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**Subject:** Instructions for BME graduates, their families, and others on Graduation Day  
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Graduating BME students, families, and faculty:

There's often confusion about where you're supposed to go and at what time on Sunday. What follows are the details compiled specifically for BME. **Please share this email with your families and guests.** The most important stuff is in **bold**. Super-critical things are in **RED**.

**It's important to show up early.** Enhanced security procedures are in place, and you should expect delays while getting assembled or getting seated!

#### Contents:

1. Where to park (BME only)
2. Where you should be and when
3. Getting from the Diploma Ceremony in Old Cabell Auditorium to the **reception** in South Commons.
4. Accommodations and suggestions for older guests and those with disabilities
5. Weather: the BME Inclement and Severe weather plans

#### Where to park (**BME only**):

Assuming there are no weather issues (see below), **we recommend that families and guests park for the day in the South Garage behind MR5 and walk to the Lawn from there.** [See this map for the South Garage location, a driving suggestion for getting there from interstate-64, and walking from there to the Lawn.](#) Parking in South Garage will ensure that you're near both the Lawn and Diploma ceremonies. EXCEPTION: Family members with disabilities (More below on this).

#### Two words of advice for *all* attendees:

1. **We recommend that you wear sunscreen!** That goes for you *and* for your guests! If you end up stuck in the sun for hours, a little sunscreen makes a big difference!
2. **Don't bring contraband!** EVERYONE will pass through security, go a metal detector, be asked to open your robes, and are subject to the "clear bag policy." **Do NOT bring alcohol, sticks or things mounted on sticks (though apparently collapsible selfie sticks are ok this year), flammables, drones, pets, and other obviously silly things.** You may carry signs and balloons, or "decorate" yourself, but none of those things may be mounted on a stick.

The "clear bag policy" is that you may carry only (a) a clear plastic bag no larger

than 12 x 12 inches, or (b) a one-gallon clear Ziploc bag, AND (c) a small clutch bag can be taken along with the clear plastic bag. The clutch bag can be no larger than a hand.

### Where you should go and when:

1A. **GRADUATES:** No later than 9:30 a.m. you should arrive on grounds and assemble in the grass on the north side of the Rotunda – that’s the side facing Carr’s Hill and the Corner. Specifically, you should gather to the left of the Jefferson Statue, as you face the Rotunda. [A map of the assembly area is here.](#)

1B. **FAMILIES:** should go directly to the lawn, not with the graduate, and must enter through the designated walkways and stairways nearest Old Cabell Hall. That’s another good reason to park in the South Garage, since it’s so close! [Here’s a map of the access points.](#)

Families, do NOT bring alcohol, “poppers,” chairs, or tents. They will be confiscated.

1C. **FACULTY:** should assemble on the southwest portico of the Rotunda – [A map of the assembly area is here.](#)

### The lawn ceremony, and the diploma ceremony

2. **The lawn procession starts promptly at 10 a.m.** Faculty Marshals (including myself) will help get you assembled and moving in the right direction. **Graduate students should be at the front of the line** - the end nearest the Rotunda; **Please move to the front when you arrive!**

3. Speeches and things come first. Degrees are then conferred by president Ryan. If you want to do the "tassel" thing, it begins on the right, and you flip it to the left after she confers the degrees (though almost no one actually does that).

4. **After the lawn ceremony, head to Old Cabell Hall** where the BME diploma ceremony will be held.

**Families:** Old Cabell Hall is the building where the President and the Deans stand to speak during the ceremony. **Gather in or near the lobby, and head into the auditorium once the doors are opened** – that will happen around noon. We will collect tickets for Diploma Ceremony to ensure that no families are excluded from the auditorium. Un-ticketed guests must wait until all tickets guests have been seated before anyone additional can be admitted to the auditorium. **Please note that Old Cabell Hall will be closed until the Lawn Ceremony is completely over; no early arrivals!** You may wait in the South

Lawn Commons, if you wish; it opens at 11:30, and is a [short walk away \(directions in link\)](#). The orchestra-level seats are reserved.

