Freeman recognizes more than 800 degree candidates at 109th graduation

May 18, 2026



Confetti rains down on Bachelor of Science in Management graduates at the conclusion of the Freeman School's 2026 Undergraduate Diploma Ceremony, which was held on Friday, May 15 in Caesars Superdome.

Tulane University's A. B. Freeman School of Business celebrated its 109th graduation on May 15, 2026, recognizing more than 800 degree candidates across two pomp-and-circumstance-filled ceremonies.

Candidates for the Bachelor of Science in Management were recognized in a morning ceremony at Caesars Superdome, while candidates for graduate degrees — including the Master of Business Administration, Master of Accounting, Master of Business Analytics and AI, Master of Finance, Master of Management in Energy, Master of Management and Master of Global Management — were honored that evening in a ceremony at Avron B. Fogelman Arena in the Devlin Fieldhouse.

Freeman School Dean Paulo Goes presided over both ceremonies, joined by Senior Associate Deans Venkat Subramaniam and Sheri Tice and Associate Dean Myke Yest. Professors Sanda Groome, Ashley Nelson, Christopher Otten and Claire Senot served as faculty marshals.



Freeman School Dean Paulo Goes, center, urged graduates to leverage the "un-outsourceable" skills they learned at the Freeman School to achieve success in an increasingly AI-powered world.

In his address to graduates, Dean Goes acknowledged the uncertainty that many graduates are feeling as they enter a workforce being transformed by artificial intelligence, but he urged them to recognize the unique value of their Freeman education.

“The more skills we outsource to AI, the more valuable those skills that cannot be outsourced become,” Goes said. “And what are those un-outsourceable skills? They’re the skills you acquired and cultivated over multiple experiential learning projects here at the Freeman School. Things like critical thinking, leadership, communication, empathy, collaboration, integrity, and the ability to navigate uncertainty and arrive at solutions.

“By combining broad-based business knowledge, a practical understanding of AI, and this range of AI-proof skills with the curiosity and open-mindedness to embrace lifelong learning, you possess something truly extraordinary — a unique toolkit that equips you to succeed in today’s business world and to adapt to the business world of tomorrow.”



Avik Hegde (SLA '26, BSM/MACCT '26), recipient of the Freeman Leadership Award, Dean's Service Award and Tulane 34 Award, shows off his diploma at the conclusion of the Graduate Diploma Ceremony in Fogelman Arena. Photo by MillerFoto.

At the undergraduate ceremony, **Charles Gaffney** received the BSM Scholastic Achievement Award, which recognizes the graduating student with the highest cumulative grade point average, as well as the Wall Street Journal Award, which honors a BSM graduate whose academic performance in the area of finance is considered exceptional. **David Van Dam** received the Evelyn and William Burkenroad Award, which is chosen by the senior class on the basis of scholarship, integrity, amiability and contributions to the professional, social and academic quality of the business program.



Charles Gaffney



David Van Dam



Joshua Christian



Grant Odom

In addition, **Emily Eckerman, Annabelle He, Joshua Becker, Isabella Castro, Talia Deutsch, Abraham Friedland, Nathan Zweig, Ka'Lea Tillman, Gianna Taveras, Anashay Monga, Sophie Lesniak** and **Avik Hegde** received the undergraduate Dean's Service Award, which honors students who have, in the opinion of the administrative staff and the dean, added dimension to the school through outstanding contributions of time and effort

At the graduate ceremony, **Joshua Christian** received the Marta and Peter Bordeaux Scholastic Achievement Award, which recognizes the graduating MBA student with the highest cumulative grade point average, and **Grant Odom** received the Roger L. Cornelius Award, which recognizes the graduating MBA who embodies the highest standards of business scholarship and leadership.

Rajat Walia received the Allen R. Vorholt Memorial Award, which honors an Executive MBA graduate who demonstrates leadership, scholarship, the ability to balance priorities and a strong sense of civic obligation. **Avik Hegde** received the Freeman Leadership Award, which was established by the Graduate Business Council to recognize students who exemplify engagement through leadership in student organizations and commitment to improving the business school experience for fellow students.

The Tulane Association of Business Alumni Award, which recognizes graduates who rank in the top 10% of their classes and who display exceptional intellectual ability, leadership, self-motivation, and responsibility to peers, the school and the community, was awarded to **Arzaan Singh, Kathleen Greenman, Alicia Sacks, Luke Seicshnaydre, Ricardo de Abreu, Reese Hathaway, Jillian Tse** and **Jackson Hammit**.

The graduate level Dean’s Service Award was presented to **Emma Freudig, Carson Caruso, Joshua Christian, Morgan Green, Audrey Portillo Recinos, Claire Babin, Mitchell Linefsky, Avik Hegde** and **Camren Monson**.



Serena Deutch



Emily Eckerman



Taylor Friedman



Juwon Ishola



Bin Wang

In addition to the Freeman awards, seven graduates received the Tulane 34 Award, which is presented annually to 34 graduates from across the university in recognition of exceptional academic achievement, student leadership and community service. The Freeman School's Tulane 34 Award recipients were **Serena Deutch, Emily Eckerman, Taylor Friedman, Avik Hegde, Juwon Ishola, João Lacerda** and **Bin "Jason" Wang**.

“The diploma you received today signifies your mastery of these skills and your readiness to being the next stage in your career,” Goes said in conclusion. “I couldn’t be happier to be with your today to share this wonderful moment, and I look forward to seeing the great things you’ll accomplish.”