



Dear Class of 2021,

Commencement is the biggest event of the year for many students and the university. Typically, we host more than 1,200 individuals hailing from across the United States and other nations to celebrate the accomplishments of our graduates. After much thought and review, the university has decided to hold in-person on-campus ceremonies the weekend of October 8-11, 2021. The news about declining cases and increasing vaccination rates makes us hopeful that we will be able to hold the event in the same tradition as all commencements since the university opened the campus in Laurel, Maryland by postponing to October. We are also forming contingency plans such as limiting guests, holding several smaller ceremonies to abide by any gathering limits that may be in place, or hosting a hybrid event with streaming and live components. The final plans will meet local, state, and federal restrictions on gatherings and guidance on face coverings and social distancing. The university will announce those plans approximately 12 weeks before the event.

We want to hear from you about your interest in a virtual celebration on May 1, 2021 to honor your accomplishment. We also want to you tell us what you view as the most important aspects of the commencement traditions should we need to alter our traditions due to public health or federal, state, or local regulations. Please complete the survey available here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YYJPKPZ>

The Commencement Committee is committed to celebration the Class of 2021 and the Class of 2020 in-person and on-campus October 8-11. The committee's first choice is to hold the event per tradition under a tent with 1200 graduates and guests. However, the committee will continue to investigate the aforementioned alternative ceremony formats, should a traditional event not be feasible. We will be using your opinion and our creativity to hold on campus in person commencement celebrations.

Your degree will be conferred at the end of the semester you complete your degree requirements. Your diploma will be shipped to you following degree conferral and once all your accounts at the university are clear. Diplomas will typically be shipped to the address on your Application for Graduation 4 to 6 weeks after the semester ends. Your feedback via the survey is appreciated and we look forward to honoring our recent graduates this year.

Sincerely,

The Commencement Committee