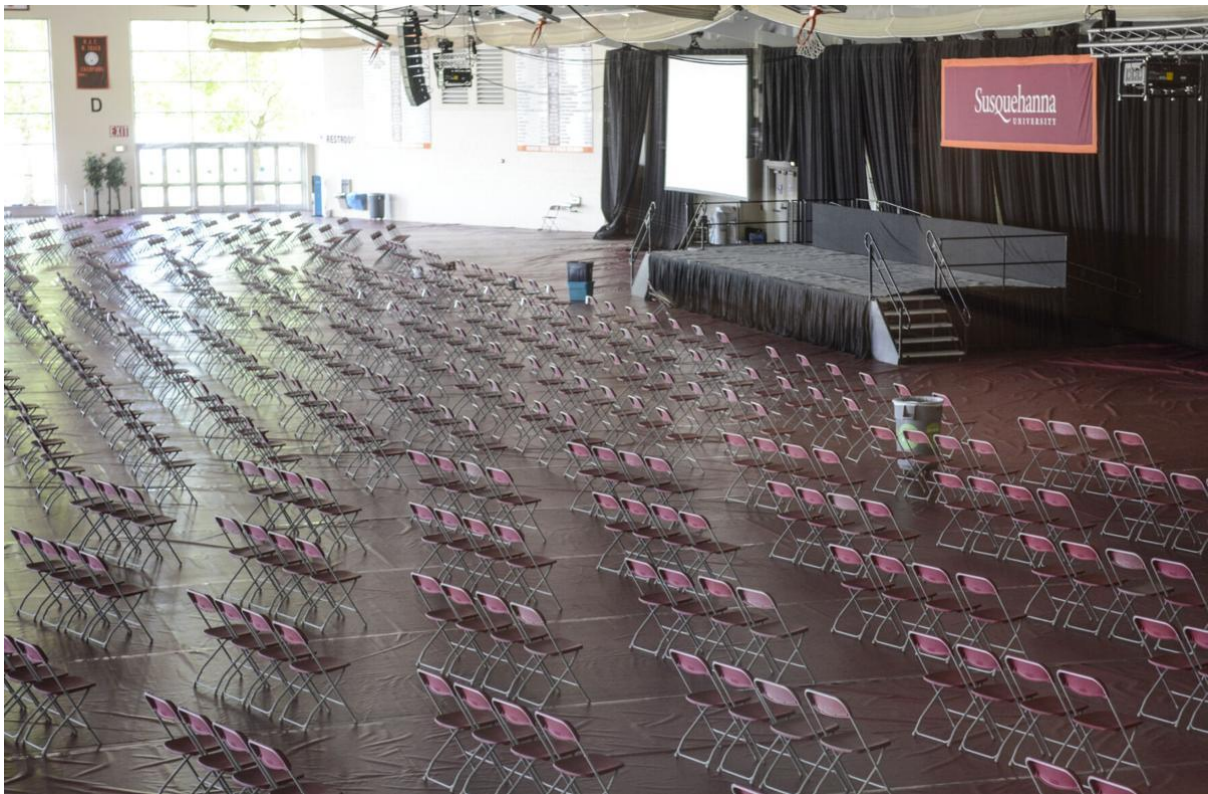


The Daily Item

More for You!

2020 Susquehanna University graduate will participate in postponed commencement ceremony

By [Marcia Moore mmoore@dailyitem.com](mailto:mmoore@dailyitem.com) May 13, 2021



SELINSGROVE — Donovan Gayles graduated from Susquehanna University a year ago and is preparing to enter graduate school, but the New Jersey native jumped at the chance to return to his alma mater and participate in a traditional commencement ceremony on May 22.

“There was no doubt that the reasons behind postponing the Class of 2020 graduation were in the best interest of all students, faculty and parents in order to keep them healthy and safe” due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he said. “However, I was excited to learn that we would have a chance to reconvene as class one more time to commemorate the completion of our Susquehanna University undergraduate degrees together, and am looking forward to seeing my classmates again.”

The response to the university's offer to hold an in-person graduation ceremony for the Class of 2020 was so overwhelming that two ceremonies are scheduled to be held May 22 at the James W. Garrett Sports Complex Field House.

As of Thursday afternoon, 299 graduates from the 2020 class plan to participate in commencement at SU, university spokeswoman Amanda O'Rourke said.

Gayles, who served as the president of SU's Student Government Association, was a political science and public policy double major who, since last year, has worked remotely on the presidential campaign from his New Jersey home and participated in a fellowship related to his field of study.

He's also preparing for graduate school but is taking the time to join his former classmates next week in Selinsgrove.

"I have chosen to attend the ceremony because it is a great way to safely reunite with my class and walk across the stage to celebrate graduating from Susquehanna," Gayles said.

This Saturday and Sunday, three separate events will be held at the Field House for the 510 graduates in the Class of 2021

To comply with health guidelines due to the pandemic, the university is taking several precautions, including staggering commencements grouped by different majors, limiting each graduate to four guests and seating attendees in specified groups.

Masks will be required indoors and outdoors on campus and all participating students will be tested for COVID-19.

Baccalaureate was held virtually this year in lieu of an in-person ceremony.

Traditionally scheduled during Senior Week, ceremonies for affinity groups this year instead were held in the weeks leading up to commencement. They were for ROTC cadets, students of color, LGBTQIA and SU Natives and Allies.

Mara Hashuga, a mathematics major from Coal Township who finished college in three years by skipping study halls, will walk in a cap and gown on Saturday morning with her 2021 classmates and accept her degree.

Since the pandemic put a damper on her final year of studies and she thought a graduation ceremony may not even happen, she's "super excited" to take part and "be acknowledged for the work I've put in throughout my years at SU" before she enrolls in George Mason University to pursue a PhD in math.

Emergency medicine physician, veteran and CNN Hero Sudip Bose will deliver the 2021 commencement address at 10 a.m. Saturday.

Bose was recognized as a CNN Hero for serving as the U.S. physician who treated former Iraq President Saddam Hussein after his capture. He served in the military for 12 years, one of the longest continuous combat tours by a military physician since World War II, for which he was awarded the Bronze Star. In 2014, Bose founded The Battle Continues, a nonprofit

organization that helps veterans fight health battles beyond combat. He divides his time as a practicing emergency physician at the Medical Center Hospital in Odessa, Texas, and teaching as a clinical professor at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center and the University of Illinois College of Medicine.

https://www.dailyitem.com/news/2020-susquehanna-university-graduate-will-participate-in-postponed-commencement-ceremony/article_9a9d16f2-b413-11eb-a7b6-4f7c3424b035.html