

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I wanted to share with you this message I've shared today with our students, which includes an update on our plans for Commencement for the Class of 2020.

Thanks as always, and take care.

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From: W. Taylor Reveley < >
Sent: Friday, April 10, 2020 4:56 PM
To: All Students <
Subject: Message from President Reveley

Dear students,

The country and world are navigating historic times, and my thoughts are constantly with you. The challenges are really hard, and these are days you will remember throughout your lives. Of course, this beautiful spring should be a time when we are all together here, but Covid-19 has morphed this semester into this surreal, shared but distant moment.

I know you're dearly missing routines and friends, and struggling with new obstacles even as we meet our obligations for the common good. I know online learning is challenging, and leaves behind so many of the rhythms and traditions we cherish. I hope you'll keep working hard. Draw strength from your Longwood friendships, and support one another, as best you can. We are dearly missing you.

I promised last month that the Class of 2020 would walk for in-person graduation, and that I'd be in touch again by this week in April. Since then, we've been working with government officials and campus and community leaders to identify a date as soon as possible that is also as reliable as can be. We have a date --- Commencement for the Class of 2020 will be on the weekend of October 9th & 10th. As would have been the case this May, the graduate ceremony will be on the Friday evening, October 9th, and the undergraduate ceremony will be on the Saturday, October 10th, during the day. It will be a full weekend of celebration – with plenty of opportunity over the course of the weekend for you to celebrate and reconnect.

Campus and Farmville are so beautiful in the fall, and earlier dates which we explored so closely continued to have real risk of disruption by this crisis. We'll have more precise details regarding exact times and logistics in the weeks ahead. (And be assured that by finishing your academic requirements you still officially become a Longwood graduate in May; we'll explore ways to mark that occasion too, without taking anything away from October.)

More broadly, I also want all of you to know that Longwood fully intends to return to in-person learning here on campus in the fall. No one can predict exactly what the weeks and months ahead in this historic and challenging time may hold, but I am in regular touch with the other Virginia college presidents and state officials as we begin preparing for a return to normalcy. It may require us to do some things differently on campus, at least for a while, including additional steps to protect public health. We're already working on that. But we have every expectation of being back next fall. When we are, we'll be all the more

appreciative of what it means to be in this special place.

During this strange interlude for now, take care of yourselves, and of one another. Check in on friends and classmates. Keep the spirit of Longwood strong until we are back together --- and stay well. Thank you so deeply.

Lastly, there is something I came across recently from the Class of 1943 that resonates with this moment and that I wanted to share. The Class of 1943 also lived through an historic and uncertain time, and even during the great turmoil of WWII found strength in this place we cherish, already over a century old in their day. Here is what they wrote:

There is something about the campus and the buildings here in Farmville that make us love the school always, from the first time we come up the short walk to the Rotunda. Perhaps it is the calm, quiet appearance of the long, low, red-brick buildings beneath the shade of tall maple trees. Perhaps it is the worn doorsill of the ever-busy Rotunda and the way the steps wind up to the second and third floors inside. Or it could be something in the atmosphere that makes us realize how many through the years have entered these buildings with a feeling of awe and left them with a heart full of devotion for this, their Alma Mater. We are proud to be among them.

All my best, always,

President Reveley