# Commencement 2017

# Senior Speaker Application / Guidelines

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We invite all graduating seniors to consider playing a special role in their commencement exercises by giving the student commencement speech. All seniors who will graduate in May 2017 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 be mindful of commencement as an academic ceremony.
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 development you have undergone during your time at RWU.
3. Strong essays include at least one of the following: University core values, relationship to service and being a global citizen, and things unique to your education 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. You are encouraged to infuse **your own personality** into the speech and/or the delivery. Talk about yourself and your experience as a student at RWU – athlete, student leader, tutor, ILA participant, etc. Make the speech interesting but remember that commencement is a formal occasion and requires a respectful tone. As individual as we encourage you to be, it is also important to be inclusive and connect with the entire graduating class—remember that it is a significant moment for all graduating seniors and their families.
5. Be brief. 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.  “Every word and phrase should be the right one, carefully chosen to bring about the desired emotional response” [Ayers & Miller]. Hanna and Gibson suggest that sincere, simple feelings are best.”
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 2017, 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 2017 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? How has RWU inspired/ prepared you to answer this challenge?
7. Suggestions:
   * Identify what you want people to walk away with. What will be remembered?
   * Be inclusive. Can all members of the audience identify with at least one theme in your speech?
   * Approval. Think of your friends, parents and professors. Who would approve of your speech the most? Social experiences, sentiment and academia should all play a role in your speech but consider the weight of each while writing your speech.
8. 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.

**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 a written draft of your proposed commencement address, which should not exceed five minutes.
* Submit a **5 minute YouTube link** of you giving your speech in a professional setting.

If you have questions, please contact Renee Danho, at [rdanho@rwu.edu](mailto:rdanho@rwu.edu), or call 401-254-3042.

**Selection Process and Timeline**

**Action Deadline**

* **Notice to RWU seniors / Call for Student Applications February 17**
* **Application / draft speech submitted to Renee Danho March 10**
* **Application / draft speech review by Committee March 13-17**
  + **Semi-finalists chosen March 21-22**
* **Semi-finalists present speeches to Committee March 28-31**
  + **Second round finalists chosen / notified (2-3 students)**
  + **Finalists have opportunity to edit/revise prior to presenting**
* **Finalists present speeches to Committee April 4-6**
* **Final Speaker chosen / notified April 7**

**Committee Information**

**Each year the Office of Student Life designates a Committee to assist in the Student Commencement Speaker selection process. The Committee is comprised of the Vice President of Student Life, the Dean of Students (Chairperson) and representative members from the faculty, professional staff, and student body. Total number of committee members is between 6-8 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. The student speaker will work with a team of staff/faculty designated to assist in this process. The student speaker must present an edited final version of the speech (during the week before commencement) to the staff/faculty team. The student speaker is expected to present 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. Finally, the Student Speaker must sign a release allowing use of their speech for media and marketing purposes.**

STUDENT COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Current Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mailbox Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The application deadline is Friday, March 10, 2017 at noon.**

**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
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* Attach a written draft of your proposed commencement address, which should not exceed five minutes.
* Submit a 5 minute YouTube link of you giving your speech in a professional setting

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

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, SSN\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,

(Print Name)

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

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Signature Date

**The application deadline is Friday, March 10, 2017 at noon.** Please submit this application and all attachments in both of these two ways:

1. **HAND-DELIVER**:

Office of Student Life

Attention Renee Danho

Center for Student Development, first floor

1. **EMAIL:** [rdanho@rwu.edu](mailto:rdanho@rwu.edu)

Late applications will not be accepted. If you have any questions about this process, please call 401-254-3042, or email [rdanho@rwu.edu](mailto:rdanho@rwu.edu).