

Dear Class of 2020,

I am reaching out to you today to let you know that after much deliberation, we have made the difficult decision to cancel all on-ground commencement ceremonies for Lindenwood University this May. Currently, state and local ordinances prohibit gatherings of any size, and with no assurance that this prohibition will be lifted by May or early summer, students, parents, and the university are unable to plan and prepare for commencement ceremonies in the near future.

When we announced on March 16 that classes would move online, we had hoped that the situation would improve enough that May ceremonies could still take place. Unfortunately, it has become clear in the past few days that we will not see improvement quickly enough for students and their families to make travel plans or be certain of their safety at a large gathering.

We understand that this decision will be disappointing to you—we share your dismay. Commencement is the most auspicious and anticipated event of the academic year for the entire Lindenwood community. Though it will not be the same, we will honor all our graduates virtually this spring. Additionally, we hope you will participate in Lindenwood's commencement exercises on December 11 and 12 at the Family Arena in St. Charles, Mo.

Postponement of the commencement ceremony will not impact students' degree conferral. Students who are on track to graduate following a spring 2020 term will still have their degrees awarded as planned at the end of March, June, or August, as appropriate. Degrees are typically conferred approximately one month after students complete coursework. For example, students who finish classes on May 8 should expect their degrees to be conferred by June 10. Following their degree conferral, students will receive an email from Academic Services to verify their name and shipping address for their diploma. Diplomas should then arrive by mail within eight weeks after the conferral date.

For more information on handling graduation caps and gowns, along with directions to prepare for the December ceremonies, please refer to the Commencement portion of the Lindenwood University Coronavirus website: <https://www.lindenwood.edu/student-life/health-wellness/coronavirus/>.

Not being able to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates at the traditional commencement ceremonies this spring is a difficult blow. In many

ways those accomplishments are even more deserving of celebration because students are completing their degrees under incredibly challenging circumstances. However, the need to care for our community by avoiding large gatherings during the pandemic makes this a necessary step.

Please watch for additional updates and know that you remain our top priority during this trying time.

Sincerely,

**MARILYN ABBOTT**

Provost / Vice President, Academic Affairs

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