Commencement Script Example 1

**Event Title:** Spring 2025 College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Commencement Ceremony

**Ceremony:** College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

**Date:** 5/17/2025

**Time:** 9:00 a.m.

**Location:** Carver Hawkeye Arena

*Please ensure that all speaker remarks, including stage directions and cues, are consolidated into a single document.*

‘Celebrating Iowa’ Video

Faculty Procession

*[Stage Direction] Faculty Marshal enters from the back of the arena and leads the procession of faculty. Faculty should line up and follow the Faculty Marshal to the stage.*

National Anthem

Introduction of Dean

**Speaker:** Mr. Gene Wilder **Left Podium**

*[Stage Direction]* : Faculty Marshal heads to the podium to introduce the dean.

Good morning esteemed faculty, family, friends, and graduates.

It is my honor today to introduce someone whose leadership, vision, and dedication have made a profound impact on this institution. Our dean, Elizabeth Catlett, has been a guiding force in the University of Iowa’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, helping to shape not only the academic landscape but also the experiences of every student who has passed through these halls.

Under Dean Catlett’s leadership, the University of Iowa’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences has flourished, continuously pushing the boundaries of excellence in both teaching and research. She has worked tirelessly to foster an environment where students and faculty alike are inspired to grow, innovate, and make meaningful contributions to their fields. She has always kept the needs of our students at the heart of her work, ensuring that this institution remains a place of opportunity, challenge, and support.

Beyond her administrative accomplishments, Dean Catlett is a renowned artist and scholar in painting, with her work celebrated both nationally and internationally. Her contributions to the art world have not only shaped contemporary discourse but have also inspired countless students to use their creativity as a means of expression and change. Her passion for education and commitment to fostering an inclusive and dynamic community is clear in everything she does.

It is a privilege to have Dean Catlett with us today as we celebrate this important milestone for our graduates. Please join me in welcoming Dean Elizabeth Catlett.

Welcome

**Speaker:** Dean Elizabeth Catlett. **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] Dean stands from their seat to address the audience.*

Distinguished faculty, family, and friends, and most importantly, graduates—thank you for the honor of speaking to you on this momentous day.

We have gathered here today to celebrate you—the graduates who have worked tirelessly to reach this pinnacle moment in your academic journey. Today, you stand at the threshold of a new chapter in your life, and as you do, we all reflect with pride on your perseverance, growth, and accomplishments.

To the families, friends, and loved ones who have supported these graduates along the way, your sacrifices, encouragement, and unwavering belief in them are instrumental. You have helped make today possible, and for that, we thank you.

Acknowledging the Graduates

**Speaker:** President Mary Coleman. **Right Podium**

*[Stage Direction] : The President enters from stage right and approaches the podium to deliver their speech. They stand and address the audience.*

Graduating students, family and friends, faculty and staff, and distinguished guests—on behalf of the University of Iowa, I am delighted to welcome you to this incredibly special occasion. It is a joy and privilege to share it with you.

To the parents, family, friends, and supporters here today—thank you for being here to celebrate your graduating student. Most importantly, thank you for the significant role you have played in their journey to this milestone. I am certain I speak for all the graduates when I say that your unwavering support and encouragement have meant more than words can express.

Graduates—looking out at this crowd, it is clear how proud your friends and family are of you. This is a moment of immense pride for all of us. But I want you to know that this is not only one of the proudest moments for your loved ones. It is also one of the proudest moments in the life of your college and university.

This day is the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and growth. You have navigated challenges, endured late nights, and discovered new passions. You have faced moments of doubt, yet you persevered. The lessons you have learned here are not only in textbooks—they are in the relationships you have built, but the conversations also that changed your perspective, and the resilience you have cultivated. It is this combination of intellectual and personal growth that makes you ready for what lies ahead.

As graduates of the University of Iowa, you leave with more than just a degree. You leave with the knowledge and skills to approach the world with curiosity, to solve problems with creativity, and to act with integrity and compassion. You are equipped not only to thrive in your chosen fields but to help shape the future of society. And as you step into the world, you carry with you the values and lessons of this community—values that will guide you no matter where your journey takes you.

