

University of Saint Francis

DAY OF COMMENCEMENT DETAILS

- **Congratulations on your achievement!**
- Commencement is a celebration of degree conferral for degree earners who complete their curriculum from September through August of the same academic year as the ceremony. The ceremony celebrates degrees from associate to doctorate. Students earning only certificates will not participate in the commencement ceremony.
 - Academic programs or divisions may hold smaller ceremonies before commencement for special recognition and pinning. Often, special cords will be distributed at these ceremonies.

COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY:

- **Guest Arrival:** There is no limit to the number of guests who may attend, and guest registration is not required.
- **Guest Special Needs:** On commencement day, family members with specific needs (e.g., handicapped seating, hearing assistance devices, or deaf interpretation) may be assisted by Coliseum ushers. Sign language interpreters will be stationed on the right side of the stage.
- **Parking:** Parking fees are for a single entry.
- **Guest Seating:** Facing the stage, bachelor's degree candidates will sit on the left side of the arena. Doctoral, master's, and associate degree candidates will sit on the right side of the arena. Students will line up on the left side of the stage and cross the stage from left to right. Guests may need this information to determine which side of the arena to sit on.
- **Shoes:** Between the line-up, the processional, the ceremony, and the recessional, students will be standing for about 2½ hours. Any temporary footwear worn during line-up should be disposable, as there is nowhere to safely store it. Students should change into preferred footwear about 15 minutes before entering the arena.
- **Belongings:** There is nowhere to leave a purse or bag. Please leave personal belongings in your vehicle. Weapons, helium balloons, and alcoholic beverages are not allowed per Memorial Coliseum regulations.
- **Concessions:** Concessions will not be open. Bottled water is available to students (but not guests).
- **Cap and Gown (Regalia):** A bookstore representative is available at check-in to solve last-minute issues.

STUDENT CHECK-IN/LINE-UP: At the check-in table, students will receive the cards they need as they walk across the stage.

- **Media Release:** Each student is required to complete a Media Release form upon check-in.
- **Gray Card:** Verify that your contact information listed is correct and update the card as needed. This card is for professional photographers and will be collected before crossing the stage.
- **White Card:** There will be one **white card** for each graduate. Names and honors will be announced for each individual graduate. Majors, minors, and certificates are not announced during commencement.
 - **Honors:** The white card will identify honors. The cumulative GPA designations for *Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude*, and *Summa Cum Laude* are for undergraduates only. These are for cumulative GPAs of at least 3.5, 3.7, and 3.9, respectively. A yellow star on the white card will indicate that a gold cord is waiting for the student at the cord table.
 - **Pronunciation:** On the white cards, students may write a phonetic pronunciation of their name if it is difficult to say or often mispronounced.

- **Career Information:** Please complete the career questions on the back side of the card before the procession.
- There will be a table near check-in to complete these cards and the media release.
- **Undergraduate students:** Those with *Cum Laude*, *Magna Cum Laude*, and *Summa Cum Laude* designations will receive a gold honor cord upon check-in. This cord should be wrapped securely on the left arm (loop it through itself). During the ceremony, when their name is read on stage, the cord will be draped around the student's neck by the dean.
 - All other earned cords (from clubs, societies, minors, student government, etc.) should already be around the neck during line-up and the entire ceremony. Stoles are not permitted.
- **Doctoral and Master's Degree Students:** Please watch the following [video](#) to see how your master's hood should be worn. Fellow students and line-up staff can help before the ceremony begins to ensure hoods are correct. Doctoral students will be hooded on the stage. Master's students should be wearing hoods throughout the processional and the ceremony.
- **Tassels:** Should hang on the right side of the cap for undergraduate students. After all students have crossed the stage, there will be a "Turning of the Tassel" event. Technically, graduate students have already had a turning of the tassel event previously when earning their undergraduate degree and therefore can begin commencement with their tassels already on the left and not participate in the Turning of the Tassel. Or they are welcome to join in the turning ceremony.
- **Line-up Area:** Students are responsible for reviewing the easels placed throughout the outer circular hall. These easels show degrees (and majors) for each station as well as student names in line-up order. Students will need to review the information on the easels to determine their individual position in the line-up.
 - Not all students attend commencement, and some students attend commencement but may not be on the listing on the easel (if their degree audit was not approved by Mar. 31). Line-up assistants are available to help place students.
 - The lined-up students will need to be in place by 1:50 p.m. and should remain in order as they walk into the arena for the processional, which begins promptly at 2:00 p.m.
 - For students with a gold honor cord wrapped around their left arm, please keep it secure. The cord is slippery against the gown and can slide off unnoticed.
 - Graduation gowns must be zipped up fully for the processional, the entire ceremony, and the recessional.

