



President's Office

Letters to the UMB Community

May 2021 Commencement

January 26, 2021

Dear UMB Community:

It's hard to believe that most of us have been working or learning remotely for nearly a year now and that May is just around the corner. Understandably, many of you have been asking about plans for graduation, so I met with our University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) deans and vice presidents last week to discuss how we should move forward.

While the COVID-19 vaccine rollout has begun, our scientists are telling us it will be some time before we will be able to resume normal gatherings. Therefore, it saddens me to say that we have decided that **all May 2021 graduation ceremonies and celebrations must be held virtually. In addition, we will not hold the previously scheduled Universitywide Commencement ceremony May 20.**

I know that this is disappointing news to many, and I empathize with those feelings. However, the safety and security of the UMB community is my priority, and virtual graduation ceremonies are one way to assure that safety. UMB leadership will reassess the situation, most likely in May, to determine if it will be safe to plan in-person celebrations in late summer or early fall.

In keeping with tradition, diplomas will reflect the official graduation date of May 20, 2021, and will be mailed to graduating students via first-class mail by the Office of the Registrar. In addition, electronic diplomas will be available from the registrar's office for graduates needing proof of their degree prior to their official diploma arriving in the mail.

As we get closer to May, we will share information on the Commencement website about virtual celebrations. I wanted to share the decision now so that graduates and their friends and families can plan accordingly.

While we are all extremely disappointed that we cannot celebrate together, please know that it by no means diminishes the extraordinary accomplishments of our graduates. We are so very proud of each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS

President

[Back to Letters to the UMB Community](#)

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