

Graduation/Commencement

What is it 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 BA yet, you won’t even be handed a “diploma” while on the stage. (President Maxson will shake your hand, however – very strongly.) 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? The answer is yes – in years to come, you’ll be glad that you did.

So what do you need? Simple: a black cap (mortarboard) with tassel and a black gown. The color of your tassel is white (College of Liberal Arts). You may rent them from the campus bookstore, beginning mid-May (you get to keep the cap and tassel). Rental prices, as well as other commencement information, are available in a brochure or via the university web site at: <http://www.csulb.edu/projects/commencement/>

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 date itself may be found on the CSULB commencement web site. You are requested to line up at 12:15. You will be handed an index card, on which you will be asked to write your name, degree and department. Bachelor degree students are lined up by department, alphabetically. At approximately 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 President Maxson 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. You’ll shake the hand of one of the Deans, then continue across the stage to where Dr. Maxson is standing and shake his hand (caution: he’s got a strong grip). A photographer will take your picture at this point, and after you step back down off the stage, you’ll pose for another photo before taking your seat again (pick up your program again before sitting).

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 (seating is first come, with no reservations or tickets).

Where can you get great photo ops? In the Psych quad: 1) Against the off-white buildings – they will be repainted just before commencement; 2) Against the ivy on the outside of the north stairwell. Or use the ivy on the wall behind the bookstore (a bit of a walk but worth it).

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. True, your back will be to the sun, but some people have been sunburned during commencement. Try on your gown and especially your cap ahead of time – make sure it’s the correct size!

When do you get your diploma? First, the Enrollment Services office clears you for graduation (this takes a few months to complete everyone). 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 notification that it is waiting for you. You may then ask for it to be mailed; however, it is recommended 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/>