
Fwd: Maintaining our community and reuniting for Commencement & Reunion

1 message

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To: Pb919@georgetown.edu

Sat, Apr 4, 2020 at 7:39 PM

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From: **President Christina H. Paxson** <president@brown.edu>
Date: Tue, Mar 17, 2020 at 10:41 AM
Subject: Maintaining our community and reuniting for Commencement & Reunion
To: <community.announce.all.students@lists.brown.edu>



BROWN

Dear Brown Students,

Over the past month, you have received countless emails from me and other University administrators with information about ever-increasing restrictions due to the coronavirus. Last Thursday, our undergraduates received the sad news that they had to relocate, and undergraduate and graduate students learned that they would have to complete the semester remotely. Since then, we have had to expedite the departure of our students and shift nearly all University operations to remote work.

Today, I simply want to express my profound sorrow that this academic year turned out in a way that none of us could ever have predicted. I also want to convey my deep confidence that we will come through this difficult period with a greater sense of our resilience as a community.

At Opening Convocation this year, after all entering students marched in through the Van Wickle Gates, I spoke about what makes a Brown education so valuable and distinctive — specifically, how it empowers students who want to make a positive difference to humanity. This may sound trite, but my eight years at Brown have convinced me that it is true. Brown students are a source of inspiration to me and to everyone who has the privilege of teaching and working with them. You are leaders who care deeply about the world, and care deeply about each other.

I often tell people that Brown students are the ultimate innovators — that you were attracted to Brown because you refuse to be confined to intellectual or social boxes, and you want to create new ways of thinking and doing. We will need your innovative sensibilities in the coming months. Our challenge is to develop ways to keep our vibrant community connected even when we are physically dispersed. Please write to me or your deans if you have creative ideas for how we can stay connected, even from a distance. We would love to hear from you. And, please stay in contact with your friends, as well as the faculty and staff whom you have come to know. They will miss you as much as you miss them.

To our graduating students: This is not the final semester at Brown that you had imagined, and I'm sorry for that. I have been receiving many questions about Commencement. We will make a call no later than March 27 on whether we can hold Commencement and Reunion Weekend over Memorial Day weekend, as usual. But, I promise you that, if we can't hold Commencement and Reunion at the traditional time, it will be postponed and not cancelled.

One of the great things about Brown is that, while we love our traditions, we are not afraid to improvise. You will have the opportunity to celebrate at Campus Dance and march out through the Van Wickle Gates, while all of us cheer you on. It's

not a question of whether, but when. (Of course, even if the Commencement ceremony is postponed, you will still be formally awarded your degrees at the usual time, so you can move ahead with jobs and graduate school plans.)

I wish all of you the very best in the coming days and months. Please know that I and everyone else at Brown are committed to your academic development and your health and well-being. And, I can't wait to welcome you back to campus.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson
President

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