The practice of wearing caps and gowns to signify a graduate’s educational passage from one level to the next extends back to medieval universities. Since then, generations of students have continued the tradition and in modern times found ways of adding unique touches to the tradition. Use this guide, designed by Tulane University graphic designer Kim Rainey, to help identify the regalia you’ll see graduates donning in the Mercedes-Benz Superdome during the 2017 Unified Commencement Ceremony.

The commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 20, will be streamed live online. Follow Commencement 2017 on social media at #tulane17.
Decoding Commencement

The Tassel

The tassel represents the academic achievements of the Tulane student. It symbolizes the culmination of years of hard work and dedication. The tassel is worn on the mortarboard cap and signifies completion of the academic program.

The Gown

The gown is a symbolic representation of the academic journey. It is worn by students during the commencement ceremony. The color and style of the gown may vary depending on the academic discipline.

The Academic Mace

The academic mace is a ceremonial staff used by the university's president during official events. It is a symbol of authority and tradition. The design of the mace often reflects the university's history and values.

The Mortarboard

The mortarboard is a square cap worn by students during the commencement ceremony. It is a symbol of the student's academic achievement and signifies their readiness to embark on the next phase of their life journey.