



April 1, 2021

Dear Members of the Community,

We write to provide an update on the University's plans for Commencement weekend. As you may know, Governor Northam released [detailed Commencement requirements](#) for colleges and universities in Virginia planning to hold in-person ceremonies. The Commencement team has worked tirelessly to evaluate the new guidelines and update our plans to determine how best to adhere to this guidance. The team has done a tremendous job under significant time constraints to revise our approach to Commencement weekend.

As such, we are delighted to share that at the conclusion of this difficult year, we will be able to provide modified, in-person ceremonies for all graduates during Commencement weekend with numerous COVID-19 safety protocols in place. The message below was sent to graduates today and includes additional details and links to more specific information about this year's celebrations.

We are very grateful to the Commencement committee, and in particular to events manager Alicia Engels, for herculean efforts over the past year to consider an array of Commencement options and lead the team responsible for providing in-person ceremonies for our graduates.

Significant work remains to bring these plans to fruition in just five weeks' time. We thank in advance all the faculty and staff who will help make a safe Commencement celebration possible amidst the continuing challenges of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

**David Hale**

Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

**Jeffrey Legro**

Executive Vice President and Provost

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Graduates,

Thank you for your continued understanding and patience as the Commencement team has worked rapidly to revise our Commencement plan in accordance with the [newly released guidance and mandatory requirements](#) provided to colleges and universities by Governor Northam on March 17.

We are very pleased to announce that the University of Richmond is planning to host a series of in-person Commencement ceremonies for our graduates, although these will be modified to address COVID-19 safety requirements. You will be able to celebrate with your entire class in these school-specific ceremonies, and you will be permitted to invite two guests to attend your graduation in person with COVID-safety precautions in place. The University will also provide a remote participation option for students who need or prefer to participate virtually and for families and friends around the country and the world who wish to celebrate with you virtually on graduation day.

Commencement weekend marks the conclusion of a full academic year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Commencement ceremonies will be among the first major events hosted on campus by the University since the pandemic began. As such, we are proceeding with caution and very careful planning to uphold the community health and safety standards we have all worked so hard to maintain during this challenging year. All attendees must wear masks and adhere to physical distancing guidelines. Additional details on these requirements are below.

Our Commencement office, school deans' offices, University leaders, and COVID coordinators have worked very diligently to develop an updated plan that adheres to state guidelines and achieves our two priority goals — safeguarding the health and safety of our campus community and providing our graduates with an in-person option for conferral of their hard-earned degrees.

## **WEEKEND SCHEDULE**

In order to accommodate COVID-19 safety protocols for all attendees, we have made necessary adjustments to previously communicated ceremony times and locations as follows:

- **MBA:** TBA — Planning is still in process, and information will be forthcoming to MBA candidates.
- **SPCS:** Saturday, May 8, in the Robins Center, Class of 2020 at 8 a.m., Class of 2021 at 11:30 a.m.
- **Law:** Saturday, May 8, at 4 p.m., Robins Stadium (*Note: The law ceremony will be held rain or shine. In the event of severe inclement weather, the ceremony may be moved indoors to Robins Center.*)
- **Undergraduate (Arts & Sciences, Robins, and Jepson):** Sunday, May 9, at 9 a.m., Robins Stadium (*Note: The undergraduate commencement ceremony will be held rain or shine. In the event of severe inclement weather, the ceremony may be postponed to a later time during the day.*)

Specific information about each ceremony and frequently asked questions can be found at [commencement.richmond.edu](http://commencement.richmond.edu).

## **COVID-19 SAFETY, TICKETING, AND SEATING**

Adherence to the Governor's Commencement guidelines will require careful management of the ticketing process. Each graduate will be allotted two guest tickets for distribution and will be required in advance to identify names and email addresses for each guest. Tickets will be distributed via email to each graduate in advance. More information about ticketing can be found [here](#).

Compliance with state guidelines further requires that all attendees wear masks and that we seat all Commencement attendee groups 10 feet apart. Close contact among graduates and between graduates and faculty and staff in attendance will not be permitted. To account for these physical distancing requirements, we will arrange graduate seating in three-person groups so that your guests may be seated with you.

Despite these precautions, we are committed to ensuring each graduate receives individual recognition during their ceremonies, including those participating remotely. Your name will be read aloud during the ceremony, and you may stand at your seat, if able, to be recognized. We encourage you to [create a customized slide](#) to be shown during your ceremony both in person and virtually.

This year's Commencement weekend will be unlike any other in our University's history. We are thrilled the Governor's guidelines will permit us to celebrate your graduation in person next month and will remain in contact with relevant updates as we work toward making possible this very special weekend.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronald A. Crutcher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent 'R' at the beginning.

**Ronald A. Crutcher**  
President