

Graduation/Commencement 2009

What is it like to “graduate” – what’s involved? I’ve been asked what it’s like to “graduate” – what’s involved. First of all, please don’t confuse going through the Commencement Ceremony with the conferring of a degree. Your eligibility will not be checked, you won’t be barred from participating just because you’re not getting your MA/MS yet, you won’t even be handed a “diploma” while on the stage. (The university president will shake your hand, however.) The commencement ceremony is just that – a ceremony, a time of celebration. As they’re fond of saying at the Enrollment Services Office windows, “Anyone can walk.” And should you? My answer is yes – in years to come, you’ll be glad that you did.

So what do you need? Simple: a black cap (mortarboard), a black gown and a master’s hood (looks like a velvet and satin sash). The colors of your hood are white velvet (College of Liberal Arts), with black and gold satin (CSULB colors). You may rent them from the campus bookstore, beginning mid-May (you get to keep the cap and tassel). Or you may purchase them (contact the bookstore representative right away (562-985-7737); it takes approx. eight weeks for delivery.) Your tassel (gold for all masters students) is yours to keep - some years the mortarboard as well. Rental prices, as well as other commencement information, are available via the university web site (see URL below). Photos of previous years’ graduates have been posted on the department web site: www.csulb.edu/~psych/news/news.html

Some people like to tastefully accessorize their regalia, adding honor societies’ medallions and cords, or sashes celebrating ethnic or organization affiliations. (And then there’s the College of the Arts, who go way beyond “tasteful” – check them out sometime.)

What happens the day of the ceremony? The Psychology commencement is scheduled for **Thursday, May 28, 2009, at 1 p.m.** You are requested to line up at 12:15; however, 12:30-12:45 will give you plenty of time. You will be handed an index card, on which you will be asked to write your name, degree and department. The master’s students are in the front of the line, with undergrads behind you. You will be instructed to drape your hood over one arm, and at approx. 1 p.m. the Music department’s Brass Choir will strike up *Pomp and Circumstance*. Confetti will be thrown at you, as you walk onto the grass and up through the seats (wear appropriate shoes!).

There will be a program sitting on your chair (be sure to pick it up before you sit down). You will remain standing until all the graduates file in, then you will be given a signal to sit. After the university president gives his inspirational speech, the dignitaries are introduced and awardees are announced, you will be instructed to walk towards the stage in a single file line (leave your program on your chair). You hand your index card to someone who will hand it to the person reading them, and you’ll walk up the steps onto the stage. Your hood will be taken from your arm and you will be “hooded” (you bow your head down so that this individual may

place it over your head), then you’ll shake his/her hand. You continue across the stage to where the president is standing and shake his hand. A photographer will take your picture at this point, and either before you step up onto or after you step back down from the stage, you’ll pose for another photo, before taking your seat again (pick up your program).

What should your family and friends do? The Psychology department will have a reception in the quad area of the Psychology building beginning approx. 11:30 a.m., prior to your ceremony. Please feel free to come by before you have to line up. If your guests will be coming separately, this gives you a good meeting place. You can then leave them in the quad, with instructions of where to go to sit, or they may head on over there as you go to line up. There will be some bleachers (the choice seats), as well as individual chairs placed around the rest of the graduates’ seating.

Where can you get great photo ops? In the Psych quad: 1) Against the off-white buildings – they may be repainted just before commencement; 2) Against the ivy on the outside of the north stairwell – if it grows back in this year; 3) Against the ivy on the west side of the bookstore’s storage facility if the Psych building’s ivy is not up to stuff.

What do you do after the ceremony? There will be a College of Liberal Arts reception (last year’s was over by the campus cafeteria), where you and your guests may partake of finger food, punch and coffee. If you rented your regalia, you’ll be asked to return it after the ceremony, in front of the bookstore. You can drop it off on the way over to the reception, or back to your car.

What to wear? The gown most likely will not go all the way to your ankles. Therefore, if you’re wearing a long dress or pants, you might want to consider choosing something that won’t stand out (black is nice – however, it may be hot that day). Wearing something that won’t be too hot under the gown is recommended. And think about sun screen – you’ll be sitting in the sun for two hours. Suggest to your guests that they wear some, too – people have been sunburned during commencement. Try on your gown and especially your cap ahead of time – make sure it’s the correct size (unless it’s a “one size fits all” cap)!

When do you get your diploma? First, the Enrollment Services office clears you for graduation (clearance does not begin until the term is over, and can take months to complete). Then, after the next time the information for graduates is sent to the company which produces the diplomas and that batch is returned to the Enrollment Services office, you will be sent a postcard or email notification that it is waiting for you. You may then ask for it to be mailed; however, I recommend that you pick it up in person, if at all possible (to avoid damage in the mail).

Congratulations to our newest graduates! And enjoy the Commencement Ceremony!

CSULB Commencement Info Web Page:
<http://www.csulb.edu/projects/commencement/>