

Memo and FAQ

Office of Community Life

To: PSR 2016 Graduates
From: Ann Jefferson, 510-849-8257, ajefferson@psr.edu
Date: June 18, 2015
Re: Graduation deadlines, Robe Rental, Announcements & Special Activities

Plans for Graduation 2016 activities are underway! We need information from you to complete those plans. Please read this Memo and the FAQ section, and fill out the graduation form which is available as an attachment at www.psr.edu/commencement. E-mail your completed form to Tara at tlimbaugh@psr.edu or return your form to the Office of Community Life box at the reception desk **by Friday, March 4th**.

If you received this message, but are *not* planning to graduate, contact Delphine Hwang, Assistant Dean & Registrar (registrar@psr.edu or call 510 849-8252) ASAP.



IMPORTANT DATES!

Please mark your calendars---

Graduation Form (this is required!) **DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 4th**

Senior Dinner **Friday, May 6th at 6:30P** **Mudd 100**
Join President David Vásquez-Levy, for this special dinner gathering for graduates, their spouses and partners or invited guests.

Senior Chapel **Tuesday, May 17th at 11:10A** **Chapel**
Coordinated by Dr. Sharon Fennema and the Chapel Planning Committee, this service celebrates the graduates' accomplishments and offers a blessing as they move into ministries and leadership. If you are interested in planning or participating in this event, contact Sharon Fennema at sfennema@psr.edu.

Eschatos Party **Friday, May 20th at 3:00P** **PSR Quad**
An informal end-of-school year party hosted by CAPSR—join us on the Quad for strawberries and beverages with lots of fun and games! (The Community Swap of gently used and no longer needed items begins at 2 pm)

Graduation Day (Tentative Schedule) **Sunday, May 22nd at 4:00P** **First Cong'l Church of Berkeley**

1:45	Students should be present & robed at FCCB
2:00	Rehearsal Begins (for graduates, faculty, and trustees).
3:15	Class Photo taken
3:30	Doors open to guests at FCCB
4:00	Commencement Ceremony begins
5:30/6:00	President's reception follows graduation at FCCB.
7:00	Clean-up

FAQ Frequently Asked Questions



GRADUATION FORM

Form due on Friday, March 4, 2016

WHAT IS THE GRADUATION FORM?

Whether or not a graduate plans to participate in the PSR Commencement Program on Sunday, May 24, at First Congregational Church of Berkeley, the graduation form MUST BE completed and submitted. Note the graduation form is different from the [other required forms](#) that you need to submit to the Registrar's Office (Assistant Dean Delphine Hwang).

WHY DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A GRADUATION FORM?

Submit the graduation form to the Office of Community Life lets us know whether or not you plan to attend the Commencement ceremony. It also allows you to order announcements, even if you will not be attending the ceremony. Completing the form with (1) your name, degree, thesis title (if your program requires a thesis), and previous degrees also provides the information needed as it will appear in the commencement program. Again, even if you do not plan to attend, your name and degree will appear in the commencement program.

WHERE CAN I GET THE FORM?

Go to <http://www.psr.edu/commencement> for the link in pdf format. E-mail your completed electronic "graduation form" (pdf) in to Tara at tlimbaugh@psr.edu OR submit a printed version to the Office of Community Life mailbox at the Holbrook front desk.

DATE & LOCATION OF PSR GRADUATION



WHERE IS THE GRADUATION TAKING PLACE?

The commencement takes place (Sunday) May 22nd at **First Congregational Church of Berkeley** (address: 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley CA 94704), located in the south side of the UC Berkeley campus (15 minutes' walk from PSR).

Where can my guests and I get directions to the location of the ceremony and reception?

(1) Directions are attached in each graduation announcement (1/4 page sheet), which you distribute to

your attending guests. Graduation announcements will be available no later than the second week in April. [Click here for map.](#)

SEATING AT FCCB

In the past, there have been occasions when commencements were overcrowded. To solve this problem, the Dean's Office implemented priority seating tickets for graduates' families and guests. Each graduate is granted **5 priority seating tickets**, which is common practice for academic institutions in the U.S. The five priority seating tickets are inserted in the announcements.

WHAT IF I NEED MORE THAN 5 PRIORITY SEATING TICKETS?

