

March 2008

Dear Parents and Friends of Graduating Students:

We are delighted to share information with you about Westfield State College's 2008 Commencement. This is the highlight of our academic year, and we hope that you will be here to celebrate with us. Commencement will be held at the college campus **on Saturday, May 17, 2008, beginning at 10:30 a.m. sharp** and lasting until approximately 1:00 p.m.

Admission

The families of our graduates are welcome to attend; no tickets or reservations are necessary. Invitations are made available at no cost to graduates through the bookstore and at The Salute to Seniors event, which will take place at the end of April. These invitations are intended as a “keepsake” or “memento” and are not necessary for admission.

Seating

The ceremony will be held under a tent in the center of campus on the lawn behind the Dining Commons. **There is no reserved seating except for graduates, faculty, and administration. Therefore, early arrivals are recommended to avoid traffic in downtown Westfield and insure the best seating.** You should also know that special sections will be designated for guests in wheelchairs and for those who can read sign language. Since seating in these sections is limited, please do not sit in these sections unless you are with someone who needs to be there.

Attire

Although the tent can accommodate approximately 5,000 seats, we suggest that families and guests dress for the weather because there are always some guests who cannot be accommodated underneath the tent or who choose to sit outside the tent. Also, since Commencement is held on a grassy field, you might wish to avoid wearing fancy or high-heeled shoes.

Parking and Shuttles

Please go to “About WSC” on the College’s web site (<http://www.wsc.ma.edu>) for directions and a campus map. We highly recommend arriving early since the traffic along Western Avenue will become congested. **Public safety personnel will be present to direct traffic and to guide you to an appropriate parking area.** Shuttle buses will be in operation beginning at approximately 8:00 a.m. to bring guests from outlying parking areas to the center of campus. **The internal roadway through the center of campus will be closed to traffic (except for those who work at the College) to allow for the large number of pedestrians, as well as for the assembly and processional of graduating students, faculty, and administrators.** As a courtesy to our neighbors, please do not park on the side streets off Western Avenue.

Families with Disability Plates, Placards or Disability Veteran Plates may park in the Campus Center lot at the north end of the Ely Campus Center. This lot is reached by the Ely roadway which is the second right as you head west past the College’s main entrance. All others will be directed to campus parking lots where a shuttle bus can transport the guests directly to the tent. Shuttle buses will operate at the conclusion of Commencement until 3:00 p.m. to transport guests back to their cars.

Refreshments

For those arriving early, coffee and refreshments will be available at the tent. The College will have water service available throughout the day. All guests and graduates are invited to a reception in the Dining Commons immediately after the ceremony.

Photography

We know that having photographs of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion is very important to graduates’ families. Therefore, to clearly capture the moment when each graduate walks across the platform, the college has engaged the services of an experienced professional photographer. High-quality color photographs will be offered to every graduate for purchase

soon after commencement. Additional information on this service will be mailed to your graduate prior to the event. We encourage our guests to avoid the area in front of the stage during the ceremony. Keeping that area clear is a courtesy to others and an important safety consideration. You're welcome to snap photographs and videos from your seat before or after the ceremony. The reception following the Commencement exercises is also a great time to get photos of your graduates with friends and favorite members of the faculty.

College Policies

The College has a strong policy concerning the outdoor consumption of alcoholic beverages. **We will not permit individuals to carry any beverage containers or coolers onto the campus; we will temporarily confiscate these if we find them; and we will ask visibly intoxicated, disruptive individuals to leave.** Despite these strong words, please be assured of a warm welcome on this exciting occasion. We enforce this policy vigorously in order to have a Commencement that everyone will enjoy.

You should know that we send this letter to the families of students who, based upon their credits at this time, appear that they will graduate or at least may be eligible to participate in the ceremony. **However, some students whose families receive this letter will not meet the requirements necessary to graduate or to participate in the ceremony. This determination is not officially made until the end of the semester after grades are reviewed.**

Please share this information with other family members or friends who may be attending commencement. For current information about our **Commencement 2008**, please visit our website (<http://www.wsc.ma.edu/commencement>). Westfield State College is proud of our graduating students. We all look forward to welcoming their families and friends on May 17!

Sincerely,



Robert S. Bristow
Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs

RSB/jdp