




Executive Memorandum 24-014

April 18, 2024

From: Stephen Perez, President 

Subject: Policy to Establish the Commencement Policy Committee

Upon the recommendation of the Academic Senate and with the concurrence of the Provost, I approve the Policy to Establish the Commencement Policy Committee.

Policy Title:	EM 24-014: Policy to Establish the Commencement Policy Committee
Contact:	
Supersedes:	EM 14-015: Policy on Commencement Exercises
Revision:	
Enabling Legislation or Executive Order:	

POLICY TO ESTABLISH THE COMMENCEMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

Scope of the Policy

This policy establishes the Commencement Policy Committee and authorizes this committee to partner collaboratively with the Office of University Public Engagement (UPE) to plan and recommend policies, procedures, and guidelines related to carrying out commencement exercises.

Specifically, the committee, in conjunction with UPE, will establish and periodically review a variety of commencement policies, and procedures in regard to: graduate attire, special recognition of students graduating with honors, commencement etiquette and decorum, security protocols and emergency protocols, and use of campus facilities. These commencement guidelines and procedures will be published on the University Public Engagement Commencement webpage.

The Commencement Policy Committee aims to provide an inclusive commencement experience. Policies and practices implemented should strive to reduce barriers for graduates and guests to access and attend in-person ceremonies, including consideration of cost, physical barriers, and time constraints of ceremonies.

Committee Membership

The Commencement Policy Committee will be composed of voting members:

- one faculty representative from each of the academic colleges, appointed by the Dean of the College, affirmed by the Executive Committee of Academic Senate;
- one representative from the Office of Graduate Studies, appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies;
- one staff representative appointed by Staff Council;
- the Grand Marshal(s) of Commencement ceremonies from the previous academic year;
- two student representatives appointed by the Associated Students; and
- Director, University Public Engagement, or designee

Faculty and staff appointees and the Office of Graduate Studies representative will serve for three years, renewable. Student appointees will serve for 1 year, renewable. The chair of the committee will be elected from the faculty members of the committee at the last meeting of the committee in each academic year.

Convening the Committee

Early in the fall and spring semesters, normally within the first three weeks, the chair of the committee will convene the committee to review policy and discuss any needed changes. Typically, the committee will meet twice a semester to address commencement needs and challenges, or more frequently as needed.

Substitutions for committee members due to planned leaves of absence

Committee vacancies may arise due to planned absences, such as sabbatical and medical leave. In circumstances where the vacancy will last for one semester or less, the appointing authority of the member has the option to appoint a substitute appointee for the duration of the planned leave of absence. The chair of the committee shall notify the appointing authority of the vacancy and request a temporary substitute for the duration of the absence.

Replacement of committee members due to excessive absences or resignation

Unplanned vacancies may arise due to varying circumstances. Members who miss more than 50% of committee meetings without cause in one semester or who resign from the committee shall be replaced by their appointing authority with a new appointee, who will complete the term of the member replaced. When a vacancy of a member arises, the chair of the committee shall contact the appointing authority and notify them of the vacancy. The committee chair shall request the vacancy be filled following the appointing authority's typical procedures to complete the term of the outgoing member.

Reporting Structure

The Commencement Policy Committee reports to the Chair of the Academic Senate annually, or more frequently, as emergent concerns or changes arise that would significantly change established commencement ceremony practice.