

## **Regarding Graduate Commencement**

President Paino and Provost Mikhalevsky have asked for a recommendation regarding graduate commencement. Since the UAAC felt that they didn't have enough information to be able to recommend any change, Jackie Gallagher (Chair, UFC) decided to provide more information:

Currently there is a graduate commencement, with the exact same pomp and circumstance as the undergraduate commencement (full BOV, all marshals, speaker, alumni speaker, flowers, photographers), starting about 7pm on the Friday before undergraduate commencement, in Dodd Hall. After the ceremony there is a big crush as people leave. It is not an entirely satisfactory experience because afterwards it is dark and there is nowhere to meet and greet graduates and their families or to congratulate them; this is especially true when it is raining.

Having two ceremonies is exhausting for the staff that organizes them. There are costs associated, though most vendors are contracted for both events. Dodd does need to be cleaned in order to serve as a streaming site for the next day. A report from the Provost states, "In a review completed in fall 2017, it was determined that 83 people worked 166 hours just that evening. This did not take into consideration any prior planning for the event. This diverts resources from planning the primary event with 8,000 guests on Saturday." So, while there would be a cost savings, there would be a greater savings in effort and time among the Commencement Committee.

Graduate students could attend the undergraduate ceremony. However, many of them participated in that exact ceremony a year or two before, and the bulk of the ceremony is not relevant to them. The relationship of the graduate student to their college/department and the institution is different from that of the undergraduate student. To have students and families leave part way through would be awful.

Three separate Hooding Ceremonies have been suggested. These would be less formal than a full commencement ceremony, without the BOV, marshals or an outside speaker. The President and other administrators could be invited, however. Hooding would take place in a large lecture theatre (e.g. Monroe 116), allowing room for friends and family to attend. It could occur on Friday evening or Saturday afternoon. College deans and faculty could speak, degrees could be conferred, and photographs could be taken. There would be space outside the lecture hall for a reception with food and time to mingle and congratulate the new graduates. By tradition, graduate commencement is offbeat; this kind of ceremony could be tailored to fit the needs of each college, and could ultimately be in three separate buildings. If each college chose to start their ceremony 45 minutes after the previous one, then President Paino could attend all three. While facilities will need to provide tables and trash cans for the food, the set up and clean up would be far less than required for the current ceremony, and the Commencement Committee that organizes both commencements currently would barely need to be involved with this one.

One hooding ceremony for all three colleges could be considered. However, graduate students from different colleges don't know each other and the concept of one's own professors speaking at a ceremony is likely to be more appealing, more memorable and more personal, to students.

Recommendation for one full undergraduate commencement and one or three separate Hooding Ceremonies is not based on the number of students who attend, although we know that number is small (less than 100 students in total in each of 2018 and 2017). UMW should have some sort of ceremony regardless of how many students participate.