

Commencement 2009

Senior Speaker Application / Guidelines

Roger Williams University will continue its tradition again this year of opening up the opportunity to all graduating seniors to play a special role in their Commencement Exercises by giving the Student Address. All seniors who will graduate in May 2009 and meet the requirements outlined in the application are invited to become candidates for this honor.

Please **carefully read** the contents of this packet before beginning your application process. You will find included:

- **Speech Guidelines**
- **Selection Process and Timeline**
- **Committee Information**
- **Final Speaker Responsibilities**
- **Student Commencement Speaker Application**

Speech Guidelines:

The following information is provided to assist in the development of an appropriate speech.

1. The speech should mark the Commencement Exercises as a special occasion. Remember that Commencement is both a beginning and an end. Your words will represent your entire class at the ceremony and should have an academic flair.
2. The goal of your speech is to reflect the sentiments of your class, your experiences, and what you look forward to in the future. It should reflect the intellectual development you have undergone over the past 4-5 years.
3. Strong essays might include the following: University Core Values, relationship to citizenship and being a global citizen, and things unique to your education here at RWU.
4. Be creative! This involves taking some appropriate risks. Think of what you would like to hear someone say if you were listening from the audience. It is perfectly alright to infuse your own personality into the speech itself and/or the delivery. Make the speech interesting but remember that Commencement is a formal occasion and requires a respectful tone.
5. Remember your time constraint. You **must** be able to deliver the speech in **5 minutes** or less. In **type written** form, 5 minutes is equal to about two and a half pages typed and double-spaced.
6. According to Whitman and Foster, a Commencement speech generally addresses the following three topics:
 - Offers congratulations. Parents, grandparents, friends, and relatives all need to be acknowledged. They are proud of you and your classmates and appreciate being associated with your success.
 - Reviews accomplishments. As members of the Class of 2009, what obstacles did you overcome? What special characteristics have you exhibited? What are your significant accomplishments? These should be in sweeping terms with specifics that could apply to members of the graduating class not just you.
 - Issues a challenge. The word *commencement* denotes a *beginning*. What does the future look like for the Class of 2009 what are the problems that you will be called upon to address as you take your place in society? What inspirational thoughts can you share which will assure your classmates that they are prepared and ready to take up the challenge?

7. If you are selected as a semi-finalist, you will be expected to deliver the speech before the Committee. You will be judged on delivery as well as content, so please come to the audition fully prepared.
8. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Kathleen McMahon, Dean of Students, at x3161.
9. Please return your application by the deadline date – **Thursday, March 12, at 4:00 pm to the Dean of Students Office, Department of Housing and Residence Life, Center for Student Development first floor. YOU MUST ALSO E-MAIL YOUR SPEECH TO kcmahon@rwu.edu by the application deadline.**

Selection Process and Timeline

<u>Action</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
• Notice to RWU seniors / Call for Student Applications	March 2
• Application / draft speech submitted to Dean of Student’s Office	March 12
• Application / draft speech review by Committee	March 13-23
○ First round semi-finalists chosen	
• Semi-finalists present speeches to Committee	April 1
○ Second round finalists chosen / notified (2-3 students)	
• Finalists present speeches to Committee	April 10
• Finalists have opportunity to edit/revise prior to presenting	
• Final Speaker chosen / notified	week of April 20

Committee Information

Each year the Dean of Students designates a Committee to assist in the Student Commencement Speaker selection process. The Committee is comprised of the following:

Dean of Student Affairs, Vice-President of Student Affairs, faculty, professional staff, and student representatives. Total number of committee members is between 5-7 individuals.

The Committee is dedicated to the integrity of the Student Speaker selection process. The goal of the Committee is to ensure that the process of selecting a Student Speaker is done fairly and in a timely manner.

Final Speaker Responsibilities

The chosen finalist must be willing and available to revise and fine-tune the speech for time, content, word choice, clarity, speed, fact-checking, etc. Speaker works with a team of staff/faculty designated to assist in this process. Speaker must present an edited final version of the speech (during the week before Commencement) to the staff/faculty team. Student speaker is expected to present him/her self in a professional manner on Commencement Day and therefore, professional, business-casual dress will be required. For example, no sandals, flip-flops will be allowed on stage. The Student Speaker is a representative of the RWU student body and the University.



2009 STUDENT COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER APPLICATION

Name: _____

Current Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____ Cell Phone Number: _____

Major: _____ Mailbox Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Your application package should include ALL of the following components:

- On a separate sheet of paper, briefly describe why you would like to be the Student Commencement Speaker
- Attach a current resume
- Attach one letter of recommendation which speaks specifically to your academic and leadership achievements and your ability to be a successful speaker.
- Attach a written draft of your proposed commencement address, which should not exceed five minutes.

RELEASE TO VERIFY G.P.A. and JUDICIAL STANDING

I, _____, SSN _____ - _____ - _____
(Print Name)

authorize the Office of Student Affairs to verify my cumulative RWU G.P.A and Judicial standing. I hereby attest that the information in this application is true and correct.

Signature

Date

Please submit this application and all attachments to:

Dean of Students
Dept. of Residence Life and Housing
Center for Student Development, first floor

ALSO e-mail **complete** application to kmcmahon@rwu.edu

The application deadline is Thursday, March 12 at 4 pm. Applications must be received by 4:00 PM on the due date. Late applications will not be accepted. If you have any questions about this process, please call 254-3161 or email kmcmahon@rwu.edu