



July, 2009

Dear Nazareth Community,

I am writing to inform you about a change in the 2010 Commencement ceremonies. For reasons discussed below, Commencement will be held at **10 a.m. on Sunday, May 9, 2010, in the Blue Cross Arena**. We will conduct one combined ceremony for our undergraduate and graduate students.

As you may know, we had severe weather problems during our recent Commencement, forcing us to evacuate the tent and delaying the ceremony for over an hour. Our back-up plan involved use of the gym and remote sites that could get video feeds of the live event in the gym. Not surprisingly, most family members and guests preferred to be in the gym and the crowd became a fire hazard. We eventually returned to the tent, but after completion of the ceremony the high winds caused the tent to collapse. Fortunately, no one was injured.

Following this experience, I met with senior staff members to discuss possible alternatives and back-up plans in the future. I also convened a committee consisting of staff members as well as student, faculty, and trustee representatives.

The two groups considered the feasibility of using the gym as a back-up in case of severe weather conditions. It was suggested that we could give each student 2 guest tickets in the event the ceremony had to be moved into the gym. Other guests would be required to watch the ceremony on screens in the Arts Center and other locations on campus. Committee members and senior staff believed that this alternative was problematic because many students attend with more than 2 guests, and all family members and friends want to see the live ceremony. It also was noted that if the delay occurred in the morning ceremony we would have an awful traffic problem because people for the afternoon ceremony would be arriving before the conclusion of the morning ceremony.

After considering the alternatives, it was the consensus of both groups that we should hold the 2010 Commencement off campus. Another college holds its Commencement in the Blue Cross Arena on Saturday. As a result we scheduled our ceremony for Sunday, May 9.

This change was not made easily. We all enjoy the opportunity to show our beautiful campus to family members and friends. It was suggested, therefore, that we hold some events on campus on Saturday. We currently are exploring the feasibility of having the Baccalaureate and candle lighting services, as well as a picnic, on the campus on Saturday.

I will hold a meeting with students in the Fall to explain further the rationale and answer any questions. It is important, however, to convey this information as soon as possible so that families can plan for Commencement.

I hope you are having a good summer.

Sincerely,  
Daan Braveman  
President