Throughout the land, during the first half of June, the academic world resounds to the strains of marches, such as the "March of the Peers" and "Pomp and Circumstance" played by bands and orchestras of varying excellence. Who are these Peers and why the Pomp and Circumstance? They are the thousands of young men and women who each year receive their degrees from American colleges at a colorful season of "pomp and circumstance" known as Commencement. What are these Commencements? Who plans them? Who is responsible for seeing that every irregularly shaped unit fits smoothly into the picture as a whole? For if the picture is to be a success, everything must move smoothly and every person must be in his appointed place at the appointed minute. Some years ago when confronted with these problems at my own institution, frantic efforts revealed a very meager amount of printed information available. So the object of this paper is to present the subject of "Commencement Procedure" in such a manner that the chance visitor from Mars may be able to return to his Alma Mater and duplicate the Commencements of Harvard or Wellesley, Berea or Brevard—for they are all cut from the same general pattern, with variations as to trimmings. The New International Encyclopedia tells us that Commencements originated in medieval universities, though the appropriate term was Inception. "Inception involved two elements (1) the recognition of the graduate or new teacher by his old master and other members of the profession and (2) the formal entrance of the newly licensed teacher upon his work by the actual performance of his duties. Hence an essential feature of the exercises was that the recipient of the Bachelor's degree should 'incept' or teach and that recipients of higher degrees should defend a thesis." At Oxford, which you remember was founded early in the thirteenth century, this occasion was called Commemoration but at Cambridge it was and is called Commencement. The inceptor was there called the commencer. The ceremony and term were a part of the inheritance received by Harvard from Cambridge and thus became general among American colleges. In colonial days some colleges held these exercises in the fall at the commencement of the college year. As the medieval bachelor incepted or taught, the graduate of the American college delivered an oration or dissertation before receiving his degree. Fortunately for the audiences this custom has now been abandoned. "Harvard held its first Commencement in 1642 with an academic procession and much pomp. These occasions came to be accompanied by great festivities and rejoicings which during the eighteenth century developed into excesses. Laws were passed in 1722 prohibiting commencers from preparing or providing 'either plumb cake or roasted or baked meats, or pies of any kind,' and prohibiting them from having in their chambers distilled liquors, or any composition made therewith." Just as the idea of Commencement was handed down from the medieval universities so was the use of academic costume. The government of those early universities was ecclesiastical so what was more natural than the use of ecclesiastical garments. The gowns now in use are copies or derivatives of the fashion of the garments worn by the monks. The old stone buildings were cold, so head coverings, caps or hoods, were necessities. The use of caps, gowns, and hoods has been continuous since the days of the early colonial universities. Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, New York University, and others had codes before 1880. Since there did not seem to be any system in use, few persons knew the distinguishing marks of the costumes for the various degrees. To quote Gardner Cottrell Leonard (late Director of the Intercollegiate Bureau of Academic Costume) in the Encyclopedia Americana: "The idea of a well defined system for American colleges and universities arose about 1893 after there had become evident a decided movement toward the use of academic costume by senior classes, trustees, and faculties. Bryn Mawr opened with caps, gowns and hoods for faculty and students in 1885, Harvard in 1886, Yale about the same time, Seniors at Williams in 1883, Seniors of Wellesley for Tree Day in 1884 and so forth. Others, including Brown, University of Chicago, Tufts, and Mount Holyoke about 1893. The movement was essentially a student movement to provide a senior badge which would improve Commencement week exercises and to

