Commencement
2016

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Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from UMass Amherst!

If you are graduating any time in 2016 (February, May or September), your graduation ceremony is this May.

This document contains information about your two commencement events:

- The main UMass Amherst Commencement Ceremony held on Friday, May 6 at 4:30pm EST. You DO NOT need to RSVP for this event.
- The UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony held on Saturday, May 7 at 9am EST. You DO need to RSVP for this event.

UMass Amherst University Without Walls 2011 graduate and veteran of the Marines, Carl Eubanks
UMass Amherst Commencement
Friday, May 6, 2015 from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m. EST.
McGuirk Alumni Stadium, UMass Amherst.

Do I need to RSVP? No.

Where do I find directions and information about parking?
Directions and information about parking can be found on the UMass Commencement website.

Who can attend?
All UMass Amherst graduates and their families and friends are invited. This is a free event, open to the public with no limit on the number of people you can bring.

Do I need to wear my cap and gown? Yes.

How do I get my cap and gown?
Caps and gowns will be available to pick up at the UMass Campus Center, rooms 165-69, on the following dates:

- Monday, May 2 from 9am to 5pm
- Tuesday, May 3 from 9am to 5pm
- Wednesday, May 4 from 9am to 5pm
- Thursday, May 5 from 9am to 5pm
- Friday, May 6 from 9am to 12pm
- On Commencement Day, May 6, caps and gowns may be picked up after 3:00pm

Students who are not able to get to campus may order their cap and gown to be shipped by visiting https://buildagrad.com/umassamherst. The shipping cost is $14.25 for standard delivery. Orders to have caps and gowns shipped must be placed before April 27.

When do I need to be there? 3:30pm in Lot 11 (north of the football stadium). Guests of graduates should plan to arrive around 2:30pm since tickets are not required and seating is unreserved.

How do I know where to go and what to do?
Refer to the Undergraduate Ceremony page on the UMass Amherst Commencement website, which will walk you through where to go and what to do for the main commencement ceremony.

I would like to carry my country’s flag in the Commencement Processional. TBA.

I am a military or veteran student and would like to carry the American flag into the ceremony. TBA.

Should I attend?
Although you are not required to attend, it is a wonderful event. Filled with pomp and circumstance, this event is the university’s official graduation ceremony attended by thousands of students and their families each year. During the procession, our UWW students sit together with their faculty advisors; the president of UMass, as well as members of the Massachusetts legislature, will be in attendance; honorary degrees will be awarded; there will be a keynote speaker and student speakers; and the UMass Chancellor will formally confer degrees by asking students to stand by college or program. Here’s our commencement photo gallery to give you a sense of what it’s like.
UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony
Saturday, May 7, 2016 from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m. EST
Location - Lincoln Campus Center Auditorium, UMass Amherst.

This is a small, heart-felt ceremony where UWW graduates, their families, and UWW faculty and staff celebrate and acknowledge your individual accomplishments. Each student will be called up to the podium to receive their commencement medal, and a professional photographer will be on hand to take graduation photos. This event is not meant to replace the official commencement, and all students are encouraged to attend both the University Commencement and the Senior Recognition Ceremony.

Do I need to RSVP? Yes. RSVPs are required by Friday, April 29 and can be sent to commencement@uww.umass.edu. Please indicate the total number of people, including yourself, who will be attending.

Who can attend? UMass Amherst graduates and their families and friends are invited.

How do I get there? Click here for directions to the UMass Lincoln Campus Center. Once you enter the campus center, there will be signs directing you to the elevators and escalators. Go down one floor to the ground level. The auditorium is on the ground level.

What about parking? Free parking is available during Commencement weekend in the Campus Center Parking Garage.

Is this event free? Yes.

Do I need to wear my cap and gown? Yes.

How do I get my cap and gown?
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- Wednesday, May 4 from 9am to 5pm
- Thursday, May 5 from 9am to 5pm
- Friday, May 6 from 9am to 12pm
- On Commencement Day, May 6, caps and gowns may be picked up after 3:00pm

Students who are not able to get to campus may order their cap and gown to be shipped by visiting https://buildagrad.com/umassamherst. The shipping cost is $14.25 for standard delivery. Orders to have caps and gowns shipped must be placed before April 27.

Will I be able to pick up a cap and gown at the UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony? No.

What time should I be there?
Graduates need to be there no later than 8:45am. Keep in mind, traffic will be heavy during Commencement weekend, so make sure to give yourself extra time to get to campus.

What do I do when I get there?
When you arrive, you will be greeted warmly by staff who will give you a program and direct you to sit in the reserved graduate seating area in front of the stage. The graduates and faculty will sit together. Your family and friends will sit in the audience. There are no assigned seats.

