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## **UMSL celebrates spring 2016 graduates, with nearly 1,600 students finishing their degrees**

As another semester draws to an end, the University of Missouri–St. Louis has much to celebrate – particularly its graduating students who will be in the spotlight on campus this weekend.

Together with friends and family, the UMSL community will gather May 14 and 15 in recognition of an estimated 1,589 degree candidates completing their program of study at the university. Participating graduates will cross the stage at five ceremonies over the course of the weekend.

The first ceremony, at 10 a.m. May 14 in the Mark Twain Athletic & Fitness Center on UMSL’s North Campus, honors graduates in the science and humanities fields within the College of Arts and Sciences. Computer science major and Beanstalk Web Solutions founder **Tim Hebel** is the commencement speaker. Originally interested in ocean engineering, Hebel moved back to Missouri several years ago to pursue a career in programming, choosing to attend UMSL for its balance of great education and affordable tuition. During the four years that Beanstalk has been in business, six of his UMSL classmates have worked for him, and three are still full-time employees at the company.

Two honorary degrees will be conferred that morning. **Chris Krehmeyer**, the longtime president and chief executive officer of Beyond Housing, will receive one of them. Krehmeyer, who has been active in the field of family housing and community development in many capacities in the St. Louis region, oversees 60 full-time employees at Beyond Housing, which aims to make entire

communities better places to live. The recipient of many awards, Krehmeyer and his wife, Christine, have three children.

**Faith Sandler** also will receive an honorary degree during the first commencement ceremony. For three decades, Sandler has dedicated herself to expanding the opportunity for students to enter higher education – particularly low-income students and others in Missouri whose life circumstances present barriers to such access. Sandler is executive director of The Scholarship Foundation of St. Louis, which provides close to \$ 4 million in grants and loans to roughly 600 students per year. At UMSL, Sandler has long served as an active member of the advisory board and instructor for the Nonprofit Management and Leadership Program. She’s been recognized locally and nationally for her efforts with regard to college access.

The second ceremony, slated for 2 p.m. May 14 in the Mark Twain building, honors graduates in the social sciences within the College of Arts and Sciences and also the School of Social Work. The afternoon speaker is **Jordan Pickering**, who graduated from UMSL five years ago with a master’s degree in criminology and criminal justice and is about to earn a second degree from the university – this time a PhD. Pickering chose UMSL, she says, because of its renowned program in her field of study, as well as the way the faculty and graduate students made UMSL feel like home. She’s worked to continue that warm environment among her fellow doctoral students and also has guided more than 400 undergraduate students as an instructor during her time on campus.

**Leanna Depue** will receive an honorary degree during the second ceremony. A transformative leader for older driver safety in Missouri since 2005, Depue was director of the state’s Highway Safety Division until 2015. The state’s main focus was teen and alcohol/drug impaired drivers prior to Depue’s tenure, but with an aging baby boomer population, she saw a need to turn attention to older driver safety and mobility issues and soon spearheaded a number of related efforts and initiatives. And during Depue’s years at the helm, Missouri roadways saw a 30-percent decrease in annual fatalities. In 2014, the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety awarded her its Lifetime Achievement Award.

The College of Optometry will hold its commencement exercises (ceremony three) in the Blanche M. Touhill Performing Arts Center at 6 p.m. May 14. Speaker **Barbara Willis Brown**, OD 1988, has spent most of her adult life either attending UMSL as a student or working to advance the campus as an employee and volunteer. The significance of her service was first recognized through the Chancellor’s Distinguished Volunteer Award she received in 1989, and in 2014 she was presented with the Distinguished Alumni Award. Her transition into retirement from UMSL in 2012 allowed her to pursue additional volunteer activities as she expanded her service to the people of Haiti, where she has led or co-led at least one mission trip each year. She also continues to see patients part-time with OTIS Optometry and Regional Eyecare Associates in O’Fallon, Mo.

At 2 p.m. the following day, May 15, UMSL's College of Education and College of Nursing will gather to celebrate their respective graduates during a ceremony in the Mark Twain building. The commencement speaker is **Lee Fetter**, who serves as group president for BJC HealthCare, with responsibilities for St. Louis Children's Hospital, Alton Memorial Hospital, Christian Hospital, Missouri Baptist Medical Center, Barnes-Jewish St. Peters Hospital and Progress West Hospital. Lee also oversees the organization's Supply Chain Management and Clinical Asset Management.

Fetter joined Children's from Washington University School of Medicine, where he was associate vice chancellor for administration and finance and chief operating officer of the Faculty Practice Plan, the affiliated 970-physician group practice. He is active in several professional organizations, including The Children's Hospital Association where he served as chairman of the council for child advocacy, as well as the St. Louis community. A resident of Webster Groves, Mo., he is married with five children.

At the final commencement ceremony of the weekend, the College of Business Administration and the UMSL/Washington University Joint Undergraduate Engineering Program will honor their graduates. That event is set for 6 p.m. May 15 in the Mark Twain building. **Joe Stieven**, who graduated from UMSL in 1982 and also earned an MBA from his alma mater in 1985, is the speaker.

Starting out at the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis after earning his own college degree, Stieven later joined Stifel, Nicolaus and Company, rising to senior vice president and director of the Financial Institutions Research Group over the course of his 20 years at the firm. In 2005, he founded Stieven Capital Advisors, L.P., a registered investment advisor focusing on investments in financial institutions. At UMSL, Stieven serves on the Chancellor's Council and as chairman of the College of Business Administration's Building Campaign Committee. He and his wife, Mary, have six children, two of whom and are currently enrolled at UMSL along with a son-in-law.

More information about spring 2016 commencement is available [here](#).

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