
NMU caps, gowns help environment

By: NW Staff

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NMU's decision to order graduation caps and gowns made of 100 percent certified recycled post-consumer materials, in this case plastic bottles, not only helps the environment, it shows that NMU takes an active role in trying to preserve earth's natural resources.

NMU is ordering its graduation caps and gowns from Herff Jones for this year's graduation ceremony. The fabric of the graduation gowns are made of Repreve Yarn. This yarn is created using 100 percent certified recycled post-consumer materials.

Creating and using Renew Fabric, which is comprised of Repreve Yarn, creates 54 percent less carbon dioxide emissions than using typical polyester in graduation gowns. Compared to other methods, each pound of yarn created to make Renew Fabric saves half a gallon of gasoline.

These effects on the environment may be small if one looks only at the physical amount of gowns that NMU orders this year. But on a bigger level, ordering gowns that are manufactured from plastic bottles gives companies like Heff Jones more revenue and resources to create sustainable products like Northern's graduation caps and gowns this year, in the future for more consumers.

NMU's new graduation gowns aren't only more environmentally-friendly compared to past polyester graduation gowns, they also have another benefit: although the new gowns made of plastic bottles are less shiny than previous gowns, they also are less susceptible to getting wrinkled.

Some think that instead of making NMU caps and gowns from 100 percent post-consumer materials, students should donate their gowns to other students because this would be better recycling.

Donating a graduation gown for other future students helps the environment. Ordering graduation gowns made from post-consumer materials also helps the environment. The two actions combined help more than each action on its own. These policies aren't mutually exclusive, they reinforce each other and help preserve more natural resources.

NMU's decision to buy environmentally- friendly gowns and caps is not an anomaly; NMU has pushed policies to be more green in recent years.

Meyland Hall was awarded the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Certification in 2007 and Van Antwerp Hall in 2008. These actions prove NMU cares about their impact on the environment.

NMU's decision to buy caps and gowns made from recycled plastic bottles will help the environment. Hopefully, NMU will continue policies like this in the future.