Cap Decoration Guidelines

The Academic Costume Code prohibits the decoration of caps (mortarboards) in recognition that commencement is a formal occasion. As such, the university strongly discourages the decoration of caps. While the university recognizes that this is an important activity for some students, students choosing to wear a decorated cap during the ceremony must adhere to these guidelines.

In addition to ensuring ceremony decorum, these guidelines exist:

- To ensure the safety of degree candidates when negotiating stairs and routes; and
- To ensure that ceremony participants and guests have unobstructed views

The university reserves the right to request that degree candidates change inappropriate attire, including but not limited to caps, before they participate in the commencement ceremony. Egregious violations of the decoration guidelines or refusal to comply with staff enforcement of the guidelines on ceremony day may result in a disciplinary referral to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility Education.

Degree candidates may decorate only the flat, top area of the mortarboard and adornments must lay flat on the surface of the cap. Decorations cannot extend beyond the border of the cap or fall below the perimeter. Cap decorations that are motivated by animosity against a person or group because of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, national origin, or homelessness, or which infringe on the rights and freedom of others will not be tolerated. Decorations may not include the following:

- Profanity
- Symbols for or references to alcohol or controlled substances
- Bows, ribbons or tulle
- Three dimensional objects
- Flowers or flower crowns
- Lighted objects

Note: This is not an exhaustive list. Degree candidates are encouraged to review examples of prohibited decorations for additional guidance. Degree candidates who arrive on ceremony day with a cap in violation of these guidelines will receive a replacement cap to wear during the ceremony. Degree candidates may then retrieve the decorated cap after the ceremony. Please email commencement@towson.edu with questions about these guidelines.