Education has the power to transform lives, but it is not just about what we learn—it is about what we do with what we have learned. The world you are about to step into is constantly changing, and the challenges it presents will require adaptability, critical thinking, and a sense of purpose. You are trained to think broadly and act decisively, and it is this foundation that will guide you.

Take the time to reflect on the road you have traveled to get here. Embrace the uncertainty that comes with the next steps—because growth happens in the unknown. Be fearless in following your passions, and know that no matter where life takes you, the education you have received here will continue to serve you.

As you embark on the next stage of your journey, I offer you some thoughts: First, embrace failure as part of your success. Every misstep and obstacle you face is an opportunity to gain experience and grow. Second, be kind to yourself and others. In an ever-changing world, human connection and compassion are more important than ever. Lastly, never stop asking questions. Stay curious. The answers may not always be immediate, but in seeking them, you will continue to grow.

The future is vast, and your opportunities are boundless. Some of you will continue your academic pursuits, while others will begin careers, create art, or innovate industries. Whatever path you choose, remember that you have the tools to create an impact. You have the power to change lives, shape communities, and contribute to a better world.

And no matter where life leads you, always remember that today is not just an end—it is the beginning of something far greater. The values, friendships, and experiences you carry with you from this institution will shape who you are and how you lead others.

For some, this may be the last time you are on campus, but no matter where you go in the world, you will always be a Hawkeye, and your Hawkeye family will always be here to support you.

As you walk across this stage, you step into the future with pride, excitement, and a sense of purpose. You are not just graduates; you are the next generation of leaders, thinkers, and innovators. I have no doubt that you will continue to make us proud.

On behalf of the entire University of Iowa community, we congratulate you on your accomplishments and wish you all the best in the next exciting chapter of your life.

Congratulations, Class of 2025! We are so proud of you.

Address by Graduating Student

**Speaker:** Herky the Hawk **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] The Student Speaker walks up to the podium from their seat and addresses the audience*

Distinguished faculty, family and friends, and fellow graduates—good morning!

It is truly an honor to stand before you today as we celebrate one of the most important milestones of our lives—our graduation. I want to start by thanking everyone who has supported us on this journey—our families, friends, mentors, and professors. Without you, none of us would be here today.

As I look out at all of you, I am reminded that our time here at the University of Iowa was not just about classes, exams, and assignments—though those were certainly important! Our time here was about growth. We came in as individuals, full of potential, and we leave today as graduates, each of us transformed by the experiences we have had and the lessons we have learned.

We have faced our fair share of challenges over the years. Whether it was the late-night study sessions, the unexpected detours in our plans, or the moments when we doubted ourselves—every one of us has overcome something to reach this day. Yet, through it all, we have persevered. And in doing so, we have gained not just knowledge, but wisdom and resilience.

But it has not all been difficult. Alongside the challenges were moments of joy and inspiration. We have made lifelong friendships, discovered new passions, and challenged ourselves in ways we never imagined. We have had conversations that changed the way we see the world, and experiences that shaped the people we are becoming. Every late-night coffee, every spirited class discussion, and every moment of doubt pushed us to learn more about ourselves and the world around us.

Today, as we stand on the precipice of the future, we carry with us not only our degrees but also the lessons we have learned along the way. We are armed with the ability to think critically, to solve problems creatively, and to engage with the world around us with compassion and integrity. These are the tools that will serve us no matter where our next steps take us.

Looking ahead, I know there is a sense of uncertainty. For many, the next step might not be completely clear, and that is okay. The world we are entering is constantly evolving, and the paths we choose may not always be linear. But one thing I am certain of is that the education we have received here will continue to serve us as we face the unknown.

I encourage all of us to embrace the uncertainty ahead. It is in the unknown that we will find new opportunities for growth. And as we navigate the twists and turns of our individual journeys, let us remember that we have already shown the qualities needed to succeed: resilience, determination, and an unyielding drive to keep learning.

