Dear Graduate,

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation. All of us at USF Sarasota-Manatee hope that the Commencement weekend will be a memorable capstone to your college experience. The Spring 2016 ceremony will take place on Monday, May 9, 2016. The ceremony time is 6:30 PM. Outlined below are details related to your Commencement experience.

Doors will open for guests and grads at the Bradenton Area Convention Center at 5:00 PM. Please arrive close to this time to get the best parking. Once inside, check in at the student registration area. You will be given a card with your name, college, degree and honors listed on it. Make sure this information is correct and add any phonetic spelling you feel is necessary. Hold on to this card, you will need it onstage.

You and others in your college will be led into the auditorium by a commencement marshal. Master’s candidates from all colleges will sit together, Bachelor’s candidates will be seated with others in your college.

After introductions and speeches, the awarding of degrees will begin. USF President Judy Genshaft will call Master’s candidates to walk first, then the Bachelor’s candidates will be called. Official pictures will be taken immediately after you leave the stage.

A few things to remember:

Seating in the auditorium for family and friends is unassigned and no tickets are required. There is no restriction on the number of guests you may invite, but we suggest not more than 20 per graduate.

For undergraduates, please let the tassel to hang on the right side and to the rear of your cap. Many official commencement photos have been ruined by a tassel swinging in front of the graduate’s face at the wrong time. President Genshaft will instruct you, as a group, to move your tassel to the left when she confers your degrees.

Commencement is a dignified occasion honoring your educational accomplishments, please dress appropriately. No shorts or flip flops/sandals. Be on time and make sure you have your cap, gown, and tassel. Think about pressing your gown. They come out of their packaging folded, but wrinkled. We want you to look your best. The material is thin, if you decide to press your gown, use a medium-low setting.

Cell phones and other electronic equipment must be turned off when the procession starts. No signs, horns or other noisemakers either. Valuables should be left with family members or guests prior to arriving at your assembly location. Take as many selfies at you like before the ceremony, but out of respect for the ceremony, your fellow grads and the officials onstage, not during the ceremony and please, not onstage.

An academic honors sash and an international student sash are the only sashes approved to wear at a USF System commencement ceremony. If you have other sashes, you may wear then under your gown during the walk across stage. They can be visible for your official photographs offstage. Additionally, you may wear club or society cords or medallions over your gown.

Should you have any special needs or questions regarding Commencement, prior to the ceremony, please email the coordinator of commencement, Michael Ayres at mayres@sar.usf.edu.