COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES
While we will not be able to gather for traditional in-person commencement ceremonies this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we are able to offer an innovative hybrid version of Commencement that will include an optional in-person opportunity as well as a virtual celebration.

All 2021 degree candidates will have the option to participate in a “stage experience” on Thursday, May 13, or Friday, May 14; this opportunity can include up to four guests per graduate. Additionally, all graduates, their family and friends will be able to view an online commencement celebration on Saturday, May 15, which will feature celebratory remarks from Chancellor Whitney, President Killeen and others, as well as the conferral of degrees.

Details for the stage experience will be shared as plans progress. Highlights include:
- Graduates will be able to walk across the Sangamon Auditorium stage, where Chancellor Whitney and Provost Papini will congratulate you.
- Each graduate may be accompanied by up to four guests in the audience.
- Timeslots will be available between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. May 13 and 14. Each timeslot will be open to eight students and their four guests to help UIS stay compliant with Restore Illinois Guidelines, which allow 50 people—including staff and volunteers—in the auditorium at a time.
- The stage experience will be live-streamed for those who cannot attend in-person to watch.

STUDENT SPEAKER
Our student commencement speaker is an important tradition at UIS. Information regarding when and where auditions will be held will be provided on the Audition Application Form. All graduating students are eligible to audition. Representatives of the faculty and the student-body will select the speaker. The chosen speaker will record their speech on campus in mid-April. The recording will be a part of the May 15 virtual ceremony. Audition application forms will be available via the commencement website (http://www.uis.edu/commencement/) March 22 through April 1. The deadline to apply is Sunday, April 4.
• Completed application forms must be submitted no later than **11:59 p.m. Sunday April 4** (note: Late submissions will not be accepted).
• Auditions, via Zoom, will be conducted between 2 and 4 p.m. Friday, April 9.
• The chosen speaker will be expected to speak on campus during filming for the virtual ceremony in mid-April.

**STAGE EXPERIENCE PARTICIPATION**
Those planning to participate in the Stage Experience ARE REQUIRED to complete the following TWO steps beginning March 29:

1. Confirm their participation by submitting an online Intent to Participate form AND sign up for a Stage Experience time. Students can submit their intent via the Commencement website ([https://www.uis.edu/commencement/](https://www.uis.edu/commencement/)) **between March 29 and April 14**. Only those who are eligible will be able to submit their intent to participate. This step is required, even for students who are making special cap and gown arrangements (e.g., borrowing a black cap and gown).

2. Purchase a cap and gown during the registration process, March 29 through April 14

In addition to caps and gowns, additional graduation merchandise will be available in the Bookstore and online for purchase including class rings, diploma frames and announcements. These products are offered through the UIS Bookstore and Herff Jones.

**Alternative Cap and Gown Arrangements:** Students making special cap and gown arrangements (e.g., borrowing a black cap and gown) MUST still confirm their participation by submitting an online intent to participate and register for a time (see “PARTICIPATION” above).

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**We hope that if you are eligible, you will choose to participate in the Stage Experience. If you have any questions regarding Commencement activities, please email commencement@uis.edu.**

**For the latest ceremony information, please visit the Commencement website at [http://www.uis.edu/commencement/](http://www.uis.edu/commencement/).**