



Russell Sage College Commencement 2026

Important Information for Graduates and Guests

Tasks to be Completed in May BEFORE Commencement Ceremony

- ✓ **Obtain your Cap & Gown** - All graduates must wear academic regalia (Cap, Gown, Tassel, Hood or Stole)
* **Grads can pick up regalia ordered online at the campus bookstores Monday-Friday** (hours listed below). Go to the [Herff Jones website](#) to check the status of an online order with home delivery. If you didn't order your cap and gown online in advance, **regalia items are available for purchase in the TROY bookstore only.**
ALBANY BOOKSTORE: Mon-Thurs, 9AM-4PM and Fri, 9AM-3PM
41 Union Drive | Gozzo Student Ctr (Albany College of Pharmacy)
518-694-7378
TROY BOOKSTORE: Mon-Thurs, 9AM-4PM and Fri, 9AM-3PM
Gurley Hall First Floor, Troy Campus
518-274-0199
- ✓ **Verify that Your Academic Regalia is Correct.** College Experience Program (CEP), Bachelor's and Master's caps and gowns are black; Doctoral gowns are green with a black tam and gold tassel. CEP grads wear a royal blue stole and all other grads wear a hood with an inner lining that is green and white (Sage's colors) and velvet trim that corresponds with your degree per this [chart](#). You can swap out items in the Bookstores, if needed. Check out these online videos to learn how to wear your **CEP & Bachelor's**, **Master's**, and **Doctoral** regalia.
(*Bachelor's students can click on the master's link to see how to wear your hood.*)
- ✓ **Pick Up Honor Cords** (if eligible). Undergraduate May 2026 graduates who meet criteria for [Latin Honors](#) will be emailed by May 13 with instructions to pick up gold honor cords from the Solutions Desk. Some other departments may make their own arrangements to distribute honor cords and stoles. (These are typically just for undergraduates.)
- ✓ **Complete the Online Exit Survey.** Tell us about your post-graduation plans through Handshake and be entered to win 1 of 10 \$50 Amazon gift cards. Need help? [Make an appointment with the Career & Self-Discovery Center](#) before you go!
- ✓ **Review the Graduation Info Presentation** - Grads will receive an email with the narrated PPT the week of May 11.
- ✓ **Reach out with any questions.** Continue to check email often for updates regarding commencement and be sure to share all pertinent information with your guests. Contact deanofstudents@sage.edu with any questions.

Commencement : Saturday, May 16, 2026 at [MVP Arena](#) in Albany

Graduates arrive for Line-up by: 12:00PM & Ceremony begins at: 1:00PM

Graduates and guests should arrive early to allow time for parking and security check.

- **Doors to the Arena will open at 11:30 AM.** Guests who arrive before this time will need to wait in line outside the Arena. **No tickets are required** and there is no guests limit for the ceremony. **There is no reserved seating.** All seating, including space for wheelchairs, will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.
- MVP Security will check all bags upon entry. **Prohibited items: alcohol, all smoking/tobacco products, backpacks, coolers, large signs, confetti canons, outside food/drink.**
- **Concessions will be open before and during the ceremony for guests,** and will close about an hour before the conclusion of the event. Grads won't be able to access this from where you're seated, so make sure you eat before the ceremony!
- **Graduates must check in through the Beaver St. entrance.** Guests will not be permitted entry here. **Guests must enter through the South Pearl or Market Street entrances or via the Concourse level of the Parking Garage.**
- Grads are encouraged to **wear comfortable shoes** as you will be standing in line for the procession for close to an hour.
- Flowers and other gifts will be available for purchase in the Arena Atrium.
- Out of respect for all graduates, **all must remain for the entire ceremony.** The ceremony should last about 3 hours. Do not make dinner plans before 4:30 PM to allow time for the full ceremony and leaving the parking garage.

Parking & Accessibility

* Information *

- We highly recommend parking in the garage located directly behind the MVP Arena, which provides direct, covered access to this building on the Concourse level at a reduced rate of \$5 for this event. Entry to this garage is directly off of Market St., just before you reach Eagle St.
- On-street parking is available around the **MVP Arena**, along with several small parking lots with variable rates. Go to parkalbany.com for info.
- Guests with mobility impairments are encouraged to use a wheelchair to navigate the large Arena. There will be space reserved for wheelchairs on a first-come, first served basis on the top tier of the Concourse level. **Sage staff will be at the guest entrance from the parking garage** to point guests toward available seating, but guests will need to be able to navigate the space on their own and are encouraged to arrive by 11:30 AM.
- Those who arrive after the concourse level spaces are filled may be directed to additional accessible seating on the floor of the Arena after the ceremony begins, as space allows.

