



COMMENCEMENT
CEREMONY
2024





“

A VERY SPECIAL CELEBRATION
OF FRANKLIN'S EDUCATIONAL
IMPACT AND PURPOSE FOR
STUDENTS AND FAMILIES

”



SAMUEL MARTÍN-BARBERO, Ph.D

President, Franklin University Switzerland

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ORDER OF CEREMONY

PROCESSIONAL

Pomp and Circumstance, Sir Edward Elgar
Gaudeamus Igitur

WELCOME ADDRESS

Samuel Martín-Barbero,
President

OPENING REMARKS

Kim Hildebrant,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

EMERITUS RECOGNITION

Andrea Terzi
Presented by David Mills
Dean of Academic Affairs

MEDAL OF HONOR AWARDS

Fulvio Pelli
Presented by Kim Hildebrant
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Paolo Grassi

Presented by Cabell West
Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Julio Frenk
President of the University of Miami, FL
Presented by Deborah Knaust,
Dean of Student Life and Engagement

CONFERRING DEGREES

Samuel Martín-Barbero,
President

Giulia Miniero,

Director, Master of Science
in International Management

Andrea Terzi,

Director, Master in Political Economy
of Money and Development

David Mills,

Dean of Academic Affairs

Rachel Simpkin,

Registrar

GRADUATE STUDENT ADDRESS

Caterina Scolari

Introduced by Giulia Miniero,
Director, Master of Science
in International Management

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT ADDRESS

Thomas Lieber

Introduced by Mario Schultz,
Assistant Professor of International Management

URSULA GENTILE LOWERRE OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

Richard K. Sussman

Presented by Kim Hildebrant,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Samuel Martín-Barbero,

President

RECESSIONAL

Rondeau, Jean Joseph Mouret

*A reception for the Class of 2024 will follow the
ceremony*

SOPRANO VOICES

Maria Guffi, Beatrice Pellegrino, Yueyan Xie

*In collaboration with Scuola Universitaria di Musica
del Conservatorio della Svizzera Italiana.*

The Franklin University Switzerland Medal of Honor was designed and created by the goldsmith sculptor Maros, the pseudonym of Maria Rosaria Palmi. Maros crafted the Franklin University Switzerland seal in high relief. The seal is also present on the Presidential Chain of Office.



PROFESSOR JULIO FRENK

President of the University of Miami, Florida (U.S.)

Dr. Julio Frenk has been president of the University of Miami since August of 2015. He also holds academic appointments as Professor of Public Health Sciences at the Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, as Professor of Health Sector Management and Policy at the Miami Herbert Business School, as Professor of Sociology at the College of Arts and Sciences, and as Professor of Health Studies at the School of Nursing and Health Studies.

Prior to joining the University of Miami, he served for almost seven years as Dean of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the T & G Angelopoulos Professor of Public Health and International Development, a joint appointment with the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. In September 2016, the Julio Frenk Professorship of Public Health Leadership was established at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health with an anonymous endowment gift.

Dr. Frenk was appointed Federal Secretary of Health of Mexico in 2000, a position he held for the full presidential term until 2006. In that position he pursued an ambitious agenda to reform the nation's health system and introduced a program of comprehensive universal coverage called Seguro Popular, which expanded access to health care for more than 55 million previously uninsured persons.

He was the founding director-general of the National Institute of Public Health in Mexico, one of the leading institutions of its kind in the developing world. He also served as executive director in charge of Evidence and Information for Policy at the World Health Organization and as senior fellow in the global health program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, among other leadership positions.

Dr. Frenk holds a medical degree from the National University of Mexico, as well as a Master of Public Health and a joint Ph.D. in Medical Care Organization and in Sociology from the University of Michigan.

He has published 193 papers in academic journals and 174 articles in cultural magazines and newspapers, as well as 28 books, including four best-selling novels for youngsters explaining the functions of the human body. His scholarly production has been cited more than 31,000 times.



He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the U.S. National Academy of Medicine, the National Academy of Medicine of Mexico, and El Colegio Nacional (the most prestigious learned society of scientists, intellectuals, and artists in Mexico).

He serves on the boards of the United Nations Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and has chaired the board of the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation since its founding in 2007.

Dr. Frenk has received numerous recognitions, including the Clinton Global Citizen Award, the Bouchet Leadership Medal presented by Yale University for promoting diversity in graduate education, the Frank A. Calderone Prize in Public Health from Columbia University, and the Welch-Rose Award from the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health, as well as honorary degrees from 11 universities in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

In summary, Dr. Frenk's career has included leadership positions in all relevant aspects of public health and higher education: research, teaching, analysis of public policies, institution-building, international cooperation, and national public service. He has also been involved in various initiatives to reform higher education.



