Dear Graduating Senior,

This letter is being sent to students who might be graduating in May, 2012. Some students will receive it who are not graduating. The deadline for filing for the May 2012 was last November. If you failed to file an application, please do so IMMEDIATELY. You will have to pay a late application fee.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY LETTER you receive about Commencement. All information about Commencement will be sent to your Dominican email account. If you have arranged for your Dominican email account to forward messages to a private account, those messages will be sent to you. If you have never accessed your Dominican email account, please visit the information technology page on the Dominican website so that you can set up your student account.

Please refer your parents, family members, significant others, and friends to the following site where they (and you) can obtain information about Commencement. This site will be updated regularly. Refer them to: http://www.dominican.edu/about/current/commencement.html

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION...READ CAREFULLY**

GRADUATION FOR UNDERGRADUATES, THOSE RECEIVING A BACHELOR’S DEGREE, WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2012 AT 10:30AM IN THE FOREST MEADOWS AMPHITHEATER ON THE CAMPUS OF DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

**SOME COMMON QUESTIONS AND ISSUES ABOUT GRADUATION**

The next few pages contain information pertinent to Commencement. Most questions you will have about graduation activities are answered here.

**TICKETS FOR COMMENCEMENT SEATING (Please carefully read this section.)**

All graduating seniors receive five tickets for seating at Commencement. Tickets are needed only in case of inclement weather. No senior will receive more than five tickets for any reason and no waiting list for additional tickets is kept. There are no extra tickets. TICKETS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO SENIORS WHOSE ACCOUNTS ARE CURRENT. You will be able to pick up your five tickets on Thursday, March 15, between 10 A.M. and 5 P.M. and on Saturday, March 17 between 10 A.M and 2 P.M. at the Dominican University bookstore. Beginning Monday, March 19, tickets will be available in the Business Services Office. Office hours are Monday-Thursday, 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. and Friday, 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. Tickets will be available on Commencement morning if it looks like the graduation ceremony will be held indoors. We ask all seniors to limit the total number of guests to five even if Commencement is held outdoors. Please remember: your Dominican account must be current in order to pick up tickets and you must have applied for graduation in the Registrar’s Office.
WHERE DOES COMMENCEMENT TAKE PLACE?
Commencement is scheduled for Forest Meadows Amphitheater, across Grand Avenue from main campus. It is located beyond the Conlan Recreation Center. PLEASE GO LOOK AT THE SITE ASAP. Forest Meadows is rustic. It is outdoors. Guests will need comfortable shoes for walking over gravel to the entrance to the amphitheater. Remind them to bring sunscreen, hats, cushions for seating, and water. Gates open for seating at 8:00AM. It will be difficult to find a seat by 9:30AM. Seating is not guaranteed. Last year several hundred guests had to stand throughout the ceremony.

HOW LONG DOES THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY LAST?
The program starts around 10:30AM. In each of the past five years it started at 10:20AM. Yes, it started early. It should end before 12:30PM. Following the ceremony there will be a reception on the lawns outside the amphitheater. Punch and similar beverages and cookies/scones/similar will be served. Because the ceremony usually lasts so long, it is difficult for some people, especially those with medical issues, to sit in the sun and heat for that long. There is no shade in Forest Meadows Amphitheater. Be kind to your guests and inform them of the length of the program and what the graduation site is like.

WHAT TIME MUST I BE PRESENT FOR COMMENCEMENT?
Arrive no later than 9:00am on campus. Pick up a card with your name on it at one of four tables, organized by school, near Angelico Hall and then line according to the SCHOOL in which you are enrolled. There are four schools: The School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, The School of Business and Leadership, the School of Education and Counseling Psychology, and the School of Health and Natural Sciences. Students do not have to march in alphabetical order, but they do have to march with students in their school. The procession to Forest Meadows will start around 9:30am. You will hand the card you receive to the dean of your school who will read your name at Commencement. If you have a name that you suspect the dean may have trouble pronouncing, please speak during the previous week to the dean and tell him/her how to pronounce it. Please print it phonetically on the card before you hand the card to the dean.