GRADS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE CEREMONY BEFORE IT ENDS

* Make sure to plan accordingly. Guests can leave early, but grads will not be permitted to leave the floor of the Arena. *

Russell Sage College Commencement 2026

Graduate Check-In, Procession, and Degree Conferral

Graduate Check-In & Procession:

- Graduate check-in opens at 11:30 AM at the Beaver St. entrance and all grads should arrive no later than 12:00 PM. The entrance procession will begin promptly at 1:00 PM and grads will not be permitted to enter after this time.
- At check-in, grads will receive a **Graduate Name Card**. This is the card you will hand to the Dean before crossing the stage to receive your diploma cover. It will contain your row and seat number and your position in the procession line. *Undergraduate students who meet criteria for Latin Honors will also have this noted in red.*
- Once you check in, you will be directed to stand on a specific number label on a red, green, blue, or gold colored ribbon taped to the floor in 2 lines. Graduates will line up by degree level in a designated order and you should not move from these positions after 12:30 PM to ensure you will end up in your assigned seat on the floor of the Arena.
- Only those wearing **full academic regalia** (cap, gown, hood/stole) may participate. CEP and Undergrad tassels should hang on the right of the cap. Graduate tassels hang on the left. **Faculty and Student Marshals will lead graduates onto the floor of the Arena.** Graduates will split off and enter the rows from the outside. (See diagram at right.)

Degree Conferral:

- After the Commencement Address, **Pres. Shaftel will announce the conferral of degrees.** The Dean will invite graduates (by degree level) to “**please rise, come forward, and approach the stage.**” At this prompt, all graduates in the named certificate/degree level will rise and file out row by row to the right and approach the entrance ramp to the stage. Graduates will need to bring their **Name Cards** with them to the stage. Graduates will be called in this order:
 - All **College Experience Program Graduates**
 - All **Bachelor's Graduates**
 - All **Master's & Post-Master's Certificate Graduates**
 - All **Doctoral Graduates:** EdD, then DPT, then OTD Graduates
- Graduates will proceed up a ramp to the stage. At the top of the ramp, graduates will **hand their name card to a staff member**, who will then hand it to the Dean. Students should wait until their complete name is called before they begin crossing the stage. As you cross the stage, Pres. Shaftel will hand you your diploma cover and will shake your hand as a photographer takes a photo. (*You will not need to stop and pose.*) Those who do not wish to shake hands can place their hand over their heart and nod at Pres. Shaftel instead.
- **Continue across the stage and exit via the ramp.** At the bottom of the ramp, another photographer will take your picture before the President of the Alumnae/i Association hands you your Alumni pin. Then, you return to your original seat.
- On stage, **graduates will be handed diploma covers** (not diplomas). May grads will receive their diplomas in the mail by the end of June.
- Photographers from **Genesee Photo Systems** will take your photo as you walk across and exit the stage. They will contact you directly with info about ordering these photos. These are typically posted online within a few days of the ceremony on their [website](#) and graduates will be able to view proofs before purchasing.
- At the end of the ceremony, members of the Stage Party will exit the stage and process down the center aisle, followed by the Russell Sage College Faculty. Then, **graduates will process out of the Arena through the center aisle, starting with Row A and ending with Row W.** Student marshals will be there to lead you to the back of the Arena through the faculty who will be eager to celebrate you.
- Be sure to **pre-plan a location to meet your family after the ceremony.** Grads will exit the Arena via Beaver St. and guests will exit on South Pearl St. or through the parking garage. **You will not be able to re-enter the Arena, so pick a meeting place outside of the Arena in advance to make things easier.**

