

April 13, 2019

Dear Parents of Seniors:

With graduation less than six weeks away, I write to give you details about various end-of-year events.

The "finishing" process will have your sons and daughters coping with an array of feelings—from excitement and delight to sadness and some inevitable anxiety about what lies ahead. For many, the prospect of leaving the supportive Blair community will not be easy; despite occasional grumblings, most of them have come to genuinely enjoy and appreciate the opportunity that you and Blair have made available. As the few remaining weeks unfold, I urge you to join us in being sensitive to those various (and sometimes conflicting) feelings and in urging your sons and daughters to finish their Blair experience on a strong and successful note.

Commencement Week is designed to celebrate the collective success of the graduating class and honor the significance of the Blair Academy Diploma. Though a few individuals will be recognized with traditional prizes, it is the collective legacy of this group of young adults that we most want to acknowledge and celebrate. In order to help you better plan for the various end-of-year ceremonies, I have attached a **schedule of events for seniors** in their last week of school. This information can also be found on our website...<https://www.blair.edu/parents/commencement>. Online registration for the events can be found at [this link](#).

Exam Exemptions allow seniors to avoid having to take the final examination in courses in which their academic performance during April and May is solid. A minimum grade of 4.0 S or 3.5 G is required in order to qualify for exemption. (For those required to take them, senior exams will be administered on **Tuesday, May 21st**.)

The **Senior Prize Assembly at 5:00 P.M. on Monday** in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts celebrates those seniors receiving departmental awards. This is an all-school assembly, and seating is limited. Parents of seniors receiving departmental prizes are notified in advance; while their presence is appreciated, it is unusual for parents to travel extended distances to attend this assembly.

The **Class of 2019 Assembly at 5:00 P.M. on Wednesday** in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts (to which all parents of seniors are invited) will be followed by **receptions in the senior dormitories**. A special dinner for seniors, families and faculty will be served from 5:45 - 7:30 P.M. in the Dining Room.

At 7:30 P.M., the seniors will gather in front of Timken Library and (weather permitting ... and it usually does!) will process across campus to Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts where the **Baccalaureate Service** will begin at 8:00 P.M.

"Senior Night" is rounded off with an informal dance from 10:00 until 11:30 P.M. The school expects all senior boarding students to spend Wednesday night in their dormitories. Any exceptions need to be cleared through the student's Housemaster. We do control traffic on and off campus that night very carefully. School entrances will be closed at 9:00 P.M.; day students or boarders leaving with their parents after 9:00 P.M. must remain off campus until Thursday morning.

On **Thursday morning**, parents are invited to have coffee at Sharpe House between 9:30 and 10:30

A.M. At 10:30 A.M., the senior class assembles in front of the Timken Library and proceeds with the faculty through the arch to the graduation site on the lawn beside Sharpe House. In the event of significant rain, we would move the ceremony into Hardwick Hall or under a tent on Marcial Field. The ceremony generally lasts for an hour and a half. Graduates and their guests are welcome to attend the **Commencement Luncheon** that follows. (Please leave dogs at home for the day. Keeping our already sizeable campus canine population out of the mix is challenging enough!)

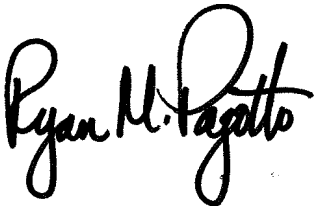
Your assistance in reminding new graduates of the need for appropriate behavior on campus that afternoon will be appreciated by the faculty and underclass students; while celebration is certainly called for, drinking and smoking are not appropriate. Because underclass students will continue to prepare for their exams in the days following graduation, graduates are asked to clean their rooms out and to leave campus by 4:00 P.M. on Thursday and not to return to campus until underclass students have completed their obligations on May 29th.

Before closing, the faculty appeal to you for awareness of—and involvement in—your child's postgraduation plans. There is a delightful aura of success, celebration and optimism that comes with this time of year, but it needs to be tempered by good sense and careful judgment. If you plan to host graduation parties, please be sure that your presence is obvious and responsible. We strongly advise that you not make alcohol available given the potential for tragic consequences and liability.

Each year, some parents seek guidance on the matter of gifts to faculty members from graduating seniors and their families. As much as anything else, faculty members appreciate a senior taking the time and interest to express gratitude in person—or, if not possible in person, in the form of a personal note. And staying in touch in years beyond Blair celebrates the value of relationships that have been so meaningful here on campus. Material gifts are by no means necessary, but if you are contemplating such a gesture, please know that school policy prohibits faculty members from accepting cash gifts.

Finally, on behalf of the Head of School and the entire faculty, let me say how much I look forward to sharing this exciting time with you. It is, to be sure, a celebration of much that is wonderful and a time to be grateful for the experience we all have shared. If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of Commencement Week, please be in touch with Mr. Stival or Mrs. Byrne at extension 5620.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan M. Pagotto". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "R".

Ryan M. Pagotto

Associate Head of School