



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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# Message from the Office of the President

April 10, 2020 — Sent Systemwide

Dear students, faculty, and staff,

Like all of us, the Class of 2020 has had to endure the many disruptions created by the current pandemic. And unfortunately, they are also missing out on some of life's most significant moments, including commencement. Having been a part of more than 25 years of commencement ceremonies in my career (my favorite day) and, as the mother of two students set to graduate this spring, my heart goes out to all of you in the Class of 2020 as I share in your disappointment.

Commencement is a time when we come together in the presence of family and friends, and our faculty and alumni, to mark both a completion and a new beginning for our graduates. I want to express my sincere thanks to all of you who have reached out to share with me the importance of commencement ceremonies to you and your families. Though we will not be able to hold in-person commencement ceremonies in May, we are committed to celebrate you this fall in an on-campus ceremony, though it will be some time before we know specifics.

Still, our University family wants to do more, not less, to recognize you and your many achievements. While we cannot replicate the joy of commencement in traditional ways, plans are underway for a large, systemwide, virtual celebration for all graduates on Saturday, May 16. The celebration for you, your family, and your friends will be fully online, can be viewed at any time and from any location, and will provide you with a personalized experience. The theme for this spring's celebration is "Hail to Thee," a reference from Minnesota's state song, and was chosen to reflect our admiration for your incredible resilience in these stressful times. More details on the virtual celebration will be shared in the coming weeks.

I wish all of our Spring 2020 graduates the very best and look forward to recognizing your achievements both remotely and in person.

Hail to Thee, Class of 2020. Please [stay healthy, safe, and well](#).

With warmest regards,  
Joan Gabel