MUST I ATTEND EVERY GRADUATION ACTIVITY?
No. Attendance is not required at any event. You choose the events you wish to attend.

RESERVE HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS NOW
There are many events in the area occurring on Commencement weekend, so book rooms for your guests now. No, it is not too early to do so. Family and friends will not be happy (and that’s an understatement) if they cannot sleep in the area the night before your graduation. Several local hotels in the past have given discounts to guests of graduating Dominican students on Commencement weekend. Be sure to ask about a discount when you book a room. Hotels that sometimes offer discounts include the Best Western Corte Madera, the Acqua Hotel in Mill Valley, Four Points by Sheraton in Terra Linda, and Embassy Suites in San Rafael. But ask any hotel you call if they will give a discount to families of Dominican graduates.

WHERE/WHEN DO I PURCHASE MY GOWN, HOOD, AND MORTARBOARD?
The Bookstore will sell academic regalia (gown, hood, and mortarboard). The regalia package will be available for purchase in the Bookstore on Thursday, March 15, between 10AM and 5PM and on Saturday, March 17, between 10AM-2PM. Beginning Monday, March 19, academic regalia may be purchased during the bookstore’s regular hours. The cost for regalia is expected to be sixty-three dollars plus tax. The University does not maintain any gowns or hoods for students to borrow for use at Commencement.
WHAT'S A HOOD?
A hood is the garment that goes over your shoulders. It is black and has a colorful trim. The color of the trim signifies the degree (not necessarily the major) you are receiving. The colorful hood originated in 12th century Europe. At that time a hood and cape were the daily dress for students, most of whom were preparing to be clergy. As colleges and universities added programs of study, each degree was designated by a distinct color. That tradition continues.

WHAT COLOR HOOD SHOULD I BUY?
The following information should be used by students in purchasing a hood of the appropriate color.

School of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
White trim on the hood

Exceptions:
  Fine Arts (including Dance) Brown color trim on the hood

School of Health and Natural Sciences
Nursing Apricot color trim on the hood
Science, Occupational Therapy Gold color trim on the hood

School of Business and Leadership
Drab color trim on the hood

School of Education and Counseling Psychology
Education degrees Light blue trim on the hood

YOU WILL BE HOODED DURING THE COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY
During the Commencement ceremony, just before you receive your diploma cover from the President of Dominican University, you will be hooded by the Vice President or Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs. You will be carrying your hood when you walk forward when your name is called. You will hand the hood to either of those people and he/she will place it over your head. Some of you may have to remove your mortarboard to be hooded.

WHERE SHOULD WE MAIL YOUR DIPLOMA?
Official diplomas will be mailed by late September. Make sure that the Office of the Registrar has the correct address to where you want your diploma mailed.

IS THERE A REHEARSAL FOR COMMENCEMENT?
Yes. It’s at 8:30am on Thursday, May 10. Pick up a card from your school’s table, located outside Angelico Hall. The Alumni Relations Office will provide pastries and beverages at 8:00am outside Angelico Hall.

COMMENCEMENT MASS
The Commencement Mass will be held on Friday, May 11, at 3:00PM in St. Raphael’s Church in downtown San Rafael. All families and friends, Catholic and non-Catholic, graduate and undergraduate students, are invited to and encouraged to attend the Mass. The Mass usually lasts about one hour. Do not wear your academic regalia to Mass. There are no special seating arrangements. Students usually sit with their families during the service.

