

Dear Parents of Students in the Class of 2020:

Normally when I write to parents I open my letter with a remark about the change of seasons and a calendar update. And while spring is now in full bloom across New England and the dates on the academic calendar have not changed, the absence of students on the otherwise beautiful Wesleyan campus has made it all too clear that these are not normal times. Classes still end on Wednesday, May 6, and reading period and final exams will still take place from May 7 through 15. Degrees will be awarded to graduating seniors at the usual time at the end of May.

As you know, Commencement has been postponed and in its place a virtual ceremony is being planned. There are also plans to organize an in-person celebration to acknowledge the achievements of the Class of 2020 at some point in the future, but uncertainty with the public health situation makes it difficult to say when such a celebration will be able to take place.

To accommodate the transition of students into the online classroom environment, several modifications to the academic regulations have been put in place this semester. The credit/unsatisfactory grading option has been made available for all courses. Students who wish to exercise this option simply need their professors before the last day of classes. All major, minor, and certificate programs have waived any existing regulations requiring courses be taken for a letter grade this semester. In addition, the deadline for submitting honors theses has been extended. And for those seniors who are still actively involved in searching for a job, the [Gordon Career Center](#) is offering virtual career events and one-on-one advising through Zoom.

For seniors in particular, in recognition of the fact that some may need to take Incompletes at the end of the semester, any member of the class who does not meet the 32 credit requirement by the end of the semester, but who is within two credits of this total, will be awarded “upon completion” status. An upon completion student does not officially graduate at the end of the semester. Instead, they graduate as soon as they have earned the necessary credits to complete the degree. If you sense that your student may need to exercise this option, please urge them to get in touch with me as soon as possible.

Graduating from college is a bittersweet experience. Completing one’s degree can instill tremendous feelings of pride and personal achievement for all the work completed and knowledge gained. At the same time, this sense of accomplishment can be tempered by the feeling that one is losing one’s community, that feeling when an accidental encounter in Usdan provides a spontaneous opportunity to say farewell to a dear friend or classmate with a big hug. It is hard to express the disappointment that our students must feel in having lost this opportunity to bring face-to-face closure to their Wesleyan experience.

But in spite of all the disruptions and disappointments that current events have imposed on this semester, I find comfort in reminding myself that the essence of the Wesleyan community lies in the interpersonal and intellectual relationships that our students have built with one another and with their professors over the past four years. It is this web of relationships that will sustain our students now and into their lives beyond Wesleyan.

I do hope that you are keeping safe. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Although I no longer offer drop-in hours, if you would like to meet via Zoom or phone, just send an email letting me know your availability and I will get back to you with an appointment

Sincerely,

David Phillips

Dean for the Class of 2020

[dphillips@wesleyan.edu](mailto:dphillips@wesleyan.edu)

<http://classof2020.blogs.wesleyan.edu/>