NEW STUDENT CONVOCATION

Tuesday, September 22, 2020
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New Student Convocation

President Sabah Randhawa, Presiding

Tuesday, September 22nd, 2020 3:30pm
Virtual Ceremony

Ceremony Opening

Welcome
Sabah Randhawa

Opening Remarks
Melynda Huskey
Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services

Welcome from WWU Faculty
Jeff Young
Faculty Senate President

Alma Mater
WWU Spring Quarter string quartet: Emma Simmons, violin; Johana Chai, violin; Lauren Waldron, viola; Kate Koller, cello

Virtual Welcome Corridor
Join us after the ceremony in one of our many themed Zoom rooms to connect with your Western community.

What is the Convocation Ceremony?
Whether virtual or in person, Convocation marks the coming together of the members of a group – a formal assembly. Western starts each academic year with this official welcoming ceremony. This formal ceremony introduces new students to academic life at Western and is the first assembling of the new academic class. Our Convocation Ceremony marks a new beginning and is the first of the formal ceremonies that frame academic life at Western.
Central Administrative Officers

Sabah Randhawa, President, BS, MS, PhD
Brent Carbajal, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affair, BA, MA, PhD
Melynda Huskey, Vice President for Enrollment and Student Services, BA, PhD
Richard Van Den Hul, Vice President for Business and Financial Affairs, BS, MBA
Stephanie Bowers, Vice President for University Advancement, BA, MGA
Donna Gibbs, Vice President for University Relations and Marketing, BA

Deans

Mark Greenberg, Dean of Libraries, BA, MA, MLS, PhD
John Bower, Dean, Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies, PhD
Steven Hollenhorst, Dean, Huxley College of the Environment, BS, MS, PhD
Brad Johnson, Dean, College of Science and Engineering, BS, MS, PhD
Paqui Paredes Méndez, Dean, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, BA, MA, PhD
David Patrick, Vice Provost of Research and Dean of Graduate School, BS, PhD
Kit Spicer, Dean, College of Fine and Performing Arts, BA, MA, PhD
Bruce Larson, Dean, Woodring College of Education, BAE, MEd, PhD
Scott Young, Dean, College of Business and Economics, BA, MBA, PhD

Faculty Senate & Bearer of University Mace

Jeff Young, Professor, College of Science and Engineering, BA, PhD

Timeline

1899: New Whatcom Normal School opens to its first class of 88 students. By the end of the year, the student body will grow to 300.

1901: The Campus School, where for seven decades Bellingham children and student teachers learn together, opens in Old Main.

1906: The Alumni Association is formed.

1912: First stone engraved with a class year is placed on Memory Walk in front of Old Main. This tradition still exists today.

1926: Rising state requirements for new teachers
reflected in expanded curriculum at the growing college. Two years of study are now required for teaching certificates.

1933: The first four-year Bachelor of Arts in Education degrees are conferred. By 1934, two-year elementary teaching diplomas are no longer given.

1937: The school, now known as Bellingham State Normal School, becomes Western Washington State College of Education.

1939: At Gov. Clarence Martin’s request, the Board of Trustees fires President Charles Fisher following an extended campaign by community members to discredit Fisher with allegations of “radical and subversive activities” on campus. The dismissal provokes a national outcry over academic freedom.

That same year, six students die in an avalanche during a college-sponsored climb of Mount Baker.

1943: World War II sends enrollment to its lowest ever, 254, as many students join the war effort.

1947: The first Bachelor of Arts and Master of Education degrees are granted. Military barracks help house the scores of returning war veterans coming to Western on the G.I. Bill.

1949: Western celebrates its 50th anniversary.

1960: “Rainforest” by James Fitzgerald becomes the first work in Western’s acclaimed Outdoor Sculpture Collection. Today, the collection includes the work of 35 distinguished sculptors from the late 20th century to the present.

1961: Western Washington State College of Education becomes Western Washington State College, reflecting a growing emphasis on liberal arts education.

1968: Fairhaven College of Interdisciplinary Studies begins.

1969: Decade’s end marks an era of political and social change including protests against the Vietnam War and for civil rights.


1973: College of Arts and Sciences established.

1975: College of Fine and Performing Arts established.

1976: College of Business and Economics established.

Western’s first science classrooms were in Old Main, as in this 1910 photo.
1977: Western Washington State College becomes Western Washington University.

1987: President G. Robert Ross, vice presidents Don Cole and Jeanne DeLille killed in small plane crash. Al Froderberg becomes interim president.

