

Commencement 2021

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

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To:



March 8, 2021

Dear Graduating Students,

Commencement is our most cherished tradition and the annual occasion we look forward to more than any other. Celebrating the remarkable achievements of our graduating students and cheering as you step (or dance) across the Luther-Roosevelt stone and place your hand on Bishop Brownell's Book are joyful moments for the entire community.

It is with great excitement, then, that I write to you today to share that we are planning for an in-person Commencement ceremony this year, and for that event to allow a limited number of guests for graduates.

Please note that we are making many changes to the event this year to be able to host an in-person event safely. This email provides the details for Commencement that we can share now. More details will be forthcoming as planning progresses and we receive further guidance (from the state and others) on health and safety protocols. Please also note that these plans are subject to change if conditions or mandates from local or state officials require.

Perhaps most importantly, we are changing the date of Commencement from the originally planned date of Sunday, May 23, to **Friday, May 21**. To accommodate the need to maintain low density and proper physical distancing, **we will host two consecutive Commencement ceremonies outside on the Main Quad, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.**

More details:

- Graduating students each will be allowed two guests to Commencement. Those unable to attend for any reason will be able to watch both ceremonies live online
- Graduating students will be assigned to a ceremony based on campus residence location. Those who live on the south side of campus will graduate in the morning ceremony. Students living on the north side of campus, those living off-campus, as well as IDP and graduate students will

be celebrated at the afternoon ceremony. We will provide exact start times once we have confirmed them.

- Specific health and safety protocols will include:
 - Continued COVID-19 testing for students who are on campus
 - Required negative COVID-19 test result or proof of vaccination for all guests
 - Required face coverings
 - Symptom checks on Commencement Day of all attendees
 - Physical distancing
- If severe weather prevents an outdoor ceremony, we will move to a virtual event. Our standard alternate site, the Koepfel Community Sport Center, does not allow for adequate physical distancing.
- Graduating students will be expected to move out and depart campus immediately following the Commencement ceremony they participate in.
- Additional information regarding move-out will follow.
- We cannot safely host any post-commencement celebrations on campus.
- Information regarding caps/gowns, honorands, and event program details will follow in April
- Individuals who are sick may not attend, and individuals who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 should strongly consider not attending.
- Those who travel to campus from out of state will be expected to adhere to [Connecticut's COVID-19 travel policies](#).

One note about the changed date for Commencement: After careful consideration and out of an abundance of caution, we decided to move Commencement to Friday, May 21, to reduce the number of days between finals and Commencement and maximize our ability to safely host a large-scale, in-person event. We know that this may be less desirable than a Sunday event for many families, and we apologize for any added inconvenience. We hope that having the information now will allow you to make plans that best suit your family.

We will update the community with more details on the plans as they become available. We anticipate hosting a town hall for graduating students and their families in the coming weeks to provide more information and answer your questions. In the meantime, visit the [Commencement website](#) for more information, or email commencement@trincoll.edu.

Sincerely,

Joanne Berger-Sweeney
President and Trinity College Professor of Neuroscience

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