

Why isn't Lakeland having an in-person commencement?

We understand that commencement is a significant milestone for our students and their families. Lakeland's commencement ceremony takes months of planning. At the point last winter in which we had to decide whether to hold an in-person or virtual event, all available information indicated that it was unlikely that most Ohioans would be vaccinated by May.

As of May 4, community spread in our region is still high and less than half of the area's population has been vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continues to recommend that large gatherings be avoided.

The Ohio Department of Health [order](#) updated April 8 requires that individuals should be in a group of no more than 10 individuals that is separated from other groups by at least six feet. That applies to outdoor commencement ceremonies. Many of the colleges that are planning in-person ceremonies have large outdoor stadiums which can accommodate thousands of people within these social distancing requirements. Our commencement tent is much smaller, so capacity would be significantly limited, even with multiple events.

We want our students to celebrate their accomplishments, and we have done our best to make our May 8 virtual commencement capture the spirit and energy of our traditional ceremony.

We have provided opportunities for graduating students to submit photos and videos to be recognized individually during the virtual ceremony, and to receive a complimentary, personal video clip to share with friends and family. Graduates have also been provided an opportunity to have their photo taken in-person on stage with Lakeland President Morris W. Beverage Jr. to commemorate the day and celebrate their achievement.

We encourage you to check the [Lakeland commencement site](#) for more information.