

Student Government Association

The University of Texas at Tyler

- I. **Call to Order**
 - a. **5:13**
- II. **Roll Call**
 - a.
- III. **Speakers Podium**
 - a. President Michael Tidwell
 - i. Thank you for the invitation to be here. We have has a lot of questions about our new outdoor ceremony. We talk about various issues that affect the student bofy. My university hosted an outdoor ceremony. We then held the secondary ceremony in our gymnasium. My outdoor ceremony left a big mark on me and I want to leave a similar mark on those that are graduating in a few weeks. We created the patriot plaza to hold large outdoor events like commencement, patriot nites concerts, etc. Thus lead to our conversation about hosting graduation ourdoors. We are not the first institution to do thius. Swarthmore, Pepperdine, Georgetown, and Wake Forest, UCSB, Marist, Charleston, and MIT, Miami, Redlands, Standford have the best outdoor ceremonies. The commencement team put together a scale of what the commencement will look like. *Shows a visual of what the commencement will look like*. Make sure it is asbeautiful as the ceremonies we have been doing in the cowan center. We will have two 20 by 12 foot screens. Third screen will sit on the stage. We are not sure if the students will enter from the ramp in the front or up the back. I just came here to dispel any rumors.
 1. Senator Ramirez- how will you ensure everyone will be able to see the screeens?
 - a. VP Roebuck- we have screens that are rated for ourdoor brightness. No problem for people seeing the screen.
 - ii. Commencement Guests: No limit on your guests. In the past in the cowan center, you might have gotten 10 tickets or JUST 3 tickets. With the outdoor ceremony you will have no limit on the amount of people you can bring. We will have 7,000+ chairs, bleachers with 2,000+ seats, two hospitality tents with live-streaming, cowan center open and HPC open with live-streaming. Will acoomidate those that cannot or do not want to sit outside. Hospitality tentsw will have coffee and water or t=for those that have little kids. There will be ADA access. We will have seats designated for those that fit into that category.
 - iii. Parking and Traffic: We know how you all feel about parking. Parking is great here at UT Tyler. Each student will have 2 passes to park ON campus. 2 GUARENTEED passes. Our expectation is to get most everyone up close. We will have offsite parking as well. “Dsiney-Style” directed Parking. Overflow parking will be at Rose Heights church and those will be shuttled over to the campus. We are strongly encouraging people to carpool. We will have officers controlling traffic from 5th street to University.
 1. Secretary Jennings- Will the shuttles run on a time shuttle?
 - a. The shuttles will be running the entire time. We will be encouraging people to get here at 8:00 AM.
 2. Treasurer Rawashdeh: how many parking spots do we have?
 - a. We have about 4,000 spots and have had 1,200 apply for graduation and only about 80% will show up.
 - b. **VP Ona Tolliver:** We will be hosting a block-party right after graduation. We thought we would create dynamic spaces for you and your friends to take pictures on Friday night. We will be lighting up the bell tower blue on Friday night. The block-party will have a DJ and food/drinks so graduates can relax and enjoy their accomplsihments. In the past, people hav felt rushed. With this new set up, they will not feel this way. The have a chance to take pictures, look at the campus, and have rerefreshments. We hope people don’t feel like they need to rush backt o their cars.

