Memorandum

To: University Community
From: Sheryl Van Gruensven
Date: January 27, 2020
Subject: Commencement Changes for Spring 2020

As we continue to grow as a University, we need to make adjustments to serve our students. An area that is impacted by our continual growth is Commencement. For a myriad of reasons we will be expanding to two ceremonies on Saturday, May 16 in the Kress Events Center.

**Ceremony I: 9:30 a.m.**
- Austin E. Cofrin School of Business
- College of Science, Engineering & Technology

**Ceremony II: 2:00 p.m.**
- College of Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences
- College of Health, Education & Social Welfare
- All Associate Degrees from all four campuses

**Rationale:**
- There is space for 750 students on the floor. We have had over 700 participants the last two years out of over 900 students eligible to walk. If a higher percentage of students wish to walk, there is not space for them.
- This also allows us to lift ticketing restrictions for students, so that they may invite more guests than the previous limit of 4.
- Last year’s spring ceremony was over 3 hours long. Some parents and family members arrive 1-1.5 hours early to get seating, making their stay 4+ hours. With this change, each ceremony is estimated to last around 90 minutes, much more reasonable for students, families, and faculty/staff.
- A smaller group of students for each ceremony allows the University to utilize stronger/larger chairs. Chair size/quality has been a concern voiced the last few years.

This change for Commencement will be positive for students, faculty, and staff and will be in line with current best practices in higher education. Faculty will only need to participate in the ceremony that their college has students graduating. Graduate students will be hooded with the college in which their program is based. Thank you for your support. More information will be coming out in the near future.