

2024 COMMENCEMENT: STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Note: Before the ceremony begins, GSBS staff will “train” a few of the students/hooders who will be the first to march so that the remaining students/faculty can follow their lead

BEFORE THE CEREMONY

- Students (grads) should **arrive at the Rice dressing room no later than 8:30 a.m.** to get dressed in regalia, receive instructions, and line up for the processional.
- Do not wear leis or corsages on the outside of your regalia as they can get tangled up in your hood.
- For students receiving the **MS degree**, the **tassel** should be hanging down on the **RIGHT side of the hat. You can move to left side after walking across the stage.** (PhD students will wear tams that do not have tassels.)
- At 9:35 a.m., Dr. Wassim Chehab (for MS students) and Dr. Natalie Sirisaengtaksin (for PhD students) will ask students to follow them to a long hallway near the auditorium. Students should then get in the proper order – there will be two groups of students (MS first, and then PhD). Students will be in alphabetical order by last name as listed in the graduation program. Staff members will be on hand to assist.

NOTE: Please look at the commencement program to see exactly where you are in the lineup. The ceremony programs will be available in the dressing room.

- Students will each be given a hood to drape over their left forearm to carry into the auditorium (this will be demonstrated).
- Faculty hooders will then be led into the hall and asked to get in line behind their students. Faculty who will hood more than one student during the ceremony will line up behind their first student.
- Before entering the auditorium, please turn off all phones and pagers.
- Students and their advisors/hooders will walk single file into the auditorium behind this year’s Student Marshal, Dr. Pierre McCrea.
- **In the auditorium, students must sit in the seat that has been labeled with their name.** The hooder will most likely sit next to student in a chair marked “hooder.” That is not always the case, however, because some hooders are part of the stage party and will sit on stage, some hooders will hood multiple students, and some students will be hooded by our assistant hooder, Dr. Ambro van Hoof, who is part of the stage party. **It sounds complicated but don’t worry - everything will be fine if you sit in your assigned seat!**

DURING THE CEREMONY

- When the Dean announces each category of degree candidate (MS or PhD), students stand up and face the stage as a degree group to have their degrees conferred by the Presidents. Hooders stay seated while the degrees are conferred. After the degrees are conferred, and when directed to do so, hooders in the audience rise and stand with the students.

- Students and hooders go to the stage stairs ONE ROW AT A TIME (at Dr. McCrea's signal) and then as a row go up the stairs and line up along the wall of the auditorium. Be careful not to trip over robe as you climb the steps.
- Ms. Bunny Perez and Dr. Chehab (MS students) or Dr. Sirisaengtaksin (PhD students) will stand just off stage to make sure the correct student goes on stage. Dr. Shadding (MS) or Dr. Frost (PhD) will be at the podium and when she/he calls your name, you and your hooder begin walking across the stage – Ms. Perez (or Dr. Chehab or Dr. Sirisaengtaksin) will signal when it is time. Stop at the designated mark on the floor for hooding.
- Give your hood to your hooder and then turn to face the audience. Your hooder stands behind you and places the hood over your head. Depending on how tall you and your hooder are, you might have to duck your head a bit. It is ok to shake hands with (or hug) your hooder after you have been hooded. An official photographer, sitting stage left in the loge area, will take a photo but it is also a photo opportunity for family and friends. The front row of seats in Stude Concert Hall will be left empty so that family members can come forward and take close-up photos if they want. They should return to their seats after their student has crossed the stage to make room for others.
- Dr. van Hoof will be on stage to hood students who do not have their own hooders. He will also assist faculty hooders, as needed.
- After the hooding, you and your hooder go separate ways:
 - You will walk over to where the deans are standing. When approaching the Deans and the Presidents, have RIGHT HAND UNDER LEFT HAND - left hand receives diploma, and right hand does the handshake with the Deans and Presidents. An official photographer, sitting stage right in the loge area, will take a photo but it is also a photo opportunity for family and friends.
 - Your hooder will leave the stage by going behind the seated stage party, exiting the stage and taking the next available seat in the open student/hooder row in the auditorium. Faculty hooding more than one student will sit in chairs on the side of the stage after hooding their first student. They will return to their chairs after each hooding and follow the stage party off the stage at the end of the ceremony.
- **For MS graduates only**, as you pass the Presidents and Dean, you may **move your tassel to the left side of your hat.**
- As you leave the stage to go back to your seat, Interim Associate Dean Karen Weinberg will assist you at the stairs.
- Sit in the next available seat in the open student/hooder row – the order will no longer matter at that point.
- Recessional: At the end of the ceremony, the stage party will leave the stage and start marching out of the auditorium. When the last stage person passes by her, this year's Faculty Marshal, Dr. Candelaria Gomez-Manzano, will lead the general faculty out of the auditorium. Dr. McCrea will fall in behind the last faculty member and lead your group (students/hooders) out of the auditorium.
- Please do not stop for photos after exiting the auditorium because that causes a back-up.

AFTER THE CEREMONY

- Enjoy the reception, take lots of photos with family, friends and faculty (GSA Officers will host a Photo Zone area that will be set up in the foyer – look for the balloons) - and then...
- Please return your rented regalia to the dressing room. MS graduates may keep their caps and tassels.

CONGRATULATIONS!!

