

Executive Summary:

Included in this report are the major findings, recommendations, and rationale for recent changes to the University of Kentucky Commencement activities. The following is a summarized list of additional changes for the upcoming May Commencement, with rationale included in the larger report.

Staging and logistics:

- The committee recommends additional deterrents to keep participants from leaving before the ceremony's conclusion, including, but not limited to, additional staffing at exits, public announcements, and temporary physical barriers such as rope stanchions. A critical element in encouraging graduates to stay is the length and time of the ceremony.

Ceremony structure:

- Increase the number of ceremonies from three to four and split over two days. This will make for shorter ceremonies and days, but the new structure (primarily the additional day) will increase costs and production time.
 - Ceremonies can be broken down by college instead of by degree type. The committee believes this will improve faculty participation and deans will only need to attend one ceremony.
 - The trial of the new ceremony structure in May 2017 proved to be very successful with all ceremonies close to a 2 hour duration. Faculty, Deans, and Senior Administration were all enthusiastically supportive in their comments regarding the new format and times.

Commencement Committee Recommendation for May Ceremonies

Background: The Commencement Committee is an advisory group to the President and university officials in all matters relating to Commencement at the University of Kentucky. In addition to their experience, the committee listens closely to students, Deans, and faculty. In making recommendations to shorten the ceremonies, the committee has looked at many scenarios, some of which are alternate formats from what has been done historically.

Key Considerations:

- Commencement is the pinnacle event for Degree Candidates and in many cases the culmination of their academic career, it should mirror the value of their educational experience at the University of Kentucky.
- The opportunity for each degree candidate to have their “moment in the spotlight” is key to their experience.

Recommendations for Ceremony Changes:

- The committee recommends that the Student Speaker continue to be a ceremony feature; however, the committee should carefully review the script to keep time allocated to a minimum (ie.3-4 minutes).
- The committee recommends deploying additional deterrents to keep participants at the ceremony such having announcements on screen, utilizing additional Rupp staff, and using rope stanchions and pipe and drape to hide side exit ways (only way out is center aisle), etc.

Recommendations for Continuations:

- The committee recommends the continuation of the “candidate in the spotlight” on IMAG displays with the student’s name and academic major on the ‘lower third’ of the screen.
 - Faculty Marshals advised the committee that this is a highlight for the candidates and their friends and family.
- The committee unanimously recommends UK continue to hand out stamped leatherette diploma covers.
 - It takes no longer to hand out these substantial tributes than any other form of document, and the committee has received positive response to such a nice memento. Previous covers were plastic and had a cheap appearance, and paper scrolls can be easily dropped during any hand off exchange.
- The committee recommends the continuation of the photography by GradImages the same as was done for the December Ceremonies.
 - They utilized two portraits and a ‘facial recognition’ photo which pulled from casual/candid shots to make them available also. There was a 38-40% increase in orders with this new methodology, and it did not slow any of the lines across stage.
- The Deans consulted recommend that for Doctoral Candidates, it is extremely important to continue to “hood” candidates on stage as it represents the highest academic degree honor the institution awards. The committee concurs.

Ceremony Times:

The committee recommends that, to achieve a two-hour window for ceremonies, there will have to be four ceremonies for May Commencement. During years in which Derby takes place the same weekend as Commencement, we recommend Friday and Sunday Commencement ceremonies. For years in which Derby does not interfere with Commencement, we recommend Friday and Saturday ceremonies. Regardless of which days the ceremonies will take place, we recommend keeping the college order the same year to year. Ceremonies would be at 10AM and 2PM each day.

Recommendation:

The committee recommends increasing the total number of ceremonies from three to four and splitting across two days with a breakdown by college (not by degree type). We have outlined in seconds how long each degree candidate takes. For undergraduate degree candidates and master's degree candidates, they each roughly take between 3-7 seconds. The numbers in the chart are slightly greater due to the estimates based off of walk and college transition time. Doctoral degree candidates take roughly 22 seconds, therefore they equate to roughly three undergraduate or master's students. [1 Doctoral = 3 Master's/Undergraduates]. This data is from the May 2016 ceremonies.

Total Seconds	Degree	Seconds/Graduate
7920	1450 Undergraduates	5 seconds
7200	1166 Undergraduates	6 seconds
2880	402 Master's	7 seconds
3060	137 Doctoral	22 seconds

Advantages:

- Deans of academic colleges would only need to attend one ceremony
- Combining doctoral, master's, and baccalaureate could increase faculty participation
- Seeing doctoral and master's presented could be an incentive for baccalaureate to continue with advanced study
- Even though this spreads out over two days, it makes for shorter days
- Breaking down the ceremonies by college (as opposed to separating graduate/professional students) was the Dean's unanimous preference

Disadvantages:

- This will require two days actual production time

Based on the May 2017 trial run, the committee would like to propose keeping the ceremony order the same:

Date	Time	Separated by college	May 2017
Day One	10AM	CAFE, CI, PH, GS	824
	2PM	B&E, HS, FA, NUR, PHARM	900
Day Two	10AM	A&S, SW, DES	841
	2PM	ED, ENG, MED	753

May Commencement Registrations As of May 7, 2017

College	UNDERGRADUATES	DOCTORAL	MASTERS	PhD's	DMA	EdD	EdS	DPT	DrPH	DNP	EdS	DDM	Pharm D
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment	352	10	29	10									
College of Arts & Sciences	557	45	25	45									
Gatton College of Business and Economics	421	8	66	8									
College of Communication and Information	300	4	21	4									
College of Design	50	0	20	0									
College of Education	254	33	69	23		10	15						
College of Engineering	310	19	15	19									
College of Fine Arts	81	12	18	1	11								
Graduate School		0	9	0									
College of Health Sciences	115	8	59	8									
College of Medicine		8	5	8									
College of Nursing	67	7	0	0						7			
College of Public Health	40	9	28	6					3				
College of Social Work	31	2	76	2									
College of Pharmacy		0	0	0									
Undergraduate Total	2578												
Graduate & Professional Total			605										
Total Participating both Ceremonies	3183												

	Registered	Last Year
Masters	455	402
Doctoral	165	137

	Registered	Last Year Total Undergrads = 2616	Actual	Extra
Friday, May 5th - 10am	802		824	22
Friday, May 5th - 2pm	862		900	38
Sunday May 7th - 10am	806		841	35
Sunday May 7th - 2pm	713		753	40
Total:			135	