



NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMENCEMENT OFFICERS, INC.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Meghan Higgins  
(609) 297-2218  
[mhiggins@cmasolutions.com](mailto:mhiggins@cmasolutions.com)

### How Does Your Setting Affect Your Graduation Plan?

*NAACO Members Offer Tips for Planning Indoor and Outdoor Ceremonies*

**PRINCETON JUNCTION, NJ – June 1, 2012** – As the planners of commencement, convocation and other education-related events, members of the North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO), understand what it takes to plan ceremonies for thousands of graduates and their families. With that in mind, NAACO members offer the following tips for planning indoor and outdoor ceremonies.

- 1. Have a communications plan in place.** Whether an indoor or outdoor ceremony, institutions should have a communications plan in place for all constituents. The plan should include everything from what happens in case of an emergency to when and how the university communicates setting logistics to faculty, staff, graduates and their families.
- 2. Establish timelines.** Timelines should be established to help universities stay on track with ceremonial activities. These timelines may be different depending on the setting of the ceremony, but they should still include realistic deadlines and cover items such as audio visual and lighting, set-up, security, speaker selection and food and beverage.
- 3. Be aware of the weather.** Monitor the weather several days in advance and have a final weather call the morning of the event. Institutions should have a back-up plan in place in case the weather becomes an issue and guests need to be evacuated.
- 4. Ensure guest accessibility.** Work with your commencement or convocation staff to ensure your campus and ceremony is easily accessible to all guests. Universities providing shuttle buses need to ensure they are ADA compliant to meet the needs of guests with disabilities.
- 5. Determine the “wow” factor.** Evaluate what small touches you can incorporate to make the ceremony memorable for graduates and their families. Is it a world renowned leader to deliver an inspirational keynote address? Or maybe a fireworks display at the end of the ceremony can be staged.

“Whether your university is holding an indoor or outdoor ceremony, it’s important to be prepared with back-up plans for both settings to help ensure a meaningful and seamless commencement and convocation experience for graduates and their families,” said Doug Bolin, NAACO President.

For more information on NAACO, visit [www.naaco.co](http://www.naaco.co) or call (877) 622-2606.

###

### **About NAACO**

Founded in 2001, the North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO) is a professional association of commencement and convocation officers from colleges and universities throughout North America. NAACO is dedicated to providing a community structure for commencement professionals to exchange ideas, share traditions, explore new opportunities and connect with colleagues from around the world who share the monumental responsibility of producing commencements. For more information, visit [www.naaco.co](http://www.naaco.co).