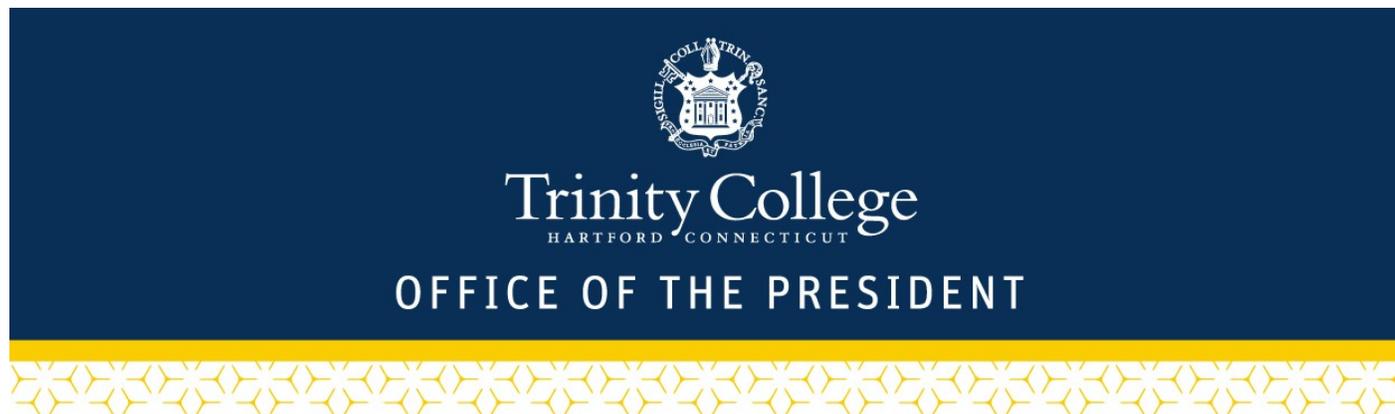


Commencement Postponement

President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>

Thu 4/2/2020 11:28 AM

To: President Joanne Berger-Sweeney <President@trincoll.edu>



Dear Members of the Trinity Community,

The following note announcing the postponement of Trinity's 194th Commencement ceremony scheduled for May 17, 2020, was shared with our Board of Trustees and members of the Class of 2020 earlier this morning. This is a challenging time for all of us, particularly those who are related to or who know a high school or college senior trying to reconcile the hopes they held for the spring semester with the reality of the situation we currently face. We are doing our best to realize plans for an alternative Commencement ceremony, which will allow seniors to commemorate this special moment at a later date. In the meantime, we want to express our gratitude for the outpouring of kindness and generosity we've witnessed from the entire Trinity community during the last few weeks and ask that you continue to take care of one another.

Joanne Berger-Sweeney
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience

April 2, 2020

Dear Graduating Students,

For many years, the week after spring break has brought the announcement of our Baccalaureate and Commencement speakers and honorary degree recipients. This announcement generally begins the palpable excitement that continues through Commencement, our most cherished tradition.

As seniors, you have been particularly affected by the disruption that COVID-19 has caused.

Restrictions on travel and gatherings have interrupted the lives of students and families in many ways, no matter where you are. Given the environment of uncertainty and the likelihood that social and travel restrictions will be in place in the months ahead, I write today with deep regret to announce that Commencement for the Class of 2020 is postponed until after the 2020–21 academic year. I know this is disappointing news.

Please know that while we cannot come together in person to celebrate you this spring, we will gather together in the future to honor your time here 'neath the elms. The entire Trinity community will cheer you on as you process along the Long Walk and dance across the Luther-Roosevelt stone. We will beam with pride as you place your hand on Bishop Brownell's book, connecting you with the nearly 200 years of graduates of Trinity College who've come before you.

Earlier this month, we asked for your ideas and preferences for a rescheduled Commencement. More than 100 of you responded to that call, and we thank you. Many of you expressed a strong preference for an on-campus Commencement rather than a virtual ceremony. I agree that a traditional Commencement on the Main Quad is a seminal experience for every Trinity student. We will work with senior class representatives to realize a vision that commemorates and celebrates your academic achievements and the friendships and bonds that you have cultivated during the last four years. We also will develop ways to include graduates who may not be able to return to campus next year.

Based on your feedback, our goal will be to offer you the excitement and customs of a traditional Commencement Weekend in 2021, including a Phi Beta Kappa Induction Ceremony, a Parents Senior Tribute Gift brick dedication, an Honors Day ceremony, and Post-Commencement Celebrations, among others. Please continue to send your thoughts and suggestions to Kate McGlew at kathleen.mcglew@trincoll.edu.

In the meantime, we do hope to move forward as scheduled with a virtual Baccalaureate ceremony on May 16, 2020. It will be a special time to unite the community, as that date marks the anniversary of Trinity's founding. It also is particularly special because our invited Baccalaureate speaker is the Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry, presiding bishop and primate of the Episcopal Church. We will share details about that event in the near future.

Bishop Curry joins a number of other [distinguished individuals](#) selected to receive honorary degrees at your Commencement. Several of them are being honored in conjunction with Trinity milestones, and we look forward to celebrating them with you and your families next year. Your Commencement speaker will be Judy Dworin '70, Trinity College professor of theater and dance, emerita, and the first woman to receive a bachelor's degree from Trinity. Professor Dworin received her diploma at the same ceremony as three other women, and we will award all four of them honorary doctorates in celebration of Women at the Summit, our commemoration of the 50th anniversary of coeducation. The three others are Betty Gallo, Judith Odium Pomeroy, and Roberta Russell. In addition, former Trinity Trustee Frank Borges '74 will receive an honorary doctorate, and James Hanley and Peter McMorris, co-founders and co-executive directors of Cinestudio, will receive honorary bachelor's degrees as the theater celebrates its 50th anniversary.

Times of crisis make exceptional demands on all of us. We will work together, and, in keeping with another beloved Trinity tradition, we will make lemonade from these lemons we've been handed, and we will toast you with our deepest appreciation.

Sincerely,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience