



Office of the President
Dr. Antonio D. Tillis

Dear Gators,

I hope this note finds you in good health and recovering following the recent winter storm.

It has been nearly one year since many of us have departed our classrooms, labs and offices to work and study from the safety of our homes. While campus is open, the majority of the Gator Family remains away from UHD as the pandemic ebbs and flows throughout the region.



As we approach the midpoint of the semester, questions regarding Spring Commencement are no doubt on your minds. In planning an event to celebrate our graduates, it is imperative that we do so with safety as our top priority. With that in mind, UHD will again conduct its graduation ceremonies in a virtual format at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 15.

I realize this will be disappointing news for many graduates, but it is in the best interests of our Gators and the Greater Houston Community not to conduct a large-scale mass gathering at this time. The risk is too great for our graduates, their families, our faculty and staff, and to Houstonians.

As a result of this decision, graduation fees will be waived and Spring 2021 graduates will be invited to participate in a future live ceremony. While these moves provide just a small consolation, please bear in mind that we are working diligently to ensure that all graduates are indeed celebrated in a manner befitting of their accomplishments.

I am already aware that a number of exciting supporting events are scheduled to commemorate our spring graduates. These will provide additional opportunities to safely spotlight your achievements. Several of these events are already available on the [UHD Commencement website](#), and more details will be added soon.

I too would have liked nothing more than to experience a live graduation event with our Gators, but in my short time as Interim President, I have set two priorities for students...safety and success. I am confident that the decision to continue commencement exercises virtually will ensure both of these critical goals are met while ensuring the health and well being of our graduates.

Sincerely,

Antonio D. Tillis, Ph.D.
Interim President
University of Houston-Downtown