

Best Practices for Planning a Commencement Ceremony



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Overview

- General ceremony planning
- Ceremonial logistics & procedures
- Recognition
- Emergency preparedness
- Integrating technology
- Resources

General Commencement Planning

Format

- Number of ceremonies?
- How are ceremonies grouped/planned?

Budget

- Who is responsible for planning vs. paying?

Staffing

- Office Staff
- Other Student Services area staff
- Volunteers

Ceremony Logistics and Procedures

- Facilities
- Photography
- Regalia
- “Green” program
 - Other environmentally friendly initiatives?
- Reception



Recognition

- Student Recognition (individual vs. group)
- ROTC Commissioning
- Honorary Degrees
- Posthumous Degrees
- Speakers (students, dignitaries, etc.)
- Musicians

Emergency Preparedness

Short-term and long-term best practices

- Inclement weather
- Natural disaster

Decision making

- Staff vs. Administration

Evacuation of Facility

- Seating for elderly or physically disabled

North Dakota State University FargoDome – late March 2009



North Dakota State University FargoDome – late March 2009



Integrating Technology

- **Webstreaming (Live and Archive)**
 - Benefits
 - Affordability
 - Campus resources
- **Social Media**
 - Ceremony info/updates
 - Live Twitter feeds?

Integrating Technology

- **Live/Open Captioning**
 - Many vendor options
 - Future – mobile devices?
- **Sign Language Interpretation**
 - Preferred seating (student graduates versus family/guest)
 - Project image
 - Challenges?

Grad Scan

- Everyone sees the graduate name
- Audio + Visual is “more special” than just audio
- ADA benefit for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing is a benefit for everyone
- Pronunciation less of a problem



Resources

- American Council on Education – Academic Costume Code and Ceremony Guide <http://www.acenet.edu> (search for ‘ceremony guide’)
- Lauren, Barbara. (2006). *The Registrar’s Guide: Evolving Best Practices in Records and Registration*. AACRAO.
- Strickland, S. Mark & D’Amico, Rosalia. (2001). *The AACRAO Guide to Staging a Graduation Ceremony*. AACRAO.

Questions?

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Thank you!