COMMENCEMENT VIDEO
Students will be able to purchase a video of the entire Commencement program. Information will be sent to each student’s email account in early May. Order forms will be available on Commencement morning at Forest Meadows.
WILL PARKING BE DIFFICULT ON COMMENCEMENT DAY?
This is a question you don’t have to ask. YES. Available spaces will fill up early. Parking on the central core of campus around the classroom buildings will be restricted to trustees and honored guests. Encourage your guests to carpool. Students should park their cars near Caleruega, the Library, and Edgehill Village. Students should not park at Conlan. DO NOT PARK on Palm or Olive Avenues. Cars parked there will be towed. Please tell your guests not to park there. The towing cost and the cost to recover your vehicle is, at the time of this letter, $360. The limited handicapped spaces at Conlan Recreation Center will be reserved for cars with special blue handicapped placards. The San Rafael Police Department will strictly enforce illegally parked vehicles. Please walk from the Conlan Center lot to the Amphitheater to determine if your guests will be able to navigate that distance. You may find it necessary to rent a wheelchair.

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES
There have been medical emergencies at each of the last few Commencements. The nurse practitioner from the Campus Health Center or paramedics responded to each of them. We will have the paramedics and the Health Center staff available again this year. They will be at a first aid station located at the entrance to the amphitheater, just behind the large set of bleachers. Guests who lack the stamina to sit through a ceremony that might last for two hours in potentially very warm conditions and direct sunlight should be advised to consider their health status before committing to attend graduation.

ORDERING GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS
Herff-Jones, the company that sells graduation announcements, class rings, and graduation memorabilia, will correspond directly with all students about ordering graduation announcements. Dominican has nothing to do with announcements and does not provide announcements. Before mid-March that company will mail an order form for announcements to you. You decide if you want to order announcements through Herff-Jones, or if you want to print your own, or if you want to use the services of a commercial printer. Students will be able to order/purchase announcements on Thursday, March 15 (10AM-5PM) and Saturday, March 17 (10AM-2PM) in the Dominican bookstore. Use this link to obtain more information about ordering rings and announcements from the Herff-Jones Company: http://www.herffjones.com/college/dominican.

SENIOR RECOGNITIONS
I am sending a separate email to you about senior recognitions at Commencement. This information also will be posted on the Commencement website at the Dominican webpage. In essence, you will have the opportunity to nominate yourself or someone to be Senior Speaker at the graduation ceremony. Other special recognitions include the Outstanding Student Award and the Veritas Cup Award, which goes to someone who has been a friend to the class.

HONORS MEDALLIONS
Students graduating cum laude, magna cum laude, or summa cum laude may pick up their honors medallions on the day of the Honors Recognition program. Watch for information about that special event. Medallions may be picked up in the Registrar’s Office after the Honors Recognition program.

COMMENCEMENT TRIBUTE
The Commencement Tribute is a way to give thanks to a friend, parents, family member, classmate, teacher or other person important in your life. Perhaps you want to direct the tribute to someone who has inspired you and made you go “the extra mile.” Your tribute will appear in the 2012 Commencement program and will support student scholarships. For more information, see the accompanying flyer. Your cost for printing the Commencement Tribute is $20.12.
I KNOW SOMEONE WHO IS GRADUATING BUT DID NOT RECEIVE THIS LETTER
Tell that person to contact the Registrar’s Office. That office provides all other offices on campus with information about who is graduating. If someone did not receive this letter it may be because that person did not apply last fall for graduation, or she/he may have had an address change.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE/SIGNERS…DOES A GUEST NEED A SIGNER?
Because of high demand around graduation time, the agency that sends signers to us has requested that we ask if a signer will be needed. That agency does not want to send a signer to a place where a signer is not needed. That may keep another institution from obtaining a signer’s services. Please let me know by April 27 if you know that a signer will be needed. Please email me at john.kennedy@dominican.edu.

That’s the information you need to know right now about Commencement. Remember to check your Dominican email account and the Dominican website for future updates and other information. Please understand that I send out information about graduation, but I have nothing to do with who graduates or who receives academic recognitions! Again, congratulations if you are graduating.

Sincerely,

John Kennedy
Vice President for Student Life