

March 25, 2020

Dear [First Name]:

Congratulations on your upcoming graduation from Rhodes State College. You will join more than 18,000 graduates as a part of the Rhodes State family, and we are very proud of your accomplishments. Unfortunately, you are completing your degree at a most challenging time. On behalf of the Rhodes State College Board of Trustees, I must inform you that Rhodes State's May 2020 Commencement is cancelled.

Our first priority has been and will continue to be the safety, health and well-being of all of our students, faculty, staff, College partners and communities. The uncertainty about when the COVID-19 spread will end is not clear, and the many planning tasks necessary to hold Commencement cannot be accomplished during this time. The College is following the Governor's Executive Orders in the best interest of you, faculty, staff, and your families and friends.

We all recognize that the Rhodes State Commencement is a very exciting and happy time for our graduates, parents, friends, significant others, faculty, staff, and administrators. It is a time to celebrate past accomplishments and certify your academic achievements; it is a right-of-passage for you. For this reason, we are looking at alternative ways in which we may still be able to confer degrees and find innovative opportunities to celebrate your successes. We will communicate these alternative plans to you as soon as possible, including how you will receive your diploma, graduation memorabilia, and academic awards, honor cords and medals.

Through all of this, our mission – Rhodes State College changes lives, builds futures and improves communities through life-long learning – stays Rhodes Strong. It speaks to the relevance of this institution and the importance of our graduates to the communities we serve. You are a part of this relevance, and we will get through this together.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cynthia E. Spiers".

Cynthia E. Spiers, PhD
President