1989: Western’s school of education becomes Woodring College of Education, named for faculty member and education scholar Paul Woodring.

1993: Karen W. Morse becomes president of Western, will lead the university through growth of several buildings, fostering more student-faculty research opportunities and a collaborative, student-centered academic environment.


2003: College of Arts and Sciences is divided to form the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Sciences and Technology.

2008: Bruce Shepard is named president and begins a commencement tradition of displaying flags of countries, sovereign Indian nations and branches of the military to represent the origins, experiences and service of Western graduates.

2010: Western celebrates awarding its 100,000th degree.

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2011: The first President’s Award, Western’s highest community honor, is given in recognition
of distinguished service to WWU and the region. Western also confers its first honorary doctorate degree, awarded in recognition of outstanding contributions to scholarship, culture and service to society at large.

**2014:** College of Sciences and Technology becomes College of Science and Engineering.

**2016:** Sabah Randhawa becomes Western’s 14th president.

Western completes its largest fundraising campaign, Western Stands for Washington, raising more than $62 million.

**2017:** The Carver Academic Building renovation is complete.

**2019:** The Multicultural Center addition to the Viking Union is complete.

**2020:** In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, Western conducts its first virtual commencement ceremonies.

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**Presidents of Western Washington University**

- 1899: Edward T. Mathes
- 1914: George W. Nash
- 1922: Dwight B. Waldo
- 1923: Charles H. Fisher
- 1939: William Wade Haggard
- 1959: James L. Jarrett
- 1965: Harvey C. Bunke
- 1967: Charles J. “Jerry” Flora
- 1975: Paul J. Olscamp
- 1983: G. Robert Ross
- 1988: Kenneth P. Mortimer
- 1993: Karen W. Morse
- 2008: Bruce Shepard
- 2016: Sabah Randhawa

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Mary Ellen Hillaire (top) poses for a photograph by fellow student Irene Parr in 1956. Hillaire, the first member of the Lummi Indian Nation to earn a bachelor’s degree from Western, went on to join the faculty at the Evergreen State College and establish its Native American Studies program. Photo by Jack Carver, courtesy Whatcom Museum.

Western Washington College of Education became Western Washington State College in 1961. Photo courtesy of Western Washington University Libraries Special Collections.
The Mace

Originally a weapon of offense used in medieval warfare by a king or a great noble, the mace has been refined into a symbol of authority used on ceremonial occasions. As an academic device, the mace goes back to 16th century England when Queen Elizabeth I presented a replica of her own royal mace to the corporation of the University of Oxford in 1589. She ordered that it be used in all ceremonies to represent the royal presence and the authority granted to the university to issue degrees under the royal insignia. King Charles I made a similar gift to Cambridge University in 1625. Since that time it has become increasingly the custom for European, and now American, colleges and universities to use ceremonial maces during graduation exercises.

The design of Western’s mace was suggested by members of the 1964 Senior Class Planning Board. It was drawn and executed by Norman Warsinke of Seattle. Made of rosewood and silver, the mace has a wooden staff surmounted by a silver casting of a Viking ship, emblematic of Western Washington University. The top-most circular band has the name of the University engraved and inlaid with blue enamel. The second band bears six medallions—the Great Seal of the United States, the Seal of the State of Washington, and engravings representing Western Washington University, the Humanities, Education, and Science. The third band bears the legend, “The Gift of the Class of 1964.” The bottom of this ceremonial staff is a silver-cast flame, symbolic of enlightenment.
The Pendant

The pendant worn today by President Randhawa was created especially for the Office of the President by Frederick Walsh and Associates of Seattle. It is made of silver with a gold flame in the center. The gold flame is emblematic of the torch of learning, as it combines the intellectual and spiritual qualities of illumination, enlightenment, and inspiration. The free form of the flame is suggestive of the true spirit of higher education—a spirit that liberates the mind and leads the intellectually curious to new frontiers of knowledge. The bowl from which the flame emanates represents the ever-expanding reservoir of knowledge.

The pendant is worn by the President on all ceremonial occasions and, in the interim, is on display with the mace in the Office of the President.
The Academic Dress

The history of academic dress dates far back into the early days of the oldest universities. A statute of 1321 required that all Doctors, Licentiates, and Bachelors of the University of Coimbra (Portugal) wear gowns.

Although the origin of academic dress is still a vexed question, most authorities believe its sources are found chiefly in ecclesiastical rather than in civilian dress.

