

University of Saint Francis

DAY OF COMMENCEMENT DETAILS 2026

CHECK-IN: At the check-in table, graduates and candidates for graduation receive the cards they need for walking across the stage.

- **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.
- **White Stage Card:** There will be one **white card** for each graduate. Names and honors will be announced for each individual undergraduate. Majors, minors, and certificates are not announced during commencement.
 - **Undergraduate Honors:** The white card will identify honors. The undergraduate 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.
 - There will be a table near check-in to complete these cards, the media release and career questions.
- **Gray Photography 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.
- **Undergraduate students:** Those undergraduates 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 processional and the ceremony. When your name is read on stage, the cord will be draped around the student's neck by the Provost.
 - All other earned cords (from clubs, societies, minors, student government, etc.) should already be around the neck during line-up and the entire ceremony.
- **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 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. They are welcome to join in the turning ceremony if they would like.
- **Line-up Area:**
 - 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.**
 - 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.** 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 14 students for the 14 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**. When guests arrive, they will receive one program per pair. Not every guest will receive an individual program.
- 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.
- 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 Assistant Dean/Name Reader**. 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 SF's Provost. 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 sent digitally to the student's email, usually within a week, and the paper diploma will be mailed about one month later. Watch for an email from Parchment.com and then verify your address on their website to receive these documents in a timely manner.
- Students need to **be careful descending the stage**, and please use the handrail. Students will pause at the bottom of the steps to **receive a gift** from the SF Student Life department and then proceed back to the student seating area.
- **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!**