DR. FULVIO PELLI

Lawyer and Notary, Pelli & Associati

Member, Foundation Franklin University Switzerland (1997 -2023)
Trustee, Board of Trustees of Franklin University Switzerland (1997 - 2023)
Trustee Emeritus, Board of Trustees of Franklin University Switzerland
(2023 - Present)

Dr. Fulvio Pelli is a Swiss lawyer and notary public, born on January 26, 1951, in Lugano, Switzerland. He earned his doctorate in Juridical Science from the University of Zurich and began his career serving as a substitute for the general attorney of the Canton of Ticino. Later, he joined his father at the family's law firm, Pelli & Associati, where he became an influential figure in the legal community.

Dr. Pelli's knowledge and expertise extended beyond the legal field. He was actively involved in Swiss politics, serving as a National Councilor in the Swiss parliament for approximately 19 years. During this time, he also held the position of President of the Liberal parliamentary group in Bern for 7 years and led the Swiss liberal party as its President, an influential political entity in Switzerland. In addition to his legal and political accomplishments, Dr. Pelli held several leadership roles in financial and educational institutions, including the presidency of Banca dello Stato del Cantone Ticino.

His dedication to education and governance is evident from his long-standing involvement with Franklin University Switzerland. He was a member of the university's Foundation from 1997 to 2023 and served on its Board of Trustees during the same period. In 2023, he was honored with the title of Trustee Emeritus, reflecting his substantial contributions and enduring commitment to the university. Today, Dr. Pelli continues to be a respected and influential figure, serving on several foundations and company boards throughout Ticino. His career is a testament to his profound knowledge in law, politics, and governance, making him a valuable asset to numerous professional circles.



PAOLO GRASSI, ESQ.

Partner at GIBNEY, ANTHONY, & FLAHERTY, LLP, New York

Member, Foundation Franklin University Switzerland (1995 – 2023)


Trustee, Board of Trustees of Franklin University Switzerland (1995 – 2018)

Paolo Grassi's professional career spans 30 years and 5 continents. He began in private practices in Switzerland and as a White & Case fellow in New York. He soon moved in-house and joined AIG's International Property & Casualty companies and later, as the leader of the AIG International Regulatory and Government Affairs team.

During the 1990s, Grassi supported AIG's footprint expansion beyond traditional markets. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of communist regimes in the former Soviet Union, he set-up companies and secured the insurance licenses for AIG's subsidiaries in Eastern Europe, Russia and Central Asia. Later in the decade, as AIG consolidated its market leader position in Latin America for insurance and private pensions, he led acquisitions and joint ventures in several countries across the region, including Mexico, Brazil, Chile and Argentina. He also participated in several projects in Africa, the Middle East and Asia in countries as diverse as India, Vietnam, South Africa, Israel and Egypt. By the end of the decade, he had negotiated and licensed 17 joint ventures, 4 wholly owned subsidiaries and completed 14 acquisitions.

In 1999, Grassi was appointed as the first General Counsel of AIG, later Chartis International, with a mandate to develop and manage the legal and compliance functions. During his 12 year tenure, he established a legal department comprised of over 100 attorneys operating in the US and around the world to support the home office business and the regional operations in the field. Concurrently, he developed the compliance unit as a business minded function while working closely with the risk units and drawing expertise from the Internal Audit department. In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis, he was instrumental restructuring AIG's P&G legal structure and in addressing inquiries and challenges by overseas regulators weary of the financial conditions of AIG's insurance operations; successfully reducing the size of collateral sought by various supervisors.

In 2012, drawing on his regulatory experience, AIG appointed Grassi to lead the group's International Regulatory and Government Affairs team with a mandate to continue as the representative of the company with its international government stakeholders. Concurrently, AIG tasked Grassi with revamping the government advocacy efforts, which had been suspended in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis. During his 4-year tenure in this role, Grassi strengthened AIG's visibility with local governments, quasi-



governmental organizations and trade associations, while at the same time, implementing internal standards and guidelines aimed at positioning local management with government bodies and political decision makers.

Upon leaving AIG in November 2015, Grassi moved back into private practice, where he has been advising companies in the financial services and InsurTech spaces, as well more traditional clients including the Consulate General of Switzerland in New York and the Swiss Mission to the United Nations, He also serves in the board of directors of business ventures and not for profit organizations.

Paolo Grassi is a native of Switzerland and moved to New York in 1990. He is a member of the New York and Switzerland Bar and is a licensed commercial pilot.



RICHARD K. SUSSMAN

Franklin University Switzerland, Class of 1995

Richard Sussman's career spans across private equity, venture capital, Fortune 500 and start-ups in technology scaling revenue, tech and capital across a diverse portfolio globally.

