

To: La Roche University Community
From: Office of the Provost
Subject: COVID-19 Update: Commencement
Date: April 27, 2020

Dear La Roche University Community,

Given the ongoing health crisis we made an earlier decision to postpone commencement exercises. That was a difficult choice, but we felt it was necessary to keep our community safe.

Recently, we surveyed graduating students to determine their preferences regarding commencement and the manner in which the ceremony might proceed – an online ceremony, a traditional ceremony at a later point in time, or both an online ceremony and a traditional one. The vast majority of respondents were in favor of a single, traditional ceremony.

We have tentatively scheduled commencement as a weekend celebration, Friday, Oct. 2 to Sunday, Oct. 4. We are asking that you reserve the entire weekend as the ceremony may need to be split into multiple parts, in addition to celebrating Baccalaureate and the pre-ceremony awards. We believe that an early fall timeframe provides us with the best chance to ensure a safe commencement weekend – a timeframe far enough in the future to allow for the dissipation of COVID-19 yet well in advance of the start of the winter flu season.

The success of this date will be entirely contingent upon our ability to provide commencement in a safe and appropriate manner. Should this not be the case, we will postpone the ceremony to a time when we can be confident of a safe gathering. We will respect all government recommended restrictions.

Please be assured that having a ceremony in October does not delay degree attainment. Your degree will be conferred in May (or August) depending upon the successful completion of graduation requirements, and irrespective of the ceremony date. Degrees will be awarded at the normal time, and final transcripts will reflect the students' degrees and their conferral date.

I know I speak for all faculty and staff when I say that La Roche University is proud of its graduates. You will be the graduating class that faced unprecedented challenges and you faced those challenges with resilience, fortitude, and determination. We will miss celebrating with you and your families in May, but we all eagerly await the day when we can celebrate all that you have accomplished at La Roche University.

Respectfully,

Howard J. Ishiyama
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs