Dear Graduate Student,

Welcome to your news! Grad Connect is your connection to all that's happening with graduate students at Utica College. If there is something that you would like to see featured, please let us know!

Commencement: A New Approach

After much consideration and deliberation, the annual commencement ceremony is being split for undergraduate and graduate students. This year marks the first time Utica College will have two separate commencement ceremonies. The Graduate Commencement Ceremony is at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 13, 2012, at the historical Stanley Theatre. A reception will be held in the Theatre lobby following the ceremony.

The commencement ceremony is a formal acknowledgment of your achievements, and it is the goal of Utica College to ensure that this is a memorable experience for our graduates, their families, and their loved ones. The commencement website has important information for upcoming graduates. UC wants you to know that this is your day and hopes you enjoy yourself in celebrating this major life accomplishment.

Please note that attending commencement does not guarantee you will receive your diploma. In order to be certified as an official

Important Dates

Please note the upcoming deadlines:

- **February 29** - Last day to add/drop a class for D2
- **March 15** - Deadline to Apply for Degree
- **March 19** - Summer and Fall Schedules published
- **April 1** - Preferred Deadline to file your FAFSA
- **April 1** - Deadline for August 2012 graduates to apply for Graduation to walk in Commencement
- **April 15** - Deadline to RSVP for Commencement
- **May 13** - Graduate
graduate and receive your diploma, you must fill out a Graduate Student Application for Degree by the deadline for the semester in which you anticipate completing all of your degree requirements or by March 15 if you would like to participate in Commencement.

In order to participate in the commencement ceremony, you must complete the online RSVP - Attendance Notification form by the April 15 deadline. If you are an August graduate and would like to participate in the May commencement you need to apply for your degree by March 15 (still select August as your anticipated graduation date) and RSVP by April 1 to ensure that your name will appear in the Commencement program. Please keep in mind that both December 2011 and August 2012 graduates can walk in the commencement ceremony along with May graduates.

Academic regalia for graduate students - caps, gowns, and hoods- are no longer being provided by Utica College. Students must order and purchase their regalia online and the items will be shipped directly to the student.

We look forward to seeing you at Commencement!

Important Commencement Links:

- **Commencement Website** - utica.edu/commencement
- **RSVP - Attendance Notification**
- **Graduate Application for Degree**
- **Graduate Regalia - Order Caps, Gowns, and Hoods**

**Resource Spotlight:**

**Office of Student Financial Services**

When it comes to graduate school, one’s first thought is how to pay for it. Utica College’s Office of Student Financial Services (SFS) offers a variety of resources to help you with financial assistance. Considerations about graduate school include whether to file a FAFSA in order to be considered for federal student loans. To be eligible for financial aid students must be enrolled in at least 5 credits and for the entire semester, which means full 16 week classes or two 8 week classes, one in session 1 and one in session 2. For information on the FAFSA (e.g., eligibility requirements, interest rates), health insurance, fees, and making payment plans, students should contact their financial counselor (listed below), an individual who will assist you throughout your time at Utica College.

**Useful Financial Links**

- [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) - for completing your Free Application for Federal Student Aid
- [www.utica.edu/sfs](http://www.utica.edu/sfs) - Student Financial Services Website
- [www.haylor.com](http://www.haylor.com) - to waive or activate health insurance
- **Consent Form** - needs to be completed in order to speak with you or anyone else regarding your account
- **Bannerweb** - Secure Area for student account information and payment
- **Book Line of Credit** - requesting a book line of credit (only available to students whose financial aid is more than tuition and fees)

**Did You Know?**

Your UC e-mail account is the primary official channel through which the College will communicate with you.
To manage your student finances, an online payment portal was recently established, which is accessed through BannerWeb. The SFS website has step-by-step instructions for students and parents on how to view your account and make payments. Note that if payment or a payment arrangement is not completed by the start of the semester, a deferred payment fee will be added to your account. Online students will not have access through ANGEL until a payment or payment arrangement is made. In addition, if you are in an online program with a residency requirement, financial aid does not cover the costs of traveling, lodging, etc. Valued members of our Armed Services or any other group that receives a discount must submit the discount letter to SFS before the billing due date for each term regardless of whether you are in an online or campus-based program.

Students receiving financial aid that are graduating or reducing their enrollment to under half time must complete an Exit Interview. Students unable to graduate until their capstone project or thesis is complete need to register for 997 Continuous Enrollment, which carries a fee not covered by financial aid, but it can defer student loans until all degree requirements are met. Enrollment Verification forms for loan deferment can be found on the Registrar's website.

Graduate school can be very expensive, and Utica College understands that you have financial needs, concerns, and questions. In order to address those needs, graduate students are encouraged to speak with their personal financial counselor in SFS:

- Jenna Urbanke for Campus-based students
- Caryn Shatraw for Online students with last name beginning with A through Le
- Anne Patterson for Online students with last names beginning with Li through Z
- Sue Boucher for any student receiving Veterans Benefits

If you are unable to reach your counselor please contact the main office at (315) 792-3179 or visit the SFS office at 117 Hubbard Hall. Please also see the Useful Financial Links box to the right.