

Minority Report Against the Commencement Proposal

While I do have certain reservations about the fairness of this motion that would block a student from participation in commencement that is very near completing his or her requirements, or even for a student that did qualify, but was simply one day late in applying, this was not why I voted against the proposal. To the credit of those who worked on this motion and to Academic Governance that passed it, the motion rightly seeks to enforce a policy that has been flagrantly ignored. While this motion does require absolute deadlines that on their face seem to prevent all unqualified students from walking in commencement, I fear it does not address an underlying route to exemption. Namely, the current situation is one in which we as a caring and compassionate community of faculty and staff rightly seek to accommodate students that would like to share this ritual of passage with their peers and family. I do not see this practice ceasing, though if the AG's information gathering group's recommendations are implemented I think these instances may dramatically decrease. The only difference is that our well-meaning accommodation will take the form as an official petition to be exempted from the enforcement of the policy. It was on this last point that I decided, with non-fully formed arguments, to vote against the proposal. It was only afterwards that I was able to reconcile my thoughts. Namely that the committee did not propose any guidelines for what constitutes an exemption from the proposed commencement policy, or provide a procedure of petition that provides for a detached review of its academic and non-academic merits. Thus, I feel we have failed to fully complete the task we bring in this motion as we have not deftly dealt with the emotionally charged issues of those students that will be blocked from the commencement ceremony.

Michael Gleason,
Senator

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