

# UW-River Falls: Community answers call to provide caps and gowns to UWRF students

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May 13, 2022 — When University of Wisconsin-River Falls alum Andrew Turner learned some graduating students needed commencement regalia for the Saturday, May 7, graduation ceremony, he answered the call.

Turner, along with dozens of others, donated the cap and gown he wore when he graduated from UWRF in spring 2021 with a degree in marketing communications.

UWRF students were shorted about 30 caps and gowns because of a supply chain issue with the supplier.

The university put out the call just two days before commencement through social media asking staff, alumni and community members to donate any black regalia they may have, including master's degree hoods.

The call was answered, even though the regalia could not be returned to donors. The Registrar's Office in North Hall collected the caps and gowns.

"I donated my cap and gown because I remember how excited I was to decorate my cap and to wear the suit signifying exit as a student and entrance as a full-time worker," said Turner, an administrative assistant III for the UWRF Teacher Education department. "I also know students have a lot on their plates already with finals, jobs afterward and the debt that comes with it. I wanted them to have one less thing to worry about."

The donations were appreciated, said David Travis, provost and vice chancellor of academic affairs.

“I can’t thank those who donated their regalia enough,” Travis said. “I was just amazed by the response that we received. This is just proof of the generosity the community, alums and staff have. I know our students appreciated it and acknowledge how the donors helped make their commencement day special.”

UWRF was not alone in the supply chain issue, other universities faced similar issues not receiving enough regalia, said Mesa Carlsen, UWRF event coordinator.

“It is absolutely amazing the heartfelt response we had from alumni, staff and the community,’ Carlsen said. “This is a fantastic story of how caring the campus and community are toward our students.”

UWRF plans to keep some of the donated regalia items to have on hand if needed.

Jaclyn Lee, a curriculum enrollment coordinator in the Registrar’s Office, donated the cap and gown she wore when she graduated from UWRF in spring 2020. She also had another gown that she had from a friend that she donated as well.

“It was an easy decision,” Lee said. “There were current students that were in need. I was happy to see somebody would be able to use it.

“It was fun seeing all of the alumni and community members who dropped off their miscellaneous regalia and were happy to help the students out,” Lee added. “Some were new, and some were over 50 years old but looked new. It was awesome to see.”