

A Cohort Rep's Guide to Planning Pinning

(While Finishing Classes and Trying not to Cry)

Heck yeah you did it you're finally almost graduated and the biggest obstacle in your way is planning this pinning ceremony because no one explains anything and you have no clue what you're doing but that's okay because I'm making this guide to hopefully make your life a little easier and keep you from crying every other day!

Everything below is organized by months ish. There are lovely checkboxes so that you can cross off tasks as you complete them and you can get the small dopamine hit from one more item being off your list. There is also an appendix with email templates, cost breakdowns, examples of layouts and programs, etc.

This guide will (attempt to) be EXTREMELY DETAILED and at times can be overwhelming. This is so that all of your questions are answered in one place and you feel like you aren't being thrown to the wolves with pinning.

Good luck!

Two Semesters Before

Your pinning ceremony typically happens the MONDAY after classes end, but due to scheduling issues with the school and USU ballroom, it can happen on a SATURDAY or FRIDAY as well. You'll get the date of your pinning ceremony 6 - 12 months before you actually graduate from the SNA PRESIDENT, who books the USU ballroom for each cohort.

At this time, I recommend sending a cohort wide email to answer some FAQs so that people don't bug you too much with individual questions. See the [emails to send](#) section for an example email.

To do:

- ☐ Get email from SNA president with date of ceremony
- ☐ Send FAQ email to cohort (can ask SNA secretary for list if needed)

One Semester Before

Committee

Start putting together a pinning ceremony committee. Reach out to your cohort and see who wants to help. Make sure that everyone who is helping understands that they are responsible for participating in planning, helping with set up and clean up, and must commit to being part of the committee for the remainder of the planning process and must be responsive (you don't want people flaking on you at the last minute). I recommend sending out a google form, email, asking during class, or some kind of questionnaire so that people can show their interest.

Things to vote on as a cohort:

- Determine by cohort ballot the following speakers
 - 2 Faculty members to announce graduates (Let's bring up student's saying)
 - 1 Student speaker to represent the cohort
 - Recommendation from previous cohorts: have people DM you their nominations for students. Ask those students if they are actually interested in speaking. Put those students in the cohort survey.
 - 1 Faculty member to announce student awards
 - 1 Faculty member to read the nursing pledge
- Determine by cohort ballot the dress code
 - Examples include all black, business casual/semi-formal, professional attire with lab coats, etc
- Lead cohort to arrange the following details of the ceremony (student expenses)
 - Photographer (optional)
 - Program printing
 - Can also be a QR code that people scan on their phone but remember that parents and grandmas like physical copies
 - Might be able to print through SLIC or ASI
 - Parking
 - Can pay the school to reserve parking or can just have individuals pay for their own parking (either option is terrible but the second is probably easier)
 - Decorations (optional)
 - Examples include flowers, balloons, banners, etc
 - Do not recommend having confetti (it creates a mess and no matter how well you clean up, you'll be charged a cleaning fee)

To do:

- ☐ Pick a planning committee
- ☐ Create a survey for your cohort to vote on options

- ☐ Assign roles within the planning committee for who will research/call which vendors
- ☐ Create a general flier/info sheet for when pinning is so people can send it out to friends and family

Semester Of Ceremony

Pins/Stoles - Finding Another Vendor

SNA President will reach out to Terry Berry to order pins, stoles, and tassels (tassels are for TBSN since ABSN doesn't get gowns/caps). SNA President will set order by date and delivery date with Terry Berry, and send a flier to cohort reps to distribute to the rest of the cohort. Pins and stoles must be ordered by the due date to arrive in time for pinning. Each individual is responsible for ordering their own pin and stole, if they choose. Pins can also be ordered from other places like Etsy, Amazon, etc. Stoles are not required to be worn but make it easier for pinning.

***note for those graduating in summer, YOU WILL ORDER STOLE IN THE SPRING SO THAT ARRIVE IN TIME, the SNA president is aware of this, just be aware of it as well

Event Planner

You will be assigned an event planner by the school 6-8 weeks out from your event date. You are required to use this event planner and it is included in the cost of using the USU ballroom. The event planner will help you with setting up seating arrangements, planning the layout of the event, etc. The SNA president will get the initial email from the event planner and then forward it to you. Please reach out to the SNA president before reaching out to the school, because they will just refer you to SNA (since SNA schedules the event).

