



*May 19, 2020*

### **Hello, Class of 2020!**

Since announcing that a Virtual Commencement Ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 27, at 11am, we have received a few questions. The most common? *How will I receive my cap and gown? When will I receive my diploma? Why is our ceremony in June?*

Before we share answers, we remind you to watch your email for regular Class of 2020 communications in these weeks leading up to June 27. Also check the [website Commencement page](#) for periodic updates.

In addition, please be sure to complete this [grad survey](#) with your **updated contact information**. Your **Mitchell College student email address** will remain active for two weeks after Commencement. You may also request a special **Mitchell College Alumni** email address by simply emailing [support@mitchell.edu](mailto:support@mitchell.edu), helping you stay connected to your alma mater and updated on future Mitchell events such as Fall Weekend & Homecoming, class reunions, etc.

Now, some answers:

**Will students receive caps and gowns?** Yes, caps and gowns will be mailed to students' homes. We are working with our vendor to coordinate, and it is our greatest desire to get them to you before the June 27 ceremony.

**When will students receive their diplomas?** Diplomas will be mailed to students' homes in late June/early July.

### **If we are having a virtual Commencement, why not sometime in May?**

With COVID-19, the rhythm of the spring semester changed. As classes moved to remote delivery, we took into account changes in learning environment and routines for our students. Although we think students adapted remarkably, we understood the anxiety around it for many, and we offered the option of Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grade designations. Choosing this option can have

ramifications for some students wishing to pursue further study, and we wanted to allow enough time for students to consult with their advisors about these options. Thus, the timing of when final grades are submitted to the registrar and the certification of grades is later than usual.

**Why June 27?** This date takes into consideration many of the traditional elements of an in-person Commencement that will be included in a virtual ceremony and allows us to deliver a thoughtful and well-executed program. The additional time is needed to ensure that every detail is addressed and managed. We know that it can't take the place of gathering together in person, but we will try hard to make the event poignant and memorable!

**Why can't we have Commencement this summer or fall as communities relax stay at home restrictions?** While we would have liked to push an in-person Commencement to the summer or fall, we have no idea what course COVID-19 will take. The health and safety of our students and families, faculty and staff are paramount. It is clear that social distancing, mask-wearing and other preventive measures will be the norm for a while, making it difficult to execute a mass gathering safely and controllably.

**What about an in-person Commencement ceremony next spring?** Some schools are moving to this model. We concluded that, as students move to the next stage of their lives over the next year, they would like to celebrate their achievement of earning their degrees sooner rather than later. In addition, conferral of degrees in a timely manner is necessary for students entering the workforce or graduate school. While conferral of degrees could be done without the pomp and circumstance of a formal ceremony, many students would miss this recognition.

**What about Grad Week?** The Campus Life and Residence Life staff is working hard to develop meaningful events for Virtual Grad Week, scheduled for June 22-26. Watch for more information.

**When can we come back to campus for a Class of 2020 event?** We will follow the developments with COVID-19 and will plan accordingly for a special celebration in the 2020-2021 academic year. We can't wait to see our Class of 2020 back on campus!

If you have other questions, please submit them [here](#).

Our whole campus community looks forward to the tradition of May Commencement each year as does our senior class, of course. We are heartbroken about having to make these kinds of changes as a result of the pandemic. Thank you for your understanding.



**Did You Know?**

The Integrative Career Development office not only offers services while you're a Mitchell student but even after you earn your degree!

Contact **Paul Dunn**, coordinator of Integrative Career Development, for help with:

- resume and cover letter review
- job search
- networking strategies
- interview preparation

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**[mitchell.edu/commencement](https://mitchell.edu/commencement)**