

Together at last



Three nursing graduates pose for a photo at the 2021 Commencement ceremony.

On June 17, students and faculty lined up in Clark College's Red parking before crossing Ft. Vancouver Way to Christensen Soccer Field for the college's 2021 Commencement ceremony. The ceremony, held outdoors in chairs spaced 6 feet apart, allowed for no guests due to Covid-19 safety precautions. It was, in many ways, a first: The first ceremony on the soccer field, the first without guests (though some proud family members lined up on a hill above the field to cheer on their grads), and the first presided over by Clark College President Karin Edwards.

"It is an honor and privilege to stand here before you tonight," said Dr. Edwards as she addressed the Class of 2021, as well as some members of the Class of 2020 who were making up for missing an in-person ceremony the previous year. "This time last year, we could not assemble on campus or anywhere due to the coronavirus."

Many speakers at the podium remarked on the unique challenges faced by this graduating class: pandemic, quarantine, a massive switch to online learning, and a turbulent environment of political strife and racial inequity.

And yet, as novel as this year's ceremony was in many ways, there was much that remained the same: tassels were turned, caps were tossed, and the look of pride on graduates' faces as they crossed the stage was as incandescent as ever. As is tradition, the recipients of both the Exceptional Faculty Awards and the Community College Presidents' Scholarship in Honor of Val Ogden were announced. All told, more than 500 Penguins marched to receive their commemorative scrolls and celebrated their achievements together.

View more photos of Commencement 2021 on Flickr.

A fully captioned video from the live-stream of the ceremony will be available at www.clark.edu/go/grad by July 3.