



To: All Graduate and Undergraduate Students of the Class of 2021  
From: Andrew O. Klein, Vice President for Student Affairs  
Subject: **Commencement Weekend May 21-23, 2021**

Dear Graduating Students:

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from Anna Maria College! This letter contains important information on graduation logistics. **PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY**. As this has been an unusual year, we are sending this information to everyone, even if you did not plan on attending.

### **RSVP**

**If you are attending, you must complete the RSVP form at <https://annamaria.edu/commencement/> by May 5<sup>th</sup>!**

If you have already done so, you do not need to complete another RSVP. Only students that have completed the RSVP will receive information for the required guest registration. Be sure to check your WebAMC portal to check for any missing Financial Aid documents, as guest registration will not be confirmed if exit counseling has not been completed (if applicable).

### **ATTIRE**

**Academic attire** (cap, gown and hood) is required for attending Baccalaureate Mass or Commencement (your graduation ceremony). Women should wear black or dark shoes and no jewelry or flowers should be visible on the academic gown. Please do not carry any bags/purses. Men should wear dark pants and shoes with a white shirt and tie. **Please note that if you iron your gown, you should use a warm iron only.**

**Graduation caps** may be decorated, as long as the height, width, and length of cap is unchanged (nothing sticking up or overhanging). Some black must be visible on top – cover no more than 2/3. No lights or inappropriate language or images please. Caps not adhering to these guidelines will be removed at lineup.

As we are unable to hold the hooding ceremony due to Covid protocols, we have created a video with instructions on **wearing your academic hood**. It will be available at <https://annamaria.edu/commencement/> after May 3.

If you earn Academic Honors (cumulative GPA of 3.5 or above) for your Bachelor's degree, you will receive a gold cord to wear at graduation recognizing your achievement. Cords will be available at lineup if you do not receive it in advance from the Registrar.

Veterans cords and cultural stoles given by the College may be worn even if you received them for a previous degree. Academic honors cords and honor society cords may be worn if they are applicable to your current degree.

**Masks will be required for everyone attending graduation.** We will have Commencement masks with our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary logo available at lineup for those who would like one, or you may wear your own. We also have a limited supply of 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary lapel pins that will be available at lineup.

### **STUDENT / GUEST REGISTRATION**

**For everyone's safety, a Covid attestation form is required for you and your guests to attend Commencement Weekend ceremonies.** This online form will be emailed to you the week before graduation. We will be checking students and guests in for the ceremonies, and no one will be allowed to enter without a completed form.

We have worked hard to provide an in-person ceremony for all graduates. After careful consideration of current Covid state guidelines, we have determined that we can safely accommodate 2 guests per Undergraduate student (Bachelor's degree) and 4 guests per Graduate student (Master's degree). While we understand that this limit is not ideal, we appreciate your understanding as we strive to provide the best experience possible given our seating capacity and social distancing requirements. Please note that all children age 2 years and up are counted as guests.

**There will be a LIVE STREAM of the ceremony available on our website of each Commencement ceremony for those unable to attend.**

If you have a friend who is a First Year, Sophomore or Junior at AMC who would like to attend your graduation by volunteering to help on graduation day, s/he would not need a ticket. There will be a seating section for student volunteers. Any student may contact Jessica Eckstrom, Director of Residence Life, to volunteer.

## **GRADUATION REHEARSAL MEETING**

**Monday, May 17, 7:00 p.m. @ Zecco (for those cleared on CoVerified) and Zoom (link to follow)**

This meeting (approx. 45 minutes) is offered to provide an overview of the Commencement ceremony, including lineup and receiving your diploma. This meeting is not mandatory, but we encourage you to attend if you are able. Please join us – knowing what to expect helps to ease nervousness on your big day.

## **PROFESSIONAL PHOTOS**

Grad Images will be taking professional photos at each commencement ceremony. You will not need a code to access your photos – simply visit [www.gradimages.com](http://www.gradimages.com) and search by name, school and year. If you pre-register at <https://www.gradimages.com/registration> you will receive a coupon for 20% off a \$50 or more purchase. For questions, please contact their customer service at 800-261-2576.

