



Dear students and colleagues,

We regret that due to continued uncertainty around the COVID-19 pandemic and a return to normalcy in Oregon, the timing and format of Commencement 2020 remain unresolved.

You were notified a few weeks ago that commencement would be postponed due to the virus and a series of executive orders from Gov. Kate Brown. We distributed a survey to our graduating seniors to ensure that their preferences would be heard, and a solid majority of respondents chose a date in September.

However, it now looks as though restrictions on large gatherings may remain in place into fall term, based on the pandemic's progression in Oregon. The best information available to us indicates that even when the "stay at home" order is lifted, restrictions on gatherings of more than 50 people will likely remain.

We do not want to schedule commencement now and then cause more disruption if we are forced to postpone it again, so we will hold off on committing to a particular date until more solid information is available. We remain committed to honoring our students in the most appropriate manner.

It is possible that smaller gatherings may be allowed as early as June, so the provost has asked program chairs and division directors to consider possibilities for holding small program and/or division celebrations. Our hope is that these smaller ceremonies may be permitted and could fill some of the void left by the postponement of our traditional large ceremony.

We feel a deep sense of disappointment and sadness that this landmark event in the lives of our 2020 graduates has been disrupted by current circumstances. We will reschedule commencement as soon as we have reasonable assurance about what lies ahead.

With best wishes,

Linda Schott, SOU President
Britney Sharp, ASSOU President