Dear Class of 2020 Trailblazers:

Of all the decisions we’ve had to make in recent weeks, the decision not to hold our commencement ceremonies face-to-face this spring has been one of the most difficult.  There is no more joyful celebration at VU than commencement, where we recognize the educational achievements of our graduates. We understand the disappointment you may feel and hope that you will read on to see what guided our decision and the options we have laid out for celebrating your achievements.

The evolving situation regarding social distancing has made the future difficult to predict for the next several weeks, if not months. While social distancing guidelines are starting to ease and Indiana, along with other states, is rebooting the economy in stages, current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance recommends that we proceed with caution. Further, all over the country large gatherings, such as sporting events, conferences, and face-to-face commencements, are being cancelled through the remainder of the summer to help reduce the spread of the virus.

**Commencement Options**

Therefore, in an effort to commemorate this joyous occasion as best we can in these circumstances, we will be offering two opportunities to celebrate the achievements of our new graduates:

1. Spring graduates will have the opportunity to participate in a single University-wide “virtual commencement” ceremony, planned to be released in late June. This ceremony will be offered with our partner *Grad Images* and will be available to all VU graduates, from all campuses and locations.
2. All 2020 graduates (spring and fall) will be invited to celebrate their milestone at the Vincennes Campus during the mid-year Commencement ceremony on **December 5, 2020.**

***Spring graduates may choose to participate in either or both of these options.***

I encourage all students to participate in VU's virtual commencement ceremony. Grad Images will send information about the virtual commencement and an invitation to participate on or around June 1.

Students who participate in the virtual commencement will receive a celebration package with items that can be used in the virtual ceremony. Any student who wishes to purchase the entire regalia (gown) can order it online through the Old Post Bookstore at www.bookstore.vinu.edu. Those who choose not to participate in the virtual commencement will still get a tassel, program, and diploma cover in the mail.

Information about mid-year commencement will be sent in late summer. Please know that students are able to earn their degree or certificate even if they do not participate in either the virtual or traditional commencement ceremonies.

All students who complete the academic requirements for graduation will receive their diploma by mail a few weeks after the end of the spring semester, as regularly scheduled.

Please watch for additional details about these ceremonies in the coming weeks on VU’s commencement web page, [www.vinu.edu/commencement](http://www.vinu.edu/commencement). I look forward to congratulating all of our seniors—online in June and in-person in the fall. I hope you finish the semester strong and wish you much success in the next phase of your education or career.

I am immensely proud of every one of you. You are living through a time that will no doubt shape a generation, and you are doing it with grace, resilience, and compassion.

Sincerely,

Chuck Johnson

President

Vincennes University