

Academic Ceremonies and Rituals

Melissa Werner, CSEP | *Arizona State University*

SESSION DESCRIPTION

Ceremony is more than just scripts and staging. This session will cover the different types of ceremonies and what they mean to your institution.

SPEAKER BIOS



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Melissa Werner, CSEP, is Director of University Ceremonies and Protocol Officer at Arizona State University in the Office of University Events and Protocol. She is the co-founder of the [North American Association of Commencement Officers](#)(NAACO).

In May 2009 Arizona State University hosted the largest graduation ceremony in the United States. More than 68,000 people attended Spring Commencement at which [President Barack Obama gave the first graduation address of his presidency](#).

Melissa has presented educational sessions at a number of conferences on a variety of graduation-related concerns including workshops on establishing mission statements for ceremonies, academic versus non-academic ceremonies, volunteer recruitment and retention, as well as how to establish and run graduation convocation events for colleges and special interest groups.

In 1999 Melissa and Carol Switzer, former director of ASU Summer Sessions, co-founded the [North American Association of Commencement Officers](#), a professional association for commencement and graduation planners from across the United States and Canada. NAACO has over 350 member institutions and hosts an annual conference for graduation professionals.

Melissa is a [Certified Special Events Professional](#) (CSEP) and holds a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Public Relations from the [Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication](#) at Arizona State University and a Masters degree in Educational Leadership from [Northern Arizona University](#). She completed training as a Protocol Officer and is a certified Intercultural and Ettiquette and Protocol Trainer through the [Protocol School of Washington](#)®.