1 Quoted from Monroe's Encyclopedia of Education.
take the place of the archaic ‘dress suit’ or ‘swallow tail’ and revive the traditions of a continuing and related university life. It was approved by students on account of its being uniform which overcame all differences of dress and made for democracy. It was seen that the gowns aided grace and overcame awkwardness in speaking and that the general effect was to make university functions more characteristic, interesting, and impressive to all beholders. It was discovered that on account of the improved appearance of all-wearing academic costume and the increased interest aroused by the dignity of the ceremonies that there was a better attendance on the part of trustees, faculty, alumni, students, and friends of the colleges and universities. "Realizing that there must be an intelligible system adaptable to all institutions if the many American colleges were ever to enjoy the full advantages of academic costume, an intercollegiate commission was formed in 1893 and there was prepared a tentative draft of a uniform code for caps, gowns, and hoods for the various degrees, designed so as to show in the hoods also the sources of the degrees by the use of color codes. The president or a representative of the trustees of Princeton, Columbia, Yale, and New York University were the most active members of this commission." Mr. Leonard, whose words are being quoted, was called in as technical adviser. The commission offered its code to all institutions. This code was adopted by the leading colleges and universities and is in general use throughout the country. The Intercollegiate Bureau of Academic Costume was chartered and undertook the work of registering the official colors in their official arrangements as the various institutions adopted them. Think of the labor involved in keeping distinct the hood linings of the more than 700 institutions that use the intercollegiate system in the United States, the Philippines, Porto Rico, Turkey, Syria, and Canada.

The wording of the object of the Intercollegiate Bureau, as stated in its charter, should have a particular appeal for registrars. It is "To establish and maintain a library relating to the universities, professional, technical, and advanced schools and colleges of the world particularly as to their membership and their ceremonial and other public appearances, including their caps, robes, badges, banners, arms, and other regalia used on such occasions; to maintain a register of statutes, codes and usages, designs and descriptions of the articles of academic costume and regalia with their correct colors, materials, qualities, sizes, proportions, and arrangement thereof; to promote social intercourse among members of universities and colleges and to disseminate information on the subjects above mentioned." The bureau strives to keep from confusion the distinctive details of symbolic academic costume and to aid, without charge, all institutions with any information in its possession.

Such were the beginnings of the modern pageant known as Commencement. To obtain information in regard to just exactly how it is done, that tried and trusted friend of our profession, the questionnaire, was used. This questionnaire was sent to about one hundred and twenty-five of the leading colleges and universities of the country. The percentage of responses was very high. My sincere thanks are hereby extended to the registrars and other officials who so promptly sent the desired information.

Some institutions graduate students at the end of each quarter or semester, but this paper refers only to the more generally observed June Commencement. The Commencement season varies in length from one to six days, though three or four seem to be the most usual number. With modifications, the general scheme is Alumni Day, Baccalaureate Sunday, Class Day, and Commencement Day. Two or more of these activities may be included in one day or an extra day, such as Fraternity Day, may be added. Of the one hundred twenty institutions reporting, only two say they do not have a Baccalaureate sermon; twelve do not have a period dur
hers, song competitions, tour of campus, Festival of Lanterns, alumni plays, band concerts, movies for class reunions, fraternity meetings, memorial services, baseball games, water sports, ivy day procession, planting of ivy, "senior sing-out" and "senior swing-out."

Several institutions report another alumni activity that is pining favor and is variously known as an Alumni College, Alumni University, or Alumni Seminar. These are occasions on which the alumni gather for a little more serious business than most of the activities listed above, their "re-education." At the University of Michigan the Alumni University is a period of one week following Commencement during which lectures are given by ten prominent professors. Other colleges are making use of this or a similar plan after Commencement, or, as is the case at my own college, at sometime during the college year.

Most institutions have only two really "official" occasions during Commencement-the baccalaureate service and the graduating exercises. Much effort is spent in trying to get the best speakers possible for these two occasions. The speakers usually receive an "honorarium" for their services. The baccalaureate service is usually held at eleven o'clock on Baccalaureate Sunday but some institutions prefer an evening or an afternoon hour. Seniors and faculty are required or "expected" to attend. Academic costume is generally used.

The climax of the week and the year is reached on Commencement Day. The hour for these exercises varies greatly. The University of Texas seems to be the most energetic university on record. Graduating exercises begin there at 8:00 A.M. But the majority of us are lazier or more conventional and begin at 9:30, 10:00, or 10:30 A.M. Quite a number of colleges and universities, including some of the larger ones such as Columbia, George Washington, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Universities of Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, and North Carolina hold their exercises in the afternoon or evening. The "sunset hour" is used by several. Graduating exercises held at some beautiful out-of-door spot at sunset are an experience that lingers long in one's memory.

