*

January - July 1998

**Dr. Todd S. Hutton**

*President of Utica College*

1998-2016

**Dr. Laura M. Casamento**

*President of Utica University*

2016-2023



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Jeremy C. Thurston '00, *Chairperson*

Dr. Gerard T. Capraro '66, *Vice Chairperson*

Krista M. DiBerardino '82, *Vice Chairperson*

Heidi M. Hoeller '91, *Vice Chairperson*

Kenneth D. Bell '75, *Secretary*

Robert A. Brvenik '77, *Immediate Past Chairperson*

Lauren E. Bull '74

Christian W. Meyer, III '79

Mikhail D. Bushinski '17, G'18

Wester E. Miga '76

John P. Casellini '81

Mark A. Pilipczuk '88

Christopher J. Crolius '80

Eugene F. Quadraro Jr. '71

Ronald A. Cuccaro '66

Solade E. Rowe '94

Harry J. Cynkus '71

Tricia Rutkowski

Frederick C. Degen '70

Treesa J. Salter '88

James F. DuRoss Jr.

John H. Snyder '95

John A. Forte '73

Tanner C. Stewart '10

The Honorable Samuel D. Hester

Jeffery S. Whalley '04

Daniel B. Jones '97

# PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION COMMITTEE

Amy Lindner, Chairperson, *Vice President for Advancement*

Kelly Adams, *Vice President for President Affairs and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer*

Laura Cook, *Director of Operations for the Divisions of Academic and Student Affairs*

Shad Crowe, *Vice President for Facilities and Emergency Management*

Ann Damiano, *Senior Associate Provost*

Richard Kennedy, *Custodial Supervisor*

Meredith Lopata, *Project Manager and Senior Administrative Assistant for Advancement*

Lauryn Moore, *Director of Campus Engagement*

Michael Roberts, *Vice President for Information Technology*

Ashlea Schad, *Associate Vice President for Advancement*

Christopher Specht, *Coordinator of Classroom and Event Support*

Stacy Thomas, *Operations Manager, Sodexo Dining Services*

Anthony Villanti, *Special Assistant to the President and Secretary to the Board of Trustees*

Kenneth White, *Associate Director of Campus Safety*



**UTICA**  
  
**UNIVERSITY**