

Good early evening, all.

Five quick updates for today:

First, congratulations to everyone -- faculty, students, and staff -- for finishing the classroom portion of our semester in style! When we kicked off this semester back in January, who of us could have predicted the world we'd inhabit fifteen weeks later?!? I must say I am proud of South Texas. While the transition to Zoom was not seamless, it was largely successful. Thank you to the faculty for adapting to a new technology. Thank you to the staff who, behind the scenes, ensured that things just worked. And thank you to the students for embracing our new normal. This may not have been our plan back in January, but it became our reality -- and South Texas crushed it. Congratulations!

Second, Graduation and Commencement! We have reviewed the feedback on the student survey -- some 239 responses. Thank you! The overwhelming choice was to hold a commencement ceremony in the fall, after the bar exam. **So, we will do that.** But, in the comments (we read every one), many students noted that May 17 was an important date to them -- and that they had been counting down to May 17 for quite a while; they asked whether we might do something to commemorate the original graduation date, as well. **So, we will do that, too!** Here's the plan:

-- **On May 17, at 2.00 p.m., we will hold a virtual event, on Zoom, to mark the day.**

-- **And, in the fall, we will plan to hold an in-person commencement event.** As we won't know until next week when the Texas Bar Exam will be held, we don't have a date yet. We will finalize the date after the Supreme Court lets us know about the Texas Bar Exam -- likely next week.

Watch for more details shortly, as there are a lot of logistics to be worked out. But I wanted to get the information to you as soon as possible that we heard you loud and clear!

Third, thank you to everyone who joined last Friday's Zoom Community Gathering -- our first ever gathering of that many people on Zoom! I very much appreciated the opportunity to engage with so many members of our community and to answer questions. As always, if there are outstanding questions or issues, please let us know: Send an email to health@stcl.edu.

Fourth, a note on social media. On Wednesday, on our social media page, we posted a picture of our bell with a note about the bell-ringing tradition when students take their last final at South Texas. This post was planned a while ago -- along with

others that recognize our school's history and traditions -- and prompted fond memories among alumni. But, the bell-ringing tradition is one that, regrettably, is not available to students right now.

Some students shared with me that they were disappointed in the timing of this post given the stay-at-home orders currently in place -- and I understand their frustration. I apologize for the timing of the post, and we are reviewing the rest of our social media calendar to make sure that there aren't similar posts in the future. Please know that we are proud of our graduates and are eager to have the building open again so that we may resume this great tradition. Please also know that everyone at South Texas is working together to support our students and to recognize the challenges that so many in our community now face. Yet, in this case, despite good intentions, we made a mistake, and I am sorry.

And -- when we can reopen the building -- every graduating student will be able to ring the bell. After all, it is tradition!

Finally, much more information is on its way next week, including information on summer classes, the fall semester information, and (hopefully) the bar exam.

Again, thank you for all of your hard work to make this semester a success.

For now, all the best on your finals, have a great weekend, and be safe!

All the best,

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