Cap Decoration Guidelines

The Academic Costume Code prohibits the decoration of caps (mortar boards) 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 follow strict guidelines developed by the Office of the Provost.

The guidelines will be enforced the day of the ceremony and the university reserves the right to request that graduates change inappropriate attire before they will be allowed to participate in the commencement ceremony. Egregious violations of the decoration guidelines may result in a disciplinary referral to the Office of Student Conduct & Civility.

Only the flat, top area of the mortar board may be decorated 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 and any adornment or message deemed inappropriate or determined to pose a safety risk, will not be permitted. Please email commencement@towson.edu with questions about these guidelines.