We are not just graduates—we are the future. We are the thinkers, the innovators, the creators, and the leaders of tomorrow. And while today marks the end of one chapter, it is also the beginning of an exciting new adventure. Whatever paths we choose, wherever we go in the world, we will continue to carry the values of this institution with us. We will continue to strive for excellence, to challenge ourselves and others, and to make a positive impact on the world.

And as we go forward, we should remember something else: no matter how far we may travel, no matter where life takes us, we will always be a part of the University of Iowa family. This community, the friendships we have made, and the experiences we have shared will stay with us for the rest of our lives.

So, to my fellow graduates, I say this: congratulations! You have earned every bit of success you have achieved, and I have no doubt that you will continue to do things in the years to come.

Thank you, and once again, congratulations to the Class of 2025!

Alumni Speaker/Hippocratic Oath

**Speaker:** Nile Kinnick **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction]* The Alumni Speaker walks to the podium to address the crowd.

Good morning, graduates, family, friends, faculty, and distinguished guests.

It is truly an honor to stand before you today as an alum of the University of Iowa. I remember my own graduation day vividly—the excitement, the nerves, and the overwhelming sense of pride as I walked across that stage. Today, I see that same pride in your eyes, and I could not be more thrilled to be here to share in this moment with you.

Graduates today is not just about receiving a diploma. It is about celebrating the countless hours of demanding work, the challenges you have overcome, and the dedication it took to get to this moment. Each of you has a unique story—a journey full of late-night study sessions, moments of doubt, and bursts of inspiration. But you have made it. You have earned this day. And now, as you prepare to take the next step, I want to offer you reflections from my own experience.

When I graduated from the University of Iowa, I had no idea where my path would take me. And to be honest, I do not think many of us do at that time. We often look at our diplomas as a ticket to a specific career or a concrete plan, but the truth is, what you have gained here is much more than a degree. You have gained the tools to think critically, to solve complex problems, and to communicate with clarity. These are the skills that will guide you—not only in your careers but in life itself.

The world you are entering is one that is constantly changing. You will face challenges that no classroom could ever prepare you for. But I have faith in you, as I am sure your professors and mentors do. You have learned how to adapt, how to think creatively, and how to push through adversity. And it is these qualities that will make you successful, no matter where you go.

As an alum, I can tell you that life after graduation is filled with unexpected opportunities. You may take a job that does not align perfectly with your degree, but it will offer you invaluable experiences. You may face setbacks, but they will shape you into a more resilient person. Along the way, you will meet individuals who will challenge, inspire, and, in some cases, transform the course of your life. Embrace these opportunities. Embrace the unknown. Embrace risks with confidence. You have what it takes to shape the world—and you're more capable than you know.

One of the most important things I learned after graduating was the power of community. The University of Iowa is a place where you make lifelong connections, not just with your peers but with the alumni who came before you. We are a community—a family—that stretches far beyond the borders of this campus. No matter where life takes you, you will always have the support of your Hawkeye family. And that is something incredibly special.

So, as you take that next step, I encourage you to stay curious. Keep learning. Keep growing. And never forget the power of the education you have received here. Use it to change the world, to challenge the status quo, and to make an impact in ways big and small.

Finally, remember that your time at the University of Iowa was not just about the degree you are about to receive. It was about becoming a part of something greater—a tradition, a community, and a legacy of excellence. And now, it is your turn to carry that legacy forward.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. We are so proud of you. The world is waiting for you. And I have no doubt you will go on to do amazing things.

Thank you.

Conferral of Degrees

**Speaker:** Dean Elizabeth Catlett **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] The Dean moves to the center of the stage, where the President is standing, to begin the conferral of degrees.*

Now, we come to the most significant moment of this ceremony—the conferral of degrees.

I will now lead us in this important tradition, where we formally recognize the achievements of the graduates and confer upon them the degrees, they have worked so hard to earn. We come now to the conferral of degrees. I invite President Coleman to come forward. Will the candidates for the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees please rise?

