On December 20, 1975
Babson College
conducted its first
Winter Commencement Ceremony.
The future of the
Winter Commencement Ceremony
is unclear

From the Babson Free Press:
November 6, 1975:

"When asked whether this December
commencement will set a precedent for future years,
Stephens (V.P. for Public Affairs) replied, 'We'll see
how this one goes. The main concern is attendance,
which stems from the fact that graduation falls on the
last Saturday before Christmas. It's a bad time of the
year and who knows what the weather will bring.' "
Babson Free Press
January 29, 1976

"Hopes for a December 1976 graduation look bleak at this point. "With the way the calendar is now, it would be impossible to schedule a commencement ceremony," said Stephens.

Registrar George Dixon confirmed that final exams will end on Tuesday December 21 (1976).

"If it were possible to push the calendar back a week," continued Stephens, "time would allow for a December graduation."

"I think that if the majority of the students want a graduation, then they should have one," Stephens went on.

The week before his graduation, David Townsend explained how one conversation led to Babson's first Winter Commencement:

Jim Grenier, Joe Castaneira and Townsend were talking at the Pub one night. One thing led to another and eventually they had a proposal.

First the group went to Dean Staake. After polling the December grads, they talked with Everett Stephens. The next step was an appointment with President Sorenson. The first week in November 1975 Dr. Sorenson made the official announcement.
DON'T THEY DESERVE THREE MORE DAYS

The Administration has drastically reduced the chances for the December graduation to be the success it needs to be by closing the dorms to students before graduation day.

They claim that it's too great a security risk to leave the dorms open for the three day interim between the end of exams and graduation.

And that it's not in the residence staff's contract to stay around another couple of days after the semester to patrol the dorms.

And that it's only thirty students that would be affected anyway, it doesn't justify keeping the entire campus open.

So what they have proposed is this: If students live near by, they can go home for the few days, and then come back for the graduation ceremony.

If they live too far away, but have friends that live near by, they can stay with them until graduation day.

And if they live too far away, but don't have friends living off campus, well, they'll have to go to the Housing Office for additional help.

And on top of that, they have compounded the problem by announcing this change with only two days left of classes.

After that come exams, easily the busiest time of the semester for any student, especially one who is trying to graduate in a few days.

So really there is not enough time for the seniors to get everything squared away, and the graduation exercise will suffer as a result.

We don't feel the Administration has done everything it can to try and find ways to keep the students on campus for the three day period.

Director of Residential Life Debra Amidon said that probably half of the dorm directors would still be on campus during the interim. But she doesn't know for sure, because it's been a month since she last polled them on the subject.

And the Housing Committee was never called upon to consider what policies might be used to make the campus more secure during those three days.

We feel these alternatives should have been explored before a decision was made. And there are still other alternatives.

Employing the use of a honor system for those staying in the dorms could reduce the risk of theft or damage in the dorms.

And 30 students pose less of a threat than do the usual 200 present on campus during Thanksgiving or before the May graduation.

Besides, after December 18, practically all the rest of the students will be home contemplating a Christmas turkey. The campus will never be more deserted.

So in light of all this, combined with the fact that both students and administration members have contributed their time and effort to this endeavor, we hope the Administration will reconsider its decision, and leave the dorms open during the interim period.

After three and a half years of contributing to Babson, the least Babson can do is give those students three more days.

— BABSON FREE PRESS
December 4, 1975
Jim Grenier reflects on his December graduation:

"When we first went to President Sorenson, he didn't like the idea right off. The faculty said it would be impossible to coordinate the graduation because of grading. Everett Stephens was instrumental in handling the logistics.

"At our last meeting with the President we figured the proposal wouldn't go through. I think Dr. Sorenson saw our downness. He said if the idea would be a success and people had enough interest, he would change the calendar.

"The only problem we had was with housing. I understood Dean Amidon's concern about heat and security, but Forest Hall doesn't have cooking facilities. This meant that we had to buy all our meals.

"I suggest that in the future, December grads should start on September 1st and keep pushing. I would definitely do it over again, despite all the red tape. I think that we were pushing more for our families than for ourselves. Our families have made the biggest contributions to send and keep us at Babson. I was more happy for my family than I was for myself."