

# Fall 2025 grads encouraged to enter next chapter of life with optimism

By Mary Beth Faller, ASU News  
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Newly minted Arizona State University graduates were urged to help America strive toward a greater democracy as they celebrated at their degree ceremonies on Monday.

ASU President Michael Crow gave that message at Graduate Commencement at Desert Financial Arena on Monday morning and at the undergraduate ceremony at Mountain America Stadium in the afternoon.

Overall, more than 12,300 ASU students [graduated this fall](#), a record and 9% more than a year ago. Nearly 7,000 of those were ASU Online students. The fall class also includes 1,596 international graduates, which is more than 15% higher than last fall.

Crow told the crowds at both ceremonies that the nearly 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 is a short time in the entirety of human history and that democracy is an ongoing experiment.

"It's a project. It's an undertaking. It's a goal. To get there, that means we have to build universities that share these ambitions," he said at Undergraduate Commencement.

Crow shared the first sentence of the Constitution's preamble, starting, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ..." And he said that ASU's charter exists to activate those rights.

"One of which is the inalienable right to learn, to live your life, advance your life, to build your world, to give you a sense of liberty, to make things happen, to make your family successful and to make your community successful," he said.

He urged everyone to avoid pessimism at the state of the world.

"We're just getting started. We're just figuring out how to do this," he said.

“Everything has to advance — new universities, new kinds of graduates, new ways of doing things, new ways of solving problems, new ways of making things happen, new ways of figuring out how to treat everyone as equal.

“And this university is built on that idea.”

He asked graduates at both ceremonies: “What are you going to do to make this work?”

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

## Main image



Katia Gutierrez, who earned an master's degree in industrial organizational psychology through ASU Online, adjusts her cap before the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement on Monday, Dec. 15, at Desert Financial Arena. More than 4,300 master's and doctoral students graduated, with nearly 300 of them taking their coursework through ASU Online. Photo by Charlie Leight/ASU News

## Gallery



Bhagvan Vemula (right), president of the Graduate Student Government and who earned a master's degree in information technology, leads the procession of college and school gonfalons to kick off the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement on Monday, Dec. 15, at Desert Financial Arena.



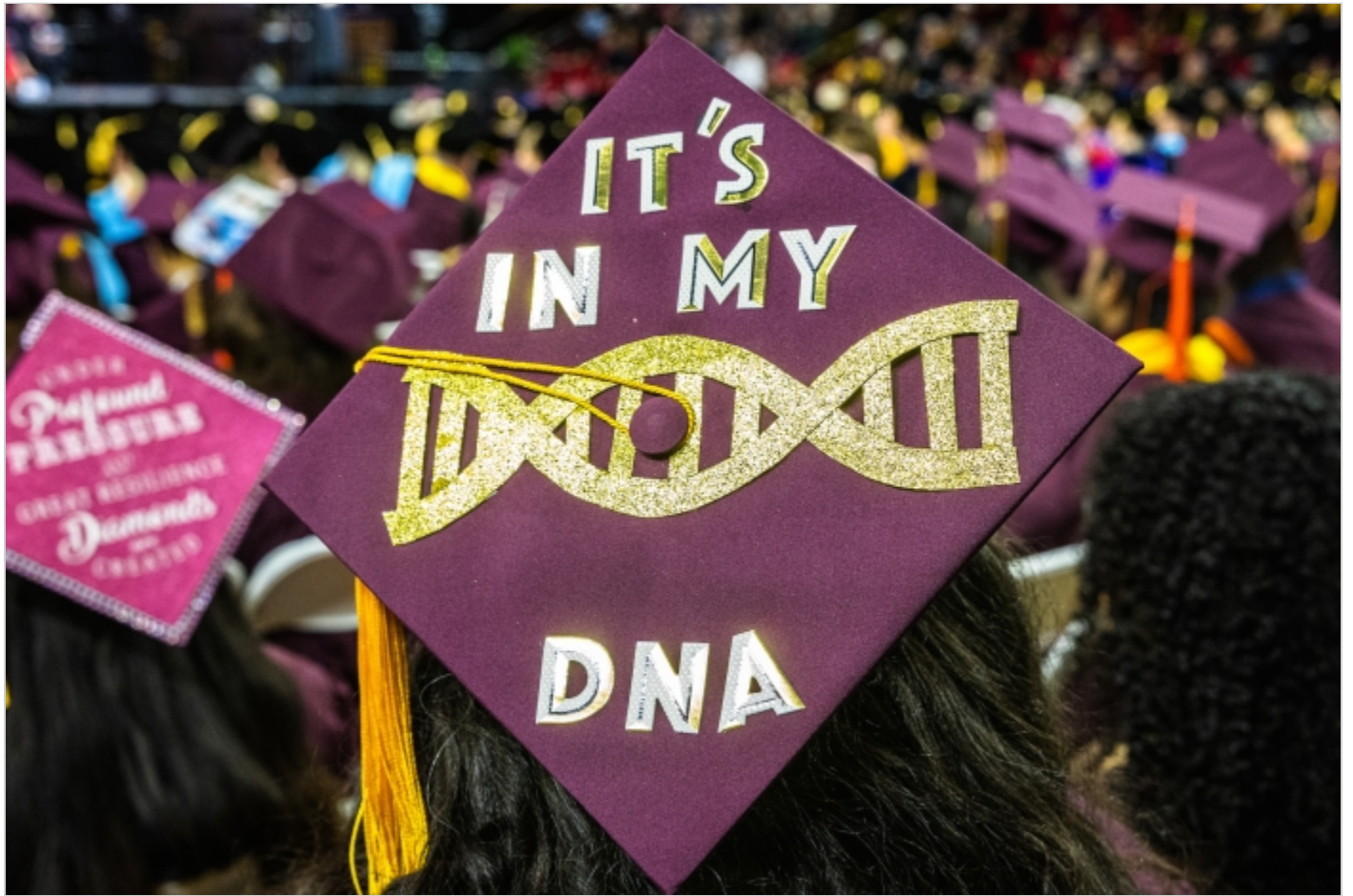


Princess Benally (left) beams after her mentor, former ASU Assistant Professor Amanda Tachine, bestowed a doctoral hood for earning her PhD in education at the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement on Dec. 15 at Desert Financial Arena. Both women are members of the Navajo Nation.



Husband and wife Aiden and Erica Trommler (center, in hard hats), who earned master's degrees in construction engineering, join other Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering graduates in celebrating at the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement on Dec. 15 at Desert Financial Arena.





Biology graduate Emily Heuchan decorated her cap for the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement on Dec. 15 at Desert Financial Arena.





Sparks fly at the end of the fall 2025 Graduate Commencement at Desert Financial Arena.





Four-year-old Travon Armstrong gives his mother, Trovana Azeez, a congratulatory kiss following Graduate Commencement, where she earned a doctoral degree in education. The family is from Guyana.

## Gallery



Graduating veterans walk in a procession at the start of Undergraduate Commencement at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15.





ASU President Michael Crow speaks during Undergraduate Commencement at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15.



Medical studies graduate and ASU Online student Erika Harrison smiles during Undergraduate Commencement at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15.





Liberal studies graduate Maritza Cataneda (center) holds up a pitchfork during Undergraduate Commencement at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15.



Around 8,000 undergraduate students earned degrees this fall as part of a record setting class.





Lia Poplawski (standing), an ASU Online and Starbucks College Achievement Plan graduate majoring in integrative sciences and arts, celebrates as confetti concludes the Undergraduate Commencement ceremony at Mountain America Stadium in Tempe on Dec. 15.