**Graduates:** Head downstairs via the **RIGHT-HAND** stairwell from the lobby, where we will assemble for the procession. Graduate students should be at the front of the line; that's the end where the right-hand stairwell leads. **There will be water and drinks available for you.**

**PLEASE find Kitter and pick up your name card.** It includes your name as it appears in SIS, and your academic distinction. **Carry this card with you.**

**Faculty:** Head downstairs via the **LEFT-HAND** stairwell, and gather in the alcove.

**All:** There are **bathrooms** on the entry floor of Old Cabell Hall, to the right as you enter, *and* one on the lower level – down the left-hand stairwell. There is a **water fountain** near the entry-level bathrooms. There are also bathrooms in the [South Lawn Commons](#), where we'll be holding our reception.

5. **At 12:30 sharp you will be led by Dr. Kelly into the auditorium.** Here's what to expect...

- You will go through a procession into the auditorium. We'll guide you.
- Undergraduates will be seated in the auditorium seating; graduate students will be seated on stage.
- Dr. Kelly will guide you up to the podium (first grads, then undergrads) to receive your scroll; just follow the lead of the person in front of you.
- You hand your name card to the person who will be reading your name – Dr. Papin for the graduate students, and Dr. Allen for the undergraduates. **Don't start walking until they read your name.**
- Graduate students will be hooded; we'll guide a few of you through the process, so don't worry yet about the details.
- Dr. Epstein will hand you your scroll. Together you'll pose for the photographer.
- After receiving your diploma, you will **head out the side door, following the person in front of you**, and have a formal photograph taken. You'll then make your way back to your seat via the lobby the same way you entered.
- **Please stay as far away from the windows of the lobby as possible as you return to your seat!** There will be another ceremony taking place right outside, and it's important to make every effort not to disturb it! There will be folks there to direct you, and there will be gaffer's tape on the floor.

**Right after the diploma ceremony, please join us for a reception in the South Commons!**

We will show you the way. It's *not* the way you came in! The above map is not the way you'll go.

There will be another diploma ceremony happening right on the front steps of Old Cabell, so out of respect to other graduates and their families **please do NOT attempt to leave Old Cabell Hall through the front doors!** Follow the path through Old and New Cabell Halls instead ([Here's a rough map!](#)). Don't worry about the details; our helpful volunteers will guide you!

**Lots of food and drink will be provided once you get there!**

### If you have older or disabled guests with limited mobility:

Talk with your guests about whether they should attend the lawn ceremony. The instructions for parking and dropping off guests with limited mobility depends on a number of factors, including whether they are coming for the Lawn Ceremony, or only the Diploma Ceremony. More information on graduation for family members with disabilities can be had by calling Melissa Oliver, Coordinator of Services for Persons with Disabilities, at (434) 924-3095. Please also contact Kitter Bishop well in advance for BME-related details.

**Be aware that streaming video of the *lawn* ceremony can be viewed in Rice Hall, or they may do so [on their own devices](#).**

### Our Inclement and Severe Weather plans

Listen to local stations or check the <http://www.virginia.edu> web site after 8 a.m. Current forecasts call for it to be hot, humid, partly cloudy, with a 10% chance of rain.

**INCLEMENT:** Meaning just rain, even if it's a LOT of rain. If the president invokes the inclement weather plan, there are actually no changes at all for BME! Same places, same times... only wetter.

**SEVERE:** Meaning lightening, high winds, or anything else that could be dangerous. If the president invokes the severe weather plan, the lawn ceremony will be moved to the John Paul Jones Arena; show up by 9:15 (doors open at 8) and the ceremony will begin at 10. Students will not process, but should instead be seated immediately on the floor of JPJ. Families should proceed to the stands. Faculty should proceed to the staging area for a limited procession. Ushers will direct you to where you need to go. **The diploma ceremony will still be in Old Cabell Hall Auditorium at 12:30 p.m., so please arrive back from JPJ (if you choose to attend) as soon as possible.**

And that's it! I'll see you all on Sunday!

~ Will

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