


HAMPTON UNIVERSITY  
HAMPTON, VIRGINIA 23668

CEREMONIAL OCCASIONS

April 29, 2026

TO: Administrators  
Faculty  
Staff  
Graduates

FROM:   
Dr. Tamara M.B. Williams  
University Grand Marshal

RE: Commencement Ceremony – May 8, 2026

As we approach our high celebration of academic achievement and the marking of yet another milestone in the history of Hampton University, "Our Home by the Sea," the following information provides instructions and schematic drawings for Commencement 2026. There will be one ceremony this year for the entire University which will be held at the Hampton Coliseum located at 1000 Coliseum Drive, Hampton, VA 23666.

**TIME TO ASSEMBLE**

All participants to include Administrators, Faculty, Staff and Graduates are to enter the entry marked Faculty/ Graduate entrance at **7:30 a.m.** on May 8, 2026 and **MUST** have government or HU issued identification. There will be tent signs indicating the entrance. Once you have entered the building, you will be directed by the Marshals to your designated area.

**COMMENCEMENT EXPECTATIONS AT HAMPTON UNIVERSITY**

The Commencement Ceremony at Hampton University is conducted with **dignity and pride**. Appropriate academic regalia and accessories should complement the robe. Caps are worn with the tips in a horizontal position, not tilted. Students in academic regalia must wear auxiliary clothing that is in harmony with the black robe. Women: black dresses of appropriate length, black shoes, skin tone or dark stockings, no pants or jeans. Men: white collared shirts with ties, black shoes, black dress slacks, and no jeans. Non-binary students: please aim for your polished, professional look that is true to who you are. Attire may include the following: black suits with shirt or blouse, long black trousers with shirt or blouse, black dress, skirt with shirt or blouse, and neckties. Academic regalia should be worn with limited jewelry. Large earrings, bangles, chains, pins and other pieces are inappropriate and will not be allowed. **Do not bring purses with you to the procession. Anyone failing to meet these guidelines (carrying flowers or wearing more than one stole, attachments, corsages, ribbons, scarves, etc. with academic attire) will be escorted from the procession.**

**No cellphones are permitted during the processional nor recessional portions of the Commencement Ceremony.** This applies within the Hampton Coliseum.

**PROCESSIONAL**

1. The Procession will begin promptly at **9:15 a.m. on May 8, 2026**. Graduation Candidates along with the Emeritus and 50 Year Class will enter the Coliseum and proceed to their seats after which

the Faculty, Administrators, and Presidential Party will enter the Coliseum. **No one will have access to join the processional once it begins.**

2. Ph.D. Candidates will march with the Graduate College and HU Global into the Coliseum and will be directed to their designated area according to their Marshal.

**MANDATORY REHEARSAL – MONDAY, MAY 4, 2026, 10:00 A.M.**

The initial mandatory rehearsal requires the attendance of the graduates and marshals only and will be held on **Monday, May 4, 2026 in the Convocation Center starting promptly at 10:00 a.m.** **Please** arrive early and find a seat. In addition, please bring your **cap and hood** with you to rehearsal.

**MANDATORY REHEARSAL – THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026, 7:30 A.M.**

A subsequent mandatory rehearsal will be held on **Thursday, May 7, 2026**. Participants should report to the Hampton Coliseum no later than **7:30 a.m. Thursday, May 7, 2026** with **caps and hoods**. Participants will assemble in designated sections once inside the graduate holding area. **Students are not to leave before rehearsal has ended.** Undergraduate students, who are unable to participate in rehearsal, but plan to participate in the ceremony, **MUST** report to the School Dean immediately upon their arrival at the Hampton Coliseum on Friday, May 8, 2026 by 7:30 a.m. in order to be correctly placed in the processional.

For Commencement updates, continue to monitor the “Count Down to Commencement” website.