Installation to Blend UA Traditions With Robbins' Personal Style

University Communications
November 2017

The installation of Robert C. Robbins as the UA’s 22nd president will be a ceremony steeped in tradition against the backdrop of musical and dance performances, and all of campus is invited.

As the traditional academic ceremony marking a new president's appointment, the installation is an opportunity for the entire campus community to welcome Robbins to the UA's helm, said Heather Lukach, administrator of presidential events.

Robbins’ ceremony is slightly different than previous presidents’, Lukach said. Robbins requested a single ceremony to mark the occasion ? an "installation" ? rather than a series of events surrounding the ceremony, which is typically called an "inauguration."

"What we're trying to do is pull in traditions that not everybody knows about the UA with our own style and President Robbins’ style, because that's who this is about," Lukach added.

The installation will be held Nov. 29. It will begin at 2 p.m. following a procession from Old Main to Centennial Hall.

Jory Hancock, director of the School of Dance, helped organize many of the ceremony’s performances as co-chair of the planning committee. The procession will include the UA ROTC Joint color guard, and a performance by the Pride of Arizona marching band. The Arizona Symphony Orchestra will perform onstage in Centennial Hall as those in the procession enter. Other parts of the ceremony will be punctuated with performances by the Arizona Choir and the UA Dance Ensemble, Hancock said.

"The purpose of these things is often to either accompany an important moment or provide a little bit of entertainment or excitement," he explained. "The recent trend is that an installation often provides a full spectrum of experience for the attendees. It can be everything from exciting, dynamic music to something that is much more classical and traditional. So, that's what we're trying to do."

Lynn Nadel, Regents' Professor Emeritus of Psychology and chair of the faculty, said he hopes to see many faculty attend the installation for Robbins, who began as president June 1.

"They do sense somebody who has great enthusiasm and great skills for increasing the visibility of the UA and excitement about the UA," Nadel said. "People are enthusiastic because they see a lot of new energy."

The ceremony will include remarks from Provost Andrew Comrie, the event's master of ceremonies, and Arizona Board of Regents Chair Bill Ridenour. Tucson Mayor Jonathan
Rothschild, ABOR President Eileen Klein, and Northern Arizona University President Rita Cheng are expected to attend, along with former UA presidents Ann Weaver Hart, Peter Likins, Manuel Pacheco and John Paul Schaefer.

A team of about 45 people from various campus units planned the event, and over 100 volunteers, including students, will work the event, Lukach said. Team members included staff in Facilities Management, Parking and Transportation Services and the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management. Arizona Public Media will livestream the ceremony [2].

The planning team put significant time into learning the traditions of an installation, particularly the symbolism, which was derived from medieval Europe, Lukach said.

That includes the significance of the ceremonial mace, a stafflike object used centuries ago by bodyguards to protect royalty. The UA's mace, which appears at commencement ceremonies, is made of mesquite and accented with 22-karat gold and strips of sterling silver, and represents the legal and chartered authority of the UA president.

Robbins will be presented with the mace and the President's Medallion before giving his address. At the end of the ceremony, following the singing of the University's alma mater, "All Hail, Arizona" Robbins and a mace bearer will lead the recession out of the hall to music performed by the Arizona Symphony Orchestra.

A reception on the lawn west of Old Main will follow the ceremony. A display will project congratulatory messages, many of which will come from nearly 40 institutions, another longstanding tradition, Lukach said. The reception will also include a playlist of songs curated by Robbins himself. Songs include "I Won't Back Down" by Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers, U2's "Beautiful Day" and "September" by Earth, Wind & Fire.

This will be the first time Christina Rocha, chair of the Classified Staff Council and a senior accountant for the Office of Research, Development and Innovation, has attended an installation.

Robbins, she said, has been engaging and personable in talks with staff.

"I love the fact that they not only allow but encourage the staff and faculty and all of the campus community to be involved" in the installation, she said.

Jennifer Lawrence, vice chair of the Appointed Professionals Advisory Council and manager of business and finance in the Department of Neuroscience and the School of Mind, Brain and Behavior, said many appointed personnel are optimistic.

"I see this event and others like it as an opportunity for the University to reflect on its shared values and shared goals," she said. "Any time we come together in this way, it's an opportunity to consider what brings us together."

Source URL: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/lqp/installation-blend-ua-traditions-robbins-personal-style