Dear Graduate,

Thank you for your interest in delivering the student address at our upcoming Adelphi winter commencement. Competition will be keen for this honor and, if selected, you are sure to remember this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as the highlight of your commencement day.

I’d like to outline some important points about this role and explain the selection process.

Overview

We will conduct two ceremonies (9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.) on Saturday, December 15, 2018, at the Xfinity Center on the campus of University of Maryland, College Park. One student speaker will be chosen for each ceremony.

Responsibilities

Seek to inspire, motivate, and encourage everyone in attendance; make your message inclusive and relevant. Ideally, you want to show how your unique UMUC experience translates into something positive, exciting, and uplifting—all while remembering to thank the faculty, family, and friends whose support made it all possible. You should reflect on the mission of UMUC and encourage everyone present to pursue lifelong learning.

Role in the Ceremony

The student speaker marches in with the university president and other members of the official platform party, and is seated on the stage wearing academic regalia. The student speaker’s guests will be given reserved seating and refreshments, along with the other guests of the platform party.

Speech Guidance

An effective, memorable student commencement address is relevant—and brief. If selected, your speech will need to be delivered in less than five minutes. We will work with you to revise your speech to about 600 words.
Good speeches have a strong theme and tell a compelling story. There should be something that your fellow graduates, their guests, faculty, and alumni can relate to. Your speech should share meaningful lessons learned during your academic journey with UMUC and inspire your audience to pursue lifelong learning.

Commencement speeches at UMUC typically have four parts:

1. Greetings to the platform party and audience, including heartfelt acknowledgement of family and friends who are present.
2. The speaker’s UMUC story and reflection on how it relates to the academic community and our world at large.
3. Encouragement to peers, family, and friends to recognize the value of education and the lessons the speaker has learned along the way. (e.g., explaining that together, we can change the world for good.)
4. Closing call to action that urges your listeners to move forward.

Make your speech memorable by including specific examples that support and illustrate the broader themes you are expressing. These examples are usually drawn from personal experience and should be described in succinct detail. For example, one recent student speaker encouraged her audience to turn their challenges into successes, illustrating her theme by revealing that she had completed her degree despite having suffered a traumatic brain injury. Her story was poignant and powerful.

**Who Can Apply**

To compete for this honor you must be eligible to attend winter commencement. Visit umuc.edu/commencement for more information.

You must also meet the following criteria:

- Minimum cumulative GPA (as of October 15) of 3.0 for undergraduates and 3.5 for graduate students
- In good disciplinary standing (no record of academic integrity or code of conduct violations)
- No overdue balances (if on payment plan, must be current)

You must be available to audition by phone, video chat, or in person one day during the period of November 8 through 16.

If selected, you must

- Work with UMUC’s speech coach to refine and revise your speech.
- Be available for in-person platform party rehearsal on Friday, December 14.
Selected speakers will normally deliver the address at the ceremony they are registered for; however, if there is a time conflict (e.g., two selectees registered for the same ceremony), we may make each selection contingent upon agreeing to switch ceremonies.

**How to Request an Audition**

1. Write a statement of interest in 250 words or less: Tell us why your UMUC journey is compelling and how it is representative of your peers. Include the theme(s) of your proposed commencement address and any public speaking experience you have.

2. Draft a proposed speech that is
   a. In Microsoft Word or Google Document format
   b. 750 words or less.
   c. Double-spaced.
   d. Numbered on each page (but do not include any identifying information on the document itself).
   e. Saved as a file named in this way: LastnameFirstnameWinter2018

3. Record a good-quality YouTube video of yourself delivering the speech. (Set your video’s privacy settings to “unlisted” so that only people with the link can view it.)

Then fill out the online student speaker application and attach your materials.

Submit your application no later than 11:59 p.m. (EST) on Monday, November 5, 2018.

We will contact the selected finalists starting November 8 to schedule auditions. Anyone not selected for an audition will be notified by e-mail by November 30.

If you have any questions about the process, please feel welcome to contact my office at commencement@umuc.edu. Congratulations on your academic achievements, and I wish you the best as you compete for this high honor.

Sincerely,

Harold Blackmon Jr.
Director
Commencement Services