

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

G. Washington
WASHINGTON COLLEGE

March 25, 2021

Dear Class of 2021 and families,

It's been quite a year, and I want to thank you for your patience as we have weighed our options for the College's 238th Commencement Exercises. After many discussions internally and after consultation with the Kent County Health Department, we are pleased to announce our plans to hold an in-person commencement, celebrating the accomplishments of the Class of 2021.

Please note as well that we will still include in a meaningful way any 2021 graduates who don't feel comfortable participating in an in-person celebration.

While we are working out specifics, we wanted to share with you as much information as we can so that you know what to expect and how to plan. We will send multiple follow-up communications as we fine tune plans and procedures.

We are updating our commencement webpage with all of the most up-to-date information- <https://www.washcoll.edu/campus-events/commencement>. Please check back to this site often!

COMMENCEMENT GUESTS

With Governor Larry Hogan's announcement on March 9th lifting capacity restrictions on indoor and outdoor venues, we are able to announce that we will be holding commencement in-person for our graduates and some guests. (Waiting to make a final decision has paid off!) We have been unsure of our ability to allow guests, and we are now moving forward with plans to allow each graduate to invite and register **two guests** to attend the outdoor ceremony. This is not something we thought would be possible even just a month ago, and we are so excited to allow limited numbers of friends and families to celebrate with us in-person. We will, of course, live stream the event for any family and friends who cannot attend in-person. Unfortunately, because of the capacity restriction, we will not be able to have the usual presence of faculty at commencement, either on the platform or in the audience.

COMMENCEMENT DATE

Our next big announcement is that **we will be holding commencement on Saturday, May 22**, reserving Sunday, May 23 as the rain date. As a safety measure, we need to make every effort to hold this event outside. In the event commencement has to move indoors due to inclement weather, graduates will attend in-person, but no guests will be permitted to attend. We want to make every effort to hold commencement outdoors so that guests may attend.

GRADUATE RSVP

In the coming week, the Office of Student Records and Registration will send out an RSVP link to all graduates asking them to let us know whether or not they wish to participate in the in-person commencement. **The due date to complete this form will be April 16.** Once this date has passed, we will consider those decisions to be final. If we do not hear from a graduate, we will do everything we can to contact them. If we do not hear back, we will assume they do not wish to participate and will be considered in absentia. Please be on the lookout for that email. We will send numerous reminders prior to the due date.

COVID TESTING FOR GRADUATES

All graduates planning to participate in commencement in-person will be required to have a PCR COVID test, administered by Washington College Health Services on campus, on Wednesday, May 19. Anyone with a positive test result will not be permitted to participate in commencement. Graduates planning to participate in the in-person commencement who are not currently on campus or in the Chestertown area and cannot make it to campus on May 19, can submit proof to Health Services of a negative PCR COVID test no more than 72 hours prior to May 22.

COVID TESTING FOR GUESTS

Guests will be required to send in proof of a negative PCR COVID test no more than 72 hours prior to May 22. Guests who have been vaccinated still must send proof of a negative COVID test. Please be on the lookout for information on how to submit those results.

GUEST REGISTRATION

Graduates will be responsible for registering their two guests in CampusGroups. A registration link will be emailed to all graduates in the coming weeks.

COMMENCEMENT SEATING FOR GUESTS

Upon arrival to campus, all guests will check in at Roy Kirby, Jr., Stadium before making their way to the Campus Lawn where the ceremony will be held. At check-in, all guests will complete a symptom attestation with a temperature check before being issued a ticket. Each ticket will show an assigned seat on it. We will distribute tickets for seats closest to the stage first. Tickets will be distributed on a first come first served basis.

All guest chairs will be set up in pairs with six feet of distance between each pair.

ADA SEATING

We will have a designated section of ADA seating for registered guests with mobility concerns or those requiring sight line seating. To request ADA seating, in addition to registering this guest when guest registration is open, please email campus_events@washcoll.edu.

REGALIA PICKUP/SHIPPING

Students coming to campus to participate in commencement in person will pick up their regalia and honor regalia at commencement rehearsal. We will ship all regalia and honor regalia to graduates who do not wish to participate in commencement in person. Please stay tuned for more details!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

We are still working on a full schedule of events. Commencement week for graduates will include the Senior Awards Ceremony, a commencement rehearsal, and the Sophie Kerr Prize Announcement. Please stay tuned to the commencement website (<https://www.washcoll.edu/campus-events/commencement>) for schedule updates!

HOUSING FOR GRADUATES

All graduates currently living on campus will remain on campus through commencement. Any graduates not currently living on campus or in the local community (Chestertown and surrounding areas) are invited to request a room in a residence hall on campus for a portion of commencement week. We are working on a registration form for graduates to request housing, and we will communicate more details in the coming weeks. Housing for graduates is not limited, so rest assured that any graduate that needs housing in order to participate in commencement activities in-person will be able to sign up for it! There will be no cost associated with this housing.

HOUSING FOR GUESTS

We regret that we are not able to house commencement guests in our residence halls this year.

DINING HALL/MEALS

Meals in the dining hall for graduates that are currently living on campus will continue to be covered through commencement under their respective meal plans. All graduates moving to campus for commencement week will be able to pay a special rate for meals in the Dining Hall.

Again, thank you for your patience as we have finalized our commencement plan. Please stay tuned to the commencement website and to your email for updates. I look forward to celebrating the Class of 2021 in-person on May 22!

Sincerely,
Michael Harvey
Interim Dean and Provost