



Dr. Robert A. Brown
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June 12, 2020

Dear Members of the Boston University Class of 2020 and Families,

I am writing to update you on our plans to hold an appropriately festive, in-person commencement for Boston University's 2020 graduates. Ever since we announced the painful decision to postpone our May 2020 celebrations, we have monitored the trend of the COVID-19 pandemic and sought the best information available from reliable public health sources to understand when and how we can safely conduct a ceremony worthy of the achievements and aspirations of our graduating students.

I can now tell you that we are directing all our efforts toward planning events that would be held in late May of 2021, either on or around the Commencement 2021 Weekend (May 15–16), or slightly later. We cannot hold gatherings of any significant magnitude either in August or October 2020, as we had earlier considered. The City of Boston is gradually reopening, but with continuing restrictions on large gatherings. In late May the Mayor announced the cancellation of the 2020 Boston Marathon, which had been postponed from its traditional April date on Patriots Day to September.

It is too early for me to tell you in detail what form a May celebration will take. We are navigating in uncharted waters. I do not believe we will be returning to pre-COVID-19 standards for large gatherings by next spring; our plans will require new protocols for distancing and hygiene. But we very much want to hold an event that can highlight all you did to reach the milestone of graduation and celebrate the many great things you will achieve. While we have witnessed (and participated in) several very imaginatively designed and executed virtual events—and learned of many others—we don't see these as substitutes for in-person community events with their pageantry, reference to history and tradition, and, of course, conviviality.

I will further update you on our plans at the earliest possible opportunity. In the meantime, please know that we look forward to welcoming you back to our special campus on the Charles River in Boston—a campus that has been all too quiet in recent months.

Be safe and well.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert A. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "R" and "B".

Robert A. Brown
President