



Last August, when the school year began, we thought we were once more embarking on an academic year's familiar cycle. None of us could know that the spring term would be most remembered for the disruption, anxiety, and loss a global health crisis brought into our homes, classrooms, and communities. None of us could guess the impact this would have—and is still having—on the simple things we take for granted, like going to work, spending time with friends, taking care of children.

None of you could know that your final semester would be disrupted by events taking place across the globe. But today you are graduating. You found ways to keep your goals in sight, and did the work that had to be done so that you could reach this day.

You have my great admiration, not only for the perseverance and academic achievement that got you to this point—accomplishments that graduates in any year would share—but also for the greater achievement of succeeding during a time of collective upheaval. You have endured separation from the friends, family members, and institutions that would otherwise have provided support and solace. Many of you have faced great financial obstacles. Some of you have experienced deep personal grief and loss. And nevertheless, this day is here—and you, with it.

This semester, although undeniably difficult, does not—and should not—define your college career by any means. Nor should it overshadow what you have accomplished and experienced as Lehman students, from the time you first stepped onto campus until now. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all on completing what is always an exciting and challenging journey.

However, I believe that your diploma, with its 2020 date, represents even more than your academic success. It is also a document of personal growth, and unexpected life lessons, all of which will serve you far into the future.

I hope you will come to consider that experience a source of strength, and a reservoir of knowledge that you can share.

I hope, too, that you will all move on from Lehman with a deeper awareness of your own strength and capabilities. I believe that wherever your next steps may lead, you are well-prepared.

Celebrate the day. Share it in whatever way you can with those you love, and be good to yourselves. You have not only demonstrated great achievement, but also your resilience. When you wake up tomorrow morning, let resilience be your guide.

Until we convene at the in-person Commencement exercises, under a glorious blue sky on our South Field, know that you have my profound respect and best wishes always.

Congratulations!

Peter O. Nwosu

Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Student Success