



April 17, 2020

Dear Spring 2020 Graduation Candidates,

The decision to postpone Concordia University Chicago's spring 2020 baccalaureate, master's and doctoral commencement ceremonies probably caused most, if not all, of you to ask when and how the University would celebrate your accomplishments. More importantly, that decision probably raised concerns as to when your degree would be officially conferred upon you. Rest assured that we are doing all that we can to celebrate you and your exceptional accomplishments.

With continued uncertainty related to COVID-19, and with the goal of ensuring maximum safe participation and attendance for graduates and attendees alike, we are proceeding as follows:

- An online Virtual Commencement will be held on Saturday, May 9. Please complete the related survey by Friday, April 24 by going to https://cuchicago.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_29WnlyDaSWxe6gd
- An online Virtual Service of Praise and Consecration/Baccalaureate Worship Service will be livestreamed on Friday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m. at CUChicago.edu/live
- All eligible Spring 2020 graduation candidates are invited to participate in a full ceremony in December.
- Spring graduates who have successfully completed all degree requirements will receive their diplomas as originally scheduled.

First, **CUC will hold a virtual online commencement ceremony on Saturday, May 9.** The time and plans for this event are still in the works, and we would like your input. Therefore, please take the time to complete the survey mentioned previously so we can make this event – your event – as special as we can. As soon as final details for the May 9 virtual ceremony become available, we will update you.

We'll also be celebrating you, our graduates, via CUC's main social media accounts in the coming weeks. Be sure to keep an eye out for ways for you to collaborate with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, which will provide ways for you to share your content too.

Second, **CUC will hold an online virtual Service of Praise and Consecration/Baccalaureate Worship Service on Friday, May 8, beginning at 7:30 p.m.** This service, which is tradition and important part of our Christian community and heritage, is for all students, their families and friends. It's an opportunity for us to join together to praise God for His blessings. Included in this service will be the consecration and commissioning of those graduation candidates who will be serving in ministries of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod or furthering their education in preparation for the pastoral ministry.

Third, every individual eligible to graduate and participate in the May 9 spring commencement ceremonies is **invited to participate and to be recognized in CUC's fall 2020 commencement ceremonies in December**. This will ensure that you will still be able to participate in a full, formal ceremony with your friends and classmates and that you'll receive the maximum number of participant tickets available. Waiting to participate in a December ceremony supports Illinois Governor JB Pritzker's announcement last week indicating that he is considering prohibition of large gatherings through at least the month of August. As plans for December event take shape, you can expect to receive full details about your participation throughout the fall.

Finally, we want to reassure you that **postponing the May 9 ceremonies will not affect the official date of your graduation and receiving your degree**. If you've successfully completed all requirements to graduate this spring, your diploma will indicate May 2020 as your date of graduation. Degree audits and the mailing of diplomas to the address you provided will be fulfilled by Jostens on schedule, which means that you will receive your diploma in the weeks that follow the virtual ceremony.

"This is not what we planned!" That's an obvious yet important statement that University Pastor Jeff Leininger shared with our Director of Christian Education students, their families and friends during their recent online internship placement service. At the start of this semester, none of us could even have imagined everything with which the world is dealing right now. I know that the hearts of CUC's faculty, staff and administration join you in grief over having to postpone the community celebrations of all your achievements. But here we are having to face unwanted change, and face it we will, together.

In this difficult time that tests our patience and resilience, I want to encourage each of you to learn from your experiences and continue to grow as an individual and child of God. As decisions related to your commencement ceremonies are made, we will communicate them to you.

If you have questions that were not addressed previously, please email Commencement@CUChicago.edu.

May God continue to bless and protect you!

Dr. Kevin Borchers

Kevin Borchers, Ph.D.
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