

THE POMP BEHIND THE CIRCUMSTANCE: ACADEMIC REGALIA

The Gown

The history of the academic gown goes back to the 12th century. During this period everyone, both men and women – royalty, lay folk, clerics, tradesmen, students – wore long flowing robes. The apparel varied in elegance according to the rank and wealth of the owner, from simple rough worsteds to rich gold brocades wrought with tassels and trimmed with colorful velvet and rich furs. It was in this period that the first organized bodies of learning were formed. From the gowns worn in the “universities” of the period have evolved the academic costumes of today.

The bachelor’s gown is of simple design falling straight from a rather elaborate yoke with long pointed sleeves. The gown worn by a master has long, closed, somewhat fuller sleeves, which reach nearly to the wearer’s knees. The arms go through slits at the elbow, giving the appearance of short sleeves. The doctoral gown is cut much fuller and has large bell-shaped sleeves. The gowns are usually, but not always, black and those of bachelors and masters are generally devoid of ornamentation. The doctoral gowns are distinguished by the five-inch velvet panel around the neck and down both sides of the front, as well as three-inch velvet bars sewn on each sleeve.

The color of the velvet trim may be black or may indicate the nature of the degree. For example, the color designating a Doctor of Philosophy is dark blue; a Doctor of Medicine, green; a Doctor of Education, light blue; a Doctor of Science, golden yellow; a Doctor of Humanities, white; a Doctor of Law, purple.

The Hood

The hood seems to have had a somewhat practical origin. Medieval monks used their hood for two purposes: to protect their shaved heads in the winter and as containers in which to collect alms.

Today the hood serves as the most symbolic part of the academic regalia by which the observer can ascertain the level and kind of degree. The master’s hood is three feet, six inches long and has a three-inch velvet trim along the edges, indicating the nature of the degree. The doctor’s hood is four feet long and has a five-inch wide trim. The hood, worn for the doctor’s degree only, has panels at the sides. The colorful interior of the hoods, visible from behind, indicates by hue the degree-granting institution.

Look for the following hood colors: Master of Public Health (salmon), Master of Science in Applied Nutrition (gold), Master of Science in Education (light blue), Master of Science in Health Informatics (gold), Master of Science in Medical Education Leadership (light blue), Master of Science in Nurse Anesthesia (navy blue), Master of Occupational Therapy (gold), Master of Science Biological Science (goldenrod), Master of Science Marine Science (goldenrod), Master of Science Physician Assistant (yellow), Master of Social Work (citron), Doctor of Dental Medicine (lilac), Doctor of Education (light blue), Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (green), Doctor of Pharmacy, (olive) and Doctor of Physical Therapy (teal).

- *Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (post-Master’s) in Education signified by a single blue cord.*

The Mace

The University Mace serves as a symbol of authority, just as it did in the Middle Ages when a mace bearer accompanied an official taking office or opening court. From the 16th century in England and since colonial days in America, it has become a symbol of office used in ceremonies and is carried by the procession leader or mace bearer.

Academic Honors

Undergraduate students graduating with academic honors will be recognized for their academic excellence by cords of different colors draped around the necks. *Summa cum laude* (gold), *magna cum laude* (blue), *cum laude* (silver).

College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Honors Program

The CAS Honors Program provides high-performing students with first-hand exposure to scholarship and research. Students apply to the program and then complete and publicly defend a research-based honors thesis. They will be recognized by a solid red cord.

Military Service Honors

The University is proud to recognize students serving or having served in the various military branches of the United States of America. Graduating students currently serving in the U.S. military and veterans will be recognized by red, white and blue cords.

Academic Honor Societies

Alpha Chi (National Honor Society), white stole with blue and green Greek letters
Chi Alpha Sigma (National College Athlete Honor Society), black/gold cord with tassels
Delta Omega (Public Health), peach and black stole with Greek letters
Omicron Kappa Upsilon (Dental Medicine), Blue/gold cord with tassels
Phi Alpha (Social Work), blue/gold cord with double knot
Phi Alpha Theta (History), red/blue cord with mixed tassels
Pi Alpha (Physician Assistant), blue/green cord with tassels
Pi Theta Epsilon (Occupational Therapy), gold/blue cords
Psi Chi (Psychology), insignia pin, platinum/dark blue cord with mixed tassels
Rho Chi (Pharmacy), purple/white cord with tassels
Sigma Theta Tau (Nursing), purple cord with tassels
Sigma Phi Alpha (Dental Hygiene), white stole with purple braid edging and gold insignia