

Commencement 2020 – November Update

November 7, 2019

Dear Campus Community,

I write to provide an update on our continuing deliberations regarding commencement ceremonies for 2020. In my October [message](#), I communicated a potential set of on- and off-campus commencement ceremonies for us to consider.

We have continued to engage in multiple discussions and listening sessions with undergraduate and graduate students (including ASUCR and GSA), academic department chairs, Staff Assembly, and Academic Senate's Executive Council. We have also continued to solicit feedback through this [online form](#).

In gathering input, a few themes have emerged:

- Not surprisingly, our campus community is deeply committed to all of our students' success. Commencement represents a significant opportunity for all of us to celebrate our students, as well as an opportunity for each of us to participate in and contribute toward our UCR traditions at the end of each academic year. We should all be proud of this shared commitment to UCR.
- In regard to the commencement ceremonies, there are multiple aspects that help determine whether our ceremonies are high-quality events, and reflect the needs of our distinctive student body. These include, but are not limited to reading of individual student names, number of tickets available, temperature control, comfortable seating, photography, and stage visibility. There are also some limiting factors such as keeping ceremonies under three hours in length, scheduling during weekends, and availability of parking, staff, and budget.
- Holding several ceremonies off-campus at the Toyota Arena in Ontario could help to increase the number of tickets available to each graduate, and provide

better temperature control and stage visibility for families and friends. However, some of our students, staff, and faculty have described holding off-campus ceremonies as less than ideal, because of the importance of celebrating the UCR experience on-campus.

- Keeping all of our commencement ceremonies on-campus is a possibility for 2020, but is not sustainable for the long term. The reasons are many, as I outlined in the June [message](#). With increasing graduation rates and steady enrollment growth, we would need to consider limiting the number of tickets even further in order to hold more ceremonies in indoor venues such as the Student Recreation Center, University Lecture Hall, University Theater, and the HUB. Additional ceremonies might also involve greater faculty and staff engagement and support than has been the case in the past.

At present, there is no firm decision regarding next year's commencement. As we continue to solicit campus input, I have asked Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Brian Haynes, and CNAS Dean, Kathryn Uhrich, to convene a working group to provide recommendations for commencement in 2020 and in the long term. The working group will consist of students, staff, and faculty, and our plan will be to announce the dates and locations for next spring's commencement ceremonies before the end of fall quarter.

If you wish to provide input, the deadline for submitting your ideas and suggestions to this [online form](#) has been extended to Tuesday, November 12th.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Wilcox, Chancellor