

How to Make MJC Graduation a Successful Experience Every Year: A Guide for Faculty

“We go to graduation for our students,
and for each other, and for ourselves.”

Attendance at MJC Commencement is not only a professional responsibility and an opportunity to support students, but it is a powerful way to build esprit d’corps. Here is a list of things we need to do to make graduation successful every year.

1. **Encourage Faculty Attendance.** “If everybody went to graduation, everybody would go.”

a. In March, the Academic Senate President should send out a graduation announcement and a brief, positive message reminding faculty of the commencement date, telling them that regalia is available, and encouraging them to make plans to attend. Students appreciate seeing not only their individual teachers but whole lines of faculty, dressed in their colorful regalia. All faculty—full-time and adjunct—are welcome to attend commencement. (See Template 1 for information to include.)

b. From that point, faculty need to encourage each other to attend. If we have decided to participate, we need to bring our friends. We need to tell others that we are attending. Graduation is actually kind of exhilarating, and the students are always so pleased and excited to see their instructors. It is fun to hear the band and to march in. We need to make graduation an event. Actually, it is an event: one in which we can be proud of watching our students succeed and be happy looking forward to summer break! The energy of faculty is the most important part of making this work.

c. The Academic Senate President also needs to appoint two Faculty Marshalls and give their names to the Chair of the Commencement Committee.

2. **Loan Out Regalia**

Lots of loaner caps and gowns are now available to faculty. Here is the process that should be followed for checking them out.

a. One month before commencement, the YFA Secretary should contact the MJC Costume Specialist in the Arts and Humanities Division to arrange for the rolling rack of regalia to be delivered to the Faculty Lounge two weeks before graduation. The YFA Secretary will then send out a memo to all faculty explaining the dates and times that regalia will be available during the last two weeks of the semester. The following information might be useful to include in that memo:

- 1.) In order to participate in Commencement, faculty need to be wearing academic regalia, which includes a Master’s gown and cap; a hood is, of course, a lovely, personal touch, but it is not required. Caps and gowns will be available for faculty to check out from rolling racks on a first come, first served basis in the Faculty Lounge. The gowns are clean but may need pressing. The caps do not include tassels; if a tassel is needed, contact the bookstore. The gowns should be dry cleaned after wearing and the regalia returned to the Faculty Lounge rolling racks during the week after graduation.

b. YFA Secretary will form a simple checkout sheet (name and phone number) for the regalia and run off instructions for return of regalia. (See Template 2)

3. RSVP

In order for the correct number of faculty chairs to be set up, it is important that faculty **RSVP**. The Chair of the Commencement Committee will email all faculty in April, reminding them of the Commencement date and asking them to RSVP by email or phone. If faculty need any special accommodations, they can be arranged at that time.

4. Send Out Reminders

During the last 3 weeks of the semester, the Senate Secretary should send out repeated reminder announcements of the time and date of commencement and the need to RSVP.

5. Arrive Before Commencement Begins

a. The ceremony begins at 6:00 pm and usually lasts about 90 minutes. Faculty meet in the Student Center on the East Campus and need to be there by **5:00 pm**

b. Refreshments provided by the MJC Foundation will be available in the Student Center before the ceremony begins. A mirror will also be available.

6 Line Up For Procession

Faculty line up for marching according to their year of hire. **This is important.** It is traditional that we honor senior faculty by placing them at the front of the line. If faculty want to move to sit with certain colleagues, they may move backward in line. Floor markers by year will be available to help with lining up. Two Faculty Marshalls will be on hand to guide and help faculty and lead them in two lines into the stadium. Faculty form a tunnel and welcome students as they enter. Then faculty are seated in front of the students and facing the stage area. They do not sit facing the setting sun.

7. Attend Commencement Reception

A reception for students, family and friends is held in the Student Center after Commencement has ended, and faculty are welcome and encouraged to attend. This is often a time that students enjoy introducing their professors to their family members and taking photos. Refreshments will be served.

8. Return Regalia

The gowns should be dry cleaned and everything returned to the Faculty Lounge rolling racks during the week after graduation when the Faculty Lounge will be open. The YFA Secretary will be responsible for looking at the checkout list and making any necessary phone calls if regalia is not returned and then call the MJC Costume Specialist to arrange for pickup of the rolling racks.

Template 1: Here is information the Senate President can use in sending faculty an invitation to commencement.

Faculty Participation in MJC Commencement: What You Need to Know

Graduation is an important event for our students, and one of the most exciting parts for those students is when they see not only their individual teachers but whole lines of faculty, dressed in their colorful regalia, marching in to support and proudly clap for the graduates. All faculty—full-time and adjunct—are encouraged to attend. Here are some things for you to know about participating.

1. In order to participate, you need to be wearing academic regalia, which includes a Master's gown and cap; a hood is, of course, a lovely, personal touch, but it is not required. There are around _____ caps and gowns available to be loaned out to faculty. They will be available for faculty to check out from rolling racks on a first come, first served basis in the Faculty Lounge from _____. The gowns are clean but may need pressing. The caps do not include tassels; if you need a tassel, contact the bookstore. The gowns should be dry cleaned after wearing and the regalia returned to the Faculty Lounge rolling racks during the week after graduation: _____.
2. MJC Commencement this year is on _____. In order for the correct number of chairs to be set up, it is important that you **RSVP** by emailing the Chair of the Commencement Committee or calling the Campus Life Office at x6704. If any special accommodations are needed, you can arrange them at that time.
3. The ceremony begins at 6:00 pm and usually lasts about 90 minutes. Faculty meet in the Student Center on the East Campus and need to be there by **5:00 pm**.
4. Refreshments provided by the MJC Foundation will be available in the Student Center before the ceremony begins. A mirror will also be available.
5. Faculty line up for marching according to their year of hire. **This is important.** It is traditional that we honor senior faculty by placing them at the front of the line. If faculty want to move to sit with certain colleagues, they may move backward in line. Floor markers by year will be available to help with lining up. Two Faculty Marshalls will be on hand to guide and help faculty and lead them in two lines into the stadium. Faculty form a tunnel and welcome students as they enter. Then faculty are seated in front of the students and facing the stage area. They do not sit facing the setting sun.
6. A Commencement Reception for students, family and friends is held in the Student Center after Commencement has ended, and faculty are welcome and encouraged to attend. This is often a time that students enjoy introducing their professors to their family members and taking photos. Refreshments will be served.

Template 2: Here is a template the YFA Secretary can use to run off instructions for faculty on returning regalia. A stack of these can be left near the sign out clipboard.

To Faculty Using a Loaner Cap and Gown:

1. First, thank you so much for participating in Commencement this year!
2. The gown you are borrowing is clean, but it may need pressing.
3. The available caps do not include tassels; if a tassel is needed, contact the MJC bookstore.
4. The gowns should be dry cleaned and everything returned to the Faculty Lounge rolling racks during the week after graduation, _____, when the Faculty Lounge will be open. Cross your name off after you have returned the regalia. And then have a great summer.

If you have any questions or concerns, you can talk to YFA Secretary, whose office is near the Faculty Lounge, 209-575-6699.