

COMMENCEMENT

UF

College of Dentistry  
Class of 2024

UF | UNIVERSITY of  
FLORIDA



Commencement  
**SPRING 2024**

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# University of Florida President

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## Dr. Ben Sasse

Ben Sasse joined the University of Florida as a professor and 13th president of the 170-year-old institution in February 2023.

A husband, father, historian, Uber driver, and football addict, Ben is committed to guiding Gator Nation through this era of rapid change in the nature of work, technology, and higher education.

As the leader of Florida's flagship land-grant university, Ben has moved swiftly to cultivate fresh leadership, construct a UF-wide strategic planning initiative, and ground UF's priorities in making the highest and best use of public funds.

He has sought to establish goals that are critical to Gators and the state: more applied research, more focus on lifelong learning for students, and faster, more nimble engagement with exceptional partners.

Ben believes that Florida is the most dynamic state in the Union — with a diverse economy, fast-growing population, and vast outside investment. He sees UF as uniquely positioned to help Floridians maximize the state's potential

as an economic and cultural juggernaut.

Twice elected to the United States Senate and a two-time *New York Times* national best-selling author, Ben's career has spanned the

private and public sectors.

Passionate about education and teaching, Ben taught at Yale University, the University of Texas, and Midland University in his Nebraska hometown. Professor Sasse has won teaching awards and holds a history Ph.D. from Yale, where his dissertation won both the Egleston and Theron Rockwell Field best dissertation prizes.

Ben and his wife, Melissa, have two college-age daughters and a younger son. Ben, Melissa, and Breck live on campus in the Dasburg House with multiple dogs and Breck's lizard, Dart, who is delighted to call humid subtropical Gainesville home.



# College of Dentistry Dean

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## Dr. A. Isabel Garcia

A. Isabel Garcia, D.D.S., M.P.H., joined the University of Florida College of Dentistry as its seventh permanent dean on February 16, 2015. Garcia's career spans over 40 years in public health, clinical practice, research, teaching and administration at the local, state and national levels. She retired from the U.S. Public Health Service in 2014 as a rear admiral, lower half. Prior to joining UFCD, she was the Deputy Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, part of the National Institutes of Health, directed dental care and public health programs in Virginia and Ohio, and worked in private practice in Richmond and Hopewell, Virginia.

She received a doctorate in dental surgery in 1980 from Virginia Commonwealth University, a master's degree in public health from the

University of Michigan in 1988 and completed a residency in dental public health at the University of Michigan and a fellowship in primary care policy from the U.S. Public Health Service.

A fellow of the American College of Dentists and the Pierre Fauchard Academy, Garcia is a Diplomate and past president of the American Board of Dental Public Health and an active member of the American Dental Education Association, the International Association for Dental Research and the American Dental Association.



## UF Alma Mater

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Florida, our Alma Mater,  
thy glorious name we praise.  
All thy loyal sons and daughters,  
a joyous song shall raise.

Where palm and pine are blowing,  
where southern seas are flowing.  
Shine forth thy noble Gothic walls,  
thy lovely vine-clad halls.

'Neath the Orange and Blue victorious  
our love shall never fail.  
There's no other name so glorious,  
all hail, Florida, hail!

*~ Composed in 1925 by Milton Yeats*



## The Dentist's Pledge

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I, as a member of the dental profession, will keep this pledge and these stipulations. I understand and accept that my primary responsibility is to my patients, and I shall dedicate myself to render, to the best of my ability, the highest standard of oral health care and to maintain a relationship of respect and confidence. Therefore, let all come to me safe in the knowledge that their total health and well-being are my first considerations.

I shall accept the responsibility that, as a professional, my competence rests on continuing the attainment of knowledge and skill in the arts and sciences of dentistry.

I acknowledge my obligation to support and sustain the honor and integrity of the profession, and to conduct myself in all endeavors such that I shall merit the respect of patients, colleagues and my community. I further commit myself to the betterment of my community for the benefit of all of society.

I shall faithfully observe the Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct set forth by the profession.

All this I pledge with pride in my commitment to the profession and the public which it serves.



## Chain of Office

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This custom-made ornament is worn with the president's regalia, symbolizing the authority and responsibilities of the office. The chain is engraved with the names and service years of the university presidents. The medallion's centerpiece is a 1.3-carat diamond.

## Academic Mace

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Dating back to the Middle Ages, the mace symbolizes strength and authority. The UF ceremonial mace was created for the university's sesquicentennial celebration in 2003. The 70-inch staff features an alligator sitting atop a globe. The four pillars supporting the globe represent the four original colleges: Agriculture, Engineering, Law, and Liberal Arts. The staff is carved from cherry wood. The university's chief marshal, who leads all academic processions, carries the mace.

## Caps and Gowns, An Explanation

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The academic regalia worn by graduating students and faculty in commencement ceremonies evolved from a style of dress worn by members of guilds and religious orders in medieval times. The academic gown is worn by individuals who have earned a degree in higher education. In addition, hoods are worn by graduate degree candidates, but not by undergraduate degree candidates.

At the University of Florida, the lining of the hood has a blue chevron on an orange background to represent the university colors. University faculty members who hold degrees from another college or university wear the colors of their alma mater.

The velvet edging on the academic hood is the color that represents the particular degree held by the wearer. Dentistry is lilac. Distinctions among sleeves indicate the type of degree held by the wearer. A long, pointed sleeve indicates a bachelor's degree, while a long, closed sleeve with a slit near the upper part of the arm designates a master's degree. A round, open sleeve identifies a doctoral degree.

The doctoral regalia also has velvet running on the rest of the gown, including crossbars on the sleeve. Colored tassels on the degree candidates' caps indicate a candidate's school or college.





# UF

*Alma Mater*

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