The order most usually followed on Commencement Day is: academic procession, processional and other music, invocation, address, announcements, conferring of degrees, and recessional. Musical selections are sometimes interspersed throughout the program.

The "Academic Procession" is, of course, the most spectacular part of the performance. Onlookers whose major interests lie outside the realm of education, as well as the members of the college community, get a thrill at the impressive sight of the dignitaries and candidates clothed in long black robes which are lightened by the brilliant and varied colors of the hoods. The order for this procession varies slightly to meet local needs but the universities follow more or less the following order: the university marshal, the president of the university and the speaker of the day, the chairman of the board of trustees, the trustees and official guests, the deans of the colleges, the faculties of the several colleges, the officers of administration, the candidates for advanced degrees, the candidates for the Bachelor's degree. The alumni frequently form part of the procession. In the less complicated colleges of liberal arts, the order of the procession is simpler. In some of the larger institutions only the full professors are in the procession, but in most colleges all members of the faculty are included. Almost without exception the faculty take their places in the line in the order of their rank. At some institutions, such as the University of Chicago, the procession is formed in reverse order with the most important dignitaries at the rear. Weather permitting, the procession is formed at a place some distance from the place where the exercises are to be held and marches to the chapel or auditorium to music furnished by the local band or orchestra.

In the majority of institutions the officials, faculty, and candidates for honorary degrees are seated on the rostrum while candidates for Bachelor's degrees are seated in the auditorium immediately in front of the rostrum.

In describing the ceremony attendant upon the conferring of degrees to course, I shall quote certain passages from an article published in The University (of Chicago) Record, July 1930, under the title, "The Procedure and Ceremonies of Convocation":

The position of each individual in each group is predetermined by the arrangement of the individuals for the degree ceremony. In the nave of the University Chapel the candidates in the several groups are arranged alphabetically by student marshals and aides. In the choir, Trustees, members of the Faculties, and guests are seated. Before the south end of the eastern choir benches is the President's Convocation chair. The Convocation Orator sits in the preacher's seat below the pulpit; the Convocation Chaplain across from him in the chaplain's seat; the Trustees in the front choir benches. The presenting deans occupy the southerly ends of the choir benches, to facilitate their duties; the Recorder and the Assistant Recorder sit in chairs
reign of the President’s chair, where on a table are the diplomas and hoods. The Marshal’s seat is next to the organ console. Responsibility for all details of seating, upon faithfulness to which depends in large part the ease and dignity of the exercises, rests upon the Marshal of the University, whose symbol is an ebony, gold-mounted baton. All persons in the procession remain standing in their places until the President and the Convocation Orator reach their seats. When the President removes his cap and takes his seat, all do likewise. Immediately the President announces the prayer and introduces the Convocation Orator. At the conclusion of the convocation address, the President dons his cap, as representing the authority of the University, rises, and says: “Attention is called to the following awards and honors.” He then calls attention to each honor, scholarship, prize, and medal awarded for special achievement or for excellence in a specific field of work, and degrees are then conferred. The President, still wearing his cap, seats himself in the Convocation chair.

Candidats for titles and degrees are presented by their deans in order. When a dean steps out to face the President, candidates to be presented by him rise in their places and proceed in previously arranged alphabetical order to the choir, escorted by marshals and aides. When the head of the column reaches the dean, the dean presents the candidates; the President confers the degree and hands each candidate, as he approaches, his diploma, which the Recorder passes to the President.

An example of the formula used by the deans in presenting the candidates is as follows:

Mr. President, These students, having satisfactorily completed the general studies prescribed by the Faculty of the undergraduate colleges of Arts, Literature, and Science, and the special programs approved by their departments, are now presented for the appropriate Bachelor’s degree. The President, conferring the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy, or Science, uses the following formula: “Candidates from the Colleges: on the recommendation of the Faculty of the Colleges, and by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Board of Trustees, I confer upon you the degree of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Philosophy, or Bachelor of Science as in each case is appropriate, and in testimony thereof present to you these diplomas.”

