

Commencement Applause

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ABSTRACT

Commencement is an activity that honors student success. As a final thought, how is this joyfulness expressed at graduation exercises?

At the start of most university graduation exercises, commonly referred to as commencement, it is a usual practice for the CEO (Campus Executive Officer) in charge of the days activities to make a statement to the effect that this is a solemn occasion and that plaudits should be reserved to the final graduate walking across the stage receiving his or her diploma. The following dynamic appears to develop without an “applause meter” at commencement exercises by the casual observance of the author.

Student populations receiving the highest crowd applause despite the chancellor's / president's statement of refrain has appeared in an apparent order. Receiving the highest crowd ovation at several universities is as follows:

1. Students in wheel chairs, or others with a visually identifiable disability
2. African American female students with sorority affiliation
3. African American male student athletes
4. International students of Eastern Mediterranean Origin
5. Graduates of non-traditional academic studies options, such as the “1-2-1” program in which students attend one year of matriculation in the home country followed by two years in the United States, finishing their final year back at the parent university. Upon successful completion of this program, students receive a baccalaureate degree from both the home and American university.

Conversely, it is interesting to the casual observer to think about why students from other populations are not outwardly expressive during this joyous occasion marking completion of a student's program of study. One has to wonder if these other groups of scholars will

be using alternative forums such as dinner gatherings or special social events to celebrate this academic landmark occasion.

A more scientific survey delving into this topic needs to follow. The question remains as to what is the appropriate venue for expressing one's self when accomplishing a major milestone in life. Commencement is a unique event based on the fact that an individual has a shared experience with anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand people.