



Dear Graduating Student,

Earlier this month, I informed students that MassBay will not hold the traditional commencement ceremony originally scheduled for May 21, 2020 — yet another sad sacrifice we have all been forced to make by the coronavirus pandemic.

Commencement, a word from Old French meaning “to begin, to start”, is a special ceremony and one of the most important days in the academic calendar. Beyond the crowd of proud family and friends, beyond the academic robes, the mortar board hats, and the grand processional, Commencement is so important because it formally and publicly confers a degree or certificate on graduates and marks a new stage in their lives. Seeing so many bright and energetic and educated people starting a new chapter in their lives gives me a great sense of hope. And, I think we can all agree that the world needs hope and light and energy now more than ever.

After a great deal of thought and after consultation with the Student Government Association, MassBay decided to move forward with a *virtual* Commencement, one that we hope will still mark the important “beginning” in your life and capture some of the warmth and energy and hope we all feel when we assemble every year for the traditional graduation ceremony. This virtual Commencement will not happen on May 21 but we are working hard to make arrangements and we will forward the details to you as soon as possible.

Please know that we very much want to acknowledge all of your hard work and we would love nothing more than to gather together in front of family and friends to do so. However, health considerations come first and we think a virtual Commencement will be a wonderful ceremony. In addition, all 2020 graduating students will be invited to participate in the May 2021 exercises.

I see a bright future for MassBay graduates and I still feel the hope you are about to bring into the world.

David Podell, Ph.D., President
Massachusetts Bay Community College