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84th COMMENCEMENT MARKS FIRST CLASS OF PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS; CELEBRATES VALUE OF UNIVERSITY OF SAINT JOSEPH DEGREE

Hospital for Special Care CEO Lynn Ricci will Give Commencement Address

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (May 3, 2019) – During its 84th Commencement ceremonies on Monday, May 13, 2019, the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) will achieve an important first — the graduation of the inaugural class of its Physician Assistant Studies program. The University will also celebrate:

- 235 students receiving bachelor's degrees
- Master's degrees conferred to more than 500 students
- 80-plus students earning doctoral degrees
- Approximately 75 percent of USJ alumni living and working in Connecticut

This year's graduates include USJ's inaugural Physician Assistant Studies class, who began their program in January 2017, utilizing the modernized and retrofitted Lourdes Hall on the West Hartford campus. The new pipeline of USJ talent will answer the demand for physician assistants from hospitals and other healthcare facilities, furthering the institution's tradition of responding to the needs of the region's economy and employers.

"Whether our graduates are going on to positions in growing sectors of our regional economy or other opportunities in society, their education is an investment with life-long returns, and we have been enriched to have been part of their journey," said University President Rhona Free.

At the ceremony, the selected graduate and undergraduate student speakers will offer their remarks. Graduate student speaker Kylie Hoang of West Hartford, who is earning her M.S. in Physician Assistant Studies, will join Trinity Healthcare's St. Francis Hospital after graduation. East Hartford's Jasmine J. Brown, the undergraduate student speaker, will graduate with a B.A. in English.

Following the students' speeches, Commencement speaker Lynn Ricci, an award-winning national health care leader, will provide her perspective on resiliency and purpose.

"I have been blessed to have had the opportunity to partner with forward-thinking institutions, like the University of Saint Joseph, to address some of the most intractable challenges I have seen in my personal and professional life," said Ricci. "I am truly honored to be invited to speak to this distinguished graduating class about their role in shaping the future."

This year's Commencement begins at 6 p.m. on May 13 in the XL Center, Hartford Conn.

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The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of coeducational undergraduate, graduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with opportunities for mentored research, community service, clinical field work, and internships. Programs are taught on the University's two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph offers degrees with value and values. To learn more, view our website at www.usj.edu.

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