

Dear graduates,

Please take a few moments to carefully read this very important update regarding the 2021 RCC Curriculum Graduation Ceremony.

The reason we all come to work every day is to do all we can to help our students succeed. That alone is the mission and purpose for which our faculty and staff get out of our cars every morning and come into our offices and classrooms. Graduation is our prime opportunity to celebrate the success of the students we have poured our hearts and souls into for the past couple of years. And all of that is absolutely true...under “normal” circumstances!

When we set our graduation date for late August back in the spring, it was a reasonable, wise decision based on the facts we had at the time. The Covid numbers were coming down rapidly, vaccinations were increasing, and it looked like the worst of it would be passed by the end of the summer. We foresaw a late August graduation ceremony that would be very safe, with every protocol put in place that would be adequate to protect the safety of all who attend.

Recently, however, we have new information that has put us in a different situation. Based on this information, we have decided to cancel our live graduation ceremony this coming Friday evening.

While I know that it will be extremely disappointing to you and your family members and friends to have the live ceremony canceled – and especially the 2020 graduates who have now had two consecutive live graduation ceremonies canceled, our top priority is to preserve the health and safety of all our graduates, faculty, staff, family members, and friends in the community who may have chosen to attend. I don't want to risk anyone's health in circumstances such as these.

But because we do value the celebration of our students' success, we will work diligently to put together a virtual graduation ceremony that will honor you, celebrate your success, and give you an appropriately festive send-off to the next step in life's journey.

Please understand that this has been an excruciating decision to make, but in the end, I am convinced that it is the right one for each of us.

Congratulations to our graduates, of whom we are so very proud! Nothing short of a worldwide pandemic could have kept us from gathering in the coliseum to cheer you on and celebrate your success. Our thoughts and prayers go with you into the next steps of your lives and careers.

Blessings,

Dr. Bob Shackleford
President, Randolph Community College