



NORTH AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMENCEMENT OFFICERS, INC.

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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

### NAACO's 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference to Honor the Past and Inspire the Future

**PRINCETON JUNCTION, NJ – November 20, 2013** – Joining together once a year to celebrate the professional rapport and camaraderie of its community of commencement and convocation officers, the North American Association of Commencement Officers (NAACO) will hold its 14<sup>th</sup> [Annual Conference](#), February 24-26, 2014 at the Westin Seattle in Seattle, Washington.

Themed “Honoring the Past and Inspiring the Future,” NAACO’s annual conference is dedicated to advancing its attendees by reinforcing traditional best practices and instilling industry advancements. This year’s conference will host a number of dynamic sessions and keynote speakers, aimed at equipping attendees with the information needed to further their skills and knowledge about the industry’s most pressing topics, to ensure ceremonies deliver the ultimate experience for guests.

Among other keynote speakers, April L. Harris, Associate Vice President for university events at The University of Alabama in Huntsville and author of three books including *Academic Ceremonies a Handbook of Traditions and Protocol*, will present on the topic, “Keeping Traditions.” Scott Stratten, expert in viral, social and authentic marketing, a trifecta of which he calls, “un-marketing,” will deliver a presentation on “social media” and its impact on the future of the industry.

Equipping attendees with information on the industry’s most demanding topics, conference sessions include, “Inspiring Commencement Volunteers through Comprehensive Training and Recognition,” will focus on Ramapo College of New Jersey’s successful development of a 90-person volunteer team who return annually to serve at commencement. This session will provide attendees with a take-away tool kit of how to organize, motivate and train volunteers. Calling on the comprehensive contingency plan of Johns Hopkins University, a session titled, “Be Prepared-Weather Plans and Evacuations,” will discuss an evacuation plan for up to 10,000 guests. Explaining the obligations of “Commencement and Special Needs,” under the United States federal law, this session will educate attendees on accessibility and accommodation enhancements and how to make them.

“Much like the planning process we as officers go through for commencement and convocation each year, preparing a conference agenda to include a wide-range of topics that our attendees will connect with, is always an exciting challenge,” said Linda Bekerian, NAACO President. “We feel confident that this year’s sessions and speakers will provide attendees with information they can put to use right away to ensure that the ceremonies of 2014 continue to engage attendees and create excitement.”

NAACO would like to thank the following sponsors for supporting the association and the conference: Grad Images, Oak Hall, Signature Announcement, Jostens, Herff Jones, Balfour, McIlhenney Banners, Commencement Flowers, Commencement Photos, Harcourts, Marching Order, Gaspard and Event IQ.

To register for the NAACO 2014 Annual Conference or to become a member, visit [www.naaco.org](http://www.naaco.org) 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 academic ceremonies. For more information, visit [www.naaco.org](http://www.naaco.org).