Vendors

After you've met with the event planner, you can work with vendors to finalize details. For example, a previous cohort rented plants from a nursery, sent them the dimensions of the stage, and the nursery staff worked with them to choose nice/appropriately sized flowers for the event.

Volunteers

You will need volunteers for this event. Reach out to the SNA president to ask them to send an email to all nursing students. If you have a mentee in a later cohort, encourage them to help. Provide the president with the date and time of the event (when you want volunteers showing up and leaving), and a way for volunteers to contact you.

Candles (DO NOT LET PPL STEAL OUR CANDLES)

At the end of the pinning ceremony students will light a candle and say the nursing pledge. SNA has ordered reusable candles for cohorts to use. Email the SNA president about getting these. Leave them on each student's chair during the setup process. Ask students to leave the candles after they are done with the ceremony.

RSVP

Send out an RSVP survey/email to everyone in your cohort. Understand that most people won't RSVP until about two weeks before/whenever they find out that they've passed the exit exam and are graduating. Set a hard deadline for RSVPing and make sure to include questions like student name, pinner name, number of guests attending, etc.

Budget

Finalize budget and student cost breakdown. Make sure everyone has paid you via cash, zelle, venmo, etc. These funds will then be sent to the SNA TREASURER to cover the cost of the ballroom and what's related to that. Any money spent on decorations, vendors, etc that aren't through the school does not need to be sent to the treasurer. SNA gets the final bill for pinning after the cohort graduates but please get money to SNA before that. The event planner should give you an estimate of costs and unless there is a cleaning fee or you go over time, those costs should be the same in the final invoice.

Slideshow

Put together a slideshow of the cohort during nursing school. Create a google folder or use some other drive to have people send you photos. Add music and make sure it will work on the school's computer. Create an email for all inquiries (i.e. cohortreps45@gmail.com)

Pinning Program

Create a pinning program and get it printed. See examples below.

Professors

Start asking Dr. Hansbrough and other professors to speak at your ceremony. Also email SNA advisor to send out faculty award information so professors can vote on students, and pinning ceremony information so professors can attend pinning).

To do:

- ☐ Send Terry Berry flier to cohort
- ☐ Finalize any vendors
- ☐ Ask SNA to send out an email to ask for volunteers
- ☐ Email SNA president for candles
- ☐ Send out student RSVP

Day Of

2 hours before ceremony

Planning committee should arrive two hours before the ceremony start time to start setting up. Chairs and tables and stage will already be set up, but any decorations like flowers, balloons, etc will need to be done by the cohort and volunteers.

Things other cohorts have had:

- Flowers rented from a nursery
- Balloon arch set up outside of ballroom doors
- Tables for check in (for students and pinners), programs, some water
 - Note that CSUSM no longer allows plastic water bottles to be given out at events so encourage guests to bring their own water or to use the water fountains
- Balloons on stage/behind where the speaker stands
- Student name cards on each chair in alphabetical order and reusable candles
 - SNA has the candles, email the president at csusm.sna.president@gmail.com

15-45 minutes before ceremony

Students should start arriving 15-45 minutes before the ceremony start time to check in, find their family/pinner, and have time to take some photos with classmates. Have a volunteer stationed at the check in area to ask for student and pinner names, and check them off the list. Have the volunteer tell them that students will be sitting up front and will be walking in alphabetical order. Once a student stands up (by row) pinners will come stand next to them. Have the volunteer tell guests that doors will open 15-20 minutes before the ceremony start time.

5 minutes before ceremony

Have volunteers start telling any stragglers that the ceremony will be starting soon and that they should head inside.

Ceremony begins

Have volunteers close the ballroom doors and stand either directly inside or outside the doors to answer questions and make sure the doors aren't being slammed shut if people are going in and out.

At this point students should be sitting in their seats, faculty and guests should be seated, and Dr. Hansbrough should be on stage telling everyone that the ceremony will be getting started.

