

April 15, 2021

Dear Graduates and Graduating Students,

We have made significant changes to our May 11 and 12 Graduation Celebration Ceremonies in response to the New York State guidelines updated on April 12, 2021. Our plans have been revised to allow each graduating student to have two guests attend the ceremony. We are also including an opportunity for graduates to walk across the stage as part of the ceremony. The ceremony will be livestreamed as well.

This year is like no other, and this ceremony will reflect the changing conditions we have faced. It will be different than our usual large gathering, but will honor the wishes of our graduates to be able to walk across the stage in the presence of their classmates and closest family and friends. The changes to our ceremonies are outlined below:

We will celebrate our 2020 and 2021 graduates **outdoors** in the Campus Quad on Russell Sage College's Albany campus in gatherings of fewer than 100 students with up to 2 guests each. Masks are required, and graduates and guests must maintain 6 feet of social distance at all times. These events will be held as one-hour ceremonies on Tuesday, May 11 and Wednesday, May 12.

Rather than gather by academic department as previously planned, we will allow students to attend the ceremony that best suits their needs. All graduates will receive an updated invitation on Friday April 16, 2021 and will need to RSVP by Wednesday, April 21, 2021. This is true even if you have already RSVP'd for the ceremonies previously planned for May 11 and 12. Please be prepared to include the names and contact information of your guests when you RSVP. All graduates and guests must be pre-registered to attend.

We know that many of you were excited about the opportunity to gather with your classmates at these ceremonies. You can still do that! We encourage you to look at the schedule and sign up with your close classmates so that you can attend the same ceremony. Each ceremony will accommodate 60 graduates and will close when it reaches capacity. In that case, you would need to choose from the other available ceremonies.

We have traditionally avoided outdoor ceremonies because the weather conditions in Albany in mid-May are highly variable. The capacity limits in the state guidelines won't allow us to run an indoor ceremony on campus that would be large enough to accommodate guests. We simply don't have a large enough facility. We will hold these events outdoors and ask you and your guests to be prepared for the weather on the day of your event. The seats will be arranged on the campus quad and will not be covered. Please plan ahead. Depending on the forecast, you may need sunscreen, a winter coat, or an umbrella!

I look forward to gathering with you and your family to celebrate on May 11 and 12.

Christopher Ames
President



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