Since not all students have guests, it is possible there will be extra priority seating tickets available for graduates who would like more than 5 priority tickets. If you would like more than 5 priority tickets, please fill out Section 7 of the graduation form. However, be aware if you indicate a number in Section 7 there is **NO GUARANTEE** that extra tickets will be available; it all depends upon the number of tickets returned to the Office of Community Life. If there are extra tickets available, access to these tickets is on first-come first-serve basis; so submit your forms early so you can be on the waiting list. **This year, in order to be fair to all students' families and guests, we will distribute a maximum of 15 priority seating tickets/per student.**

PRIORITY SEATING vs NON-PRIORITY SEATING

Only guests with “priority seating tickets” have access to reserved seats on the main floor. Guests without tickets may be seated on the balcony, but will not have a guaranteed seating space. Non-priority seating space (on the balcony) is available on a **first-come first-serve** basis only.

How will my family (or guests) know about seating arrangements at FCCB?

Information about “priority seating” versus “non-priority seating” is printed on the back of your guests’ ticket, along with page insert of a map and directions to FCCB.

WHEN CAN I RECEIVE TICKETS SO THAT I CAN DISTRIBUTE THEM TO FAMILY & GUESTS?

The announcements, priority tickets, maps and directions will be distributed when they arrive in the Office of Community Life (in April). Or you may pick them up with your robe during the first week of May. If you are a commuter, they may be mailed directly to you if you wish. Please indicate this request on your graduation form (item 9).

GRADUATION ANNOUNCEMENTS vs. INVITATIONS

We do not have graduations “invitations”—that is, an invitation made especially for each of your individual guest. Instead, we have generic graduation announcement cards that indicate the graduation date, time, location, speaker and theme. **PSR provides 5 commencement announcements to each graduate at no cost. You may request for extra announcements for \$0.50 each.** Students use the extra announcements for the extra tickets they have ordered. Sometimes they use it not necessarily to invite family and friends to the commencement, but to officially let them know that they are graduating.

GRADUATION SCHEDULE on May 22

The tentative schedule on May 24:

1:45	Students should be present & ready to robe at FCCB
2:00	Rehearsal Begins (for graduating seniors, faculty, trustees)
3:15	Class Photo is taken
3:30	Doors open to guests at FCCB
4:00	Commencement Ceremony begins
5:30/6:00	President’s Reception follows after graduation at FCCB
7:00	Clean-up

GOWNS & HOODS



WHAT AM I WEARING FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY?

(1) A black robe, no other color is allowed. PSR graduates do not wear caps.

A reminder on hoods

If you are a graduate in a Masters or a Doctoral degree program, please remember that your hood will not be given to you before the ceremony. You will be hooded during the ceremony on the stage.

If you are a graduate in a Certificate program, you will not receive a hood.

What should I wear under my robe?

Under the black robe, you can wear anything you want. Some people wear Sunday clothes, others wear jeans and t-shirt.

WHEN AND WHERE CAN I PICK UP MY RENTED ROBE?

You will pick up the robe at the Office of Community Life Office when they arrive. Tara Limbaugh will notify you via email. (*Remember:* Due to costs, mailing robes directly to students is not an option).

WHY DON'T WE WEAR CAPS?

It's not part of PSR tradition to wear caps. Evidence: Check out the hallway that leads to faculty offices in the 1st floor in Holbrook. There you will find pictures of PSR grads since the turn of the 20th century.



COST: How much does the renting a robe and hood through Community Life cost?

(1) Robes: To rent a robe through PSR will cost you \$50.

(2) Hoods: Hoods for your PSR degree are *free*, but, must be returned following the ceremony.

(3) Hood for a previous degree: During commencement, some students like to wear hoods of degrees received previously from other institutions in the United States. This is not required, but an option. If you would like wear the hood of your previous degree(s) granted from other institutions in the United States, the cost to order the hood is \$25 and you need to fill out Section 6 of the graduation form.

NOTE: This option is not available for those who graduated from institutions in other countries.

Are the robes and hoods mine to keep?

Unfortunately NO! The graduation robes and hoods are rented. They must be returned to the robe company. If you forget to return them, you will be contacted and reminded to return your rented robe and hood.

I would like to purchase my own robe and hood to keep. What should I do?

Community Life will *not* purchase robes and hoods for graduating seniors. Our business with Herff Jones Inc. (the caps and gown company) is *only* renting graduation outfits. So, if you plan to purchase your graduation outfit to keep, placing the order will be your responsibility. **You may purchase these items directly from the cap and gown company with which the Office of Community Life does business: Herff Jones Inc.,** or from any other company of your choice.