What’s this card on my chair and is it important?
On your chair will be a very important card. As soon as you sit down, fill this card out and keep it with you. You will give this card to the emcee as you cross the stage so she knows who you are and can read your name. Also, this card allows the photographer to know who you are so you can be sent a link to your personal graduation photo.
How will the medal ceremony work?  
From the podium, the emcee will give you clear instructions about what to do and where to go. But here’s a sneak preview: row by row, starting with the front, the graduates will stand and each graduate will climb the steps onto the stage. You will hand your card to the emcee who will read your name. UWW Director Ingrid Bracey will hand your commencement medal to you and shake your hand. A photographer will take a picture of you getting your medal. You will then leave the stage and go over to another photographer who will take a formal commencement photo in front of a UMass Amherst backdrop. Then, you will return to your seat. Everyone will clap and cheer and generally freak out and be super happy.

Will my faculty advisor be there?  Most likely. Every year, faculty advisors look forward to attending this event to celebrate with their students.

Will food be served?  Refreshments of quick breads and fruit will be served after the event, along with coffee, tea, water and juice.

Are children welcome?  Always!
FAQ

I’m not graduating until September, 2016. When’s my graduation?
The May commencement ceremonies are for all students who have graduated in 2016 or anticipate graduating at any time in 2016. So, if you think you’re graduating in September, then your official graduation ceremony is this May.

I graduated in September, 2015. Can I still come to the graduation ceremony in May, 2016?
Yes, but since your graduation ceremony was officially in May 2015, please let us know that you’re coming so we can make sure you are recognized in the commencement book.

How do I know if I’m graduating in 2016?
SPIRE contains your expected date of graduation. However, it is YOUR responsibility to keep this up to date. If you have any questions about whether and when you are graduating, contact your advisor.

How do I get my cap and gown?
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Is there anything I need to do to be able to receive my diploma?
Yes. Review the Graduation Instructions carefully. If you do not follow these instructions, you may not be able to officially graduate. Each year, there are students who do not receive diplomas because they did not follow instructions.

If I’m listed in the commemorative commencement booklet, does this mean I’m graduated?
No. Fulfilling the requirements for receiving a diploma from UMass Amherst is different from attending the graduation ceremonies and being listed in the commemorative booklet. Review the Graduation Instructions carefully. If you do not follow these instructions, you may not be able to officially graduate. Each year, there are students who do not receive diplomas because they did not follow instructions.

When will I receive my diploma?
You will receive your diploma in the mail within three months after your official date of graduation. Your official date of graduation is not necessarily the date you attend the graduation ceremony, but the date you have been determined by the UMass Amherst Registrar’s Office to have satisfied all the requirements for graduation and have submitted the necessary paperwork.

I need to stay overnight. What do you suggest?
Visit the UMass Commencement website for information about accommodations. NOW is the time to do this – rooms fill up VERY quickly for commencement weekend.

I need disability accommodations for myself or one of my guests.
To receive accommodations for the main ceremony on May 6 such as accessible parking, shuttle service, special seating, and/or an interpreter, you will need to submit a request ASAP. Visit the UMass Commencement website for more information. In addition, let the UWW staff know that you or one of your guests require accommodations by emailing commencement@uww.umass.edu so we can assist.

Which ceremony should I attend?
We support you in attending whichever ceremony or ceremonies you would like to attend. You have worked hard to get where you are. Savor this moment. Spend the weekend celebrating with your family, friends and community.
I live far away. Do I have to attend? No, but if you can swing it, it will be fun.

I'm a veteran. How do I get my stole? Contact the Veterans Resource Center at 413-545-0939.

Will my faculty advisor be there? Every year, our faculty advisors do their best to attend, and they sit with the graduates!

Announcements

WANTED: Student Speaker. UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony: Email your 3-4 minute speech to commencement@uww.umass.edu by Friday, April 1. Finalists will be selected and asked to audition their speech either in person or by Skype. For more information, contact Jill Dubnansky, the chair of the speaker selection committee at commencement@uww.umass.edu.

University Commencement Announcements
The University Commencement website contains up-to-date commencement information and announcements.

Sign up for Commencement e-list
Sign up for the Office of Parent Services Mailing List to keep up with what’s happening on campus as you prepare to graduate from UMass Amherst. Although designed for parents of traditional age students, these communications contain information about time sensitive issues that are relevant to all graduates.

Graduation Checklist

☐ Read this document.

☐ Read carefully and follow the Graduation Instructions. Following these instructions is essential for you to be awarded your diploma.

☐ Talk with your advisor if you have questions about your graduation status.

☐ If you want to be recognized in the UMass Commencement book, check to see if your name is on this list. If it’s not on this list, email us at commencement@uww.umass.edu by April 1.

☐ Email your RSVP for the UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony to commencement@uww.umass.edu by Friday, April 29. Please indicate the total number of people, including yourself, who will be attending.

☐ Review the UMass Commencement website for additional information and instructions.

Timeline of Important Dates

April 1: Deadline to get your name into the UMass Amherst commencement book.
April 1: Deadline for applying to be the student speaker at the UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony
April 27: Last day to order your cap and gown to be shipped.
April 29: Deadline to RSVP to attend to the UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony.
May 6: Main UMass Amherst Commencement Ceremony
May 7: UWW Senior Recognition Ceremony