President, these worthy and approved candidates, having completed all the requirements for the degrees as listed in the Commencement program, are recommended to you for the conferring of these degrees by the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences .

**Speaker:** President Mary Coleman **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] The president stands next to the Dean, ready to confer the degrees.*

On recommendation of the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences , and by the authority vested in me by the Board of Regents, State of Iowa, I confer on each of you the degree of the Bachelor of Arts (BA), and Bachelor of Science (BS) as qualified and designated.

Presentation of Graduates

**Speaker:** Dean Elizabeth Catlett **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] The Dean returns to the center of the stage and prepares for the presentation of graduates*

At this time, we will begin the presentation of the graduates.

Once each graduate's name is called, please come forward to the stage to be recognized. Upon reaching the stage, they will stop to shake hands with President and me, before continuing down the stairs and returning to their seat.

We will continue calling the names of all our graduates until everyone is recognized.

Graduates, as your name is called, take a moment to enjoy this special recognition, and know that today marks the culmination of your hard work and achievement.

*[Stage Direction]* During the presentation of names, the graduates walk across the stage to shake hands with the President and the Dean*.*

Tassel-Turning Ceremony

**Speaker:** Dean Elizabeth Catlett **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] After all graduates have walked across the stage, the Dean returns to the podium for the next part of the ceremony.*

Now, we come to an incredibly special moment in today’s ceremony: the Tassel-Turning Ceremony. Graduates, this is the moment when you will officially transition from being a student to a graduate.

As you stand before us, ready to embark on the next chapter of your journey, I ask that you take a moment to reflect on the incredible achievement this day symbolizes. You have worked tirelessly, faced challenges, and proven resilience, determination, and the pursuit of knowledge. Today, you are not just receiving a degree but also affirming your place as a graduate of this institution.

I invite each of you to carefully move the tassel on your cap from the right side to the left. This simple act marks a significant milestone in your life. It symbolizes your transformation—from a student who has earned the right to be here, to a graduate who is now ready to take on the world.

As you make this symbolic gesture, know that you are not alone in this transition. You are part of a larger community, a class of remarkable individuals who have worked together to reach this moment. With your tassels now on the left, you join a vast community of proud alumni who have come before you, stepping forward with the potential to make a profound impact on the world around you.

I invite everyone to join me in applauding the Class of 2025, who have now officially earned their degrees.

Closing Remarks

**Speaker:** President Mary Coleman **Center Podium**

*[Stage Direction] The President* walks to the center of the stage for the final remarks.

Graduates, today marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. You have worked hard, overcome challenges, and achieved incredible things. It is with pride that we celebrate each of you, as you now join the ranks of alumni from this institution—an esteemed group of individuals who, like you, have made an impact in their fields and in the world.

As you move forward, remember that the education you have received here is not just about knowledge—it is about the ability to think critically, act with integrity, and lead with compassion. You are equipped not only to succeed, but to contribute positively to the world around you. The possibilities before you are endless, and I have no doubt you will continue to make us proud in all that you do.

To the families and friends of our graduates—thank you for your unwavering support and for sharing in this special moment with us today. Your encouragement has been a cornerstone in their success.

And to the faculty and staff who have guided and mentored these students, thank you for your dedication and for helping these graduates reach their full potential.

As we close this ceremony, I encourage each of you to reflect on your journey, embrace the excitement of the future, and carry with you the lessons, experiences, and friendships you have gained here. Wherever your path leads, you will always have a place in the University of Iowa family.

Congratulations, Class of 2025. We are so proud of you, and we look forward to seeing the incredible things you will do.

Thank you, and may the future be bright for each of you.

Faculty Recession

**Speaker:** Mr. Gene Wilder **Left Podium**

*[Stage Direction] As the recessional music begins, all speakers, faculty, and graduates exit the stage.*

Please remain standing as the recessional begins. Graduates, please follow the faculty and procession as we conclude today’s ceremony.