

Dear UWG Graduate and All Family Members:

Let me congratulate you – students, parents, spouses, and families – on this upcoming graduation! This is a great event and a very significant one in your lives.

You have worked long and hard to get to this day, and so we want Commencement to be a signature event for you and your family. Hence, this letter. Many students, parents, and family members have told us that it is a very emotionally uplifting time to hear their graduate's name called and for the graduate to walk across the stage to receive this hard-earned diploma. We want nothing to mar this event, and seek your help and cooperation in working toward that end.

In today's world of instant gratification and mail-order delivery, the beauty of an impressive Commencement ceremony is an important one. We realize that you do not have to attend this ceremony – diplomas can be easily mailed to you if you prefer. However, if you choose to attend, *you deserve an impressive and respectful ceremony*. The history of commencement is one that dates back to medieval times, and your program will describe in detail the significance of the robes, the hoods, the colors of each discipline, and other items of pomp and circumstance. If you choose to participate, you will be part of a formal ceremony that is hundreds of years old. Formality is not often part of our lives, but this is a unique and very special event.

Our top two priorities are your safety and demonstrating respect for your accomplishments. Regrettably, there are some larger, more impersonal universities that have forgotten this second element, and those ceremonies often degenerate into a mess of catcalls, whoops, foghorns, and balls being tossed around. In the tradition of *Educational Excellence in a Personal Environment*, UWG is opposed to such behavior – because it is disrespectful to the graduate who comes next whose name cannot be heard, and whose family hears only raucous noises instead of their graduate's name. So:

- We need your help and support to see that such disrespectful behavior does not occur, and that you do not tolerate someone else's offensive behavior to ruin the respect shown to your graduation.
- Correspondingly, we earnestly request that you and your family not take actions that may ruin the ceremony for someone else.
- Marshals have been selected to help maintain decorum – and all graduates and family members are requested to follow their directions and leadership.
- No alcohol of any kind is permitted by State law and City ordinance, with associated penalties for violations.
- We ask your help in ensuring your safety and enjoyment by not bringing to commencement any unneeded items such as air horns, silly string canisters, and beach balls. These items will be confiscated by University Police or other officials; refusal to turn over these items will lead to removal from the ceremony. They have no desire to appear to be harsh, but the benefit is that when the graduate's name is called, it is more likely that it will be clearly heard, and not obliterated by the inconsiderate blast of an air horn.
- Certainly, we want you to enjoy this important event. After all the names are called and all the graduates are seated, we will call on several groups to be recognized – including graduates, family members, and faculty, to the applause and cheers of the entire crowd. This will be the “non-formal” part of the event – and you will have your chance to cheer at the top of your voices, should you so choose.

We need your support and help to make this tradition of respect for the individual work. If you feel you cannot do so, you may simply inform us that you prefer to receive your diploma by mail. We really do hope that you will participate and cooperate, and help make this event a wonderful and positive one for all the graduates and their families. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beheruz N. Sethna".

Beheruz N. Sethna, Ph.D.
Professor of Business Administration, and President of the University