Commencement Ceremony Rehearsal for Doctoral Candidates and Thesis/Dissertation Chairpersons

Arrival and Rehearsal
1. Doctoral candidates and their thesis/dissertation chairpersons are to attend the commencement rehearsal. The rehearsal will occur in the Towson Center gym on the date scheduled for the commencement (See below dates).
2. Arrive 90 minutes before your commencement ceremony begins: 7:30 AM for morning commencement and 12:00 PM for afternoon commencement, and 4:30 PM for evening commencement.
3. Meet on the left side of the Towson Center gym for the rehearsal. Follow the signs for graduate students as you enter the main doors.
4. Contact disability Support Services in advance, if you have mobility challenges. Wheel chairs can be arranged to transport you.

Gowning
5. Bring your gowns, but leave your valuables with family members or in your cars as there will not be a secure location for storage. If you must bring personal items, they should be small enough to carry in the pockets of your clothing or in a very small pouch/purse that is concealable under your gown.
6. Wear comfortable shoes as you will need to walk at least ¼ mile from the Towson Center where all graduating students are to convene to the SECU Arena where the commencement ceremony will take place.
7. You will robe at the Towson Center. Place the tassel of your cap to the left. The tag on the inside of your cap indicates the back of the cap.
8. Doctoral candidate hoods will be distributed during the rehearsal. A green hood is for a Doctor of Audiology; a blue hood is for a Doctor of Education; a yellow hood is for a Doctor of Science; and a white hood is for a Doctor of Philosophy. Drape the hood over your right forearm with the colored fabric facing toward your hand and the black button hook by the collar (narrow part of the hood) facing the zipper of your gown.

Procession
9. Doctoral candidates and their thesis/dissertation chairpersons lead the student procession from the Towson Center to the SECU Arena for the commencement ceremony. The procession starts at 8:30 AM for morning ceremonies and at 11:30 AM for afternoon ceremonies, and 5:30 PM for evening ceremonies.
10. You will enter the SECU Arena at the doors nearest the stage, process down the side aisles then up the center aisle. Depending on the number of doctoral students in your college, you will sit only on the left side or on both sides of the center aisle. Thesis/dissertation chairpersons will sit to the right of their doctoral candidates. In some circumstances, the doctoral candidate may sit on the left side of the aisle and the thesis/dissertation chair may sit on the right side of the aisle. Follow the directions of the commencement marshals.

Hooding Ceremony
11. When the Provost says “Will the candidates for the doctoral degree in (name of program) please stand and proceed to the stage” all doctoral candidates and the thesis/dissertation chairpersons in that program are to stand and ascend the stairs on the left side of the stage (i.e., the left side of the stage as you face it from the audience, also known as stage right). Walk in front of the stage right podium and towards the edge of the stage right table just far enough so that all doctoral candidates are on stage but remain “stage right.” Face the audience. The thesis/dissertation chair follows the doctoral candidate when ascending the stairs and stands behind the doctoral candidate while on stage.
12. Remain standing there while the President says “I am pleased to receive these candidates for the doctoral degree...” Do not move until your name is called for hooding.
13. The dean of the academic college and the dean of Graduate Studies stand in front of the stage right table. The college dean stands to the right of the graduate dean.

Stage Right table

X X
College Dean Grad Dean

14. The department chairperson announces the name of first doctoral student to be hooded. ONLY that doctoral student and his or her thesis/dissertation chairperson move toward the center of the stage right table, next to the college dean. The doctoral candidate is in the middle; the thesis/dissertation chair is to the candidate’s right and the college dean is to the candidate’s left. All face the audience.

Stage Right table

X X X X
Chairperson Doctoral Candidate College Dean Grad Dean

15. As the department chair reads the name of the thesis/dissertation and committee members, the college dean takes the hood from the candidate’s arm and passes the hood behind the candidate’s back. The college dean and the thesis/dissertation chair jointly hood the doctoral candidate, signifying doctoral status. The hooding occurs as the title of the thesis/dissertation is announced.

16. The graduate dean hands the diploma to the “new doctor.”

17. The new doctor shakes hands with the thesis/dissertation chairperson, the college dean, and the graduate dean.

18. The new doctor then walks to stage left table until all doctoral candidates are hooded. If there is only one new doctor, walk to the center of the stage.

19. The thesis/dissertation chair walks behind the stage right podium while the new doctor walks across the stage.

20. Steps 13 through 19 are repeated until all candidates are hooded.
21. The President says “Let us congratulate our new doctorate(s) once more.”

22. The new doctor(s) then descend the center stage left steps. Concurrently, the thesis dissertation chair(s) descend the center stage right stairs and return to their chairs.

The link to the official commencement ceremony site is http://www.towson.edu/academics/commencement/index.html.

Review for parking, clothing recommendations, ticket options, etc.