



# MEMO

**TO:** Students, Faculty, and Staff

**FROM:** President Anderson

**Date:** November 13, 2020

Dear Students, Faculty and Staff –

If there is one thing 2020 has taught us, it's that we must be flexible.

Our team has been diligently planning ten commencement exercises to honor – in person - the graduates who have persevered through this difficult year to reach the ultimate milestone of graduating with a new degree. All while following the CDC guidelines and Gov. Hogan's mandate of *less than 100 people indoors together at a time*, and maintaining six feet of physical distance.

As this planning has all been taking place in the background, the virus has been spreading and the infection rate in Maryland continues to climb. This prompted Gov. Hogan to announce Maryland is in the "Red Zone" and add new measures to stop the spread earlier this week.

On Thursday, UMES received a [message](#) from Sec. Robert Neal from Maryland's Department of Health insisting that all indoor activities be **limited to less than 25 people in a room**. The university took several hours to confirm with Somerset County Health Department that our previously approved plans were no longer going to be acceptable before having to make the very difficult announcement that we will not be able to execute the Commencement exercises that we planned.

We all know this comes as a blow, just one week before you were to walk across the stage. Please understand, if there were any other way, we would **make it happen**.

We will, however, be doing a **series of photo shoots** across campus and we welcome *our graduates* to come have photos taken so we may create a celebration of your achievements for a **December 18 virtual reveal**. We are sending emails to all graduates to explain where and when they can meet our photographer. **Come in your favorite UMES gear or in caps and gowns. We welcome your excitement and enthusiasm!**

**Graduates may also gather 2-3 of your favorite photos and send them to [EMSE@umes.edu](mailto:EMSE@umes.edu) by December 4.** We will use your photos and other video messages to create a virtual celebration.

Our team has put in a lot of work and we feel your frustration with this new mandate. We all look forward to a time when we can gather together as one big Hawk Family and share the excitement of your accomplishments together!

With Hawk Pride,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heidi M. Anderson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With Hawk Pride,".