

Subject: On the eve of your day

Dear seniors and families,

Tomorrow, we would have all gathered on campus for your Commencement. There are not enough words to capture what you all must be feeling and no sufficient way to fully honor this important moment in your life. But let me say something else that is equally important at this time: YOU are now a Roger Williams graduate. Congratulations and welcome to the family of alumni of Roger Williams University.

As I have gotten to know you during this first year of my presidency, I have been deeply impressed by the leadership you have demonstrated to your rising classmates, the faculty and staff. I am so proud of your tremendous scholarship and work ethic as well as perseverance and resilience through this spring semester. You have set the bar, in my eyes, for the true spirit of RWU Hawks, and all following classes will have to work hard to measure up to what your class embodies and means to me.

Nothing can take away the friends and memories you've made and the connections with faculty and staff that will last a lifetime. Maybe it is still too soon, but I want you to know that the sadness and pain you may have felt this spring is a sign of how much your friendships and the Roger Williams community mean to you. That longing and connection will always be with you and will be a bond for your class like no other. I want you to also know that your class will forever have a place in the hearts of all the faculty and staff.

Tomorrow, in all the places we are, we celebrate the Class of 2020, in small ways now and we look forward to giving you the in-person Commencement ceremony you deserve at a later date.

While we decided to not have a virtual Commencement, I wanted to share a few opportunities and initiatives with you:

- A special issue of *This Week at Roger* will arrive in your inbox today, with stories of scholarship and accomplishments of our graduating class. You will also find those stories at [RWU News](#).
- This past week, @myRWU has been featuring memories from our senior class using the hashtag #RWUGrad2020. Check out our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and add your photos and memories.
- Ready to mark your transformation from senior to alumni? [Watch a video](#) of
- Mikayla Berteletti leading the Class of 2020 in the time-honored tradition of turning your mortarboard tassel!
- The Deans of our Schools also have shared [messages of congratulations](#) with their graduates.
- Read through the full list of graduates, available [here](#).

Throughout these past years, you have become Civic Scholars, committed to making a meaningful impact through your careers, volunteerism and philanthropy – and the world needs you now more than ever. We need your energy and passion to leverage what you have learned and to help reopen communities, take care of others, and make a difference in the world. That is the challenge and the obligation you now carry as a college graduate and especially as Roger Williams alumni.

Now, go change the world! And stay connected to each other and to Roger Williams. We can't wait to have you back on campus next year for an amazing Commencement ceremony.

Sincerely,
Yannis