The speaking order goes as follows:

1. Introduction and Opening Remarks
 - a. Usually given by Dr. Hansbrough or whoever the dean is (if this document lasts that long)
2. Student Address
 - a. Given by the student speaker that the cohort voted on
 - b. ~5 minutes?
3. Presentation of the Graduates
 - a. Graduates line up by row in alphabetical order with their pinner next to them
 - b. The faculty announcers that the cohort chose will announce each student one at a time
 - c. The student will come up to the podium/microphone while their speaker stands behind them to the right
 - d. Student will say something along the lines of, "My name is ____ and I chose ____ to be my pinner because ____, ____, and ____."
 - e. Then the student will turn towards their pinner, get pinned on their stole or shirt, turn and face the crowd/camera (if you have a camera), get their photo taken, and walk off the stage
 - i. As they are walking off the stage, the next name can be called
 - f. At this point students and pinners can return to their seats (unless the pinner is pinning another student)
 - g. After the first row, the next row of student can get up, line up, and start the process again
4. Presentation of Faculty Awards
 - a. Presented by whichever faculty member the cohort voted on
5. Candle Ceremony, Nursing Pledge
 - a. Read by whichever faculty member the cohort voted on
6. Student Video
7. Closing Remarks
 - a. Usually given by Dr. Hansbrough or whoever the dean is
8. Everyone cheers and claps the end

Ceremony Ends

Most people will start leaving at this point or will want to start taking pictures on the stage/with their families. Have your volunteers start cleaning up as much as they can, moving things that no longer need to be used, picking up candles (sometimes little kids try to take them), moving trash, etc. Some people from the planning committee will need to stay for clean up and there is a cleaning fee if things aren't picked up off the floor (hence me saying no confetti). There should be a vacuum somewhere so try to ask

about that if there are a bunch of little things on the floor. Chairs don't need to be moved, but basically anything that you bring in, you must also take out (balloons, flowers, decorations, etc).

Costs-ish

Costs can vary by cohort depending on how much they choose to spend. USU ballroom costs are anywhere from \$450-\$750 or more, a previous cohort spent ~\$1,900 total on their ceremony.

This was split amongst 50 or 55 people and was ~\$35 per person.

The ballroom is technically free to use but the costs for set up and A/V equipment cost money. Here is a table provided by the school and the event planner can answer more questions.

Emails to Send

Subject: Preliminary Pinning Ceremony Info

Hi everyone,

Happy start to the fall semester and congrats on making it through the summer. Ivy and I (your wonderful cohort reps) just wanted to send out a quick email with some information about the pinning ceremony that's happening next year. The official planning will start sometime during the spring semester, with more information to come, but here are some basic FAQs for now:

- **What is a pinning ceremony?**
 - a. A pinning ceremony is a graduation ceremony for nurses. It's just for our cohort, it'll be in the USU ballroom on campus (no we can't change this), and you can invite your friends and family to come celebrate with you. You'll walk across the stage, your pinner will put a pin on your stole (or shirt/dress if you don't have a stole), you'll take a photo, and everyone will clap.
- **What's a pinner and who can it be?**
 - a. It's highly encouraged that your pinner be a nurse; this can be a friend, family member, or even a professor, but no one is going to kick you off the stage if your pinner isn't a nurse.
- **I'm so excited, when is this happening?**
 - a. Insert date
- **My family and friends are so excited, how many can I invite?**
 - a. As of right now, please plan on inviting a maximum of 7-8 people. More info to come on if you can have more.
- **I love planning things and want to help. How can I be involved?**
 - a. We'll be setting up a pinning planning committee in insert date. Look out for an email.
- **I hate planning things but still want my opinion to be taken into consideration. How will that work?**
 - a. The planning committee will be sending out a survey for the cohort to vote on certain things like dress code, faculty speakers, a student speaker, etc. Look out for an email (votes will be by majority).
- **After everything we've paid for during school, this pinning is free right?**
 - a. No, the school actually has each cohort pay for their own pinning. We are working with SNA to try to offset some of these costs but please plan to

contribute if you are going to the event. We will aim to keep event costs below \$40-\$50 per person and will continue to be as transparent and informative as possible throughout this process.

- **I have more questions!**

- a. Great. Fill out this form ([hyperlink your own form here](#)) and we'll send out another FAQ email sometime in the (insert next semester).

Thank you!