



SOUTHERN VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE *of the* PRESIDENT
ONE UNIVERSITY HILL DRIVE, BUENA VISTA, VA 24416

March 19, 2020: Letter to Seniors from President Wilcox

Dear wonderful Graduating Seniors,

You have been on our minds these last several days. We are so sorry that the CV-19 outbreak has emerged just at this precise time and disrupted all our lives, and the final few weeks of your senior year of college. In light of all we know about the pattern of the virus outbreak in other countries, it is clear we cannot with any confidence plan to be able to gather on May 9 for Commencement to celebrate your graduation and the beginning of a new time of life. We are so very sorry. And we miss you. You have become part of life here. You embody the kind and good spirit of this unique University.

I've been so impressed with the calm maturity and kindness you've shown, and your determination to move ahead regardless, to finish your classes online, and move ahead with life. You are truly great young men and women. Only a few in the earth's history have had the opportunity and made the effort and investment to study even a year at college. Many fewer have had the determination, perseverance and faith to stay the course, finish the work, and graduate. It's a great thing you've done!

Please know how much we have come to love and admire and respect you.

We will not be able to plan a Commencement exercise on May 9, but assuming the viral outbreak has subdued and things have returned to normal this fall, we will plan something we've never done before. Next year, 2020-2021, will complete our 25th year as a new university, so we would like to do something special, something we've never done before – to invite you home, here, for a unique Commencement weekend to honor you, with an exceptional Commencement address and ceremony with family and friends and the entire student body, a recognition dinner and reception for graduating seniors, and other amazing special events.

We will need to work with all areas of the University to set the right date when everything can be done, and will let you know the date as soon as it can be cleared in the next few weeks and you can have many months' advance notice. We realize not everyone will be able to come, and we will do our best to have everyone join in at least virtually, but we hope most people and employers will recognize this was a once-in-a-generation time we've lived through together, and support the opportunity to come home to be honored for graduation from college.

We wish you the very best in completing these final classes and as you begin the next steps in your lives. We're so very proud of you and believe you will go on to serve and lead and change the world in so many positive ways. We are better for having been with you these past years. The world will be better for all you do as you go forward from here. We'll be excited to hear from you and hope we can look forward to seeing you again this fall.

Be safe. Be happy. Be faithful and kind. We love you and are so very proud of you,

And we will make sure you have a Commencement and reunion to remember!

Reed Wilcox, President
Southern Virginia University