

Instructions for Participation in the 2026 NIACC Commencement Ceremonies

Cap and Gown

Caps and gowns, honor cords, and PTK stoles can be picked up in the Records Office in the Pierce Administration Building (AB-104H) from Monday, April 27 through Thursday, April 30, 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

If you are unable to come during this time frame, please contact the Records Office to make other arrangements (641-422-4376).

We highly recommend that you try on your gown prior to the ceremony to check that it fits. If you need a different size, please contact the Records Office and we will do our best to accommodate you (641-422-4376, AB-104H).

Decorating your mortarboard/cap is **not permitted** at NIACC. You will not be allowed in the ceremony with any type of writing or symbols on the top of your cap. Likewise, only the honor cords and stoles issued by NIACC are permitted to be worn – cords for societies and organizations that are not NIACC-sanctioned **may not** be worn. Please respect this rule.

Please dress appropriately beneath your gown as your pants and shoes will be visible. Graduates will be walking up and down stairs, so we recommend footwear that you can walk in easily so you don't trip.

Secure storage is NOT available for bags, coats, etc. Please have a family member or friend take anything you don't want to carry.

Time and Place

Graduates will assemble in the Activity Center and need to arrive at the times listed below in red for their respective ceremony:

Health – **2:15 p.m.** (ceremony begins at 3 p.m.)

Career Technical – **4:15 p.m.** (ceremony begins at 5 p.m.)

Arts & Sciences – **6:15 p.m.** (ceremony begins at 7 p.m.)

We recommend that graduates park west of the Careers Building/Pappajohn to allow family members and guests more space in the east parking lot by the auditorium.

The auditorium doors will open to guests approximately 45 minutes before each ceremony. Seating is first-come, first-served, and overflow seating is available in the Activity Center. No tickets are required. If your guests find it difficult to use stairs or need accessible seating for wheelchairs or other assistive devices, please contact the Records Office to reserve accessible seating (641-422-4376). Accessible seating is limited but NIACC staff will do our best to seat the rest of your guests near the accessible seating.

Name Cards

When arriving at the Activity Center, graduates will go to the lower level by the windows to pick up your name card. Please complete the information on the back for the photography.

This card will be used to announce your name as you cross the stage to receive your diploma cover.

Borden Plunkett, our name announcer at each ceremony, will be available in this area if you wish to visit with him about your name pronunciation.

Phi Theta Kappa Graduates

PTK graduates will pick up your stoles in the Activity Center near the name card tables immediately before the ceremonies. After the ceremony, please return your stole to Josie Popp in the east gym lobby upon exiting the ceremony (by the concession stand). If stoles are not returned after the ceremony, there will be a hold placed on your academic record. Graduates keep their cap, gown, and other honor cords.

International Graduates

The flag of your country will be displayed in the auditorium lobby.

Livestream

NIACC will livestream the commencement ceremonies on the NIACC YouTube channel. To view, follow the link provided on the NIACC graduation web page or go to www.youtube.com/user/myniacc in your web browser on May 1, 2026 at each ceremony start time.

Processional

Graduates will process from the Activity Center to the lower level of the Auditorium where the ceremony will take place. NIACC staff will be there to direct you.

After the processional music ("Pomp and Circumstance") begins to play, the graduates will enter the auditorium, led by Dr. Lisa Vance. You will process across the mid-level walkway, then go down the stairs to the lowest level of seating and fill the rows from the bottom up.

Please remain standing throughout the national anthem until Joel Pedersen, NIACC president, directs the audience to be seated.

Ceremony

The presentation of the degrees will be made by Joel Pedersen, NIACC President.

Borden Plunkett, our name announcer, will indicate to the ushers and graduates when to approach the stage. The front row should stand and proceed to the stairs leading up to the right side of the stage.

You will hand Borden Plunkett (the name announcer) your name card as you cross the stage to receive your diploma cover so that your name can be announced. You will take the diploma cover from the NIACC president while shaking hands, then shake hands with a NIACC Board member. If you do not wish to shake hands, please fold your hands together to indicate this.

You will then exit the stage through the curtains, where another photo will be taken backstage. NIACC staff will assist you from backstage to return to your seat where you will be seated at once.

Recessional

As soon as the recessional music begins, ushers will release the faculty first and then the graduates and lead them out of the auditorium, starting with the front row.

Photography

A professional photographer will be taking pictures of each graduate as they receive their award cover and as they exit the stage. The photographer has requested that we tell the graduates to be sure and look at the photographer when receiving their diploma cover on stage. The graduates will have the opportunity to purchase their photos if they choose.

Honors

The following honors will be recognized in the ceremony:

- Hall of Fame Graduate candidates
- Phi Theta Kappa Graduate candidates
- Phi Theta Kappa All-State Academic Scholars
- Outstanding Athletes/Scholars
- Ambassador Scholarship recipients
- Military Service and Volunteer Service cord recipients

Diploma Information

NIACC has partnered with Parchment to provide your diploma. After the College confirms that you have met degree requirements and has conferred your credential, you will be notified by Parchment via text message and email (to your NIACC email address) that a digital copy of your diploma is now available. The printed copy of your diploma will arrive by mail 15-20 days after that notification.

Transcript Request Information

If you wish to have a final transcript released after your degree has been noted on your transcript, you can request that in the Records Office in the Pierce Administration Building or request one online (<https://www.niacc.edu/admissions/registrar-and-records-office/transcript-request/>).

Graduation Communication

Graduates have been sent an Evaluation/Confirmation Letter along with a NIACC email from the Registrar's Office indicating the graduation information link on the NIACC website. If you have not received any information, please stop in at the Records Office (AB-101H) immediately.

Please read all graduation information on the NIACC website:

<http://www.niacc.edu/graduation-information/>

What Happens to Your Student Loans After Graduation?

After you graduate, your federal student loans don't disappear – they enter a grace period, typically lasting six months. During this time, you won't need to make payments, but interest may still accrue depending on your loan type. Once the grace period ends, repayment begins, and it's important to understand your loan terms, monthly payment options, and how to stay in good standing. To learn more about repayment plans, loan servicers, and how to manage your loans after graduation, visit StudentAid.gov. If you have additional questions, please contact [Financial Aid](#).

Alumni Association

As you prepare to graduate, we want to extend a warm invitation to join the no-cost NIACC Alumni Association. You are now part of a vibrant and supportive community of nearly 35,000 alumni who are connected by their shared experiences at North Iowa Area Community College.

Joining the alumni association offers you a chance to stay connected with your alma mater, fellow graduates, and current students. As a member, you'll enjoy:

- **Networking Opportunities:** Connect with alumni who are professionals in a wide variety of fields. Whether you're seeking advice, looking for career opportunities, or mentoring others, your alumni network is here to help.
- **Exclusive Events:** Attend alumni gatherings, reunions, and special events that celebrate the NIACC community.
- **Alumni Resources:** Benefit from resources like career counseling, professional development workshops, and discounts on campus events.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep up with campus news, alumni success stories, and opportunities to give back to the college that helped shape your journey.

We also encourage you to **Stay Connected**; make sure you keep us updated not only on your address, and contact information but also you life events (jobs, marriages, births, promotions, etc.)

You can Join the Association and update contact information online with the Stay Connected form

here: <https://www.niacc.edu/alumni-friends/stay-connected/> The Alumni Association holds a prize drawing (Amazon Gift Cards) for every 50 updates submitted.

Remember to Stay Connected! #trojansforever