

# **UW-Madison: To celebrate Spring commencement with graduate-only ceremony**

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CONTACT: Meredith McGlone, [meredith.mcglone@wisc.edu](mailto:meredith.mcglone@wisc.edu), (608) 263-7523

MADISON – After a year in which students faced many challenges, University of Wisconsin-Madison leaders are pleased to announce plans to hold in-person commencement ceremonies for spring 2021 graduates at Camp Randall.

The university is planning two ceremonies on Saturday, May 8 – one for undergraduates, the other for all graduate degree candidates.

Because of the ongoing pandemic, these in-person gatherings will be limited to graduates only, no guests. Family members, friends and graduates who are unable to attend will be invited to watch a livestream of the ceremonies, among other virtual engagement opportunities.

This approach is necessary because when allowing for six feet of physical distancing, even a venue as large as Camp Randall cannot accommodate both graduates and guests. Also, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention currently advises no travel in order to limit the spread of COVID-19.

The in-person ceremonies are contingent on continued progress in controlling COVID-19 on campus and in the community. Health and safety requirements will include physical distancing and the wearing of face coverings. Participating graduates will need to be part of the Safer Badgers testing program and show a green Badger Badge on their Safer Badgers mobile app for entrance to Camp Randall. A green badge signifies adherence to campus safety protocols, including

having a recent negative COVID-19 test result on file.

“Our students have lost so much during this pandemic,” says Chancellor Rebecca Blank. “While I am disappointed that it is still not possible for all our Badger family members to attend, I am very pleased that our graduates will again gather and celebrate together in our commencement tradition.

“To family members and friends, I know many of you wanted to be in Camp Randall as well. Please know that we are working hard to make sure there are many unique ways for you to participate in this joyous occasion.”

The ceremonies will include speeches, student entertainment, and the conferral of degrees. The university will be announcing the spring commencement speaker soon.

“I am so excited to celebrate with my fellow graduates in Camp Randall this May,” says Alec Bukowiec, senior class president. “Even though this year’s ceremonies will look different, we can still Jump Around, sing Varsity, and throw our caps in the air. And to Badger families everywhere, I want to assure you that the senior class officer team will be working closely with the Parent and Family Program, the Wisconsin Alumni Association, and other campus organizations to create meaningful opportunities to participate for those who cannot attend in-person.”

In the weeks ahead, students must remain committed to COVID-19 testing and to slowing its spread on and off campus, Bukowiec says.

“While today calls for excitement and hope, we must continue to keep positive case numbers low in order to realize this opportunity to be at Camp Randall,” he says.

Additional details about the ceremonies will be released in the weeks ahead, including the times of the ceremonies and the process for graduates to confirm attendance. As in other years, the ceremonies will occur rain or shine; there will be no makeup date.

In past years, schools and colleges often have held their own events to honor graduates in addition to the campus-wide ceremonies. This spring, however, any additional celebrations will be virtual, not in-person.

The ceremonies on May 8 will be only for 2021 spring graduates. The university is planning an in-person celebration for all 2020 spring and winter graduates for this

upcoming fall. More details on the fall celebration will be released as plans come together.

Please visit the commencement website at <https://commencement.wisc.edu/> for more information, a set of FAQs, and the latest updates.