



April 14, 2020

Dear Graduating Student:

Thank you for taking the time to share your university-wide commencement opinions in the recent survey issued to all UMB graduating students. Even during this unprecedented and challenging time filled with competing school, personal, and societal pressures, we received a phenomenal 56 percent response rate to the survey. Additionally, the winners of the prize drawing have been contacted and will receive their prizes soon.

In my March 26<sup>th</sup> video [message](#) addressing the need to cancel in-person commencement, I committed to finding a unique way to celebrate your accomplishments. I heard and respect your opinions and have decided to move forward with the following:

- **No virtual commencement.** Overwhelmingly, there was little or no interest in holding a virtual commencement this May.
- **In-person university-wide commencement.** Many respondents favored an in-person commencement ceremony in the fall or as soon as it can reasonably be scheduled. We will revisit this request as we get a better sense of the course of this pandemic.
- **Celebration for Graduates.** Many of you expressed an interest in a celebration at a later date and suggested a number of interesting ideas. We will definitely consider your suggestions.
- **Conferment of degrees.** In May 2020, you will receive a package from UMB containing your diploma which automatically confers your degree.

Your school's dean and leadership team are working hard to develop their own plans for a school-specific celebration of this major milestone in your life and they will communicate those plans to you as soon as they are finalized.

I recognize that many of you have made sacrifices to pursue your education at UMB and I know that postponing commencement comes with immense disappointment. No future celebration will replace the commencement that you envisioned for yourself. But it is my hope that we can embrace this challenge, and the disappointment that comes with it, and use it as a catalyst to unite us and renew our personal and professional purpose.

Nothing will give me greater pleasure than to be able to communicate with you about future plans to celebrate your major accomplishment and congratulate you in person! Until that time when we can all come together again, I wish you best of luck in your professional and personal endeavors.

Please stay safe and well!

Sincerely,

**Bruce E. Jarrell, MD, FACS**  
*Interim President*