You may choose from any of these companies:

- 1) Bill Higbee at bayareagrad@gmail.com, Office: 408.234.9749.
- 2) You may also Google search graduation robe & hood suppliers/companies in the U.S.

How to place the order: Tell the sales representative the name of your school (Pacific School of Religion), and the degree you will be receiving along with your request to purchase a graduation outfit.

A precaution: If you plan to purchase a robe and hood in time for the May 2016 graduation, make sure to order far in advance, preferably in February or early March at the latest, as you will need to allow at least 6 weeks' processing time. Cap and gown companies tend to be extremely busy at the end of the semester. Remember they do business with academic institutions throughout the United States.

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If you aren't able to purchase the robe and hood in February, then rent them through the Office of Community Life for the meantime, and purchase your robe and hood later (early in the summer).

Hood colors: Provided you inform the company of the name of your school and your degree, finding the colors of the hood for your particular degree should not be a problem. Cap and gown companies will have a record of the color of the hood for your school and degree.

Can I wear my own black robe or gown?

Yes, you may. Some people have worn their clerical gowns, while others have worn gowns from their undergraduate commencement ceremony.

Can I wear something different, something symbolic to either (1) support a particular cause, issue, belief or (2) to uphold my identity?

(Examples would be a particular colored ribbon or robe in a different color, other than black).

You may, but there is a caveat. If you are planning to do this, it is *highly recommended* you consult with the graduation planning team (Sharon Fennema & Ann Jefferson) to avoid misunderstandings. Rituals (like a commencement ceremony or a worship service) are not individual events where you can do anything you want willy-nilly. A graduation ceremony is ***collaborative and communal***. People tend to take rituals personally. While there is nothing wrong with wearing something different, other than the black robe and PSR hood, you do need to communicate with the graduation planning team about why you are wearing something different (i.e., why it is meaningful or has value for you). Guests and participants of the event can then be informed why you are wearing a unique symbol others are not wearing. This particular step prevents unnecessary confusion, misunderstandings, and wrong assumptions.

If I cannot pick up the robe at the Community Life Office what should I do?

If you cannot pick it up at the Community Life Office, then you may pick it up at the Robe Room at First Congregational Church on graduation day between 1:45 and 3:30 pm. If you decide to do this, just



remember there will be only one iron, so we strongly suggest that you do not pick up the robe at the last minute. If you pick up your robe in the last minute, we recommend that you bring your own iron.

When and where can I pick up my hood?

Please remember unless you've ordered a rented hood from a previous degree from another institution, the hood for the degree you are receive from PSR (which is free) will not be available to you when you pick-up your robe. You will receive the PSR hood during the ceremony when you get hooded.



"You can lose the backpack now."

DIPLOMA

On stage during the commencement ceremony, you will receive a leather diploma cover, but not your official diploma. You will receive your official diploma of your academic degree from Delphine Hwang via snail mail in mid-July.

PAYMENT

If I paid by check, to whom should the payment for the rented gown and additional graduation announcement be written?

Write the check to "Pacific School of Religion" and drop it off at the Office of Community Life mailbox at the front desk, or send it to:

**Community Life Office
1798 Scenic Ave, Holbrook 123
Berkeley CA 94709**

GRADUATION PLANNING PROCESS

WHO ORGANIZES THE GRADUATION CEREMONY AND WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISIONS?

Graduation planning begins when the graduating seniors voice their suggestions, opinions and preferences regarding graduation at a planning session held in the Fall prior to graduation. They will articulate what graduation means for them as a graduating class, which helps determines the graduation theme, text, music and speakers. The information gathered in this session will be used by a graduation planning team (composed of faculty and staff) to shape the liturgy of the graduation ceremony.

The graduation event is considered a gift given by Pacific School of Religion as an institution to the graduating seniors, and based upon student input, final decisions are made by the PSR Administrative Staff and Faculty.



LODGING FOR OUT OF TOWN GUESTS

Here are web links for lodging in the East Bay:

- 1) [City of Oakland](#)
- 2) [City of Berkeley](#)

Remember to check driving distance and directions from the hotel to PSR (1798 Scenic Ave, Berkeley CA 94709) or to First Congregational Church of Berkeley (2345 Channing Way, Berkeley CA 94704) through Yahoo, Google, or Mapquest.