He has run operations, IP and revenue generating business units at several tech/media/data companies with ~\$1B market caps (The Nielsen Company, IPG, and Gracenote-Tribune Media...); as well as co-founding two venture backed media, entertainment and e-commerce technology platforms (with respectable exits) and two venture capital funds. The first, a European-American early-stage fund, Nordic Eye VC, with a portfolio of 30+ investments worldwide returning ~700% IRR for investors, tracking top-decile fund performance and awarded Venture Capital firm of the year in the Nordics. The second, Rebel Fund, a ~80 portfolio seed stage venture fund which leverages data science and Silicon Valley's most accomplished founders to invest in a portfolio of Y Combinator startups with the statistical power to outperform, also tracking top-decile fund performance with a 53% mark up to date.

Sussman has been interviewed and profiled on the state of technology by media publications such as the Los Angeles Business Journal, TechCrunch, The Wall Street Journal, CNBC and The Los Angeles Times.

He has also served as a speaker at industry events including Goldman Sachs' Special Situations Group, Digital Hollywood, Digital Analytics Association, International Consumer Electronics Show (CES), CABSAT, the National Association of Broadcasters and IBC. Additionally, he has been a guest lecturer at UCLA and USC.

Sussman has been honored with the ARF's Great Mind Award twice, received Nielsen's Best of the Best Award and was nominated as one of the 50 most influential alumni in 50 years from Franklin University Switzerland.



MASTER OF ARTS AND MASTER OF SCIENCE DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Caterina Scolari

Manno, Switzerland
Responsible Arts Management
and Cultural Heritage

Gabriela Malavenda Ballestas

Miami, Florida – USA/Bogota,
Colombia
International Management with
an Emphasis in Arts and Luxury
Management

Mathilde Louise Rose Moine

Paris, France/Denver, Colorado – USA
International Management with
an Emphasis in Arts and Luxury
Management

Seth Howard Riffe

Columbus, Ohio – USA
International Management with an
Emphasis in Digital Transformation

Samuel Sarno

Cirié, Italy
International Management with an
Emphasis in Digital Transformation

Lauren Stargardt

Manhattan Beach, California – USA
International Management
with an Emphasis in Business
and Sustainability

William A. Thexton

Richmond, Virginia – USA
International Management with
an Emphasis in Arts and Luxury
Management

Nicholas Yeiter

Salt Lake City, Utah – USA
International Management
with an Emphasis in Business
and Sustainability

Lili Ma

Beijing, China
Political Economy of Money
and Development



BACHELOR OF ARTS AND BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE RECIPIENTS

Riham Hussein Alfaiy

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
International Marketing
Management major
Finance minor

Emiliano Alfaro Gomez

Mexico City, Mexico
International Relations major
French minor

Doueid Allaham

Damascus, Syria
International Relations major
Management minor

Haya Alourfi

Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
Comparative Literary and Cultural
Studies major
Psychology major
Honors Program Graduate
cum laude

James Peter Arnold

Zug, Switzerland
Finance major

Gabriel Anthony Bader

Albuquerque, New Mexico – USA
International Relations major
French and History minors

Nicholas Charles Belet

Lugano, Switzerland
International Management major
Finance and Psychology minors

Nicole Belotti

Lugano, Switzerland
Fashion Studies major

Silvan Bieri

Lucerne, Switzerland
History major
Honors Program Graduate
cum laude

Neil Boukaa

Casablanca, Morocco
Finance major

Ana Cristina Centeno Diaz

Puebla, México
Fashion Studies major
International Management major
Economics minor
magna cum laude

Gracie Closson

Portland, Oregon – USA
Political Science major
Legal Studies minor
cum laude

Tristan Cousin

La Jolla, California – USA
Finance major
Environmental Science minor
cum laude

Siri Kaitlyn Dye

Lopez Island, Washington – USA
Environmental Science major
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Samantha Lauren Elam

Forest, Virginia – USA
International Marketing
Management major
magna cum laude

Salma Farih

Casablanca, Morocco
Finance major
Applied Mathematics
and French minors

Carlye Catherine Godwin

Severna Park, Maryland – USA
Comparative Literary and Cultural
Studies major
Social Justice and Sustainability
and Studio Art minors
summa cum laude

Lolita Goncharova

Dnipro, Ukraine
Visual Communication Arts major

Olivia Anne Hedberg

Barstow, California – USA
Psychology major
Comparative Literary and Cultural
Studies and Environmental
Science minors

Mahina Kame'enui-Becker

Honolulu, Hawaii – USA
Environmental Science major
cum laude

Matei Iordachescu

Bucharest, Romania
Finance major
Marketing minor

Harkrishan Kaur Khalsa

Santa Barbara, California – USA
International Economics major
with an Emphasis in Political Economy
Applied Mathematics, French, History,
and Political Science minors