- c. **President Tidwell:** The commencement stage will be a concert size stage. The main seating will be in the bowl of the plaza. We will have seating on the terracing. We can get 1,700 students in the bowl of the plaza. Our ADA seating will be behind the terracing. The “grand seating” will be in the Alumni House backyard. We will have additional seating in the HPC parking lot and green space between the plaza and the bell tower. Hospitality tents will be set up by the HPC and the Bell Tower. The largest seating area is between the bell tower and the plaza bowl. The visibility is great to the front of the UC Theatre. Areas to hang out and eat will be at the Alumni House. Afterwards the Alumni House will be open to the graduates. Check in will be located right next to the BEP.
- d. **Sarah Bowdin:** Students will line up, check in, and alumni things will be handled by the BEP. Graduates will exit in 4 different groups. Students will enter the bowl from 4 different areas.
- i. **Question:** Daniella- I like the idea. Is there an order? Is it by class or college?
 1. **Sarah Bowdin:** we are using marching order like in the past. The lineup will be by career. Doctoral students, Graduate students, undergrad. We have looked at how many students will need to be in which line. You will not be with students that are in your college. We will have videographers that are videoing so they can see you that way.
 - ii. **Question:** what time do student have to be there?
 1. 7:30 AM.
 - iii. **Aya-** You mentioned you have timed it. How long will it take each graduate to graduate.
 1. **Sarah Bowdin-** It takes 15 minutes to fill the bowl. I will echo Dr. Tidwell to get there early.
 - iv. **Aya-** Will you be hosting a practice?
 1. Not for students, but for faculty and staff, yes.
 - v. **Questions:** Lack of intimacy with their college. Have you all come up with any ideas to make it more intimate with each college?
 1. **President Tidwell-** We are hosting hooding ceremonies in each college. Those students will have those ceremonies that are much smaller and have their family come. We are adding a level of ceremony. These ceremonies are all day Friday. Hooding ceremonies used to be held during graduation and it would take a much longer time. That element hasn't changed.
 - vi. **Question:** how long do you think the ceremony will take/
 1. We estimate about 2 hours. All aspects of graduation will be done the same way as the past.
 - vii. **Question:** Isnt there a hill by the HPC?
 1. There will be no seating on the hill. We will have a public safety officer stationed in this area to make sure no one goes there and stands up to take pictures or anything else.
 - viii. **Question:** will one person be called at a time?
 1. Yes, only one at a time. They will
 - ix. **Question:** Chance of rain alternatives?
 1. If theres rain, we will have 4 ceremonies in th Cowan Center. We will call it a week out. You will have tickets ahead of time. 9:00, 12:00. 3:00. 6:00 ceremonies.
 - x. **Question:** if that happens will we only have 3 tickets?
 1. The average is 6.
 - xi. **Question:** Will the parking plan stil be the same in the case of inclemate weather?
 1. No
 - xii. **President Menhennett:**
 1. Student fees will not be increased. Graduation fees will not be increased. There are onetime costs that go along with this. The stage being one of those. Costs will get cheaper after every time we do it.
 - xiii. **President Menhennett:** How have the plans changed following the

1. They have changed quite a bit. We have been able to look at the parking plan. Making sure our ADA seating is an important component in our ceremony. It will be clearly designated.
- xiv. Question- Can you bring your own water?
 1. Yes, absolutely.
- xv. Question: Can I sit by my fraternity brothers?
 1. Yes
- xvi. Question- Will we be in alphabetical order?
 1. No, but the program will be in alphabetical order by college. It will all be in how you line up. The screen will show your name, degree, and honors found on a barcode.
- xvii. Question: What are the security needs challenges?
 1. We will be working with our on campus loce department and the Tyler PD will be here assisting with traffic flow.
- xviii. Question: Alternating
 1. Graduates will be entering from 4 sides based on where they line up and where they are sitting. Graduates will exit down the middle after recefing their diploma.
- xix. Question: Will there be service provided in case?
 1. Yes, EMS and police are on call and at the university.
- xx. Question: Names
 1. Yes, faculty and staff will be pronouncing names.
- e. Sarah Bowdin: There is an online system where you can enter your name and even say it so that are speakers will know how exactly to say it.
- f. One Tolliver:
 - i. Question: Will there be any recognition for students who are not attending? I think it would be a good thing to recognize those students. Maybe read the names or have a rolling script.
 - ii. **Josh- 3rd question. !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**
 1. Question- we will host it again?
 - a. Yes, that is the plan from now on.
 - iii. Rhett- In respect to the people that have shown up, it could be disrespectful.
- g. Question: what about a summer commencement?
 - i. SGA is looking at doing a summer commencement.
- h. Zoom question- the online petition response?
 - i. Students do have strong feelings about it. Everyone's opinion is valid. It did have that many signatures, but as the university we have to look at the big picture and dream the biggest we can. We are interested in student opinion. Cowan center graduation has been a problem in the past. Please come up after the ceremony to tell me if you had a good time.
 1. No. I will not be attending because of how you are doing it.
- i. Question: Can you walk in the fall in the Cowan center?
 - i. Yes
- j. My high school graduation was so memorable and it was outside.

k. President Tidwell:

l. VP Roebuck

m. Sarah Bowdin

IV. Announcements

a. Headshots (3/19 8:30-2:30)

b. Tabling for Fee Education (beginning March 16th at noon)

c. BANQUET (April 26th 5:15 pm – 7:15 pm)

V. Next Student Voice Reports (March 18th)

a. Freshman Senators

b. Soules College of Business

c. Student Body at Large

- VI. Adjournment**
a. Time- 6:19 PM