

**From:** [Susan Prager](#)  
**To:** [commencement2020](#)  
**Cc:** [faculty](#); [staff](#); [boardoftrustees](#)  
**Subject:** Message From Dean Susan Re: Graduation  
**Date:** Thursday, March 19, 2020 2:39:30 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

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Dear Members of the Graduating Class of 2020:

I write now to let you know that we have concluded that we must cancel our May 11<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremonies, which were to be held at the Pasadena Civic Auditorium. It seems highly unlikely that the COVID-19 situation will by then have eased to the point that a public gathering involving many hundreds of people in an enclosed space would be advisable or responsible. And we know many graduating students have out-of-state family and friends who would need to make travel arrangements very soon, so we wanted to make and communicate this decision as soon as possible in light of all the available information.

Words are just not adequate to fully describe the mixture of emotions this decision evokes in us. On the one hand we know that bringing people together now would be totally irresponsible, and, in all likelihood, we would be prevented from executing the event in any case. But on the other hand, we know how important Southwestern's graduation experience is to all who are involved because of who you are and what you have accomplished.

We are eager to work with you as a class to ensure that your achievements will be recognized in a meaningful way by Southwestern. So over the next few weeks, we will be exploring creative alternatives for celebrating the accomplishments of this graduating class---one that is meeting unprecedented challenges and is getting the job done! We will be reaching out to you in the near future to solicit your input on some of the possibilities we are considering, including a delayed in-person ceremony, a virtual graduation ceremony, and perhaps other alternatives. In the meantime, Vice Dean Waisman and I, all welcome your suggestions.

Thanks to each one of you for your individual and collective efforts to move to obtaining your J.D. on schedule and in good health. One of the things we plan to celebrate is the even higher degree of grit and determination that you all exemplify.

With admiration,

Dean Susan

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