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DECEMBER COMMENCEMENT

Background:

In September 2009, President Lee T. Todd, Jr. created a President's Academic Ceremonies Task Force and charged it with providing recommendations regarding a reconstitution of academic awards and Commencement Exercises. The Task Force was chaired by Dr. Thomas W. Lester (Dean of the College of Engineering at the time). Part of the charge was to consider whether Commencement should be held in both the Spring (May) and Winter (December). Significant research, benchmarking, and analysis were conducted throughout the Fall Semester of 2009. The final report was issued on December 28, 2009. The report and a subsequent proposal for a December Commencement Ceremony were presented to the University Senate Council on April 19, 2010.

A Modest Proposal (April, 2010)

"Provost Subbaswamy requests that the University Senate consider an amendment to the academic calendar to accommodate a three-year pilot initiative of a Winter (December) Commencement. The major elements of the Winter Commencement proposal include:

- Stage the ceremony in Memorial Coliseum to contain costs
- Recognize individually not only Ph.D. degree candidates but also Bachelor's & Master's degree candidates
- Have President Todd serve as the Master of Ceremonies
- Forego speakers and awards to maximize the allotment of time for the individual recognition of all degree candidates in attendance
- Conduct a separate Winter hooding ceremony for professional degree and professional doctorate candidates
- Ask deans and faculties to promote the Winter 2010 Commencement among their students to create an expectation that all winter graduates (and their families) would attend the ceremony
- Ask the University Senate to consider a revision to its policy on the conferral of honorary degrees to permit the award of honorary degrees at the Winter Commencement."

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Current Senate Rules

5.4.0 DEGREES, HONORS, GRADUATION

Commencement convocations shall be held in December and in May of each academic year. [US: 2/14/11]*

*It appears that no changes will be needed to Senate Rules. However, the Senate should receive this report on December Commencement Ceremonies and perhaps accept the December Ceremony Pilot Programs as satisfactory evidence that a December Commencement Ceremony should become a permanent part of the regular academic calendar and a regular ceremony of the University of Kentucky.

Commencement Committee

At the January 15, 2013 meeting of the UK Commencement Committee, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the University Senate Council that a December Commencement Ceremony become a permanent part of the University Academic Calendar and part of the University academic tradition.

The President supports this recommendation.

Supportive Data:

DECEMBER COMMENCEMENTS		2010	2011	2012
Undergraduate Participation		482	647	726
Graduate and Professional		115	144	147
Doctoral Hooding		33	60	78
Audience Attendance		3500-4000	6000	7200
Total Degrees Awarded:	2010	Undergraduate Graduate	964 330	50% participation 35% participation
Total Degrees Awarded:	2011	Undergraduate Graduate	1002 331	65% participation 44% participation
Total Degrees Awarded:	2012	Undergraduate Graduate	TBD TBD	February 1 st February 1 st
Respectfully Submitted:	John H. Herbst Commencement Committee Chair			