



March 30, 2020

Dear Students,

Since the Coronavirus has mandated that SOWELA move to online instruction, one of the most frequently asked questions is, "What about commencement?"

The graduation ceremony is the culmination of all the hard work put forth by our students to pursue and successfully obtain a higher education that provides the means to improve lives.

SOWELA's faculty and staff strive to ensure your success, and we are incredibly proud of the individuals who will graduate this semester. These students are working hard to juggle the day-to-day complexities of life, and exhibit the firm determination to succeed. Your commitment to your dreams is what we want to celebrate.

Because of the circumstances associated with the Coronavirus, unfortunately we will have to postpone our Spring Commencement scheduled for Tuesday, May 19, 2020. Due to the advice given by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), other public health officials, and officials in our great state of Louisiana, it is difficult to imagine how we could safely hold such a large gathering this spring.

If possible, our plans are to reschedule the ceremony at a later date. The Commencement Committee will soon begin sending surveys to students in order to gain feedback about what the best plan will be in regards to a ceremony to celebrate this important milestone. However, if we are unable to reschedule, students who would have graduated during the Spring 2020 Commencement will be invited to participate in the Fall 2020 Commencement Ceremony on Friday, December 18, in the Lake Charles Civic Center at 6:30 p.m.

Please note that students who complete their programs of study by May 11 will still earn their credential(s) and "graduate" even though they may not participate in a "commencement" ceremony. Academic transcripts and diplomas will be available to students in June.

If you have any questions, please email SOWELA's Registrar, Laura LaFleur, at [graduationinfo@sowela.edu](mailto:graduationinfo@sowela.edu).

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we deal with this crisis.

Sincerely,

  
Neil Aspinwall, Ed.D.  
Chancellor