## **NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Would you like news of your graduation shared in your hometown newspaper? The College is happy to provide this free service, but your permission is required. If you have not already completed a press release form, please go to <http://www.annamaria.edu/commencement>.

## **BACCALAUREATE MASS**

This ceremony combines a celebration of your academic success with the mission of the College through the celebration of Mass. Due to seating capacity, attendance will be limited to students that have completed the RSVP. All students participating in the Baccalaureate Mass should wear their gowns and hoods; **no caps will be worn.**

## **COMMENCEMENT LOCATION**

Graduation ceremonies will be held by cohort on May 21-23, 2021 on the Anna Maria College campus, 50 Sunset Lane, Paxton MA. Each ceremony will last no more than 1 ½ hours. Due to state guidelines, no food will be served during Commencement Weekend events (water will be provided). You may bring your own food and enjoy a socially distanced picnic on campus if you'd like.

## **SEATING**

Please allow extra time in your plans for parking and check-in at arrival. To allow us to clean and disinfect between ceremonies, we ask graduates and guests to arrive no earlier than 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony. For this same reason, we ask that you limit your time on campus following the ceremony to 30 minutes.

**IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU BE ON TIME, 30 - 45 minutes before the start of your ceremony, FOR LINEUP IN ORDER TO TAKE PART IN THE PROCESSION. GUESTS NEED TO BE SEATED 15 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE START. LATE ARRIVING GUESTS WILL BE SEATED AFTER THE OPENING PROCESSION.** Students will be seated in one section, 3' apart. Guest seats are in pods of two seats, with 6' between pods.

## **LINEUP**

There will be an usher available to direct students to the proper lineup area, which will be outdoors, adjacent to the tent. Social distancing measures will be in place. At the lineup, all students will be given name cards with a number on it that will indicate your order in line. Graduates will present this card to Dr. Holmes during the graduation exercises so that she can read your name. If you would like to provide the correct pronunciation of your name, you may spell it phonetically on this card, or email Dr. Holmes [cholmes@annamaria.edu](mailto:cholmes@annamaria.edu) by May 17.

Please give any bags you have to one of your guests before you proceed to the lineup site. You may not carry bags, backpacks, tote bags, etc. in the processional and there is not a secured storage location at the lineup site.

The order for the processional will be as follows: Mace Bearer, Marshals, Graduating Students, Alumni, Staff, Faculty, Officers, Trustees, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and President. The order for the Graduating Students will be alphabetical and according to the degree. **Arriving on time to the lineup location is important so that our volunteers can get everyone lined up in the correct order.**

## **RECEIVING THE DEGREE**

At the designated time during the ceremony, the marshals will direct one row at a time to stand and proceed to the stage. The ushers at the bottom of the stage ramp will tell each graduate when to proceed on to the stage. All graduating students should hand your name card to Dr. Holmes who will read the name as it appears on the card. Graduates then proceed to the President at the center of the stage, receive the diploma cover, and have a moment for a photo with the President. Graduates proceed across the stage and receive a medallion from the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. After leaving the stage, graduates will pose for another photo (mask optional) then be directed by the ushers to your seats. Graduates are to be seated once you return to your seats.

Out of respect for the other graduates, please refrain from any gift exchanging and talking during the ritual of conferring the degrees. All graduates and guests are expected to remain for the entire ceremony, as early departures disrupt the ceremony for those still receiving their degrees.

## **RECESSIONAL and PHOTO OP**

Mace Bearer and Marshals will lead groups out in reverse order. Graduates will then recess to greet family and friends as their seating sections are released. There will be photo opportunities spread out across campus featuring the College logo for personal photos with your guests.

## **DIPLOMAS**

All graduates will receive a diploma cover at Commencement. If you are a May 2021 graduate, you will receive your official diploma by mail once you have fulfilled all academic and financial obligations. Typically, you should expect to receive your diploma 8 weeks after graduation.

**If you have any questions, please contact Laurie Hickey at (508) 849-3388 or [lhickey@annamaria.edu](mailto:lhickey@annamaria.edu).**