To the Campus Community,

Commencement is every university's favorite season of the year. It is the culmination of years of hard work by our graduates, the families supporting them, faculty, staff, and so many others. On Graduation Day, there is a radiance on the faces of students, parents, and family members as they celebrate this milestone. Faculty feel a sense of pride for having helped their students cross this important threshold.

That's why I'm delighted to announce a bright bit of news in the midst of what has been a gray time for us all: Our campus has decided to honor the 2020 graduating class with a formal, in-person commencement celebration. Originally scheduled for May 28 and 29, 2020, the event will be held when public health authorities tell us that large gatherings are safe and the university’s calendar permits us to host the event. In the meantime, all 2020 graduates will receive their diplomas in the mail this summer as a “down payment” on the celebration of this tremendous achievement.

This decision was based on a campus survey in which an overwhelming majority (90 percent) of 1,000 respondents (more than 900 from the 2020 class) chose this option over a remote version held during the original dates.

I want to thank everyone who shared their thoughts on how we should proceed. The feedback from our student leadership has been invaluable, and I commend the Commencement Committee for helping us navigate this unexpected situation. My office will keep you informed as we develop more clearly defined plans in collaboration with the Undergraduate Student Government.

To our 2020 graduates, please know that we are here to support you. We look forward to the day when we can applaud your accomplishments in person and to provide you the recognition that you so richly deserve.
With appreciation for your understanding during these challenging times, and excited anticipation for a festive, in-person commencement,

Katherine Newman
Interim Chancellor

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