

Western States Chiropractic
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Portland, Oregon 97230

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THE
WESTERN
STATESment

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Due to the amount of anxiety the topic has created among students, faculty, and staff, this issue of THE WESTERN STATESment will be devoted exclusively to future commencement exercises. The exercises in December caused many hard feelings for various reasons, and in some cases misinterpretations were made regarding the position of the Board of Trustees and the administration. We hope that this issue will make the position of the College clear. We do, however, realize that there will not be full agreement on that position.

COMMENCEMENT TRADITION

Commencement exercises have been a part of higher education for as long as there have been colleges and universities. The first exercises consisted of feasts and drinking, with successful degree candidates buying food and drink for their faculty. Gradually the exercises came to signify entrance into a particular profession or calling, namely theology and medicine. The ceremony was staged by the institution for the benefit of the public, the students, and the institution. In the United States today, commencement exercises are staged by the institution. Student representatives may participate in the planning of the exercises, but they are totally staged by the institution. Histories of institutions of higher education will confirm this, as will administrative personnel of any college or university.

HISTORY OF WSCC COMMENCEMENTS

All commencement exercises of Western States Chiropractic College were planned and implemented by the administration of the College and were held on campus until the March commencement of 1976. At that time, the graduates asked that they be allowed to graduate at a church pastored by Dr. Robert Elliot, former president of Western States. Permission was granted. The following class -- June of 1976 -- returned to the WSCC gymnasium for its exercises.

Beginning in the fall of 1976, the College held commencement exercises every four months. The Student services staff was not large enough to be able to devote sufficient time to the planning of the ceremonies and relinquished some of its responsibility to the graduates. There was enormous administrative turnover between 1976 and 1979, and those administrators ultimately responsible for commencements found it easier to let students graduate where they wished rather than attempt to plan the exercises for the WSCC campus.

When Dr. Timmins was president of the College from 1976 to mid 1979, there was an attempt to make arrangements with Warner Pacific College so that WSCC commencement exercises could be held there on a regular basis. Warner Pacific rented their facilities to Western States until the March 1981 exercises, during which damage was done to their auditorium. Warner Pacific notified WSCC by letter that they would no longer rent the facility to us. Most of the following commencements were held at Catlin Gabel school in the Beaverton area.

The Board of Trustees determined in 1981 that all commencement exercises should be held on campus, and the administration of the College concurred. (The Board had made a similar ruling in 1977, by the way, but due to administrative turnover, the policy had never been implemented.)

REASONS FOR COMMENCEMENTS ON CAMPUS

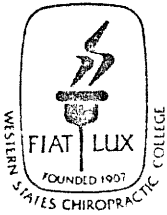
The Board and the administration did not reach their decision on the spur of the moment, nor did they develop the policy without considerable thought. Listed below are the reasons for their decision.

- 1] The only opportunity the College has to bring non-chiropractors to the campus is commencement. It is important to let the public know where the campus is located, what it looks like, and, yes, even what condition it is in.
- 2] The cost of renting other facilities amounts to a considerable sum over the years and that money could be better used on campus.
- 3] Friends and relatives of WSCC graduates want to see where the graduate has spent the last four years. They don't want to see a college or high school that has no affiliation with Western States.
- 4] The logistics of holding commencements off-campus create a considerable burden on the staff of the College. Moving caps and gowns, transporting a podium, diplomas, etc., all take time, and there is often the problem of something being forgotten and a last minute dash back to the campus has to be made.
- 5] There is always the possibility that damage will be done to the rented facility (as it was at Warner Pacific College in March 1981) and Western States will be held liable. (There is more concern here for the reputation of the College than for the actual cost for damages, by the way.)

Contrary to the opinion of some, the administration of the College does not insist that commencements be held on campus just to anger students. There are valid reasons for this insistence and the administration understands the risks of angering students just before they graduate. The administration cannot be coerced, though, by students who say they will not contribute to the College unless things are done their way. There would be no end to what graduates might want and the College would be torn apart by forces demanding this as opposed to that.

All members of the College Board and administration want graduates to be proud of their institution. We all want students to be as happy about choosing Western States as they can possibly be. At the same time, we realize that decisions we must make are not going to make everyone happy. Naturally we would prefer to not make those decisions, that is why we were elected or hired.

Attached is a copy of a letter regarding commencement from Dr. Leslie Pullen, Chairman of the WSCC Board of Trustees.



October 18, 1983

Senior Class Representative
Western States Chiropractic
College
2900 N.E. 132nd Avenue
Portland, Oregon 97230

Dear Mr. Sagaert:

The WSCC Board of Trustees read your letter and discussed at great length the concerns you raised regarding the site of the December 1983 commencement exercises. As chairman of the Board of Trustees, it is my responsibility to inform you of Board action.

The Board voted unanimously to uphold its policy of holding all commencement exercises on the Western States Chiropractic College campus. While we sincerely regret any misunderstandings and feelings of ill-will which have arisen regarding this decision, we nevertheless believe our action is in the best interest of the College.

In the past, the Board has been called upon -- as has the administration -- to deal with a myriad of problems resulting from commencement exercises held away from the WSCC campus. The logistics of preparing for exercises off campus have, we feel, created undue problems for the administration and staff of the College. The need to move podiums, attire for the platform party, flowers, etc., as well as the need to carry out rehearsals away from campus, interrupts the work schedule of campus employees.

Commencement exercises must be viewed as something more than the traditional ceremony whereby graduates leave school. The exercises bring graduates into the chiropractic profession, and by doing so, place upon each new doctor the responsibility to put aside individual wishes and look to the best interests of the profession and the school which represents it. It is most assuredly in the best interest of the College to be the focal point of chiropractic ceremonies which bring non-chiropractors to the campus. It is, and should be, a major part of the College public relations and community outreach program.

October 18, 1983

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We are proud of the improvements in both the academic quality and the College properties which have been achieved at WSCC over the past years and are very much aware of the personal sacrifices made by many because of their love for our profession so that these would be available to you. You are the fruition of their dreams and we look to you for a similar dedication. With your help WSCC can continue to improve and achieve the dreams that you have for it.

It is the hope of the Board of Trustees that you and the members of your class will recognize our deep sense of responsibility in this matter, and that you will join with us by rechanneling your energies to help the College which has made it possible for us to enter the chiropractic profession.

Thank you for your letter. I look forward to meeting you at the time of your graduation.

Sincerely,



LESLIE C. PULLEN, D.C.
Chairman, Board of Trustees of WSCC

LCP/bw