Sample Graduate Name Card

#78

Ruby Gonzalez Lavoie

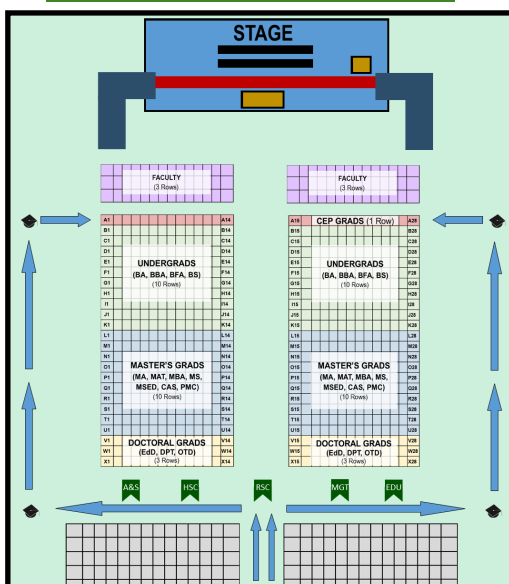
ROO-bee Gun-ZOL-is Luv-WAH

MAGNA CUM LAUDE

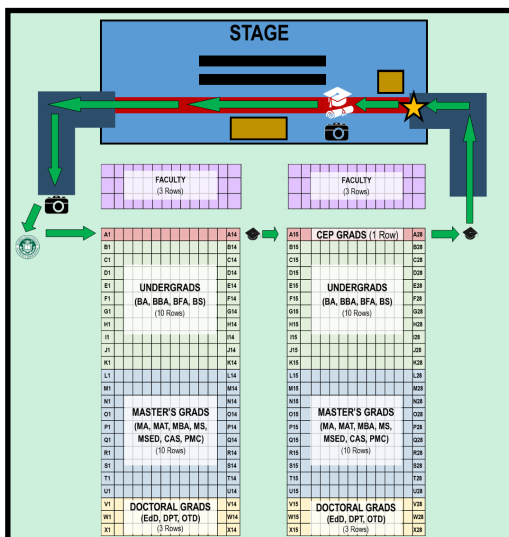
Procession Line Position Assigned Row & Seat #

LINE-UP: GREEN-LEFT-44 SEAT: D-12

Graduate Procession



Degree Conferral



ROW LEADERS

Grads in seats **#14 and #15** are in the **INSIDE AISLE** and must start a **NEW ROW**. Your Grad Name Cards will have this label on the back as a reminder.

NEW ROW

MVP Arena 51 S Pearl St, Albany

Russell Sage College Commencement May 16, 2026 | 1:00 PM

- * Guests enter via Parking Garage Concourse Level or Arena Atrium starting at 11:30 AM.
- * Grads enter via Beaver St. for Check-in and Procession Line-up by 12:00 PM.

MVP Parking Garage (\$5)

Entry to this garage is directly off of Market Street, just before you reach Eagle Street.

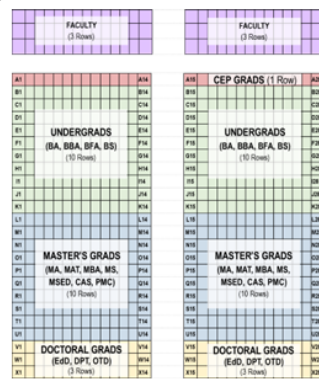
GUEST ENTRY

Guest Seating (tiered w/ steps) is accessible via the Concourse Level (3) of the Arena. Guests should enter through the Parking Garage or the S. Pearl St. entrance. Elevators & escalators are available in the Arena Atrium & Parking Garage.

- Market Street -

Stage

Seating for Faculty & Grads on Arena Floor



Limited Seating for Guests w Accessibility Needs (1st Come-1st Served)

Graduates will Check In and Line Up HERE by Degree Level in assigned order in 2 Lines for Graduate Procession

- Beaver Street -

GRAD ENTRY

Stage Party & Faculty Line Up HERE for Procession

WC Available Space for Guest in Wheelchair (Accessible via Concourse Level)

E Elevator/Escalators provide guest access to Concourse seating level.

E MVP Arena Atrium

GUEST ENTRY

RS

- South Pearl Street -

Russell Sage College Commencement 2026

Important Information for Graduates and Guests

Overview of MVP Arena | Graduate and Guest Entrances



Check out Important Info

including links to the commencement webcast & videos about how to wear regalia at:

[Sage.edu/commencement](https://sage.edu/commencement)

During the Ceremony, View the Livestream from the

[Sage Commencement Microsite](https://sage.edu/commencement)

Reach out to the Student Life Office with Questions

deanofstudents@sage.edu

