

## **EVERYONE’S WELCOME**

### **Introduction**

Commencement ceremonies are celebrations that encompass the entire University community – faculty, staff, students and alumni. We continue to see “first in family” college graduates that often bring family and guest that span several generations.

Each campus is unique in its ceremonies and facilities. “Examples” of access will be provided, however the questions need to be addressed on an individual basis. Hopefully through an interactive discussion, strategies will be discussed that may assist a colleague address their own issues.

The main issues of access to the Commencement Ceremony (and other ‘pomp’ activities on campus) starts with the initial communication – then we can break the ceremony into three parts – Parking – Seating – Ceremony.

But first-----

### **Why do we need to address issues of access?**

- Because it is the right thing to do!
- We are obligate by law
  - Title II - Public College/Universities  
“State Universities”
  - Title III – Private Colleges/Universities

### **Who are we serving?**

Faculty  
Candidates for Graduation  
Platform Party  
Attending Guest

Who is disabled?

Blind/visually impaired  
Deaf/HOH (Hard of Hearing)  
Physical/Mobility Impaired  
Chronic Medical  
Elderly

### **Committee**

Who’s on it  
Disability Services: Academic Affairs v. Student Affairs

### **Communications**

Web page (accessible)

### **Providing Services**

Options  
a. advertise via (webpage) “services” (Disability Services???)

- b. if not, it must be assumed that everything is accessible make everything accessible - Parking – Seating – Ceremony

Otherwise - ask

“If you need “xxx” (o.k. to specify) please contact “Somebody” at 555-5555 by DATE”

***Special Request*** – wheelchairs

Refer to local (hometown) rental stores

**Commencement Program** (Print/CD)

Who is the intended recipient?

Graduate?

Guests?

**The Ceremony(ies)**

(Main, School and Departmental)

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER**

**Ceremony Site Providing Services**

**University Owned**

Leased – access requirements (whose responsibility)

What is written in the contract (re: legal above)?

- Auditorium – limited accessible seating – access to balcony
- Arena – depending on age -
- Stadium – limited accessible seating/stairs
- Out-of-Doors
  - Quad – stability of ground (canes/walkers/wheelchairs)
    - Toilets (Port-A-Johns) accessible?
    - Concessions
- Remote locations (overflow)

**Parking –**

(legal) reasonable distance (state preferences)

- Reserved –
  - institutional issued permit for ceremony
  - honor state placards
- Remote parking with Shuttles –
- Are shuttle accessible?
- Assistive Services – intermediate transportation –
- Golf - Carts

**Seating**

- Reserved – how many – guest/”attendant” or group

- Concert Seating
- Steps (how many)
- No Steps – wheelchair, walker, canes

### **Platform/Stage**

Appropriate concern for Schools/Departmental Ceremonies

#### **(Steps or Ramp)**

- Officiating Party – guest requiring access
- Keynote Address
  - Interpreter
  - Open Captioning (Stadium “Big Screen”)
  - Is the speech is place on website after ceremony – if video streamed – requires an accompanying transcript

### **Processional**

- Faculty
- Candidates required access
- Awarding of Degrees
  - Processing across stage

### **Disabilities and basic access issues**

- Blind/visually impaired
  - Braille/CD **Program**
- Deaf/HOH (Hard of Hearing)
  - Interpreters – **Platform/Reserved Area**
  - Assistive Listening Systems – **Sound System**
  - Open Caption
- Physical/Mobility Impaired
  - Proximity Parking
  - Shuttle Service
  - Stairs
  - Seating (attendant/group)
- Chronic Medical
  - Diabetes
    - Food (bring your own/facility policy)
  - Environmental
    - Cancer
      - Chemotherapy – Sunlight
      - Suppressed immunity – public contact