The same formula, appropriately modified, is used in conferring the other degrees. When conferring the degrees of Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Jurisprudence, the formula is modified as follows: “In testimony thereof I give to you these hoods which you may wear as Doctors of the University of Chicago, and also these diplomas.” Honorary degrees are given at regular or special convocations after the conferring of the degrees in course. The candidate is presented by the head or chairman of the appropriate department, and the President in conferring the degree uses a special formula for each candidate. The appropriate diploma is presented by the President, and the appropriate hood placed on.

Such a ceremony as that of Commencement at a large or even at a small college cannot be successfully carried out without great foresight and the most careful planning. Who does this planning? Sometimes the registrar does all of it, sometimes he is responsible only for the diplomas or the seating of the candidates for degrees, sometimes he has no responsibility in the matter. Some times there is a Commencement committee, of which the registrar may or may not be a member, which makes all plans and instructs the marshal or marshals. The head marshal may be a student, but is most often a member of the faculty appointed by the president. The dean or registrar or faculty marshal, whoever the duty devolves upon, must prepare and disseminate very detailed directions to the seniors and other participants. The larger universities issue printed pamphlets giving specific directions as to exactly what is to be done on each occasion. Smaller institutions may issue mimeographed instructions, even going so far as to give the number of the auditorium seat to be occupied by each candidate. The candidates are told that they are expected to observe certain uniformities respecting the clothing worn with, academic attire. Women should wear white dresses with black shoes and hose. Men should wear black shoes and dark trousers. Cap or mortar board etiquette is very important. Some institutions use the different colored tassels to distinguish the courses—others use the black tassel exclusively except in the case of the doctors who may wear the gold tassel. The tassel is worn on the left side of the front of the cap by those already holding a degree. Seniors wear the tassel on the right side until after the degree has been conferred. Then the tassel is transferred to the left side of the cap. Women wear their caps through the whole of each exercise. Men remove their caps when they sit down and put them on whenever they rise.

Before closing I must say just a word about diplomas. A few of the larger universities distribute the diplomas from offices after Commencement exercises are over, but the majority seem to give out the diplomas at the time the degrees are conferred and pride themselves on seeing that each graduate receives his own diploma. In many colleges the registrar presides over the table of diplomas and hands each diploma to the president who in turn hands it to the candidate. Time was when all colleges used big sheepskin diplomas that could be framed and hung in the ambitious recipient’s room or professional office. More and more colleges each year seem to be adopting the use of the small 6 X 8 diploma in a flat leather case.
Other details might be mentioned but our friend from Mars is probably dizzy by this time.

CHECKING FOR GRADUATION

H. W. CHANDLER

Checking for graduation, like all the other functions of the registrar, varies with the size and type of institution. The procedure is not uniform in all colleges and universities, and it is very doubtful if it could be uniform. Methods must differ because in some institutions all records are kept in the office of the registrar, in other institutions all records are kept in the deans’ offices, and in others records are kept both in the office of the registrar and in the deans’ offices.

With the reorganization of a number of institutions, and the contemplated reorganization of others, it is rather difficult to discuss the procedure of checking for graduation. A few years ago practically all institutions used some form of credits, such as semester hour credit, term hour credit, year hour credit, et cetera. Today a number of institutions have dispensed with clock hours, specific credits, and class grades as prerequisites to the completion of their programs. It is evident, therefore, that checking for graduation in such an institution as this would be entirely different from that in an institution which still uses credits and grades. I shall discuss the function of checking for graduation as it existed in the past and as it exists in most of our institutions today.

*Permanent Record Card*

Before one can begin checking a student’s record for graduation, it is necessary that a complete record of the student’s college achievement be available. Such a record is usually kept on some form of permanent card. In addition to essential personal information about the student, the permanent record card should include complete information on the following items:

(a) Entrance units

(b) College credits earned

(c) Penalties

(d) Quality of credits earned (grades and honor or quality points) (e) Designation of courses for content

(f) Faculty actions relative to the curriculum