Originally the hood was a Tippet, or shoulder covering, worn by begging Friars in the Middle Ages. It also served as a head covering. When caps came into fashion in the fifteenth century, hoods became ornamental and were draped over the shoulder and down the back. The cap was conferred as a symbol of the Master’s Degree and varied greatly. Some were stiff, some soft, some square or round with a tuft in the center. The tassel today is an elaboration of the tuft. The “mortar board” style is from Oxford, but round and soft caps are also worn today at some universities.

The practice of wearing academic dress in this country dates from 1754 when King George II chartered King’s College (now Columbia College) and transplanted to the Colonies many of the regulations of Oxford and Cambridge. In time, more somber colors replaced the scarlet of the English universities. During most of the nineteenth century, American colleges and universities had no standard style of academic dress. Many faculty wore gowns from European universities where they received their degrees or gowns of local origin. Only a few wore hoods, which often were assumed to be articles of ecclesiastical rather than academic dress.

It wasn’t until 1895 that a commission of leading American educators adopted a code standardizing academic dress. That code is still in effect today although it was modified slightly in 1935 and again in 1960. The shape and size of the American hood marks the college degree of the wearer, and under the system established by the code, it is possible at an academic convocation to distinguish at a glance the Bachelors, Masters, and Doctors, and at the same time recognize the university and college from which the degree was obtained.

Hoods

It is the hood which is the most important and distinctive feature of the American code. The Masters hood is three and one-half feet long with a three-inch-wide band. The Doctors hood is four feet long with a five-inch-wide velvet band. The velvet band of the hood symbolizes the wearer’s field of study while the lining of the hood recognizes the official colors of the institution from which the degree was granted.

Listed below are some of the colors which represent fields of study at Western:

College of Business and Economics .................................................. Brown
College of Fine and Performing Arts ............................................... Pink, White
College of Humanities and Social Sciences .............................. White, Gold, Blue, Dark Brown
College of Science and Engineering ........................................ Gold, Blue
Commencement Furnishings

Podia

The two podia were designed and hand-crafted in Fall, 2014 by Randy Stribling, a local alumnus of Western Washington University. The pieces were built with sustainably yielded African Mahogany and faux ebony plugs to complement the chairs on the dais. The style is Greene and Greene, an elegant form of the Craftsman style popular in the early 20th century. When Western began as the Washington State Normal School at Bellingham at the turn of the last century, the Craftsman or Mission style of furniture was used extensively throughout the campus. Many examples can still be found tucked away in Old Main and elsewhere around the university. The design of the furniture was inspired by the rich history of Western and will be a part of the pomp and circumstance of commencement ceremonies for generations to come.

Gonfalons

Gonfalons are heraldic flags or banners that were first used by Italian medieval cities to display coats of arms or other insignia. In modern times, the colorful banners have been adopted by many universities around the world as part of the pageantry and ceremonial nature of commencement. As a symbolic element of the formal ceremony, Western has nine gonfalons, one representing each of the university’s colleges and one representing University Interdisciplinary Programs. The gonfalons are used during commencement ceremonies to symbolize the different academic areas within the university.
Memory Walk and Alumni Way

Memory Walk has been a commencement tradition since 1912. Each year, a stone representing the graduating class is laid in the sidewalk that runs parallel to the facade of Old Main, Western’s first building. Beneath each of these class stones lie time capsules. At the conclusion of the spring and summer commencement ceremonies, the graduates follow the macebearer, the president’s party and the faculty out of Carver Academic Facility. Graduates proceed across Red Square through Alumni Way to Memory Walk where they may place their student body cards or other memorabilia into a box which will be buried beneath the stone bearing their class year. Paving their way to Memory Walk are thousands of individually personalized bricks. Purchased by Western alumni, families, and friends commemorating their time at Western over the past 100 years, these bricks support Western students and alumni through scholarships and various programs. To learn more about the Alumni Association https://alumni.wwu.edu.

Fall and winter graduates take part in an indoor Memory Walk included in the recession. The time capsule containing memorabilia for the academic year is buried at the end of summer quarter.
White and Blue

Adagio

Far above the Bay's blue water
Here the youth from town and seashore

Stands our own Sehome.
Gather for the year.

Guarded all around by mountains
Learning truth that shall be cherished

Crowned by Baker's Dome
Forming friendships dear.

Nestling among the grandeur
Soon the ties must all be severed

Reigns the White and Blue
But they leave with you

Colors of our Alma Mater
Happy memories and best wishes

Hail all hail to you!
For the White and Blue!
This space is for you to write your goals, hopes and aspirations for your time at Western.