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SECTION: Academic Affairs

SUBJECT: Commencement Exercises

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Policy for: All Campuses

Procedure for: All Campuses

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I. Policy

Commencements are a time-honored tradition in academia and honor the achievements, learning, and rigorous work of undergraduate and graduate students.

- A. The University of South Carolina President confers the degrees to those degree candidates who have completed the requirements for their respective degrees at each of the commencement exercises across the USC System. The commencement exercises will include the University's traditional ceremony, a ceremony whose style stretches back to the earliest origin of the University of South Carolina, honoring each degree candidate individually. The President will join the dean or academic authority of each college/school/campus to greet each candidate individually as his/her name is called.
- B. The ceremonies will begin with a series of academic processions including representatives of the University faculties, University officials and deans, members of the Board of Trustees and distinguished guests.
- C. The University mace is carried in procession at all commencements. The placement of the mace on its stand signals that the proceedings are about to come to order; its retirement indicates the conclusion of the exercises.
- D. The significance of the mace is mirrored in the President's Medallion and Chain of Office which designate the wearer as the temporary embodiment of the institution's power and authority.

II. Procedure

A. Committees on Commencement

1. The Columbia Commencement Committee

The Columbia Commencement Committee manages commencement exercises held on the Columbia Campus of the University of South Carolina. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees serves as Chair of the Commencement Committee.

2. The Systemwide Commencement Committee

The Systemwide Commencement Committee oversees, coordinates, and establishes standards for all commencement exercises of the University of South Carolina on all campuses. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees serves as Chair of the Commencement Committee.

B. Commencement Calendar

The University of South Carolina holds formal commencement exercises in May, August and December of each year on the Columbia Campus and in May of each year on the Senior and Regional Campuses. The Systemwide Commencement Committee Chair informs the campus community of the official commencement dates for all campuses at least two years in advance.

C. Ceremonies

1. Columbia Campus

- a. In May of each year the University will administer separate ceremonies for the School of Law, School of Medicine, Doctoral Hooding, and three Baccalaureate, Master's and Professional Commencement Exercises.
- b. In August and December of each year, the University will administer a Doctoral Hooding, and one Baccalaureate, Master's and Professional Commencement Exercises. Candidates from the School of Law, the School of Medicine, the Senior Campuses, and the Regional Campuses are invited to march with the Baccalaureate, Master's and Professional Commencement Exercises.
- c. Degree candidates/graduates march with their college/school in alphabetical order within their degree.

2. Senior and Regional Campuses

- a. In May of each year, the Senior and Regional campuses hold commencement exercises on their campuses for their degree candidates. In August and December of each, degree candidates from these Campuses may participate in the USC Columbia Baccalaureate, Master's and Professional Commencement Exercises.

D. Standards for Exercises

The order of exercises, format and content of the commencement program, and processional for each USC campus are submitted to the Chair of the Systemwide Commencement Committee for approval.

III. Reason for Revision

Non-substantive change to move administrative divisions from Board of Trustees (BTRU) to Academic Affairs (ACAF).