

For All in the Brown Community,

At this moment, community is everything. With most on-campus students heading home, events and gatherings being cancelled, and many daily interactions moving online, maintaining a sense of who we are as a community at Brown is more important than ever.

Earlier today, I shared the message below with our students, and I want to share it also with all who work at Brown, as well as Brown's extended community of parents, families and alumni.

While we have made the very difficult decision to move to remote education amid the evolving situation with novel coronavirus, we are still Brown. Everything that defines and unites us as a community is enduring. And while the feeling of watching our community disband in the middle of the semester is truly indescribable, it matters deeply to me that we continue to remain connected with one another and with this amazing institution.

We will have the opportunity to be together again in celebration of this academic year, once this health crisis has abated. We will decide no later than March 27 as to whether 2020 Commencement and Reunion can be held at the traditional time. But, as I note in my message to students, if it can't be held then, it will be postponed and not cancelled. Please read my message to students. And please know that I am eager for the day when we can bring our full community together again.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson
President

MESSAGE TO ALL BROWN STUDENTS

Maintaining our community and reuniting for Commencement & Reunion

Dear Brown Students,

Over the past month, you have received countless emails from me and other University administrators with information about ever-increasing restrictions due to the coronavirus. Last Thursday, our undergraduates received the sad news that they had to relocate, and undergraduate and graduate students learned that they would have to complete the semester remotely. Since then, we have had to expedite the departure of our students and shift nearly all University operations to remote work.

Today, I simply want to express my profound sorrow that this academic year turned out in a way that none of us could ever have predicted. I also want to convey my deep confidence that we will come through this difficult period with a greater sense of our resilience as a community.

At Opening Convocation this year, after all entering students marched in through the Van Wickle Gates, I spoke about what makes a Brown education so valuable and distinctive — specifically, how it empowers students who want to make a positive difference to humanity. This may sound trite, but my eight years at Brown have convinced me that it is true. Brown students are a source of inspiration to me and to everyone who has the privilege of teaching and working with them. You are leaders who care deeply about the world, and care deeply about each other.

I often tell people that Brown students are the ultimate innovators — that you were attracted to Brown because you refuse to be confined to intellectual or social boxes, and you want to create

new ways of thinking and doing. We will need your innovative sensibilities in the coming months. Our challenge is to develop ways to keep our vibrant community connected even when we are physically dispersed. Please write to me or your deans if you have creative ideas for how we can stay connected, even from a distance. We would love to hear from you. And, please stay in contact with your friends, as well as the faculty and staff whom you have come to know. They will miss you as much as you miss them.

To our graduating students: This is not the final semester at Brown that you had imagined, and I'm sorry for that. I have been receiving many questions about Commencement. We will make a call no later than March 27 on whether we can hold Commencement and Reunion Weekend over Memorial Day weekend, as usual. But, I promise you that, if we can't hold Commencement and Reunion at the traditional time, it will be postponed and not cancelled.

One of the great things about Brown is that, while we love our traditions, we are not afraid to improvise. You *will* have the opportunity to celebrate at Campus Dance and march out through the Van Wickle Gates, while all of us cheer you on. It's not a question of whether, but when. (Of course, even if the Commencement ceremony is postponed, you will still be formally awarded your degrees at the usual time, so you can move ahead with jobs and graduate school plans.)

I wish all of you the very best in the coming days and months. Please know that I and everyone else at Brown are committed to your academic development and your health and well-being. And, I can't wait to welcome you back to campus.

Sincerely,

Christina H. Paxson
President