Uday Saurabh Khattar

Simi Valley, California – USA
Political Science major with an
Emphasis in Global Political Economy
Applied Mathematics and Postcolonial
Studies minors
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Grace Kjer

Kewaskum, Wisconsin – USA
Environmental Science and Political
Science combined major

Chloë Michelle Lendi

Palos Verdes, California – USA
Social Justice and Sustainability major
Gender Studies minor
magna cum laude

Thomas Lieber

Houston, Texas – USA
Environmental Studies major
International Management major
Honors Program Graduate
cum laude

Camille Terese Lyons

New Haven, Vermont – USA
International Economics major with an
Emphasis in Political Economy
Applied Mathematics minor
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Eric William Maier

Tiburon, California – USA
Social Justice and Sustainability major
Environmental Science minor

Josip Marić

Zagreb, Croatia
Finance major
Psychology minor

Mihail Martynov

Vilnius, Lithuania
Finance major
Economics minor

Raymond Adrian Matulich

Napa, California – USA
International Management major

Anastasia Mikhaylova

Lugano, Switzerland
International Relations major
Economics minor
cum laude

Gayane Oganessian

Moscow, Russia / Yerevan, Armenia
International Marketing
Management major
Italian Studies minor

Danila Ostreykov

Moscow, Russia
International Management major

Daniela Perezchica-Trancoso

Maple Valley, Washington – USA
Environmental Studies major
International Relations major
French and Postcolonial Studies
minors

Victoria Ramsey

Nashville, Tennessee – USA
Fashion Studies major

Piercarlo Luciano Ravasio

Brescia, Italy
Finance major

Sofia Y. Rojo-Kratochvil

Guadalajara, México/San Diego,
California – USA
Communication and Media Studies
major
International Management major
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Sydney Ruth

Orlando, Florida – USA/Minneapolis,
Minnesota – USA
Comparative Literary and Cultural
Studies and History combined major
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Johannes Carl Maria Schäff

Kulmbach, Germany
Finance major
Germanic Studies minor
cum laude

Alex C. Storer

Encinitas, California – USA
Comparative Literary and Cultural
Studies major
cum laude

Sonya Strauss

Westminster, Colorado – USA
Environmental Studies major
Psychology minor
magna cum laude

David Streidel

Crownsville, Maryland – USA
Psychology major
Economics minor

Claire Marie Sullivan

Fairfield, California – USA
History major
Honors Program Graduate
magna cum laude

Alexander Tzvetkov

Torino, Italy

Communication and Media

Studies major

Comparative Literary and Cultural

Studies minor

Skylar Nybo Tempel

Erie, Colorado – USA

Environmental Science major

Social Justice and Sustainability minor

cum laude

Scarlett Victoria

Zürich, Switzerland

Psychology major

Environmental Science minor

Honors Program Graduate

summa cum laude

Hong Zhang

Shanghai, China

Finance major

Environmental Studies minor

All degree candidates have been confirmed by the faculty as eligible to graduate in December 2023, May or August 2024. Diplomas, honors, and award statuses will be conferred upon final verification that all degree requirements have been met, in accordance with university policies and procedures.

PLATFORM PARTY

Samuel Martín-Barbero,
President,
Franklin University Switzerland

Kim Hildebrant,
Chairman of the Board of Trustees

Cabell West,
Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees

Julio Frenk,
President of the University of Miami,
Florida (U.S.)

Tomaso Rizzi,
Vice President for Finance and
Administration

Lucila Perez-Mollo,
Vice President of Admissions and
Enrollment Management

David Mills,
Dean of Academic Affairs

Deborah Knaust,
Dean of Student Life and Engagement

Nickolas Neibauer,
Director of Advancement and Alumni

Armando Zanecchia,
Professor Emeritus of Political
Science and International
Management

Davide Gai,
Director of Marketing and Strategy

Caroline Wiedmer,
Professor of Comparative Literary
and Cultural Studies

THE FRANKLIN FUND

JOIN US IN EMPOWERING FRANKLIN'S FUTURE

The Franklin Fund is the lifeblood of our university, addressing its current needs and ensuring that every student's journey is marked by exceptional learning experiences, cutting-edge resources, and a vibrant campus community. It empowers us to respond swiftly to emerging challenges, seize unforeseen opportunities, and provide an unparalleled education to our students.

By contributing to the Franklin Fund, you become a crucial part of our university's success story. Your support directly enhances student scholarships, faculty development, innovative research initiatives, and the overall campus experience. Together, we can create lasting change and foster a legacy of excellence that echoes through generations.

GIVE NOW



Heartfelt thanks to Diana López-Quesada, Rachel Simpkin, Vera Massari, Marta Leto, Sean Essue and the FUS Marketing Team who, together with the LAC Lugano Arte e Cultura staff, lead this contemporary Franklin ceremony.