THE CEREMONY: THE commencement ceremony **begins at 2:00 p.m.** with the processional march through the entire length of the arena. Administration, trustees, and faculty lead the processional, followed by students, with doctoral degree candidates processing first, then master's degree candidates, bachelor's degree candidates, and finally associate's degree candidates.

- **Students will be directed** into rows for seating upon processing into the arena. It might look like there will not be enough space, but there will be – the attendants are counting out 15 students for the 15 seats in the row, so please trust their direction.
- Everyone **remains standing** for the Invocation (prayer) and the National Anthem.
- Each student will have a **program on their seat**. It would be good to take the program home after the ceremony for family/guests who wish to have an extra copy. When guests arrive, they will receive one program per pair. Not every guest will receive an individual program.
- There will be some **speaking components** during the ceremony, and then it will be time for degree conferral. Doctoral degree candidates will walk to and across the stage first, followed by master's, then bachelor's, and finally associate's degree candidates.

- An attendant will **release degree candidates row by row** to approach the stage. Additional attendants will show students the direction to proceed.
- As the degree conferral portion of the ceremony progresses, there will be students **walking in opposite directions** and crossing each other (because some are going up to the stage and some are returning from the stage).
- Also, the seat one returns to after walking across the stage **might not be their original seat**, so it is not wise to leave items behind.

Students will have **two professional photographs** taken during commencement.

- The first professional photograph is taken upon **approaching the stage**. The photographer's assistant will take the gray card received during check-in, and the photographer will snap each individual's photo against a backdrop. Friend shots and group shots are not permitted, as this process needs to be rapid.
- The second photo will be taken on stage for each student while **shaking the President's hand**.
- Based on the email provided on the gray card, students will receive a message in a couple of weeks with a website link to **view and order photographs**.

CROSSING THE STAGE:

- If you have a blue card, give it to the reader before the white card.
- When students reach the top of the stage steps, they will **hand the white card to the Vice President of Academic Affairs**. This is how each name gets read as students cross the stage. Each student will walk across the stage only once. If a student has more than one degree, the student will cross the stage only once, and only one card will be presented to the reader. The student may sit with either major group.
- Next, **if there is a gold honor cord to award**, move forward a step or two, and it will be taken from the student's left arm and draped around the student's neck by USF's Vice President for Healthcare Relations. At this point, the cord should no longer be securely tied to the arm but be draped loosely over the left arm so it can quickly and easily be grabbed and draped.
- The student will then proceed across the stage to the President. **Shake his hand, reach for the diploma cover being offered, turn slightly, smile for the second professional photograph, and then take the diploma cover and proceed the rest of the way across the stage**. The diploma cover will be empty. Diplomas will be ready for students several weeks after the end of the semester.
- Students need to **be careful descending the stage** steps to ensure the graduation gown does not catch on the railing. Also, please be cautious and use the handrail. Students will pause at the bottom of the steps to **receive a gift** from USF's Vice President for Catholic Culture and Student Life and then proceed back to the student seating following the instructions of the attendants (possibly crossing the line of students who have not yet been on stage).
- **Students cannot stop for photographs** after crossing the stage or descending the stairs because more graduates need to descend.
- Students are to **return to a seat** on the arena floor for the remainder of the ceremony.

Once degree conferrals are complete, it will be time for the **Turning of the Tassel** (undergraduate tassels will move from the right to the left). There will be some final words and a prayer, then the recessional. Students shall exit the arena through the recessional via the back end of the arena. Dignitaries from the stage will lead the recessional, followed by Trustees, Sisters, faculty, and finally the graduates. Graduates must remain in their seats until given the sign by the attendants to join the recessional.

Find your friends and family to celebrate! **CONGRATULATIONS!**