

## Commencement 2020 – A Message from President Birge 3.20.2020

Dear Trailblazers, Friends, and MCLA Community:

I want to extend my gratitude to all of you for adapting to the major disruption and challenges that have been presented to our community in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. This is a difficult moment for everybody and I greatly appreciate the understanding, flexibility, and patience that I have witnessed from students, families, and dedicated faculty, staff, and alumni. In true Trailblazer form, I have heard many heartwarming stories of connection and outreach and I have personally seen our community step up to help one another, from donors funding computer equipment purchases for students to senior faculty helping junior faculty learn new remote learning technologies.

To the outstanding, brave, and resilient Class of 2020: Commencement is the highlight of the year for our graduating students and the entire MCLA community looks forward to celebrating you on this important day. **Because of that, I want to make it very clear to you that we will NOT be canceling our 2020 Commencement ceremony.** Sadly, we **will** have to postpone the ceremony due to current restrictions on large gatherings, and in the interest of all of our health and safety.

We have already begun to discuss possible alternatives, and more details about the postponed commencement ceremony will be forthcoming. But know this, Trailblazers: We will meet again. I will still be there on stage to congratulate you in person. You have worked so hard and contributed so much to the MCLA community, and you deserve a celebration, a day for you and your families to mark the incredible accomplishment of earning your degree. We will do everything in our power to provide this important celebration for our hard-working graduates and their families.

Again, thank you for your patience and understanding during these difficult times. We know many of you have questions surrounding COVID-19 and MCLA in general, so we have set up a hotline phone number for these questions at 413.662.5550, between the hours of 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Friday. Additionally, more information can be found on our COVID-19 landing page at MCLA.edu, [here](#).

Until we meet again, Trailblazers, I will be thinking of you each and every day.  
Jaimie

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**James F. Birge, Ph.D.**

President

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