
Student to Speak at Commencement Dec. 18

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WESTERN STUDENT TO SPEAK AT COMMENCEMENT DEC. 18

St. Joseph, Mo. - Dec. 10, 2010 - The Winter Commencement for fall graduates of Missouri Western State University will be at 11 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 18 in the M.O. Looney Complex arena. For the first time in school history, a student will be the featured commencement speaker: Lindsey Jackson, a senior speech communication major.

"We're pleased that Lindsey is starting a new tradition, and I'm sure she's going to do a wonderful job," said Dr. Robert A. Vartabedian, Western's president. "We are Missouri's institution of applied learning, and giving a speech to her graduating classmates is a great way for a communications major to apply what she's learned."

Jackson was chosen from a pool of six candidates nominated for the honor by fellow students, faculty and staff. The executive board of the Student Government Association, or SGA, interviewed finalists and presented a recommendation to Dr. Esther Peralez, vice president for student affairs.

"Lindsey has been an outstanding leader on Western's campus, serving as an SGA Senator, SGA Director of Communications and a Resident Assistant, just to name a few," Dr. Peralez said. "She is an active volunteer in the community and has outstanding communication skills, which she uses to describe how her experiences as the child of an Air Force father helped expand her knowledge and understanding of other cultures, making her a true 'citizen of the world.' She has relied on those experiences to help in her academic career."

Students were excited to have one of their own speak at commencement, Dr. Peralez said, and plans are to continue the new tradition every December. Jackson said she's honored to be the first student chosen as commencement speaker. She plans to talk to her fellow seniors about how they all got to this point in their lives.

"No senior would have made it this far without the help of family, friends and Western faculty and staff," Jackson said. "I guess you could say I'll be honoring all those who have been pivotal in our journey."

Jackson will graduate in May 2011. She plans to marry shortly after graduation and pursue a career in public relations.

The MWSU Alumni Association is hosting a free reception for all graduates and their families immediately following the ceremony in the old gym. A pinning ceremony and reception for nursing graduates is scheduled for 8:30 a.m. Dec. 18 in the Fulkerson Center. A commissioning ceremony and reception for graduates of the ROTC program will be held at 9 a.m. Friday, Dec. 17 in the Enright Community Room, Spratt Hall room 214/216.

Missouri Western State University is a comprehensive regional university providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The university offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo., and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves. Visit www.missouriwestern.edu.

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