



Armstrong & Liberty Campus Senate
CL-AC1819-SR7: *Changes to 2019 Commencement Process*
Sponsor: Senators Tyack, Leitelt, Wright, McDaniel, Kovach
Sponsoring Committee: Committee of the Whole

Whereas: On January 16th, 2019, Georgia Southern University announced that the Spring 2019 commencement process will be changed for graduating seniors, having them graduate on the campus on which their college is based, not where they attended classes; and

Whereas: While it is understood that this is a new university, students that have worked towards graduation, from both the old Georgia Southern University and Armstrong State University, deserve the privilege to graduate from their respective campus at which they have completed their degree, as opposed to an unfamiliar place which is likely to hold no personal value to them; and

Whereas: Students at the Armstrong and Liberty Campuses have traditionally held their commencement ceremonies in the City of Savannah, while students at the Statesboro Campus have traditionally held their commencement ceremonies in Historic Paulson Stadium; and

Whereas: The President's Cabinet attended the 2018 Armstrong Campus State of the University on November 15th to answer questions and concerns of the student body, one of which being potential changes to the commencement, with the response from the University President's Cabinet being quote:

“A decision has not been made yet. We’re working through that. We have put together some different proposals that we’re looking through. One of the proposals you’ve heard about is one where you’d graduate with your college at a certain campus. We’ll look at it as a whole, keeping in mind the student experience, and let you know as soon as we can,”

; and

Whereas: Georgia Southern University states on their Commencement FAQ page that the decision to change the commencement process was made by a committee, which solicited input from students before handing their recommendation to the President's Cabinet; and

Whereas: No members of the Student Government Association Senate, the elected representatives of the Student Body, on any of our three campuses were consulted on the potential changes; and

Whereas: The student concerns aired at the State of the University on the Armstrong Campus were promptly ignored by the committee in their decision, discrediting the claim that student input was considered; and

Whereas: The President's Cabinet is quoted above as saying they will inform the Student Body of the Committee's decision as soon as possible, yet the web page regarding the changes was last edited on December 18th of 2018, and then published on January 16th, 2019, twenty-one days after a decision was made, and

Whereas: Commencement is less than five months away, which is insufficient time for travel and lodging plans to be changed for many out-of-state family members who plan on attending their loved one's proudest day; and

Whereas: The short notice of a change in venue may result in an unanticipated financial burden to the students, their family members and others especially to those who do not have the ability to travel such long distances; and

Whereas: Having two separate graduations for students on opposite campuses requires graduating students and their families to travel Interstate 16, a highway that is notoriously dangerous for travel, particularly when congested; and

Whereas: An online petition to revert graduation to its original state has garnered over eleven thousand signatures in less than 72 hours; and

Whereas: There is significant outrage from both current Georgia Southern students and Georgia Southern and Armstrong State Alumni; and

Whereas: It is the opinion of the Student Government Association that these changes to the Commencement process have begun to further divide the campuses through an immense increase in negative comments between campuses as opposed to unifying them after a particularly bitter consolidation process; therefore be it

Resolved: That the President's Cabinet of Georgia Southern University *immediately revert* the changes made to the Spring 2019 Commencement Process so that students from each campus may graduate on their home campuses; be it also

Resolved: That if the President's Cabinet believes that, going forward, a new plan for Commencement must be created, and that the committee for this planning be created of *equal parts* Students and Faculty in *equal proportion* of all three campuses of Georgia Southern University; be it also

Resolved: That any final plan determined by said above committee shall be presented to the Student Body no sooner than *18 months*, the time when most students have to apply for graduation, of any commencement date; be it also

Resolved: That any final plan determined by said above committee have *three listening sessions*, one on each campus, before the final vote of approval by the President's Cabinet.

Spencer DeMink, *Executive Vice President*
Armstrong & Liberty Campus

Date