



2015 UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND UNIVERSITY COLLEGE  
COMMENCEMENT

Dear Graduate,

Thank you for your interest in delivering the student address at this year's Adelphi commencement. Competition for this honor is keen each year, 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**

Each year at UMUC's Adelphi commencement, students are chosen to speak to approximately 14,000 students, guests, faculty, and alumni in attendance at each ceremony. This year, three bachelor's or master's graduates will be selected to speak: one apiece at the morning and afternoon ceremonies on Saturday, May 16, and the third student will speak at the afternoon ceremony on Sunday, May 17. A fourth student—a doctoral candidate—will be selected to speak during the doctoral commencement on Friday, May 15.

### **Responsibilities**

Delivering a student commencement address carries great responsibility. You should strive to inspire, motivate, and encourage everyone in attendance. Ideally, you'd show how your unique UMUC experience translates into something positive, exciting, and uplifting—all while remembering to thank the faculty, family, and friends whose tireless devotion and support made it all possible. You should reflect on the mission of UMUC and encourage everyone present to pursue lifelong learning. Your message should be inclusive and relevant.

### **Role in the Ceremony**

The student speaker is part of the official platform party, seated on the commencement stage and wearing academic regalia. (We will ensure that you are quietly escorted from your seat on stage and into the appropriate spot in line when it's time to have your name read.) The speaker's guests will be seated in a reserved area along with the other guests of the platform party.

## **Speech Guidelines and Selection Process**

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 draft 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 you've learned during your academic journey with UMUC and inspire your audience to pursue lifelong learning.

Commencement speeches typically have four basic 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. (For example, together we can change the world for good.)
4. Closing—this can be done in many ways, but remember that commencement begins a new chapter in the life of every graduate. Your closing should be a call to action and highlight forward motion.

To compete for this honor you must be available to audition by phone, video chat, or in person one day during the period of March 24 through April 9 (exact time and date to be determined).

The winners must

- Commit to phone meetings with UMUC's speaker coach to refine and revise his or her speech.
- Be available for in-person platform party rehearsal on Friday, May 15.

## How to Request an Audition

To request an audition you must submit a statement of interest, a draft of your proposed commencement speech, and a YouTube video of yourself delivering the speech by Sunday, March 22 at 11:59 p.m. (EDT). Here are the specifics:

1. Format your statement and speech as a Microsoft Word or Google Document.
2. Send us a link to your YouTube video.
3. Limit your statement of interest to 250 words or less. Tell us why your UMUC journey is compelling and how it could be representative of your peers. Include the theme(s) of your proposed commencement address and any public speaking experience you have.
4. Submit a proposed speech that is
  - a. 750 words or less.
  - b. Double-spaced.
  - c. Numbered on each page, but do not include any identifying information on the document itself.
  - d. Saved in a document that is named in this way:  
LastnameFirstnameCommencement2015.doc

[Fill out the online student speaker application and attach your materials here.](#)

Remember to submit your application **no later than 11:59 p.m. (EDT) on March 22, 2015.**

We will contact the selected finalists starting March 23 to schedule auditions. If you have any questions about the process, please feel welcome to contact us at [commencement@umuc.edu](mailto: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