

March 18, 2021

Dear Trojan students and families,

Commencement is one of the most cherished ceremonies in a student's academic life. It's the single time when we come together as a community to celebrate years of hard work by our graduates. Unfortunately, COVID-19 kept USC and most other universities from offering in-person ceremonies last year. Today, I am delighted to let you know that we have received permission from state authorities to host in-person commencement celebrations this spring for the graduating classes of both 2020 and 2021.

The in-person ceremonies for undergraduate and graduate students will take place at the historic Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum. To accommodate the State's restrictions on density and rules for cleaning following each event, we will need to schedule graduation ceremonies, twice a day from May 14 to May 25. All ceremonies will combine wonderful elements of USC's traditional main graduation ceremony with those of individual schools and colleges. Every graduate will be invited to one ceremony with their specific school or degree program cohort. Graduates will have the opportunity to cross the stage, hear their names read, receive their diplomas, and have their photos taken while projected on the screens at the stadium. Density restrictions require graduates to have no more than two guests.

State public health guidelines currently require that access to the ceremonies – at USC and other California universities – be limited to individuals currently residing in California. Those who plan to attend should stay informed about the California Department of Public Health's most recent [travel advisory](#). We are actively working with state officials to see if there is any avenue to allow out-of-state residents to attend the ceremonies. We will advise you of any new developments as soon as we have them.

As soon as we determine the number of graduates who plan to attend, we will be able to produce a schedule with the time and date for each ceremony by school. To finalize these plans, eligible graduates need to follow the instructions on our [commencement page](#) and fill out the registration by April 1. Even if you cannot attend, we ask that you let us know.


For those who cannot join us in Los Angeles, everything we do in-person will also be broadcast online, live, and on-demand for future viewing. The university is building a new digital platform to host a memorable, feature-rich remote experience with the objective of delivering an unforgettable experience for everyone. Every school will host a virtual celebration for its graduates on May 13.

Due to distancing requirements, it will not be possible to hood doctoral candidates. Hooding ceremonies will take place at a future time when restrictions are lifted.

There are a number of questions you – and all of us – still have. We will communicate additional details as soon as they are confirmed via our [commencement page](#). In the meantime, please know that we are doing everything possible to produce an experience that balances both the challenges brought on by the pandemic, as well as the achievements of our incredible graduates, which deserve to be celebrated to the fullest extent possible.

I look forward to seeing many of you at graduation. Stay safe and Fight On!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carol L. Folt".

Carol L. Folt
President