



BLAIR ACADEMY

April 4, 2024

Dear parents of seniors:

With graduation exactly seven weeks from today, I write to share details about the culminating events for our seniors.

The final stretch will find your senior 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 possible. 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 soon-to-be Blair alum to finish their experience at this school on a strong and successful note.

The events for the seniors are 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've included a schedule of events for the last several days of school and some additional notes below on the various events.

Exam exemptions allow seniors to avoid taking the final examination in courses in which they have achieved solid academic performance. Over the ten weeks between the return from spring break and the end of the year, a student who does not earn the equivalent of a 3.5 grade with “responsibility” and “engagement” effort marks at “often” or higher or a 4.0 grade with “responsibility” and “engagement” effort marks at “occasionally” or higher will take a senior exam in that course. Any required senior exams will be administered on **Tuesday May 21**.

The **Senior Prom** will be held on Tuesday evening, May 21, at 6 p.m. at the North Shore House. All students will travel by bus to and from the prom. Parents are welcome to come to Sharpe House lawn to take photos from 4:15-5:30 p.m. There will be a small reception for parents of prom-goers on the Sharpe House patio.

The **Class of 2024 Assembly** will be held on Wednesday, May 22, at 5 p.m. in Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts. A special dinner for seniors, families and faculty will be served from 6:15-7:30 p.m. in the Romano Dining Hall.

At 7:30 p.m., the seniors will gather in front of Timken Library and will process across campus to Armstrong-Hipkins Center for the Arts where **Baccalaureate** will begin at 8 p.m.

An informal dance for seniors from 9:30 until 11 p.m. rounds out the night. The School expects all senior boarding students to spend Wednesday night in their dormitories. Any exceptions need to be cleared through the student life office. We do control traffic on and off campus that night very carefully. School entrances will be closed at 9 p.m.; day students or boarders leaving with their parents after 9 p.m. must remain off campus until Thursday morning.

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

10:30 a.m. At 10:30 a.m., the senior class assembles in front of Timken Library for a class photo 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 under a tent on Marcial Field (aka the Bowl). The ceremony generally lasts for 75 minutes. Graduates and their guests are welcome to attend the **Commencement Luncheon** that follows. (Please leave dogs at home for the day. Keeping our already sizable campus canine population out of the mix is challenging enough!)

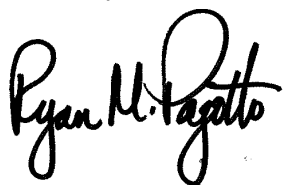
Your assistance in reminding new graduates of the need for appropriate behavior on campus that afternoon will be appreciated by faculty, staff and underclass students; while celebration is certainly called for, drinking and smoking are not appropriate. Because underclass students will continue to prepare for their exams in the days following graduation, graduates are asked to clean their rooms out and to leave campus by 4 p.m. on Thursday and not to return to campus until underclass students have completed their obligations on May 31.

Before closing, the faculty appeal to you for awareness of—and involvement in—your child's post graduation 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 and staff members from graduating seniors and their families. As much as anything else, everyone who works at Blair appreciates 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 the 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 Blair employees 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 experiences we all have shared. If you have questions or concerns about any aspect of Commencement week, please be in touch with Susan Long, associate director of advancement, at longs@blair.edu.

Sincerely,

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

Ryan M. Pagotto
Associate Head of School